

NOTIONS OF MASCULINITY AND FEMININITY IN THE RAJPUT ETHOS

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It is certified that the dissertation entitled "NOTIONS OF MASCULINITY AND FEMININITY IN THE RAJPUT ETHOS" submitted by Ms. LAVLEENA VYAS of eight credits out of the total requirement of twentyfour credits for the award of the Degree of MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY of the University, is her original work to the best of our knowledge and therefore be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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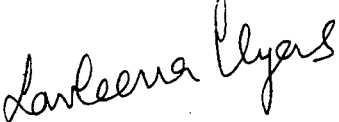
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INTRODUCTION

NOTIONS OF MASCULINITY AND FEMININITY IN THE RAJPUT ETHOS:

Masculinity and femininity are often treated as polarized conceptions of the two sexes. That is, what one is, the other is not. Although every culture and group has its own ideas regarding what is masculine and what is feminine, but usually masculinity is associated with 'manliness', 'dominance', 'bread-winning competence', 'goal orientation', 'independence', 'autonomy', 'success', 'courage', 'aggression' and 'violence'. On the other hand femininity is associated with 'womanliness', 'domesticity', 'dependence', 'submissiveness', 'passion', 'intuition', 'emotion', 'passivity' and 'vulnerability', etc. Notions of masculinity and femininity are expected, average type within a culture and vary as they are constructed in different situations. However, they play significant role in the construction of societal reality.

The main purpose of this study is to give an account of the social construction of masculinity and femininity in the Rajput ethos. The focus is on how these notions are manifested in a particular caste group, i.e., the Rajputs and how they affect society at large. This also includes the powerful social expectations men/women face by virtue of being Rajput male/female, the prevalent

cultural beliefs about personality characteristics that they should have and appropriate behaviour.

The study also investigates (i) the process of identity formation, as masculine or feminine; (ii) how the process of conformity with the ideal type of role behaviour results in the polarization of gender-roles; and (iii) what are the consequences of the sex-role differentiation.

Most of the research work on caste and gender in India has emphasised only the status of women, without taking into consideration the male role dimension. Like what is to be a man, what are the sex-role stereotype for the male role, what are the social expectations they face by virtue of being male, what ^{are} the male role-strain, etc. Furthermore, very little has been said or written about the interrelationship between caste and gender, particularly on how the notions of masculinity and femininity are related to the caste identities where again. it is equally important to study male roles as well as female roles for proper understanding of total societal reality.

Being a highly hierarchical society, there are different role-models and value systems for each caste. Caste is the basis of the Indian (Hindu) social system. One cannot generalize that these are feminine traits and these are masculine qualities without treating each group

separately because every group gives different meanings to masculinity and femininity. The traits appear to be important for one group may not be so far the other. Moreover, on the normative level each group (varna/caste), every individual in different life stages (ashramadharma), and every relationship (father-mother, husband-wife, brother-sister, father-son/daughter...) has assigned duty in its respective role that closely follows the hierarchy of occupation, age and sex.

Here caste has not been taken as a rigid system but rather dealt with the changing aspect of the caste that is, how socio-cultural changes within the traditional hierarchical system are influencing gender roles. The idea behind is to find out how and why stereotyped sex-roles are persistent and are perpetuated in our social system.

This study focuses on the Rajput community. The Rajputs have been taken particularly because they were dominant in the north-western parts of India and were rulers in the past. There has always been a tendency to follow the aristocracy and to imitate 'elite' groups of society by the lower status groups in hope of achieving higher social status. There are evidences showing that lower status castes and groups are 'Sanskritizing' and 'Rajputizing' their way of life, and these processes are helping in the maintenance of stereotyped gender roles.

One cannot dismiss the study of the Rajputs as a thing of bygone era, a thing of aristocratic past. It seems that the Rajput sub-culture has something different and particular in it compared to that of other castes, as it has incorporated traditional Hindu, pan-Indian and tribal characteristics in its ethos. The Rajput community is also associated with social practices like purdah, dowry, femicide and is often accused of the subjugation, subordination and commodification of women.

The study is divided into three chapters with their sub-sections. Since no fieldwork has been carried out the material collected and conclusions drawn are based on the review of related work in the area of caste, gender, social change, history and psychology.

In the first chapter, "Conceptual Framework", the sociological concepts of Sanskritization and Rajputization are viewed in the context of gender roles: How do they affect the process of genderization in the society? Do the processes help in the maintenance of caste hierarchy as well as traditional system of gender by increasing constraints on women? This question has been posed in view of the fact that it has been suggested in the literature that increased constraint on women is an essential part of a rise in the caste

hierarchy.¹

A second question is how separation and hierarchy between the sexes are related with the system of caste, and how changes within the caste system affect gender relations. Does social change tend to conform the traditional roles assigned to men and women, or reject or modify them?

This chapter is divided into four parts. The first and the second parts are a general explanation of the concepts 'Sanskritization' and 'Rajputization' and how these processes of change in the socio-cultural sphere take place. The third part deals, in brief, with gender roles and how they are defined, while the last part focuses on how gender roles are affected by the processes of 'Sanskritization' and 'Rajputization': when a caste or group Rajputizes what restrictions and demands are placed on feminine as well as on masculine roles? Since groups aspiring to Rajput status generally imitate the 'ideal type' i.e., the expected type of male and female in the Rajput sub-culture. Identification with the Rajputs means not only the adoption and the imitation of specially Rajput customs and the Hindu sacraments allowed to the Rajputs but also of the personality traits and the Rajput ideal type, including the gender stereotypes.

1. Srinivas, 1962: 46 ; 1989:22-5 ; Liddle & Joshi, 1988:59 ; Das, V., 1976:135; Yalman, 1963.

In Chapter Two "Genderization and the Rajput Ethos", an attempt has been made to determine the representations of masculinity and femininity through the Rajput ideal type for male and female, i.e. what it is to be a Rajput male/female and what type of male/female is idealized in the Rajput ethos? The chapter is divided into five sections. The first deals with the Rajput ideal type while other sections focus on characteristic Rajput practices like hypergamy, female seclusion, female immolation, female infanticide, dowry and polygyny. It is important to see in what way these practices are related to the Rajput ideals of honor, valor, revenge and self-sacrifice. This chapter also deals with how the groups who claim to be Rajput emulated Rajput ideal type, and to what extent they are able to proximate to the Rajputs.

Chapter three, "Process of Masculine and Feminine Identity Formation in the Rajput ethos" focuses on the way in which the traditional roles of the two sexes are conceived, and how children are socialized to their values. It is primarily aimed to find out important sources of masculine and feminine identity formation in the Rajput ethos. In particular, genderization is associated with defined responsibilities in work, marriage and family.¹ The chapter considers what is the process

1. Bardwick, 1980:22.

of internalization of the ideal type of conduct, and how masculine and feminine identities are formed under the system of extended family, separate living quarters (i.e. zenana & mardana), gerontocratic authority and the primogeniture inheritance system.

Additionally the study is also intended to seek answers to the following general theoretical question in application to the Rajputs as a community:

1. Does the concept of masculinity simply indicate that a person is 'man' or 'not' a 'woman' or 'not a child'.¹ Or in other words, in particular is masculinity constructed against femininity? (In the Rajput ethos)
2. Femininity is generally associated with the softer side of human nature. Is this true also with the Rajputs?
3. There is a general belief that the combination of masculism and militarism results in very sharp segregation of sexes, that the 'public/private' dichotomy takes its most 'serious and sophisticated forms, and social roles therefore become gendered'.² Is this applicable also to the Rajputs, meaning that the genderization of sex roles results in domestication of female roles.

1. Hearn, 1987: 137

2. Hearn, J. 1987:137-46.

4. Masculinity has been associated with the issues of social power and the domination over women by men.¹ Is it the case with Rajputs too? What type of the relationship between the two sexes exists in the Rajput sub-culture, and in the sub-culture of those who aspire forward to emulate the Rajput status?

5. Is it true for the Rajputs that what is considered to be masculine, or feminine is exclusive trait to one and prohibited to the other?

6. Is it the case with the Rajputs that "masculinity is more important to men than femininity to women."²

7. Are the Rajput notions of masculinity comparable to the traditional western notions of masculinity where physical strength, achievement, aggression, competition and control are the dominant characteristics validating masculinity.³

1. Carrigan et. al. 1985; 552; Hacker, 1957:229-32; Tiger, 1969:209.

2. Hacker, 1957:229-32.

3. Pleck, 1976:156.

CHAPTER I

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: SANSKRITIZATION, RAJPUTIZATION AND GENDER ROLES

In this chapter an attempt has been made to understand gender roles in the context of the sociological concepts of 'Sanskritization' and 'Rajputization'. Major focus of the study is to find out notions of masculinity and femininity in a particular caste group i.e., the Rajputs.

This chapter is divided into four parts. The first part deals with the process of 'Sanskritization', while the second part provides a general introduction to the Rajputs and to the process of 'Rajputization'. The third part discusses gender role, and how they are defined, while the last part refers to how gender roles are affected by the processes of 'Sanskritization' and 'Rajputization'.

I. SANSKRITIZATION:

The static, ascriptive and apparently 'closed' caste system in India is not as rigid as it appears on first glance. There are, and there always were, movement of individuals and groups between different levels of the social hierarchy.

The process of socio-cultural change and mobility in the traditional caste system has been studied within the conceptual framework of 'Sanskritization'. It was M.N. Srinivas¹ who first put forward the concept and defined it as "the process by which a 'low' caste or tribe or other group takes over the customs rituals beliefs, ideology and style of life of a high and, in particular a 'twice born' caste. The Sanskritization of a group has usually the effect of improving its position in the local caste hierarchy. It normally presupposes either an improvement in the economic or political position of the group concerned or a higher group self-consciousness resulting from its contact with a source of the 'great Tradition' of Hinduism such as pilgrim centre or a monastery or proselytizing sect."²

The idea behind adopting the cultural ways of higher castes is that, since caste is the structural basis of Hindu society, to be a Hindu means membership in a caste. Again castes are hierarchically arranged, each forming separate hierarchies of customs, diet, ideas and occupation.³ The high castes can be categorised in the Varna

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1. See Srinivas, 1952, when he first used the term sanskritization.
 2. Srinivas, 1989:56-7.
 3. See Dumont, 1970.

scheme of Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas, who were endowed with social status, political and economic power. The remaining groups and the Shudra Varna were deprived of social and ritual status and their economic and political positions were relatively weak. To remove these disabilities and move up in the hierarchy are the important factors behind one process of Sanskritization.

Social deprivation is one of the factors behind 'Sanskritization' but it is not the only one because it is not the case that all lower castes or depressed groups are sanskritizing their way of life. It is difficult to say exactly when, how and why sanskritization takes place. It depends on many interrelated factors which are relative in time and space.

Gould¹ suggested 'repressed hostility' as one of the major motive forces behind sanskritization. When 'lower' castes feel society does not accord them what they are entitled to and they find themselves underprivileged in valuation of self and society, they aspire for higher ranking caste status. There is not necessarily an antagonistic feeling for the privileged group but rather there exists a desire for identification with

1. Gould, 1961:315.

those of higher rank and differentiation from one's own group. Sanskritization is thus not a rejection of the caste system, but a sign of conformity to the traditional system. It is a slow and smooth process results in an infiltration into higher ranks rather than a capturing of them. Probably aspiring groups are aware that they cannot change the system as such, so their efforts are toward relative changes in the statuses within the social system. The structural system of society remains the same.¹ The Indian social system is such that even if a group or caste is economically or politically strong lower social status remains a disability. The above two factors do however help in the improvement of their social and ritual status.

Pre-requisites for sanskritization (when a change in personal habits and jati manner is introduced by a group) as suggested by Srinivas (1955:18; 1959:1-4), Mandelbaum (1972:443-67), Gardner (1968:82-97) and others are: 1) sufficient numbers; 2) strong political or economic base; and 3) enough unity to move together for higher status, etc.

1. Singh, Y., 1972:196-7; Srinivas, 1989; Mandelbaum, 1972:7.

The process of sanskritization through which lower ranking groups claim higher status involves such changes as: change of name; shift in occupation; securing services of Brahmins; appointing genealogists; creation of caste associations; adoption of some new values and customs and discontinuation and modification in the old ones. These are the "patterned ways in which people become acquainted with the norms and activities"¹ of the group whose status are aspiring to. But the "pattern" does not remain the same in all cases of sanskritization. It depends on which group is claiming which status and, in certain situation, what changes are required.

With economic betterment, change in traditional occupation, alteration in customs, association with a religious sect, change in name and sometimes migration, few members of a lower ranking group are able to create an elite group within their group. This 'elite group' generally initiates the process of sanskritization.² As various studies (Mayer, 1956:117-44, 1960:154; Sinha, 1962:35-80; Shah, 1975; Rowe, 1968; Lynch, 1968) show aspiring groups do not merge into their 'reference group' because of the complex system of stratification, endogamous

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1. Merton, 1957:351.
Social Theory and Social Structure.
 2. See Lynch, 1969:218.

marriage system etc. But sometimes they are able to achieve status equivalent to the one aspiring for, and higher to their original one.

Furthermore not all groups who try for social up-gradation aspire for the highest ritual-status in the hierarchy. For every aspirant group there are different reference categories or models. e.g. 'Brahmin', 'Kshatriya', 'Vaishya' and other 'dominant group'. In the formation of caste identities and attempts to move up in hierarchy varna system plays an important role. Now the question is, what is the criteria behind the selection of a particular model?

According to M.N. Srinivas¹, it is the 'dominant' caste which is important. For Louis Dumont², on the other hand, it is the relative 'purity' of a caste that is more important. Like Srinivas, Kolenda³ maintains that the regional aspect is of equal importance in caste identity to the varna order of castes, although the Varna system is quite important when a caste tries to climb up in the local caste hierarchy. It would be more appropriate to

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1. Srinivas, 1987, Introduction.
 2. Dumont, 1970:31.
 3. Kolenda, 1984.

say that sanskritizing groups emulate the varna which is dominant in the region. In South India the Brahminical model is more popular, while in North India it is the Kshatriya model. There are also evidences when members of 'twice born' castes initiated the other locally dominant varna. S.K. Srivastava (1963) indicates "kshatriyaisation" of Brahmins, when they became the landowning class or the zamindars they tried to imitate the Kshatriya groups in order to acquire the status of landlord rather than that of Brahmin priest.

