Caste is the basis of the Indian (Hindu) social system and there are different role-models and value systems for different castes. Therefore, one cannot generalize regarding masculine and feminine 'traits' in Indian society without treating each caste group separately because every group gives different meanings to masculinity and femininity. The traits that appear to be important for one group may not be so for the other. Moreover, on the normative level each caste group, every individual in different life stages (ashramas), 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 age, sex and occupation.

The main purpose of the study is to give a comparative account of the social construction of masculinity and femininity among the three upper caste groups, i.e., Brahmins, Rajputs and Banias in the city of Jaipur in Rajasthan. The focus is on how these notions are manifested in these caste groups and how they affect society in general.

The study also focuses on the powerful social expectations men/women face by virtue of being Brahmin/Rajput/Bania
male/female, the prevalent cultural beliefs about personality characteristics and masculine/feminine gender appropriate behaviour. The study also investigates:

i. the process of identity formation as masculine or feminine;

ii. the reproductions of the notions of masculinity and femininity;

iii. the process of conformity with the ideal type of role behaviour vis-a-vis gender-roles; and

iv. the consequences of the sex-role differentiation among the upper castes.

The emphasis in the study is on comparison of upper because most of the existing studies are either ison between higher castes and lower castes1 or between individual caste/community studies.2

A comparison between the 'high caste' groups is quite important because all these three caste groups enjoy, more or less, high social, political and economic status. Nonetheless, such a similarity of status does not make this


`elite group' of society a homogeneous group. There seems to be a marked difference in the value system of each individual caste. At the same time, a comparison between the high caste and the low caste shows the contrast due to economic and social deprivations.

Here caste (jati) is not taken as a rigid system, but rather it refers to the changing aspects of the society, 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 notions regarding men and women are persistent and are perpetuated in our social system? Another 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 confirm the traditional roles assigned to men and women, or to reject or modify them? There is literature\(^3\) suggesting that with the social process like `Sanskritization', subjugation and seclusion of women increase in the sense that greater constraints are placed on women. Women are even used as means for achieving higher social status.

The focus is on three caste communities, i.e., Brahmins, Rajputs and Banias. These have been chosen particularly because they were endowed with high social and ritual status, political position and economic power in this region. There has always been a tendency to follow the 'elite' group of society by the lower status groups in the hope of achieving higher social status. 4

There are also evidences when members of the 'twice born' castes imitated the other locally dominant varnas/jatis. S.K. Srivastava 5 indicates "Kshatriyaization" of Brahmins when they became the landowning class or the zamindars as 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 6 through the census of 1931 officially changed their name to Patidars, claimed Kshatriya status and adopted Rajput customs. However, with the declining dominance and power of Rajputs, they are shifting from Kshatriya to Vaishya affiliation, and claiming to be

Banias. As business is the preferred occupation in Gujarat the Bania caste enjoys high prestige, so people are more prone to emulate the Vaishya model.

Such an emulation does affect gender roles. Upwardly mobile groups usually imitate the expected type of man and woman of the group, because identification with a 'reference group' means not only the adoption of specific customs allowed but also their personality traits. And there are evidences showing that these processes are helping in the maintenance of stereotyped gender roles.

Another important reason for the present study, is that these castes have a different sets of values for their members and regulate the conduct of their members accordingly. A Brahmin is supposed to discipline his life-style. He is expected to be more 'ritual-directed' and 'purity-focused' than the other caste