The Kanbis of Gujarat through the Census of 1931 officially changed their name to Patidars¹, claimed for Kshatriya status and adopted Rajput customs. How, with the declining dominance and power of Rajputs, they are shifting from Kshatriya to Vaishya affiliation and, claiming to be Banias, discard the services of genealogists (the Barots). As business is the preferred occupation in Gujarat the Bania caste enjoys high prestige, so people there are more prone to emulate Vaishya model.

Ideally, the caste system is based on varna but in reality the jati is supposed to be more functional

1. See Shah, A.M., 1959:63; Pocock, 1955:71.

in the daily lives of people. Varna is based on Vedic classification of the four ranked occupation order with an absolute distinction between "status" and "power" and subordination of power to status. While jati model of caste is characterized by local ranking, hereditary and separation.¹

In relation to sanskritization question is which model is more influential. Marriott² has pointed out the increasing popularity of varna model with the increase in secularization, urbanization, geographical mobility. But for Srinivas the jati model with the notion of dominant caste of the region is more determinant. The character of locally dominant caste "provided an immediate model for the local, non-dominant caste to imitate and the varna idea was distanced in comparison."³

Involvement in a particular type of occupation and claim for the varna in which the sanskritizing group find that they could fit in is the general tendency. For instance, groups and castes who were involved in trade and business claiming Vaishya status, and martial races

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1. Srinivas, 1989:28-9.
 2. Marriott, 1959:104.
 3. Srinivas, 1989:66.

for Kshatriya status, was quite common. But claim for a particular varna is not enough in itself unless the aspiring group give some name of origin. On the basis of the name they become a separate group or 'jati' sometimes belonging to a particular varna. e.g. when Noniya, a shudra caste, claimed Kshatriya status, they identified themselves with Rajputs and designated themselves as the Chauhan Rajputs.¹ A shepherd group in Maharashtra known as Sagar Dhanger now link themselves with the Marathas and call themselves Sagar Rajputs.²

The opposite process to sanskritization has been denominated as 'de-sanskritization', and 'tribalization', due to the special privileges provided to the lower castes and tribes for their socio-political and economic upliftment. But there still do not prevent lower castes from imitating high castes.³

There are also examples where a group first tried to affiliate with a varna but later on, finding themselves in a strong position, shed their association and regrouped themselves as an independent caste, e.g. Kayasthas⁴ and

1. Rowe, 1968:66-77.

2. Orenstein, 1963:67.

3. For example, see Sinha, S., 1962:35-80.

4. See Rowe, 1968:201.

Jadavs.¹

Selection of 'reference' model² depends more or less upon its relative dominance, social status and feasibility and useability for the group that is aspiring and claiming for that status. Movements in the "middle ranges" of caste hierarchy have been widely recognised. Kshatriya and Vaishya model have been comparatively open and accessible for an outsider as the achievement element is more evident in these models for caste mobility.

II. RAJPUTIZATION:

Those who aspired for the 'ruler-warrior' model for social mobility, in the Rajput predominant areas, frequently, adopted the Rajput principles for conduct and they orient themselves to the Rajput standards and this process of adoption is called Rajputization.

Who are the Rajputs?

The word "Rajput, meaning son of a King or 'Rajputra', is the designation of several groups who began to emerge from the seventh-eighth century A.D. and became dominant in the north India. Rajputs are known as rulers,

1. See Lynch, 1968:209-13.

2. See Damle, 1968:98.

warriors and the landowning martial groups or races, the modern representatives of the ancient Kshatriyas, who formed the second order of the varna system.¹ The Kshatriyas or warrior class of the Indian Aryans, as described in the scriptures, were assigned with the duties to rule, to administer and to protect society. Rajputs considered themselves to be superior since they claimed to be sons of the royal household or members of the nobility or of Royal descent.²

There are various views regarding the origin of Rajputs. Some believe them to be descendants of Gujars³ who came to India during Kanishka's reign and converted to Hinduism, their leaders forming the main stock from which the higher Rajput families have sprung, especially the Agnikula clans.

Another view is that a few Rajput clans have an Indo-Scythian origin. Col. Tod suggested a common origin of many races like 'Hya' or 'Aswa', the 'Takshac' 'Jats'; the Chinese, Tatar, Mughal, Hindu and Scythic races. He also relates the Rajputs with early European races like

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1. Crooke, 1896:Vol.IV, ; Russell, 1916 (1969:411-4).
 2. Bahadur (ed.), 1978:4.
 3. Jackson, ; Cunnigham, 1849: ; William Crooke, 1896:42, Vol.4.

the Scythian by tracing similarities in their early genealogical names, customs and rites. e.g. martial tradition, initiation to arms, horse worship and horse sacrifice, the sun worship, Bardic tradition, conduct towards their females and a flair for hunting opium and drinks.

On the other hand, some believe that the Rajputs were ancient Hindu Kshatriyas. Although the Kshatriyas were supposed to be rulers and warriors not all of them were rulers. Since Rajputs consider themselves to be son of kings and Rajas, there is a tradition among them to claim ancestry from some famous king or great warriors, whether of local origin or foreign lineage, e.g. Greeks, Shakas and Hunas. Quite often there were inter-marriages between the two. These rulers were concentrated in the western parts of India, especially the desert area and Aravalli Hills.¹

There is a general tendency to claim for Kshatriya status among the martial groups. The three major martial groups, who claim to be Kshatriyas are (1) the Rajputs; (2) the Marathas; and (3) the Jats*. These three groups

1. Russell, 1916 (1969:198-9); Fox, 1985:3.

* In Punjab many of the Jat groups became Sikh during the 18th and 19th century A.D.

have a long and heroic history of fighting against 'alien' forces, particularly against Muslims. They are seen as an ideal for 'honor', 'pride', 'self-respect' and 'martyrdom'.¹

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Of the three martial groups mentioned, the Rajputs are the most outstanding, with a long history as rulers and warriors. They began to rise from the 7-8th century A.D. and by the twelfth century became very prominent in north-western India. The term which was used in earlier times for the sons of king began to be applied during this period to the military clans and to the numerous small chiefs holding villages who largely constituted the ruling landed aristocracy.² Later on groups who were in close proximity with the Rajputs or joined military also started claiming to be Rajputs.

The Rajputs were undoubtedly powerful during early medieval times. Later on they either fought against Muslim rulers or became subservient to them but their power in either case remained intact in their respective areas as the Mughal rulers recognised their authority

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1. Dutta, R.C., 1888 reprint 1972:64-8.
 2. Dutta, R.C., 1888 reprint 1972:64-8.

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and made them local chieftains responsible for the collection of revenue and its payment to them.

With the downfall of the Mughal empire, the small Jagirdars and Thikanedars became stronger as they started withholding revenues due to the government.

In their tradition of tracing origin from a famous king, Col. Tod listed 36 royal clans from where most of the Rajputs derive their origin. Even the 36 royal clans as listed by Tod are divided into various clan-clusters and ranked in a complex style. There are four major prestigious sets of clans from whom most of Rajputs derive their descent, ranked in the order as the solar, the lunar, the fire and the serpent.¹

(1) Solar clans: The bardic sources suggest they were descendants of Lord Rama of Ayodhya through his son Lava, who also founded Lahore and Lava's descendants migrated to Gujarat and established the Valabhi dynasty. Bappa Rawal, the founder of the Sasodia clan of Mewar was one of their descendants.

(2) The Lunar clans² of the Rajputs are also identified with the early Scythian immigrants of the first

1. Tod, 1971:49; Karve, 1965:165-71.

2. Tod, 1971:424-39; Russell, 1969:415.

and second centuries. Another thing is that Lord Buddha is said to be the first of the Lunar clan and Lord Krishna also their king. Yadavs, the principal clan of lunar origin, are said to have first settled in Delhi and at Dwarka in Gujarat. But after the death of Krishna, they were expelled from these places and Yadavs retired across the Indus, settling in Afghanistan. Again, they came at a later period to India and settled first in Punjab and afterwards in Rajasthan. Those who took to military became Rajputs and those who took to cultivation became Jats.

(3) Agnikula Clans¹ are supposed to be the descendants of the white Hun and Gujar invaders of the 5th and 6th century A.D. who were purified at Mt. Abu and included into Hinduism as Kshatriya caste.

(4) Serpent or Nagvansi are considered to be the descendants of the Tak or Takshac, Tod also identifies them with Scythians. But generally they are associated with landholders of indigenous tribes who have adopted this name and started claiming to be Rajputs.

Important Rajput clans with their many branches can be grouped according to their origin as:²

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1. Balfour, 1968:350; Russell, 1969:416.
 2. Tod (1829), 1971:68-100; Karve, 1968:166-7.

1. <u>Solar</u>	2. <u>Lunar</u>	3. <u>Agnikula</u>
i. Sasodia or Gahlot, 24 branches (Mewar) Udaipur	<u>8</u> Branches i. Bhatti (Jaiselmer)	<u>87</u> Branches i. Parmar
ii. Rathore. 24 branches (Marwar or Jodhpur)	ii. Jharega (Kutch)	ii. Parihar
iii. Kachwaha. 12 houses (Jaipur)		iii. Solanki iv. Chauhan

Whatever might have been the origin of Rajputs, they were/are known as the rulers, warriors and landowners, endowed with social prestige, economic and political power and have great influence over Indian culture and society.

The warrior-ruler model of the Rajputs includes power, authority, dominance, social prestige and status without much stress on learning, ascetic piety and wealth.

The Rajput model provides an effective model for limitation because, firstly it imposes fewer restrictions. Secondly, the chances of holding political power were more likely to be available to the leaders of a 'dominant' group. And "power has to be translated into authority",¹ because of the ideal Hindu notion that ruler has to be Kshatriya. This motivated leaders of dominant group who graduated to the position of a ruler, king or

1. Srinivas, 1989:63.

chief in acquiring, in the process, the symbolic and other cultural ways of the Kshatriyas or the Rajputs. e.g. Marathas¹ were classed as shudras and their leader Shivaji in the year 1674 A.D. was supposed to have become a pure Kshatriya through ritual performance, and then crowned as king.

Thirdly, imitation of the ruler by his close associates, subordinates, servants and those who were recruited in the army was common and whenever they had a chance they would start claiming for Rajput status.

Fourthly, association of the Rajputs with land also motivated lower castes towards Rajputization. As in the past rulers were also owners of the land as ownership of land was always associated with power and prestige. Groups who acquired land also started emulating Rajput style. Further stereotype image of the Rajputs as martial and chivalrous may be proved helpful for lower castes and tribes in improving their social status in the hierarchy.

There are various studies supporting the above view some of them are:

1. Majumdar, 1926.

1. Karve, 1961:43.

2. M.N. Srinivas, 1952:33, 220-1.
3. Pocock, 1955.
4. Cohn, 1955:53-77.
5. Shah & Shroff, 1959.
6. Mayer, 1960.
7. S. Sinha, 1962:35-80.
8. S.K. Srivastava, 1963.
9. Rowe, 1962:66-77.
10. Minturn & Hitchcock, 1966.
11. G. Shah, 1975.

The relative popularity of the Rajput model probably lies in its accessibility and receptiveness to all kinds of groups. As the Kshatriya model in all regions was characterized by the notions of honor, rule and martial valor. The Rajput version of that model added certain traits such as hypergamous clan organisation with regional variations. Rajputization is in fact a means through which claim for kshatriya varna becomes easier. Rajput customs and rites seem to be a mixture of Brahmanic and non-Brahmanic culture. Their hypergamous relations reflects that Rajputs themselves are in the process of sanskritization or rather kshatriyaization.

The process of Rajputization involves re-arrangement of lineage and lineage segments in hierarchical order, which provided a basis for hypergamy. For this genealogists and mythnographers are patronized, who help in creating a myth about their origin and prepare a genealogy. Association with some famous warrior clan generally validates claim to Rajput status and the claims are established through hypergamous marriages.

Rajputization not only involves change in occupation, securing the services of priest but also emulation of what is deemed to be the appropriate role behaviour for a Rajput.

III. GENDER ROLES:

'Gender' refers to the social construction of sex and the sex-related categorisation and classification into feminine and masculine. While 'sex' refers to the biological division into female and male.¹

'Gender role' denotes to a set of expectations and obligations associated with a particular person by being a male or female within a group or social situation. Gender roles are learnt, acquired or internalized.

Now, the question is: how do sex-roles become gender-linked? It has been suggested that asymmetries between sexes lie in their cultural evaluation as female/male; domestic orientation/public orientation²; ascribed status/achieved status; nature/culture³; affective expressive/intellectual instrumental⁴; and passive/active,⁵ etc.

1. See Oakley, 1972; 1983:41.

2. Chodorow, 1974: ; Rosaldo, 1974:

3. Ortner, 1974:67-37.

4. Parsons & Bales, 1953.

5. Chodorow, 1974:43-66.

The universal inequality of sex roles could be result of various factors that are deeply rooted in human societies. Often, women are identified or symbolically associated with 'nature': their status is connected with their stage in the biological life cycle. A biological basis may be one of these but more significant is evaluation and interpretation by society and association with a particular type of action. In other words, stigmatization or valuation of behaviour because of being male or female.

A contrast between the 'domestic' orientation of women and the 'extra-domestic' or public ties available to men, which is neither necessary nor desirable, provides framework for an examination of male and female roles in any society. Women become absorbed primarily in domestic activities because of their role as mothers. Their economic and political activities are constrained by the responsibilities of childrearing and the focus of their emotions and attention is particularistic and directed toward children and home.¹

In current gender studies the object relation perspective has been widely used. It is supposed to be an

1. Rosaldo, 1974:24.

improvement on Freudian psychoanalysis and it attempts to identify the psychological links between genderization and the earliest experiences of girls and boys.

Object relation theory distinguishes the physical birth of an infant from the psychological birth.¹ The basic argument is that primary parenting by women and discontinuing in the little boy's primary identification with his mother, in contrast to the continuity of the girl's, is central to the emotional dynamics of masculinity and femininity.

A woman's role comes to her "naturally"; her growing up has a continuity. By staying in proximity with mother she learns that by being 'nurturant', 'responsive' and 'kind' she will be appreciated and this process involves the turning inward of the little girl's aggressive feelings. By suppressing her feelings women develop comparatively "weak ego boundaries" which allow them to empathise too readily with the needs of others. And result is a diffused "feminine" character.²

A man's experience lacks this continuity. They are forced into an early psychic separation and independence from mother-world. This is because of exclusive

1. Jaggar, 1983:374.

2. Chodorow, 1978:108-

mothering by women and comparative absence of the father. The boy's sense of self thus becomes bound up with his sexual identity and masculinity is constructed against feminity in a separation generated and sexualized by the mother.¹

In this way the masculine identity formation begins with separation and individuation from mother. That is, discarding everything that associates with feminity and establishing one's self as an individual. But society being 'gender-structured', it influences the very process of individuation around their own gender. For example, girls will grow up to be women, like their mothers, because mothers often unconsciously treat daughters as extensions of themselves rather than as separate persons and this makes it difficult for girls to achieve separation and individuation. On the other hand, boys are encouraged to separate themselves from their mothers much earlier than girls and they do so in a much more complete way. Because women are socially devalued, boys find it necessary not just to separate from their mothers as individuals but to reject all identification with the femininity.² For boys any association with femininity

1. Chodorow, 1978:108- ; Craib, 1987:730-2.

2. Jaggar, 1983:374-5.

is seen as a threat to their masculinity as a result they deny emotional need for their mother and develops a hostility for femininity.

The theory also assumes that the process of separation and individuation will result in differential self-conception and understanding for others among girls and boys. Girls will have rather "flexible ego boundaries" compared to the boys' rigid ego boundaries." Boys will be more involved with distinguishing themselves from others while girls will develop a diffuse personality both as infant and adults. Due to relative absence of father from caretaking the boy will find it difficult to identify with father as a whole person. And the only alternative left for the boy is to identify with a cultural stereotype. That is, identification with the group-shared characteristics.

Probably that is why males are predicted to have greater difficulty attaining their sex-role identity and to show more insecurity in their sex-role identity than do females.¹ The insecurity of male sex-role identity sometimes result in overconformity to the male role and "hypermasculinity", including a predisposition to violence.²

1. Pleck, 1976:158.

2. Toby, 1966:19-27.

It has been suggested that due to 'rigid ego boundaries' and 'insecurity', the male adopts a negative attitude towards women, and try to control them (i.e. women) as a sign of their masculinity. One way to express manliness is through establishing a prideful superiority over women and being dominant. Gilmore¹ in his study of Andalusian culture finds that defensiveness of manly pride is coupled with an intensely aggressive effort at sexual expression. For Andalusians being macho is being sexually aggressive. 'Mashismo' or 'hypermasculinity' invites competition among men and aggression towards women. In turn the woman holds in her hands the capacity to ruin her husband's reputation through her conduct, which, of course, only she can control. Her behaviour is the key to his masculine pride and reputation.

One cannot say exactly that because of separation and individuation a boy develops a violent or aggressive attitude in general and particularly against women. Also important is what society expects from them by being a male and the 'type' of masculinity or manliness is recognized in a particular group, culture and society.

1. Gilmore, 1987:126-30.

Pleck (1976) suggests that masculinity should not be taken as something permanently fixed by childhood experiences, but as a role that changes over the life-span of the individual and as a role that is itself not stable, but undergoes significant cultural changes. Masculinity is fundamentally the social pressure that, internalized, prevents personal growth.

Although the traditional western model of masculinity associates manliness with aggression, violence, physicality, impulsive behaviour, avoidance of tenderness, a purely functional relationship between the sexes, femininity is related to tenderness, vulnerability, immaturity, etc.

In the Hindu system, it seems there are various models of masculinity, these models are quite different from the western traditional type. But to some extent the Rajput model does look similar to western type in its emphasis upon physical prowess. For a Brahmin man his manliness lies in self-restraint and non-violence. It is difficult to say that a Brahmin is feminine, womanly or unmanly rather their value system assign them a different role set as male. The same is the case with the other castes too.

IV. EFFECT OF SANSKRITIZATION AND RAJPUTIZATION IN GENDER ROLES:

The high caste Hindus segregates the world of men from the world of women with much greater sharpness compared to lower castes, probably because of the economic necessity which requires lower caste women to work for a living along with their men. Any change in the socio-economic sphere results in reshuffling of men's and women's relationships and spheres of activity.

In the caste hierarchy the lowest level of occupation is manual labor. As one becomes economically better off, the first thing one does is withdrawal from manual labor. This applies both to males and to females, but it has different repercussions for women and men. Men generally change their occupation while women are secluded from outside world to domestic work.

There is a common acceptance¹ that with sanskritization subjugation of women increases in the sense that greater constraints are placed on women. Women are even used as means for achieving higher social status.

Although it is true that a rise in social ranking increases constraints on women but one cannot say positively that the subjugation of women lies in the caste hierarchy. From an outsider's point of view it could

1. Srinivas, 1989:22-25; Liddle & Joshi, 1986:238; Yalman, 1963:55-58; Das, V., 1976: 135-

be the case, for an insider the situation can be different. Women might not actually feel subjugated. Women too desire for an improvement in social status. When restrictions like purdah are placed, they certainly not feel that they are being used or suppressed. Rather they feel proud and honored that their family is now in better position so that they need not work outside the home. This is a thing of social status.

Since social prestige is attached to seclusion of women when a poor family becomes affluent enough to adopt purdah, its women are generally eager to do so because now it is "family izzat", an index of superior status.¹ Intensified purdah practice is an important and elevating change made by sanskritizing groups.

Sanskritization has significant effects on conjugal relations,² as the seclusion of women results in the increased dependence of women on men. It involves the emulation of the high caste ideal of 'pativrata', i.e. treatment of the husband as deity, or that all religious rituals are directed towards the wellbeing and long life of the husband, because of fear of widowhood due to taboos related to a widow and social restrictions on widow remarriage.

1. Mandelbaum, 1988:34-5; Rowe, 1966:77; Srinivas, 1989:83; Cohn, B.S., 1955:67.

2. Srinivas, 1962:46.

Moreover the idea that at marriage a woman is given as gift (kanyadan) with dowry to another family makes the situation difficult for a woman, especially for a widow. Once married return to her parental home becomes a formal occasion and permanent return out of the question because it is seen as dishonorable for both families, her natal and conjugal.

Another effect of seclusion is that a girl becomes a burden for her parents and preference goes for a son. Son preference has been enforced and reinforced by religious sanctions and related rituals which only a son can perform, so that women become importantly only in their reproductive role especially as mothers of sons.

Seclusion of women emphasizes that now their sexuality is controlled, that daughters are virgin, caste and pure and wives faithful. Once women are secluded the seclusion of women is associated with social status, a preference will certainly go for a virgin bride with a good 'reputation'.

It has been suggested that pure/impure is Indian version of culture/native dichotomy.¹ Impurity is associated with low castes and among high castes with women. But impurity of caste is supposed to be permanent and for

1. Krygier, 1982:75; Dumont, 1972:88-9.

women it is rather temporary related to her life-cycle, when she is menstruating, during child birth and death in family.¹ She is treated like an untouchable, impure because of her close involvement with 'life process'.

A man is considered relatively pure. Purity of man can be associated with their extradomestic orientation. In their position as bread-winner they cannot afford staying at home but they can afford their women staying at home and adhere to purity/impurity notions as they differentiate lower born higher castes.

In reference to caste and gender the most talked about topic is control of female sexuality and caste purity. As Nuryalman writes: "There is specific important relationship between female purity and the purity of castes... It is through women and not men that the 'purity' of the caste-community is ensured and preserved..."²

When Rajputization takes places notions of 'purity' in relation to women or caste is not so important. Women

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1. e.g. even among the 'untouchable' Chuhras prepuberlat girls are treated as pure as a goddess while in menstruation and child birth she is impure. As a suhagin she is auspicious, especially if she is also a mother of sons but as widow she is inauspicious. See Kolenda, 1987:289-354.
 2. Yalman, 1963:41-44.

are secluded but not for 'purity' reasons only. It rather becomes a point of honor that, their women should not work outside the home.

Rajputizing groups usually opt for hypergamous marriage for their daughters. Since marriage relations are the easiest way to make permanent connections with high ranking group, e.g. Patidars and Kolis of Gujarat¹ adopted hypergamy while claiming Rajput status. But when such groups find it difficult to marry their daughters in high status group and are not accepted by their reference group and they find it degrading to marry off their daughters in their own caste with whom they are trying to dissociate, in such situation many have introduced huge dowry and sometimes started practising female infanticide. For example Lewa Kanbis of Gujarat,² Lewa Patidars, Jhareja Rajputs of Kathiawar, tribes of Meenas³ and Mahir of Ajmer and Udaipur adopted it who were equally proud of their lineage as the Rajputs themselves. The Jats of Bharatpur practised it, as they took it as disgraceful to give their daughters in marriage to anyone.⁴

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1. See Shah & Shroff, 1958:264- ; Pocock, 1957:25-7; Shah, G., 1975.
 2. See Viswa Nath, 1973:386-404.
 3. Saxena, 1975:10-12.
 4. Prakasi, 1970:37; Panigrahi, 1972:5-13.

Alteration in marriage rules is a part of sanskritization and Rajputization. In the less sanskritized lower levels marriages by exchange, widow remarriages and bride-price in place of dowry are more prevalent. As these groups move upward they discard these practices and introduce others like hypergamy, dowry etc.¹ Since more prestige and higher caste status is associated with these types of marriages, for whatever reasons (whether it is economic affluence, or seclusion of women leading to their devaluation as earning member of society). These not only have suppressive effects on women but also put pressure on men. Now they have to arrange substantial dowry for their daughters and look for a bridegroom in a higher ranking group etc. When this proves difficult they may adopt female infanticide and its modern version female foeticide.

Dowry is an integral part of hypergamous marriage. Upward moving groups generally pay huge sums (i.e. dowry) to obtain a desirable groom from higher strata. For example, the rich, landowning Patidars of Central Gujarat paid dowry, while poor Patidars paid bride price. Again the rich landowning Desais (upper layer of Anavil Brahmins) paid dowry while the Bhatela, the poorer division of the

1. See Kolenda, 1984:108. Women as tribute, woman as flower: images of "woman" in weddings in north and south India".

Anavil practised marriage by exchange, both direct and indirect.¹

Introduction of dowry makes a girl's birth burdensome for her family. First they have to get her married in a higher ranking strata again with dowry. For a Rajput and Rajputizing caste it becomes a matter of honor and family prestige to give their daughter with sufficient dowry. Probably giving of a large dowry helped in negation of the lower status of the bride and the stigma of an association with a lower status group. It also gives the bride moral support in the sense that in spite of being from a lower status she has brought dowry (only if it is substantial). Particularly among the aristocratic families where polygyny was common, dowry used to help a bride for her maintenance and her status within zenanas. Many of their marriages were contracted in order to gain an enormous sum as dowry, while for the bride's family it used to help them in improving their social ranking through marriage alliance which was also often a political alliance.

Rajputizing and Sanskritizing groups also use 'sati' and glorifies 'sati' as a means for claiming

1. Srinivas, 1975:24; 1984:13-15.

higher social status. Occurrences of sati in other parts of India have been associated with drastic socio-political and economic changes.¹ Sati was common among the Rajputs during medieval period and was associated with heroism and family honor. But in Bengal it was prevalent among Kuliu Brahmins and related to Dayabhaga system, the inheritance rights to a widow, and nouveaux riche, sanskritizing groups during colonial time.² Among the Marwari Baniyas (Vaishya) became popular in the post-Independence period. Since sati was associated with aristocracy and high rank in earlier times, groups who later on became dominant in certain areas opted for the custom/rite/practice and gave different set of values suited to their group, caste and occupation, although the incidences were never very high in number.

Sati was an expression of association with high rank. For high ranking groups marriage was the only approved status for women, and remarriage was out of question. Attempts to upgrade caste ranking were usually accompanied by the imposition of restrictions on widow remarriage. Once married with dowry, a woman is considered

1. See Nandy, 1980:1-11; Thaper, 1988:15-16.

2. Nandy, 1980;5-6.

as member of another family so that every she is widowed at an early age remarriage is not possible. On the one hand it is seen as against the prestige of her in-laws' family. But, more importantly, who is going to marry her? Since men of high castes used to have a wide choice of brides, why should they take a widow as a bride?

But for a widower, things are/were different, re-marriage was not a problem, but was rather given religious justification. Firstly, being a patriarchal society, it attached necessity to the production of an heir; secondly, easy accessibility of brides made the remarriage of a widower easier. Once argument is that, in the Hindu view women are endowed with 'wild energy' ('shakti'). That is why they need to be 'controlled' and directed in wifely roles. Since they are the source of 'shakti' for their husbands, when the wife is dead a man should "replace the missing source of energy and vitality by marrying again."¹

The unmarriageability of the widow among high social status groups and her association with 'inauspiciousness' and 'danger' helped in the advocacy of sati.

Aspiring groups for higher status emulated this as verification of their higher ranking. Probably fear of

1. Stein, D., 1988-89:465-85.

widowhood was so strong that all religious rituals and rites for women were directed towards the wellbeing and long life of husband. Ceremonial or actual death were the alternatives left for a widow.

Rajputization is sometimes introduced by creating a 'worship complex' or by imitating higher caste 'pantheon'. For example, in Rajasthan there is a tradition of 'hero-worship'. There are various warrior saints, like baba Ramdeo, Gogaji, Veer Tejaji, Pabuji and Bheru,¹ who are worshipped and their devotees are mostly lower castes and tribes. These saints are warriors from 11th century and onwards and there are stories about their heroic deeds and miracles. All blending martial traits with religion, which is also reflected in the idols and images, as dressed in the 'Rajput style' riding a horse with a sword or spear in a hand, of these 'warrior saints'. It reflects a desire among lower castes and tribes for the martial orientation of the Rajputs.

One more example in the same context - Rastriya Swayam Sevak Sangha (RSS) Movement, which is being labelled as a revival of militant Hinduism, is based on Kshatriya model,² and is creating 'Bharat mata', as goddess of

1. See Tod, 1971:574-5; Pal, H. Bhishm, 1974:133-4; 186, 179.

2. See Anderson, W. & Damle, S., 1987:1-5.

national level, which could be seen as an influence of the Rajput pantheon.¹ One can see the movement as Rajputization of national culture as they are emphasizing on physical training, Bharat Mata complex plus saffron colour, celebration of festivals related to the Rajputs like Dusshera, worship of arms, etc. Emergence of various militant movements on the national scene can also be associated with Rajputization.

Sanskritization and Rajputization directly affects gender roles. Upwardly mobile groups aspiring to Rajput status imitate the expected type of male and female in the Rajput ethos. New demands are made on the part of aspiring groups because identification with Rajputs means not only the adoption of specifically Rajput customs and Hindu sacraments allowed to Rajputs but also their personality traits. Rajputization generally results in further differentiation of sex-roles as the Rajputs particularly emphasise on martial orientation, notions of family honor, valor and masculinity.

As already stated, political alliances consolidated through matrimony, the moral obligation of marrying daughters hypergamously. The need to ensure legitimate male heir and polygyny were prevalent customs among 'elite Rajputs', reflecting their high social status and a symbol

1. The Rajput sub-culture emphasis worship of 'shakti' or 'Devi' or 'Mother Goddess' and has been associated with power, activity and strength. Also see Nandy, 1980:32-43.

of their honor. Consideration of honor resulted in the practice of purdah, dowry, childmarriage, restriction on widow-remarriage, female infanticide and sati. And these were culturally moulded in such a way that they were considered as signs of respect for women, rather of her degraded status. In the same way, groups aspiring for Rajput status used their women as ladders for higher status by imposing restrictions on them.

Although women are/were used as a means for Rajputization and Sanskritization but they were/are not the only the sources. Sanskritization or Rajputization is a result of interplay of many interdependent and inter-related factors and women were/are one of those. Killing a female child or putting a woman under purdah or marrying a daughter in high status family do not in themselves ensure a Rajput-status. Rajputization also requires enough economic power so that they can keep up their high notions of honor plus to some extent martial orientation.

CHAPTER II

GENDERIZATION AND THE RAJPUT ETHOS

The objective of this chapter is to delineate representations of masculinity and femininity in the Rajput subculture through consideration of the ideal type of male and female, i.e., what it means to be a Rajput male/female, or what type of male/female is idealised in the Rajput ethos. The process of conformity with the ideal type of role behaviour does have certain consequences. Among the Rajputs this has resulted in social institutions such as hypergamy, sati, purdah, female infanticide, dowry, polygyny, etc., and these have become integral part of their culture. In other words, these are the manifestations of masculinity and feminity which in turn affect society at large. _ _

The concept of ideal type has been adopted because by constructing an 'ideal type' it becomes easier to understand the binding forces behind a person's course of action, his perception of life and what is considered to be a deviant form of action in a particular culture or a group. It does not describe an individual course of action but rather focuses on an average type or an "objectively possible course of action".¹ In the Weberian sense

1. Weber, 1964:17 (Henderson & Parsons Trans.).

'ideal type' denotes those standardized characteristics of a behaviour or an action which are both 'abstract' and 'general' and also observable in reality. That is an 'ideal type' is a 'pure type' derived from common phenomena.¹

It is not necessary that all the characteristics will always be present in reality, but any particular situation or behaviour may be understood by comparing it with the ideal construct. The concept of ideal type can be helpful in understanding the process of Rajputization since there must be some degree of approximation and emulation to a pre-conceived image. It can also be important for understanding the highly 'value rated' subculture of the Rajputs. Weber has also related the 'value-rated' conduct to the behaviour of persons for whom the convictions matter so much that fulfilment of 'duty', 'honor', 'religiosity', 'command' and 'obligation' becomes the most important. It has also suggested² that 'value-rated' action could also be affectual, demanding an immediate satisfaction of an impulse to obtain revenge, sexual gratification, a complete surrender to a person or to an ideal without considering the danger

1. Weber, 1949:90-3 (Shils & Finch eds.).

2. Weber (Secher, 1962:60-2).

involved or uselessness of the action.

I. RAJPUT IDEAL TYPE:

Here, a Rajput ideal type has been constructed on the basis of certain aspects of behaviour, customs and institutions which were/are observable in the Rajput sub-culture. This also includes the characteristics and traits which were associated with the Rajputs but it is not necessary that every Rajput has or must have these characteristics.

Since the Rajputs identify themselves with the Kshatriyas, they not only derived their cultural identity from the ruler-warrior model but have also modelled themselves as warriors, conquerors and rulers. In this tradition of martial orientation dominant themes in the Rajput culture were valor, honor and sacrifice "without regard for consequences". They valued heroism rather than thriftiness, action over utility and thoughtful calculations, death in place of captivity and subservience, truthfulness (loyalty, upright and justice) over falsehood, personal bravery over shrewd generalship and vendetta if insulted otherwise life long service towards master, commitment for the sake of friendship, obligation towards elders and sensitiveness on points relating the

honor of their women.¹

Bhats and Charans, patronized by Rajputs as their genealogists and chroniclers, played an important part in shaping and sustaining the ideal code of conduct. They also accompanied Rajputs in battle and popularized their acts of bravery and the virtues of their wives and daughters.²

A. The Ideal Type of Rajput Male

Being a Rajput man means being 'martial', that is how a Rajput male has always been depicted in the oral tradition of the middle period. He is characterised as an inborn fighter. Col. Tod attributed to the Rajputs qualities like 'high courage', 'patriotism', 'loyalty', 'honor', 'hospitality' and 'simplicity' as their prominent traits of character. By 'simplicity' he probably did not mean the opposite of extravagance, since Tod himself describes Rajput extravagance during the time of birth, marriage and death ceremonies.

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1. Tod, 1971:509-11; Bingley, 1899:170; Rudolph & Rudolph, 1984:41-2; Hitchcock, 1958:10-7; Steed, 1955:114-5; Ziegler, 1973:67-9.
 2. Stern, R., 1988:5; Rudolph & Rudolph, 1984:41.

These ethics of the middle ages, emphasizing fighting skills, bravery and sacrifice, could be an exaggeration for the need of the time when society was facing frequent threats and battles. But somehow it became a part of the community especially on symbolic level, a Rajput heritage and thus helped in shaping their contemporary character. For a Rajput his long mustaches, high turbans, etymology of name, eating habits are all a part of displaying his virility. As Steed commented, "... Rajputs could be identified at once by an insistent, self-styled physical appearance and dress symbolically denoting strength..."¹

In the Rajput ethos, the colour saffron was of a great significance as a symbol of sacrifice, a sign of their unreserved commitment to battle. They used to wear 'kesaria bana' while going for battle and women 'kesaria sari' while committing sati or johar.² It was an indicator that they are prepared for death while fighting, a sign of finality - that either they will achieve the goal or will accept death. The Rajputs also used to wear saffron coloured robes at weddings probably as a sign of irreversible bond.

1. Steed, 1955:114.

2. Russell, 1969:427; Tod, 1971:158.

Salt played an important role in the Rajput ethos. A great value and honor was attached on eating salt and offering salt. A Rajput owes his life to those whose salt he has eaten. And offering salt signifies that one is extending his help and protection. Hospitality to a guest is given great importance and it is host's duty to protect one's guest even if he is a stranger. The custom of offering salt to the guest works as a measure against the guest if he is trying to play some trick on his hosts. Because the use of salt is supposed to make the reception of a guest conditional since there is belief related to salt that one should not be disloyal to those whose salt one has eaten.¹ The notion of salt was not only limited to the etiquette of guest and host. Loyalty to the King or master or elders, generosity to the captive enemy and a duty to protect those who had turned to a Rajput for help were also a part of it.

A great value and respect was attached to a Rajput's turban, i.e., his head-dress.² There is a popular Marwari saying that it is easy to wear a turban but it is very difficult to keep and guard the honor of a turban. Only a brave man can do this. In fact most of the presentations

1. Abbott (1932), 1984:70-77; Tod, 1971:494.

2. Tod, 1971:517.

made in the Rajput states were related to turban. The Rajput rulers of Marwar used to distribute turbans amongst their people as a sign of extending their faiths and protection while binding the people to loyalty and service.¹

An exchange of turbans was a mark of fraternal adoption and a bond of friendship. e.g. Shah Jahan before becoming the Emperor exchanged his turban with one Rana of Mewar and in turn he was given support and refuge in Mewar in spite of the two centuries of combat during which Mewar has suffered and had lost its independence to the Mughals. Yet his turban was kept with respect and preserved in the same fold as when exchanged with the Mewar ruler.²

Offering or placing of a turban at the foot of another man meant total surrender or acceptance of the authority of the other man. And there was a belief that if a dead warrior's body could not be sent home from the battlefield then at least his turban must be recovered to save it from the dishonor of falling in the hands of enemy.

1. See Nair, D., 1990:9.

2. Payne (ed.) Tod's, 1960:109; Russell, 1969:427.

One of the most honorable gesture was to be presented with a turban. This meant that one is included as a part of the family.

The size, colour and style of a turban was also important, signifying status, occasion and season. Volume and heaviness of a turban was associated with the distinction of the bearer.¹

Saffron colour turban was associated with celebration. It was not only worn on the occasions like wedding, festivals and childbirth but also by the dead and in the battlefield since war and death were the two occasions when a Rajput could prove his courage and valor. As these two occasions were never related with sorrow, they used to wear saffron colour on these occasions too. However white or black colour was associated with mourning.

The ideas related with the colour scheme of turban also applied to the colour of women's dress. In other senses one cannot compare the turban with a woman's head covering, sari or veil.

The mode of death was a decisive indicator of a person's chivalry and courage. Death was appreciated over defeat and surrender and death in the battlefield

1. Russell, 1969:426.

while fighting was the best way of dying.¹ For a woman the most glorious form of death was committing sati or Johar. Notions of immortality and martyrdom were associated with those kinds of death. This probably gave an incentive to die while fighting for a cause which could even be a revenge for an old feud between the forefathers. Death in captivity was considered as the most degraded form of dying.

Suicide has been much condemned in the Hindu ethos as an act of sin. But the Rajputs used to commit suicide when they found that there is no other way to preserve their honor and express their loyalty or when defeat is certain.

There is an intrinsic value attached to the pledge of sending a Rakhi (hand-band) to a man by a woman. It is a recognition of the brother and sister relationship, the Rajput brother assuring protection to his sister.

For a Rajput his heroism lies in self-sacrifice. In their tradition of taking a vow, giving shelter to a man in danger, eating one's salt, accepting a Rakhi and pledges while exchanging turban, words over a cup of opium or sharing same smoking pipe (Hooka) a Rajput would

1. Tod, 1971:510-1.

rather lay down his life to keep his word in place of facing defeat and dishonor as a Rajput. The Rajputs were not good winners but they were good fighters. They did not believe in a victory by hook or crook but had an idealistic conception of fair conduct in a fight. The real victory for them was to uphold the Rajput code of conduct whether they won or lost a battle.

In the Rajput ethos for men masculinity was not related to success rather they valued personal bravery over shrewd generalship. The favoured tales are not stories of great military victories but of disasters. Udaipur which frequently sacrificed its nobility and prosperity to the chivalric ideals is still admired and not the statesmanship of Jaipur rulers who had accepted the Mughal superiority. Its reflection can also be seen in the historical figures like Prithviraj Chauhan, Rana Kumbha, Rana Sanga, Hamir and Rana Pratap, who preferred to struggle and die for honor and liberty rather than fall into the hands of enemy. And they are idealized by the Rajputs for their gallantry, self-sacrifice and determination.

If the founding principles for a Rajput are honor, obligation (gratitude) and loyalty, the greatest crime for him is "forgetfulness of favours" (Gunchor).

Tod¹ writes that "gunchor" is the most powerful term for ingratitude and infidelity. Gratitude for a Rajput embraces every obligation of life and is inseparable from loyalty to his lord", i.e., swamidharma. The one who disobeys these is not only gunchor (abandoner of virtues) but also namak-haram (ungrateful to salt) and satchor (violator of his faith). Such a person is not deemed fit to live.

But the Rajput idea of 'sacrifice' was not synonymous with "patriotism". They had a paradoxical conception of patriotism. Loyalty was important but to whom? Patriotism and loyalty for country and state were nullified by their extreme commitment for revenge and loyalty to their various pledges. If we look at the history we find that they went to battle only for their king (master), i.e., for the sake of their tradition of obligation and loyalty. The Rajput alliances with the Mughals and later with the Britishers are the examples. In J.F. Richards² opinion, the idea of loyalty for the master is a bardic construction, a respectable rationalization of accepting the Mughal superiority, when in the medieval times the Rajputs were divided into small principalities and were not properly equipped to resist the Mughal power, while keeping the 'heroic'

1. Tod, 1971:156.

2. Richards, 1977:X.

tradition of the Rajputs intact. In fact the Mughal emperors exploited the Rajput loyalties to clan or brotherhood and to marriage relationships and used them against their own people. As a result the Rajput support was the prime cause of all important Mughal successes.

Loyalty to a brotherhood (bhaiband) is constituted by acknowledgement of the ties between the members of 3-6 generations of the male line of a descent group. Marriage relations (saga) includes all those relatives to whom a Rajput gives his daughter or sister or from whom he receives wives in marriage.¹

Cosely related to the idea of loyalty was that of revenge.² Sensitiveness to an insult and prestige and taking revenge without thinking of right or wrong was a part of proving oneself a true Rajput. The notion of revenge stretched to many generations between clans and groups. There was a great importance attached to taking up one's father's feud to preserve personal and family honor. A Rajput is condemned as a 'kuput' i.e. worthless son, who fails to retaliate or die in the attempt. A Rajput is supposed to born under the debt to die in taking

1. Ziegler, 1977:215-51.

2. For example, see Tod, 1971:237-9.

revenge on behalf of his family: the first commandment is "avenge thy father's feud."¹ Behind many cases of revenge marriage of a daughter was the cause. Since the bride's father was assigned a lower status, if he approached and own thwarted the attempt of a marriage proposal from a family of a higher status it was taken as a direct offence, or a daughter decided to marry a person whom her father disapproves off could result in a feud, as in the case of Prithviraj Chauhan, his father-in-law Jaichand took his revenge by helping Mohamad Gori against him. On the other hand marriage alliances were also a way to settle disputes.² In the medieval tradition of Rajputs it was said that no money could compensate for bloodshed, only land or bride from the guilty clan were accepted as peace offerings.

One way of proving and displaying prowess as a warrior and as a man is their association with hair and mustaches. The Rajputs probably started shaving their beards to distinguish themselves from the Muslims but they were very sensitive towards their mustaches. Raising mustaches with a stroke was associated with power, i.e. an indication that the

1. Tod, 1971:502.

2. See, for examples, Tod, 1971:498-501.

person is showing his authority. It was also a challenge to the other person that he is powerless or weak in comparison to him. If the person, in front, does the same act, i.e. of stroking mustaches, this was considered a mark of accepting the challenge and could turn into a fight!! The gesture was not allowed in front of elders, a way of showing their respect and acknowledging a subordinate position.

Even the Rajput choice of names stresses their martial orientation. e.g. Vikram, Diggvijay (Victor), Pratap (powerful), Abhay (fearless) were/are the usual names with suffix 'singh' (lion). Moreover 'veer' (courageous) was a common middle name.

The Rajputs also have a tradition of eating meat and taking opium (without admitting to having a weak head for the strong drink) as a part of showing their strength. They also had a custom of offering 'a cup of opium' as a gesture of welcome to their guest.¹

The favoured occupation of the Rajputs, suited to their traditional warrior image, was military. There was a rooted aversion for agriculture and commerce, which they considered as menial and degrading, incompatible

1. Tod, 1971:60.

to their status as Rajput. Handling of a plough or pen was considered as demeaning. There is a saying that "a Rajput who reads will never ride a horse."¹ It shows that for a Rajput man physical prowess was a matter of pride and a sign of manliness but not physical labour.

In the Rajput ethos masculinity is also coupled with the feminine modesty and it was a matter of honor for the Rajput men to protect their women from any kind of disgrace. At the same time it was their women's duty to save their men from dishonor. It seems, to avoid dishonor, women were controlled, secluded from public life - put under the strict purdah. Marriage of one's daughter into a suitably high ranking clan became a rule involving a man's honor, giving rise, in turn, to practices like sati, Johar, dowry and female infanticide.

B. The Ideal Type of Rajput Female

A Rajput woman is supposed to be 'courageous' and 'self-sacrificing', matching with the martial orientation of Rajput men, as well as conforming to feminine models of grace, modesty and sacrifice.

The qualities and characteristics expected from a Rajput male are also idealised in a Rajput female. But a woman's loyalty and honor lies exclusively in her self-sacrifice for her husband as his wife, as a mother for her

son and for her master if she is a servant. Moreover the woman who had immolated herself for the preservation of family or husband's honor, the widow who had to continue to live to protect her son and be a capable fighter if the situation demanded were/are idealized in the Rajput ethos. In other words, Rajput women helped their male members of family in upholding the Rajput code of conduct. The following are some of the examples of historical characters (excluding the mythological figures like Sita, Draupadi etc.) who have been idealized by the Rajputs for their "heroic qualities", "virtuous deeds" and "self-sacrifice".

1. Karma Devi¹, of Chittor, became regent for the minor heir Karan when her husband Samar Singh died in the second battle of Tarain in 1192 A.D. She "nobly maintained what his father left. She headed the Rajputs and gave battles in person to Kutubuddin near Amber, there she was defeated and wounded.
2. Padmini², a princess of Sri Lanka, married to Bhim Singh, an uncle and protector of the minor prince, was

1. Tod, 1971;210-1.

2. Tod, 1971:213-5.

known for her extraordinary beauty. This became the cause for two attacks on Chittor by Alaudin Khilzi (1290 A.D. and 1303 A.D.). The motive of Alaudin's attack was supposed to be the possession of Padmini, but after a long and fruitless siege, he restricted his demand to a mere sight of her. And it was arranged that he could see her through the medium of mirrors. "Relying on the faith of the Rajputs", he entered the fort without much security, and having fulfilled his wish, returned. The Rajputs came to see him off to the foot of the fort. Here he had an ambush; Bhim Singh was made prisoner and his release made dependent on the surrender of Padmini. When she was informed, Padmini devised a scheme with her uncle Gorah and his nephew Badal, and they succeed in freeing Bhim Singh off from Alaudin's captivity. He reached safely but at the outer gate of Chittoor fort Badal, aged 12, and Gorah died in an encounter.

Defeated, Alaudin took revenge and again attacked Chittor in 1303 A.D. This time the Rajputs lost and fought to their last while Padmini with about 16,000 females preferred Johar to the dishonor of falling into the hands of Alaudin Khilzi.

3. Tarabai¹, daughter of a disposed chief of Thoda Rao Surtan, made an attempt to recapture Thoda (Toda)

1. Tod, 1971:237-9.

from Afghans with her father but failed. Then it was declared whoever recover the domain would get her hand in marriage. Jaimal, a son of the Chittor ruler Raimal, was willing, but when he tried to insult her in the palace, was subsequently slain by her father. Thence Jaimal's banished brother Prithviraj came forward and won her. She accompanied him in many battles. When Prithviraj was poisoned to death she joined him on the funeral pyre and committed sati (1509 A.D.).

4. Jawaharbai, queen mother, a Rathore set an example of courage, she donned the armour and leaped forward to defend Chittor when Bahadurshah attacked in 1532-3 A.D. while other ranis committed Johar and infant heir Udai Singh was placed in safely with the Bundi ruler Surtan. And the fort gates were thrown open and the Rajput men in their saffron robes died in defence upholding the Rajput dharma - "death as less dreadful than dishonor and captivity".¹ Meanwhile, Rana Sanga's wife -

5. Karnavati², the mother of Udai Singh, asked for a help from Humayun by sending him a 'rakhi' which invested him the title of an adopted brother (rakhi-band-bhai) and protector of her infant son. He responded to this Rajput

1. Tod, 1971:249-50.

2. Tod, 1971:249-51.

pledge and came to help Rani Karnavati, abandoning his conquests in Bengal to save Chittor. He expelled the troops of Bahadurshah from Chittor and also took away Mandu from him, and thus Rana Vikramjit was restored to his capital. However, Humayun was late and Karnavati had already committed Johar with 13,000 females. The queen mother Jawaharbai was slain while fighting and about 32,000 Rajputs were slain along every clan chiefs, in this destructive seige. This is known as the second sack of Chittor.

Five years later, the Rana was assassinated by Banbir, the natural son of Prithviraj. He also attempted to murder the minor heir of Mewar, Udai Singh, but he was rescued by his faithful nurse -

6. Panna Dhai¹, the nurse incharge of six years old Udai Singh, sacrificed her own son of the same age by placing him on the couch of Udai Singh and smuggled out the prince in a fruit basket covered with leaves. When the usurper Banbir entered in their quarters and inquired about him she pointed to the couch and in front of her, her own baby was murdered (1538 A.D.). After that she joined Bari (Nai), who had helped in smuggling out the

1. Tod, 1971:252-3.

prince, and who was waiting for her a few kilometres away from the fort. She placed the child in the secure hands of Assa Shah, a Jain merchant and returned.

Later, Udai Singh proved a weak ruler of Mewar and Akbar invaded Chittor. This third and the last sack proved fatal for Chittor. But still the Rajputs glorify the sacrifices of their brave warriors especially of Jaimal of Bednore and Patta of Kailwa.

7. Patta's Mother¹, when her husband died in the previous sack of Chittor, decided to rear her son the only heir of their house in place of becoming sati, when Akbar attacked on Chittor, May 1568 A.D., she ordered her 16 year old son to wear 'saffron robe' and to die while defending Chittor.

8. Hadi Rani had accepted the proposal of much older Chundawat Sardar of Salumbar (Mewar). But he had to leave his newly wed bride on the call of Udaipur Rana to face the Mughal army. Rather disappointed Sardar sent a messenger to her, from the battlefield, asking her for a memento. Hadirani felt that she is detaining her husband from his duty as a Rajput now it is her turn to prove a true 'Rajputni'. And she asked the messenger to take the last

1. Tod, 1971:261.

remembrance to her husband. Then she pulled the sword and struck her own neck.

9. Rani Durgawati, ruled Gondwana (M.P.) during Akbar's time. After her husband's death she became regent on behalf of her infant son and successfully faced several attacks. She finally stabbed herself when capture seemed imminent in a battle in 1564 A.D. with Akbar's army led by Asaf Khan.

10. Krishna Kumari¹, the princess of Mewar, became the cause of rivalry between the two major principalities of Rajasthan, Jagat Singh of Jaipur and Raja Man of Marwar, and the conflict was solved, after a high drama, by putting her to death by her own parents (1806 A.D.). The rivalry between Jaipur and Marwar attracted all the predatory powers of India. The Scindias were supporting Raja Man and demanding dismissal of the Jaipur, which was refused, so he advanced his army and after a fruitless resistance, in which Jaipur troops joined, Rana agreed whatever was demanded.

Meanwhile Jaipur prince assembled a huge force to take his revenge for his insulted pride. And Raja Man was also prepared but the interval rivalry of the

1. Tod, 1971:365-9.

Marwar divided the loyalty of his clansmen. Here Marathas also came into the scene. In an open encounter Raja Man tried to kill himself but was saved by his royal chiefs and was pursued to his capital Jodhpur, which was besieged and successfully defended for six months followed by the flight of Jagat Singh's army from these arid plains. Here Amir Khan came forward as an aid to Jagat Singh but he betrayed him. He suggested to the Rana of Udaipur that either Krishna should marry Raja Man or be put to death for the peace of Rajwarras. As an alternative Rana Bhim decided that Krishna should die. And the job was given to his brother Maharaja Jawandas, "as no common man could be armed for the purpose", but he failed in front of sixteen year old Krishna and the dagger fell from his hand. Her mother asked for mercy "but death was arrested, not averted." And a cup of poison presented to her in the name of her father which she bravely drank while consoling her mother that "...I fear not to die! Am I not your daughter? ...We are marked out for sacrifice from our birth."¹

11. Laxmibai, Rani of Jhansi, born in a brahmin family, took over the affairs of state as regent and began a series of negotiations with the Britishers to have the adopted son recognised and died in combat at Kalpi battle at Gwalior (1857 A.D.).

1. Tod, 1971:369.

The life histories of these Rajput women focus three important things, first is their self-sacrifice in different stages of life as daughters/sisters, wives, mothers and widows irrespective of their personal interests. Secondly, the Rajput code of conduct was the most pervasive force behind every action. And thirdly, the influence of a woman in the formation of Rajput ideal type of male was of no less importance. Her expectations, as sister, wife, mother, from her male members of family reinforced the ideal of a martial, courageous and sacrificing Rajput man.

Women as sisters/daughters were respected and were expected to do the same for the family decoram. e.g. Krishna Kumari proudly accepted her father's verdict, and a conflict was settled by sacrificing a daughter. Tarabai's father could not tolerate the insult of his daughter and he killed her suitor. The honor attached to a rakhi-band bhai shows the concern of a Rajput male if he is invested with a brotherly role. As wives women were expected to sacrifice their lives to save their husbands or their families from dishonor. At the same time women also demanded from their husbands to be a true Rajput. For example, Hadi Rani sent her own head when she felt that her husband was not behaving like a Rajput. In the other case, when Maharaja Jaswant Singh (Marwar) was forced to

retreat from a battle, his wife, a Mewar princess banged the gates of the castle on his face. She declared that the son-in-law of the Maharana could not have "so mean a soul as to flee the battlefield, that he had to remember that being grafted into so illustrious a house he was to follow its virtues, in a word he was to vanquish or die."¹ And she asked for the funeral pyre to be lit up so that she could immolate herself. When her mother convinced her that he had fought valiantly and would raise another army to fight Aurangzeb and repair his honor, she agreed to meet her husband after eight or nine days.

Moreover a Rajput woman's selection of a brave husband reinforced the ideal type. e.g. Sanjukta's choice went for powerful and famous Prithviraj Chauhan in spite of her father's opposition and his revenge to this led to Muslim rule in India. Tarabai was a prize of Thoda (her father's lost principality) winner. The matter of their women's honor and insult led to many wars since the epic age including the two attacks on Chittor.

The Rajput mothers were seen as guardians of their son's rights preparing them for battle. For a mother the

1. Tod, 1971;495.

heroic death of her son was the greatest fulfilment of her life. They say death while fighting makes "mother's milk resplendent".¹ There are many examples when women became regent and looked after the state and administration and even took part in battles in person. e.g. Karmadevi, Pattas mother, Durgavati and Laxmibai. They took to those roles in absence of their male kinsmen, usually after their husband's death. Instead of committing sati they assumed power and ruled as regents of minor rulers up to the age of majority. Here for them their duty as a mother and obligation to the family and duty to protect one's people in the role of caretaker ruler became more important. They were like living satis - "duty bound". They stepped into these roles not because of their personal choice or their capabilities but out of necessity.

There are many instances in the Rajput history when women became queen-regents but not a single example showing that they succeeded as rulers in their own right, as a natural choice of their father or were designated as heir-apparents in absence of a male heir, although they were trained in horse riding, shooting and hunting.

1. Tod, 1971:501.

Motherly duties in different positions could be seen in the second sack of Chittor when the queen mother Jawaharbai fought to her death. Karmavati the mother of the infant-heir headed 13,000 females for Johar after sending the heir in safe hands and after sometime his nurse, Panna, sacrificed her own son to save Udai Singh. Here her duty towards her master becomes more important than towards her own son. This is an example of an extremely hostile situation but it set an example of a Rajput mother.

As a widow the Rājput queens in these stories either became satis or committed johan or accepted the role of regents to their sons, but they never opted for remarriage. Whenever they saw a chance of captivity or defeat, they ended their lives to prove the "heroism of character" of a Rajput woman. —

There is also an exceptional example of Mirabai¹, which does not fit in any of these roles. She refused to follow the Rajput ideals of honor, pride and decorum, breaking the norms of a most powerful Rajput royal family of the time (Chittor) by renouncing family and domestic life. She rejected her assigned duties as a wife, as a

1. Sangari 1990:1465-6.

widow opted for the life of a saint and became Krishna 'bhakti'. Although she is admired for her devotion for Krishna, she was never idealized. A fear of supernatural is associated with her since there are stories saying that she tried to 'sacrifice' herself when asked to do so by drinking poison, by jumping into a river but she survived them all.

These examples covering a period of more than nine hundred years shows the strong hold of the notions of valor, honor and self-sacrifice in the Rajput ethos. Although they are associated with times of adversity but their influence could not be denied in the later years. And, they set an example of feminine ideal for the Rajputs

These examples also emphasize a particular region i.e. Mewar or the Sesodia Rajputs, who consistently faced hostile threats. Probably that is why they are ranked highest in the Rajput clan hierarchy. And the notions related with the ideal type were/are adopted by the groups who claimed for the Rajput status or a higher ranking within the Rajput clan hierarchy. They started modelling themselves according to these Rajputs and moulded these ideals according to their own convenience.

The other parts of the chapter deals with these consequences such as hypergamy, female seclusion, female infanticide and female self-immolation.

II. HYPERGAMY:

Hypergamy, that is, "marrying up" refers to the marriage of a lower ranking group to a man of a higher ranking group. In a patriarchal system it ensures the father's status to the children born from this marriage. Rajput marriages are often taken as an example of hypergamy. The existence of a hypergamous system is attributed to the Rajputs ruler-warrior orientation. During the medieval period they accepted daughters from the conquered groups, but did not give them in return.

The Rajputs ordinarily observe the rules of caste endogamy and clan exogamy with preference for clan hypergamy. Within the Rajputs there is a high degree of internal differentiation due to their various power positions in the past, broadly "rulers" and "commoners". They had lineages of rajas and maharajas, the powerful ruling families; Thakurs or jagirdars and landowners under various land tenures. In the lowest level of hierarchy Rajput status sometimes merges with non-Rajputs-lower castes or semi-tribals.¹

The Rajputs do have a tendency of hypergamy but there is no strict distinction or recognition or uniform

1. Shah, A.M., 1982:10.

rule of clan hypergamy. In many areas there was territorial exogamy and the movement of brides in specific directions. Generally the Rajputs of the west (Rajasthan) are regarded as of purer blood and of a better standing than those of eastern India. There was a preference for and a tendency to give girls to western Rajputs. While the western Rajputs considered themselves of a higher status and did not give their daughters to the Rajputs of the eastern states.¹ The effect of this practice was a surplus of marriageable girls at the top and a shortage at the bottom of the hierarchy. In the western parts the problem was sorted out by the practice of polygyny among the aristocratic families, dowry and female infanticide.

The shortage of wives at the lower end of the hierarchy was solved by taking wives from castes below them and this helped the lower castes in improving their social status. Marriage alliances provided them with an easy entry into the Rajput group.

The Rajputs never followed strict rules of marriage. The royal marriages² provide no evidence to support either

1. Parry, 1979:219; Karve, 1968:125; Singh, K.B.K., 1988: Hazlehurst, 1968: .

2. Plunkett, 1973:64-80.

the hypergamous ranking of Rajput clans noted by Blunt (1931) or the sun-moon-fire ranking of the clans mentioned by Karve.¹ They also do not indicate any preference for the geographical direction a boy from the west and the girl from the east'. Stern² writes that the marriages of the big jagirdar families still offer some evidence of the hypergamous feature, in its principle as well as in application.

A common pattern in the royal marriages of Rajasthan was a ruler marrying related girls extended over many generations. e.g. Man Singh of Jaipur (1922-70) married the daughter of a Jodhpur ruler and subsequently her brother's daughter; Raghubir Singh of Bundi, 1889-1927, married three generations of girls from the Jodhpur royal family.

Among the (ex) ruling Rajput families their marriages served them many important political and dynastic functions. The cases of revenge were settled by creating marriage relations. A girl could be offered a token of submission and also be a focus for conflict. The most prominent one has been for purposes of political alliances.

1. Karve, 1968:166-7.

2. Stern, H., 1977:72.

e.g. Rajput-Mughal cooperation in the 16th and the 17th centuries were sealed by the marriages of Rajput girls to Mughal emperors but not vice-versa.

As polygyny existed among the ruling Rajputs, often after a high status marriage a ruler's subsequent marriages became something of a business proposition for both the sides. A ruler could make a hypergamous marriage without extravagance while collecting a substantial dowry and service from the girl's family for the privilege of an alliance with a ruling house. In the secondary marriages the degree of inferiority could be so great that sometimes the groom did not go personally to the bride's place for the marriage ceremony but sent his sword to represent him and the bride was escorted to her husband's house.

Polygyny also allowed the rulers to make hypergamous marriages with non-royal as well as with equal status families. In the case of their own daughters they adopted a different attitude - they had to be married at least to an equal status family and often they were married off on reciprocal basis.

In the Rajput marriages whether they followed strict hypergamy or not, no matter which class/rank they belonged to the most evident factor was that women were/are treated as an "object" of exchange. Among the royal families women were used for creating political alliances

and also for accepting political subordination. In such cases the marriages were not only intercaste but also inter-religion. In the middle ranges of nobility marriages were either with equal ranking clans for maintaining status or were with the high ranking clans.

Hypergamy is not so evident among the high status or 'established Rajputs' but is rather used by the groups who claim to be the Rajputs. e.g. Kanbis, Patidars; Pocock¹ writes that having acquired wealth through trading Patidars of Gujarat have been able to raise their caste rank by hypergamous marriages.

To a greater extent hypergamy is related to the Rajputization of non-Rajputs by providing brides to the lowest status Rajput clans. They were not simply matrimonial alliances but fulfilled many important political, economic and social functions.

Hypergamy affects the women's position in two different ways, when a woman is married off in a higher status family it, in fact, increases her status within her family and she does not lose contact with her family as it provides them an association with the high ranking group. But hypergamy could affect a woman's position

1. Pocock, 1972:190.

in her marital household in another way and put her at a double disadvantage. Firstly, she is from a 'lower' status family and secondly, her duties as wife and daughter-in-law assign her further 'lower' position in the family. This could result in her internalizing "low self-esteem" and subsequently a complete identification with her husband's family.

III. FEMALE SECLUSION:

The Rajput women were secluded by a series of restrictions placed on their physical movement outside the home and inside the household as a matter of their family honor. Purdah is the term generally used for secluding women from public to private sphere as a part of female modesty. It implies many things like covering of face 'curtain', 'veil' or 'ghunghat' and segregation of sexes with separate living spaces.

Purdah-practice is believed to have been adopted as a kind of defensive reaction at the time of Muslim invasions in order to protect their women, but probably some kind of seclusion has always existed as a part of etiquette to keep certain distance between the sex and with outsiders. It could be possible that the practice intensified and was institutionalized with the Muslim rule in India. The high castes and aristocratic families

and others followed it as a status symbol.

The Rajput women observed two types of purdah: First, purdah from outside world. They never ventured out in public although there are some individual cases when women ruled as regents and took part in battle, but the practice of secluding women remained the same. Purdah was even forced by the Rajput nobility. e.g. the Maharana of Udaipur deemed it a part of court etiquette and ordered his subjects that no women should come out in public in the presence of men and this was applicable on his household too. As a result Maharani of Udaipur was kept in strict purdah till 1947.¹

The second type of purdah was purdah within the household, with its different shades. One of them was separate apartments for men and women i.e. mardana and zenana: free mobility in each others' apartment was not possible. Their activities were conducted separately within their quarters. Only close male relatives could enter women's apartments, at night or during meal times, but not without prior announcement. Zenanas were closely guarded by the eunuchs. In fact, purdah was restrictive for both sexes.

1. Mehta, 1982:142.

Within the zenanas women were supposed to maintain decorum. 'Reserved', 'disciplined' and 'respectful conduct was expected of women, especially the daughter-in-laws. They were required to have full command over their gestures, language and proper dress in front of other female relatives. In spite of separate living quarters, women lacked privacy.

Among the Rajputs purdah was not only used as a means of enforcing sexual segregation but to maintain their exclusive status by secluding women into 'zenanas'. Inside the family it was a mark of respect for elders of both sexes. Purdah was ingrained as a part of feminine etiquette and a question of family honor. Moreover, it was restricted to upper strata women who could afford it. But segregation was also adopted by the groups aspiring for high caste status as a status symbol.

IV. FEMALE INFANTICIDE:

Another practice associated with the Rajputs and their high notions of honor and pride is female infanticide. There were no religious sanctions or sacrificial connotations behind this practice but it did exist, and to some extent, still exists, amongst some Rajput groups.

Reports and literature on female infanticide in 19th century India, mainly by British officers like Peggs J.

1830; Ludlow 1842; Wilkenson 1844; Col. Sutherland 1846, etc., reveals that the practice was prevalent in the north western parts especially among the Rajputs of Kutch and Rajasthan, Jats (Bharatpur, Rajasthan), Khatris of Punjab, Lewa Kanbis of Gujarat and also among the tribes like Mina (Rajasthan), Todas of Nilgiri Hills, Konds of Orissa.

It has been suggested¹ that female infanticide originated with Muslim invasions and later became a regular feature among the groups who claim to be the Rajputs. Other suggestion is that the Rajputs were completely uprooted from fertile plains of Ganga to the desert of Rajasthan, economically ruined in new environment, cut off from the rest of the community. Their haughty pride in their origin, poverty, political upheavals resulted in this "selfish"/inhuman custom. They preferred murder rather than running the risk of having to make inferior alliance for their daughters or the disgrace of their remaining single in case they may not be able to find a suitable husband for them or were unable to provide a large sum as dowry. Whatever reason or emergency they may have for adopting the practice of female infanticide they continue to practice it for their convenience. For

1. Fuller, 1900:148-9.

instance, Chareja Rajputs of Kathiawar, Gujarat¹ were said to have entered the area of Kutch in the past as invading tribes from Sind and they became the rulers, developed a strong rank hierarchy among them which led to sharp distinction between a superior and an inferior lineage. Their class-consciousness, pride in the nobility of their lineage again caste-endogamy restricted them to marry their daughters in inferior clans.

However, the essence of the custom of female infanticide among the Rajputs lies in their system of hyper-gamous marriages, notions of honor and 'superficial supremacy'. But extravagance poverty plus high status make the situation worse.² It seems that the problem was confined to a limited group of Rajputs with excessive pride and little means to support it.³

1. Walker & Willoughby, 1856:135.

2. e.g. Chauhans of Mainpuri (U.P.) were reduced to poverty due to extravagance and started killing their daughters. See Miller, 1987:19-20; Panigrahi, 1972; Tod, 1971:506.

3. e.g. The Bhatti Rajputs of Jaisalmer (Rajasthan) considered themselves to be the most superior Rajput clan and are reported to be practising it for centuries. Even the sex-ratio of population in the Jaisalmer district is 35:65. The methods used are strangling, placing a heavy bag of sand or salt on the girl's face or giving her a heavy dose of opium. See Dhawan Shally, 30.9.88, The Times of India.

It is often said that female infanticide was neither practised nor encouraged by the rulers of Jaipur and Jodhpur.¹ It could be true but prevalence or non-prevalence of the practice among big ruling houses was difficult to know because of their close system of zenanas and furthermore a daughter's birth was never announced or celebrated like that of a son. Another possibility could be their relationship with charans who were supposed to know their every action.

Charan-Bhat and Rajput alliance was important in the extension of the practice. Because heavy demands were made by charans and Bhats during marriages and there was fear that if their claims remained unsatisfied they would write satires against them and this would have brought bad name to their family. For example, the Thakur of Asoph (Jodhpur) at the time of his daughter's marriage, made a vow that he would make good all the demands of the charans, made upon him for a year. When every pie of his belonging was exhausted, a charan demanded his head which he is said to have (Rajput Dharma!!), at once, served from his body himself. From that time onwards the descendants of the house began destroying their daughters.²

1. Saxena, S.K., 1975:5.

2. Saxena, S.K., 1975:5.

Female infanticide is either practised by the groups who claim for the Rajput status or the groups which faced challenge to their Rajput status, often due to economic reasons. In both cases it is obvious that women are used to gain or maintain their status.

V. FEMALE-IMMOLATION:

In the medieval period Rajput women, especially of the royal families, practised two types of self-immolation. One was the self-immolation of a widow on the funeral pyre of her husband, known as sati and the other was self-immolation in anticipation of her husband's or her menfolk's death, known as Johar.

Sati and Johar were seen as the 'feminine' counterparts of a 'veer' (brave) Rajput man. While a woman was supposed to die for her husband, a man was not expected to die for his wife. If a man died while pursuing the 'Rajput-dharma' it was the wife's duty or 'swami-dharma' to follow her husband.

a) SATI:

'Sati' refers to a widow burning herself on the funeral pyre of her husband. This act is described as 'sahamarna' (dying together), 'sahagamana' (going together) and anuvarohana (ascending the pyre). The causes behind

'Sati' are associated with the notions of honor, idealized relationship between husband and wife, idea of 'virtuous' wife, hardships of widowhood, restriction on widow re-marriage and political and economic suppression.

Incidences of sati were rather local and limited to certain groups, e.g. in Bengal to the high class Brahmins and in Rajasthan, especially among the Rajputs and the Marathas who claimed Rajput descent. Among Rajputs of north India rites of sati seemed to be influenced by and, to an extent, was related to the institution of hypergamy and "the incidental phenomena of polygyny at the top of the hypergamous hierarchy."¹ But in Bengal, according to some authorities, it was related to the widow inheritance right under the Dayabhaga system of law. While in Rajasthan economic gains were not important. The emphasis was on family honor, self-respect and sacrifice. And thus it narrowed down to the martial custom.

The association of sati with a particular region or group or notion of sacrifice or honor seems to be time bound and circumstance specific. There is a tendency to associate sati with Rajputs, and sati in this context, i.e. Rajputs, is always associated with sacrifice as part of

1. Sharma, A., 1988:xi.

one's wifely duties. However, there are other factors too. For example, in the Jaipur region there were very few instances of sati during medieval and colonial time, which could be attributed to the favourable political conditions since there was no fear of Mughal invasions or British suppression like that of Bengal. Political stability gave them a sense of future security and they did not enforce the custom of sati on their womenfolk. But the case of Udaipur and Jodhpur regions was the just opposite and so also was the frequency of Sati and Johar.

It was not only a counter custom to show valour equivalent to their menfolk or to save the honor of their family. It was also influenced by the options left for a widow (fear of future uncertainty and social identification of a married woman through her husband).

Taboos related to widowhood also negated the prospective fear of death. Widowhood was a state of 'perpetual mourning' and the widow was treated as 'a symbol of inauspiciousness and ill luck'. Moreover the cause of her husband's death was attributed to her sin in the previous birth. And the belief that the rite of sati would wash her 'sins' and the responsibility of her widowhood and a respectable position after death. The lack of 'suitable male-protection', absence of honorable and independent social role for a widow, and "the value system built up to uphold female chastity

(satitva)"¹ were also the cause behind 'sati'.

Furthermore, deification and the hope for mythical power if one commits sati probably gave a widow a feeling of satisfaction that at least after her death she will be respected and that her act will bring honor to her natal and conjugal families.

The maintenance of a widow is a responsibility of her husband's family and "once widowed she is of no future value to her in-laws as a potential bearer of sons."² Such devalued widowhood probably left her with little choice and women opted for self-immolation.

In medieval times 'sati' was justified as a measure to save women from disgrace. Later it became a part of tradition, a 'voluntary' act performed out of her wifely devotion for her husband. The Brahmins gave it a religious sanction and the Charan and Bhat gave it a heroic valor suitable for Rajput history.

Whether it was sati or Johar, one cannot justify it by saying that it was a voluntary act. There always was social, political or an economic compulsion. Social admiration and the fear of the unforeseen helped in a

1. Stein, D., 1978:263.

2. Stein, D., 1978:263.

gradual legitimization of 'sati'. Distorted interpretation of scriptures, the question of protecting women, the contact with some tribal and cognate cultures (believed in the comfort of dead man by burying him with possessions including wife) and the hope to reunite with her dead husband also helped in the perpetuation of 'Sati'.

As 'sati' was related to the upper castes, sanskritizing lower castes also adopted it as a status symbol. Association of caste with purity of their women and sati with 'chaste wife' helped the lower castes in improving their social standing. A single incidence of sati was enough to bring honor to their family.

Thus the idea of self-sacrifice in the Rajput ethos gave rise to the notion of 'sati' as an ideal of womanhood and it was reinforced through religious conformity, glorification, and the respect society gave to it. The incidences of sati are not so important but significant is the use of woman and her sacrifice for the maintenance of family honor and prestige, for improving caste ranking and the treatment of widows as useless.

b) JOHAR:

The word 'Johar' means display of courage or an act of bravery. Johar is associated with the Rajput idea of death, when the women threw themselves into the flames while their men fought to death for the preservation

of their honor.

Johar refers to a situation where the wife or wives and other women immolated themselves often communally, after or in anticipation of the husband's expected death. During the medieval period Johar was prevalent among the Rajput royal families. It was not exclusively related with the husband's death but also included kinsmen and allies who were facing a threat or danger from outside. The basic idea behind the Johar was to ensure the preservation of honor during the war time when "the first token of victory was probably the captive wives of the foeman," and women preferred death rather than fall into the hands of a conquerer. For example, Hamir Dev Chauhan of Ranthambore died fighting Alaudin Khilzi after the Rajput ladies threw themselves into the flames. Similarly Madni Rai of Chanderi prepared Johar while facing Babar.¹ The most gruesome were the three sacks of Chittor, in the first Padmini committed Johar with 16,000 women when Alaudin's victory was certain. In the second sack 13,000 female followed Karnavati, when Bahadurshah attacked on Chittor. And at the time of third sack 8,000 women immolated themselves in an answer to Akber's invasion. When Jaisalmer fell to the Muslims

1. Dutta, 1988:10-1.

24,000 women opted for Johar.¹

In the above cases 'Johar' not only included women of the royal families but all the women, infants and children male and female, residing in the palace at the time of the sack. It was usually a mutual decision that both men and women would wear 'saffron robes' and men would go for fighting while women would commit Johar. Even valuables were destroyed. All the Johar incidents show that the practice was adopted in the wars against Muslims when victory was not possible.

The Johar adopted at the time of extreme adversity probably gave rise to individual cases of sati as an ideal of self-sacrificing woman for the family honor. The ideal of johar also perpetuated the idea of women's dependence on their kinsmen for their protection.

1. Tod, 1971:215, 251, 261.

CHAPTER III

PROCESS OF MASCULINE AND FEMININE IDENTITY FORMATION IN THE RAJPUT ETHOS

This chapter is aimed at finding out the sources of masculine and feminine identity formation in the Rajput ethos. What was the type of system that existed, and that still exists, in the Rajput sub-culture and how it affects the formation of masculine and feminine identity would be studied. Since the Rajputs have a long history as rulers of north-western parts of India, they have developed a strong communal system with gerontocratic authority, primogeniture inheritance and separate spaces for living i.e., zenana and mardana. This practice was and still is not so common among the other castes.

This chapter is based primarily on the studies done in the field of personality formation, socialization and family system among the Rajputs. Important among them are those of Steed (1955), Carstairs (1957), Minturn and Lambert (1964), Minturn and Hitchcock (1966) and Rudolph & Rudolph (1984).

Every culture has its own particular way of assigning social roles. Adapting to a specific role is not inborn, and there are certain social forces that help in the process of masculine or feminine identity formation.

Important among them are name, history, origin, religion, social conditioning family type, family relationships, authority system within a family, rules of marriage and kinship organisation.¹

The word 'identity' denotes a person's sense of orientation, reflecting his 'self' and 'a self-system'.² Identity formation is linked with incorporation of standards of conduct, i.e. ideal type of role behaviour, expectations of society or a group from an individual by virtue of being its member. Identity provides a person with a sense of belongingness and a sense of pride by being part of that group or society. It also involves a notion of maintaining one's exclusiveness.

In the context of masculine/feminine identity formation identity could be associated with the "mechanism" through which an individual internalizes gender roles as his or her personal traits. It sometimes involves avoidance of cross sex models or, in other words, orientation towards the same sex model.³

1. Mead, M., 1935:311; Erikson, E., 1968:61-4.

2. Erikson, E., 1968:208-12.

3. Erikson, 1965:1-26.

The traits of being masculine or feminine depend upon the intensity of identification. It has been suggested that the stronger the identification with one's members of the same sex the sharper the differentiation between sex roles as masculine and feminine. Identity formation comes to a decisive crisis in youth because of the break in continuity. It is usually accepted that a woman's early experience in growing has a continuity. A man's experience lacks this continuity; he may be wrenched from the domestic sphere in which he spent his early years, by means of a series of rituals or initiations that teach him to distrust or despise the world of his mother, to seek his manhood outside home. Men are identified with and through those groups of kin or peer that cut across domestic units: and are ranked in hierarchies of achievement.

However, for a girl, in India, identity problem arises when she leaves her parental family to a stranger's family as a bride. It is here that she belongs and so must conform to the norms of that new house in her various roles as daughter-in-law, sister-in-law, etc. Women are usually identified and symbolically associated with nature, their status is derived from their stage in the life cycle, from their biological functions, from their,

"inner space"¹, capability of bearing offspring.

I. HISTORY:

The history of a group and the code of conduct derived from that history is a most important factor in its identity formation. Although family is the primary unit from which a person derives his/her identity but family relations are always governed by the value system held by that group. In India² it is the caste system that rules and regulates all social relations.

Since the Rajputs have a long history as rulers and warriors, for them 'being a Rajput' and following the Rajput code of conduct is the most pervasive force behind masculine/feminine identity formation.³ Being a Rajput was not simply a "historical genesis and genealogy rather it was a claim to political status or a rationalization of political alliance."⁴ And continuity of this association through clan system and bardic tradition became important for their existence as a Rajput.

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1. Erikson, 1968:261-94.
 2. See Kakar, 1978:122-3.
 3. Hitchcock, 1958:10-17.
 4. Fox, 1971:22.

As the Rajputs have a tradition of tracing their genealogical history usually from ancient epic heroes or kings, there came into existence a class of people who became professional genealogists, e.g. Bhats, Barot and Charans. Their services were very important among the Rajputs because it was the only way through which a Rajput could claim and validate his position as a Rajput.¹

Another important factor was their hierarchically arranged lineage and clan system. The primogeniture inheritance system among the ruling families gave rise to less powerful lineages within a clan. Also, within a clan there arose an inferior section formed of the offspring of women of other inferior castes, who did not have the membership of their father's clan.² Clan ranking was important in arranging marriages especially of the daughter and efforts were made towards marrying her into an equal status or higher status clan.

The history enforced by the system of clans and bardic tradition helps towards forming an ideal type image of a Rajput man and a woman, which in turn provides an effective model for identification.

1. Shah & Shroff, 1958:263.

2. Russell, 1969:418; Plunkett, 1973:64.

II. EXTENDED FAMILY:

Extended family was the most-prevalent form of family among the high castes and has always been associated with 'high status'. Extended family is also referred as a 'status group' where each member has a definite position with assigned duties and behaviour codes which are fixed by convention.¹ Identification with the extended family or caste group has been so strong that every action is directed towards the maintenance of family honor and prestige, especially among the Rajputs, as a result every familial relationship is influenced and affected by the family norms. What one does his life style, his mode of action is usually seen as a product of family norms and values, rarely as an individual effort.² Within the family it is the network of familial relationships, like father-son, mother-son/daughter, brother-sister, elder brother-younger brother, husband-wife and master-servant, from where a person first derives his/her identity and decides what he/she would like to be. Here his/her social character as masculine/feminine is formed.

Feudal Rajput households used to have an elaborate membership including parents, grandparents, uncles and

1. Karve, 1968:136.

2. Kakar, 1978:121.

their families, brother and their families servants, etc. Authority and obedience were the most evident themes in every relationship.

Family Relationships

a) Father-Son:

'Father figure' for a Rajput was always the authority figure, the head of the family, who could be father, grandfather, uncle or elderbrother, who at the same time demanded respect and obedience from the younger ones. Consequently, this helped in the development of a very restrained and formal relationship between father and son. Furthermore, open expression of affection was avoided in the presence of grandparents and even as a child one was supposed to show respect. Such obligatory suppression of affection and its expression resulted in detachment and an obligatory relationship between the father and son.

The growing up of a Rajput male involves two opposite things: one is the suppression of expressive behaviour in front of elders, and the other an approval for 'action', 'expression' and 'aggression'. In this duality a child tends to identify with the latter, where impulse finds an easy outlet. Father-figure stands for 'self-control', 'disciplining of the passions and emotions', for everything that is formal, restrained and correct.¹ In the case of

1. Steed, 1955:135-6; Carstairs, 1971:112.

the elder son the father usually adopts a more strict attitude towards him, further straining the relationship. While the elder son grows up under the tension of continuity of his family line and his future authoritative role, the younger sons feel they are without any economic, political and social status.

Studies by Steed (1955), Carstairs (1957) and Minturn & Lambert (1964) highlight how the Rajput parents adopt a very restrained attitude towards their own children not showing their affection so as not to spoil them. Such social constraints restrict a child from identifying with his parents. Thus, a very formal relationship between the father and the son develops.

b) Mother-Son/Mother-daughter:

Mother-son ties which have been emphasised¹ in the context of the Indian families do not seem to be the same for the Rajputs. For them it is a relationship more or less of obligation and duty. Although as a child one spends more time in the company of one's mother and other female relatives the relationship lacks personal intimacy. At the same time a woman's status within the family increases by being a mother of a son: she derives

1. For example, see Nandy, 1980.

her identity and authority through motherhood. It is evident from Amersingh's diary¹ that his mother did not have any power or influence over him and her authority increased over him, after he got married, via her control over his wife.

Minturn and Lambert (1964), in their study 'The Rajput Mothers of Khalapur', reported that the "Rajput mothers are less warm and more hostile to boys than to girls. They also tend to use frequent and intense physical punishment for boys rather than girls." Their suggestion that a "culturally sanctioned preference for boys requires of women a kind of self-degradation which they resent,"² seems to be one sided. There is little possibility of a mother's "coldness" towards her son as an expression of indirect hostility towards her husband in a culture like the Rajputs where so much emphasis has been given to a son and a woman's moral duty towards her husband as bearer of a son to him. Moreover, for reasons like future security, her prestige within the family and higher social status assigned to a male is more likely to force her preference for boys rather than for a girl.

However, a mothers' cold behaviour towards the boys could be a part of 'training the boys to their future roles

1. Rudolph & Rudolph, 1984:

2. Minturn & Lambert, 1964:232-3.

as upholders of the warrior tradition'. Less involvement and overt coldness towards one's own children is a common feature of the extended family where in the presence of other elderly women a mother remains a secondary caretaker. There seems to be very little correspondence between the mother's preference for a girl or a boy and her behaviour.

Moreover a girl is usually treated as a temporary member of a family; no expectations as such are related to her in her role as a daughter. As a result, there are less chances of conflict between mother-daughter, father-daughter and brother-sister relationships.

It seems that Minturn and Lambert have also overlooked the view held by the Rajputs that pre-pubertal girls are like goddesses and mothers' treatment of their daughter could be a result of this idea. Nonetheless, having a son or not having one had a greater significance for a woman, for polygyny was prevalent among the princely and feudal Rajputs and, a wife's status in zenanas was influenced by her being mother of a boy. Otherwise there were also chances of her husband's negligence and another marriage. So being mother of a boy, became an important agent through which she could prove her worth and contribute to her husband's family.

c) Brother-Sister:

Among the Rajputs it is the brother-sister relationship which has some emotional undertones, and where formality is relaxed. The brother-sister concept is not limited to sisters and cousins but all the girls of the same generation of one's lineage and clan, who are ineligible as marriage partners are regarded as sisters. Sometimes the girls of one's own village are treated as sisters. Moreover there is also a tradition of fictitious brother-sister relationship.

A brother is supposed to extend his life long support to his sister. And the festivals like 'Rakhi' and 'Bhai-Duj' are reminders of the idea that it is a brother's duty to protect his sister. The warm relationship between a brother-sister can be seen as an extension of the mother-father persona. Since the 'protector' value is attached to a brother's role and in case of an elder-sister, she sometimes takes the role of mother while the mother is busy with other things. Moreover, early years spent together and an absence of a parent-figure in the extended families makes the bond stronger.

After a sister's marriage the relationship becomes more significant, especially in the case of hypergamy, which is/was common among the Rajputs. Hypergamy gives

a brother a chance to associate himself with a higher ranking clan than his own, which he would certainly like to maintain as it increases his status in his own group. There are many instances when the brothers were given high posts by their ruler brother-in-laws. e.g. Raja Mansingh of Jaipur was a commander-in-chief of Akbar's army.

To a sister, the brother's association gives her a sense of security in time of need, and a link with her parent's family. There is/was a custom that the brother goes to his sister's place to invite her and escort her to her parents house and a status value was attached to it. One more reason behind the strong brother-sister tie could be the absence of a challenge on property rights from a sister as a Rajput woman could not inherit her father's property. All this contributes to a woman's peripheral membership and treatment of her as a guest in her parents' family.

The idea of adopted brother (rakhi-band bhai) also reflects a woman's dependent identity, that a woman can only be someone's daughter, sister, wife and mother, i.e. she has no identity of her own as a woman.

Thus it seems that the brother-sister relationship coloured with duty and emotion further enhanced the formation of a 'protector' image of a man and a 'dependent' woman.

d) Husband-Wife:

The husband and wife relationship was also of duty and obligation. As is evident from the studies of Steed, Carstairs and Rudolph & Rudolph, the extended family separate quarters of living and gerontocratic authority system gave a little chance for the development of a friendly relationship between the husband and wife. Since marriages were arranged, set by elders sometimes not even consulting those who were to get married, marriages were many a times mismatched. In the relationship there always was an anxiety due to desire for male progeny.

The 'ideal type' expected the wife to sacrifice for her husband and his family's honor. She was to adopt a regent's role in her husband's absence but never opt for another marriage. And it was the husband's duty to protect her and so she was kept in seclusion and not allowed to work outside the home. Within the family it was her husband's position which determined her authority and status. If she was a widow she was not supposed to return to her parents' house permanently. Her leaving would indicate that her husband's family was not fulfilling their 'responsibility', emphasizing further that a wife's first loyalty is to her husband's house and that it should be lifelong.

All these seem to contribute in the formation of a feminine ideal of duty-bound, self-sacrificing, understanding and devoted wife.

e) Servants:

The Rajput extended families were not limited to family members but servants and their families were also included in it. Sometimes the communication between the family members was dependent on them. A large number of the servants and other associates like charans and Bhats contributed in the formation and reinforcement of the ideal type Rajput image. The number of servants assigned to a person was an indicator of status within the family.¹ In such a case the interaction with the servants and their submissive attitude towards their master could have been the first lesson for a Rajput of authority and subservience, where he was supposed to extend his protection to them and at the same time demand obedience and loyalty from them.

III. ZENANA AND MARDANA:

A separate living space for men and women was common among the Rajputs and was known as zenana and mardana - 'zan' is a Persian word for woman and zenana is the women's

1. Rudolph & Rudolph, 1984:190; Minturn & Hitchcock, 1966:18.

secluded apartment. Keeping a large zenana was a status symbol during feudal times. Zenana of a Rajput prince used to consist of Maharani, ranis and rakhels (concubines) and the largeness of a zenana was a sign of Rajput virility. The internal politics of zenana was quite important, conflicts existed between the ranis, who were from different rival factions, with their own group of relatives and servants. The ranis with sons and the mother of the "heir-apparent" have often affected the relations between the Rajput principalities.¹ Women were not allowed to move out of their quarters without a "proper" escort and even the men's free movement in the zenanas was restricted. Eunuchs were used as security guards of zenanas. The secrets of the zenanas were in their hands as they were the announcer of a child's birth and of the heir-to-be.

Such a strict system of segregating the sexes became a part of the Rajput pride even for a "commoner" and keeping women in seclusion became a part of their culture symbolizing a higher social status. These separate spaces for living are very significant in the process of masculine and feminine identity formation. A male child had

1. Stern, R.W., 1988:6-8.

to make a move, out of zenana during his childhood while a girl stayed on in the zenana, in the company of women, making it easier for her to identify with her mother. As a result without any difficulty or protest she internalized her 'feminine' role. It seems that due to this smooth process of identification the Rajput women developed weak 'ego boundaries' and so later in life they did not protest against any kind of authority and were able to identify completely with their husbands and their families.

At the same time, a Rajput male had to make a difficult transition in identity when he shifted from the zenana to the mardana, usually between the age of 5 and 10. And here he faced stricter discipline for conformity to the familial and social standards, he was also exposed to his future roles and 'masculine' values.¹ The Rajput ethos emphasises valor, honor and self-sacrifice; conforming to these ideals, the Rajputs, instead, become aggressive, and violent. At the same time the seclusion of women, became the symbol of honor and prestige for them, an expression of their manliness.

IV. PRIMOGENITURE:

Another important factor which influenced the Rajput masculine and feminine identity formation was

1. Carstairs, 1971:112; Minturn & Lambert, 1964:234-5; Kakar, 1978:126-7.

their inheritance system ruled by primogeniture. According to this rule it was the eldest son who inherited the family title and a major portion of his father's property, usually eighty per cent, while the younger sons were granted only the leftover twentieth part of the property. However, this rule of senior preference was not prevalent among the brothers of a junior lineage.¹ Moreover, the women were completely excluded from inheritance. Their share in the father's property was whatever was given to them at the time of marriage as a gift (dowry) which used to go into the hands of their in-laws. Women had come to accept the system as a part of their family decorum. This is evident in their role as regents to their son or adopted son.

The law of primogeniture led to differential upbringing of each child depending on his seniority and sex. The important distinction was between the eldest son and the younger sons. In view of their future roles and responsibilities fathers tended to be more strict and demanding towards their elder sons compared to the younger ones. A father's higher expectations from his eldest son contributed to their strained relationship.

1. Steed, 1955:117; Carstairs, 1971:113; Rudolph & Rudolph, 1984:226.

Discriminative inheritance caused tension between brothers. The younger brothers and their families were supposed to obey and respect the elder brother since his accession to the family head endowed him with authority and the responsibility of family survival. But another dimension of the relationship was of mutual mistrust and a fear of challenge from younger brothers for those who were in power position. There are examples when the rulers have preferred to appoint non-Rajputs as their advisers and ministers in place of their own brothers and kinsmen. This tendency gave a chance of becoming a member of the Rajput warrior class to other non-Rajputs.¹ And this was a challenge to the younger brother's Rajput status.

The younger brothers were not only deprived of authority and power but also of wealth. In such a condition, within a generation or two, they faced a kind of an identity crisis because now it was only through their association with a particular clan and membership to a lineage that they could derive their identity. Probably in such a condition they became more particular about observing the Rajput 'dharma', became fanatic about their

1. Stern, R., 1988, 57.

'ruler-warrior' orientation and more loyal towards family affiliation. In a way they faced a situation of decreasing Rajputness, with the lower ranking of their lineage, brides coming from further lower ranking clans, polygamy which was a sign of Rajput status and virility became increasingly unaffordable. These loosening grounds of Rajputness probably made them more sensitive to 'honor' and 'prestige'.

Thus, the Rajput law of primogeniture resulted in imposing the authority of elders, tense relationship between brothers and father and the domination of men over women by depriving them of inheritance and making them further dependent.

V. GERONTOCRATIC AUTHORITY:

The Rajputs were not only patriarchal but their authority system within the family was based on gerontocratic rule. A great emphasis was placed upon obeying elders especially the authority figure and there was an elaborate system of 'proper behaviour' like forms of greeting, code of address, ways of taking position etc. Children were expected, from an early age, to show their respect and obedience towards their elders.

Independence or adulthood or maturity in the western sense does not seem to be applicable to the Rajputs.

In the highly hierarchical system of the Rajputs adulthood was not related to age or independent decision making power. In the presence of elders, a junior was always a 'child', a rather submissive and obedient person as a mark of respect for the elders.

In the identity formation the age of a person is important but more important is his seniority in the family, whether one is the first born son and inheritor of the family fortune etc. For a woman it depends on her life stages, as a daughter, wife, mother and mother-in-law not on her being a first born or on her age. As a wife her seniority and authority depends on her husband's position in the family. In the case of polygyny it was always the first wife, and that too from a proper marriage, who was considered to be the senior most. Even if she was not the mother of the 'heir-apparent' it was she who became the queen-regent, in case of a minor heir.

It seems that gerontocratic authority system induced among the Rajputs a passive acceptance to the authorities like father, elder brother, head of the family, the ruler, husband or the Rajput code of conduct, this is also evident in their idea to taking 'revenge'.

These five sections of the chapter seem to suggest that in the Rajput extended family 'identity ideal' is

diffused in the presence of relatives and complex relationships. Firstly, because of a large number of family members, servants and other allies with their assigned statuses and duties. Secondly, separate quarters for men and women and thirdly, differential upbringing between the first born son and other sons and daughters. In such a situation a child tends to derive its identity from the membership to a particular family, clan, lineage and caste. Since affective relationship like that of father or mother do not provide a proper model for identification, the authority figure too remains affectively distant and impersonal a figure to obey.

All the Rajput familial relationships were such that nobody stood out as an ideal identity figure. Affective relationships were more or less of a formal kind and lacked intensity. In such a situation probably what one could aim at and learn from were the shared ideals and values and that for them was the Rajputhood or the Rajput status. Thus a child's identity formation began with the incorporation of values related to the Rajput code of conduct. In effect, a person's 'manliness' or 'womanliness' lay in becoming a 'good Rajput', by following the Rajput code of conduct.

CONCLUSION

This study with its major themes of gender, caste and change suggests that caste norms are the most binding factors in the formation of masculine and feminine identities. And if a caste or a group has a history of social, political and economic dominance then it also provides^a model for imitation to those groups and castes who aspire for higher social political and economic status. Further, this sort of imitation and emulation which could be a distorted form of the 'actual type', helps in the perpetuation of the stereotype notions of masculinity and femininity.

As an answer to the questions raised in the Introduction, it is quite evident that masculinity is not constructed against femininity or vice-versa, in the Rajput ethos. Ethnically there is no difference between the Rajput ideal type for male and female. The kind of values upheld by a Rajput by being a Rajput man does not differ from what a Rajput female upholds. But the process of identification with the Rajput ideal type and their social system of extended family, gerontocratic authority, primogeniture inheritance, makes all the difference. That is, it has different repercussions on men and women. For example, the high notions

of 'honor', 'valor', 'self-sacrifice', 'revenge', 'loyalty' and 'service' apply equally to its male and female members but they have different effect and outcomes on male and female roles. As there is no fundamental difference in the values regarding male and female, the gender roles are not diffuse among the Rajputs. In other words, the role-responsibilities of both sexes are different but they share the same values.

The Rajputs do not associate femininity with the 'softer side of human nature', and feminine characteristics with 'fragility', 'passivity', 'emotional weakness' and 'timidity'. For them women are as brave as their men and they have equal responsibility in protecting family honor. As is evident in the 'Rajput ideal type' that the influence of a woman in the formation of the Rajput ideal type of male was of no less importance. Her expectations, as sister, wife, mother from male members of family reinforced the ideal of a martial courageous and self-sacrificing Rajput man. For a Rajput man his masculinity lies in upholding the Rajput notions of honor, valor and self-sacrifice and this itself shows that a person is a 'man'. The same is true for a Rajput female, i.e. that her 'womanliness' consists in following the Rajput code of conduct.

The ruler-warrior orientation and occupation in the earlier times helped in segregation of the sexes

in the sense of separate living spaces: the men's world became synonymous with 'public' and the women's with 'private'. This separation gave little chance of interaction between the sexes; as a result notions of masculinity and femininity became two separate conceptions although ethically there is no conflict and difference between the Rajput male and female ideal type. At the same time, separate spaces of living confined a woman to 'domesticity' and enforced a man's 'extra-domestic' activities, as well as his 'protector' role. It seems that for women the notion of 'self-sacrifice' became equal to her sacrifice to the wishes of her husband and his family, leading to a woman's lower and secondary status.

Separate spaces of living not only confined a woman to her household but also gave rise to the notions of 'controlled', 'chaste', 'pure', 'vulnerable' as feminine ideals. These also were perceived as 'moral standards' for a woman of high social status. These notions have been adopted by the 'sanskritizing' and 'Rajputizing' groups.

The Rajput ethos is essentially the same for both male and females but when it comes to the question of 'social power' and 'dominance' it is always a man who

occupies them. The social system of the Rajputs was such that it enforced the 'protector' role to man and 'dependent' status to woman as mark of high social status, e.g. the Rajput law of inheritance resulted in imposing the authority of elders tense relationship between brothers and father and domination of men over women by depriving them of inheritance and making them further dependent. But the word 'dominance' in the sense, as a masculine characteristic or trait, is not applicable on the Rajputs. Because, the Rajput ideas of loyalty obligation, service and commitment to various pledges have a different set of values and outcomes on men roles as compared to 'dominance' in the 'western' sense.

What is masculine/feminine for a Rajput male/female do not seem to be an exclusive trait to one and prohibited to the other because the 'ideal' code of conduct is essentially the same for a male and a female.

Since masculinity/femininity is not seen as another completely different set of traits then the question is not applicable on the Rajputs that "masculinity is more important to men then femininity to women." What is important for both man and woman is to fulfil their duties as a Rajput in their respective roles as a father, brother, son, servant, family head or the ruler, daughter, sister,

wife and mother. e.g. it was a matter of honor for the Rajput men to protect their women from any kind of disgrace. At the same time it was their women's duty to save their men from dishonor. It seems, to avoid dishonor, women were controlled, secluded from public life - put under the strict purdah marriage of one's daughter into a suitably high ranking clan became a rule involving a man's honor, giving rise, in turn, to practices like female seclusion, female immolation, dowry, female infanticide, etc. And these practices were adopted by the groups who aspired for the Rajput status.

If one compares the Rajput notions of masculinity and femininity with the western traditional notions of masculinity and femininity there seem to be a few similarities like 'physical prowess', 'courage', 'protection', 'aggression', 'violence' as masculine qualities and association of 'dependence', 'seclusion' with femininity. But in the Rajput ethos the notions of honor, valor and self-sacrifice were so strong, important and marked that they completely change the meanings of the few similarities between the two cultures. It would be better if one looks at the Rajput notions of masculinity and femininity in their particularity rather than comparing them to some other pre-conceived conceptions.

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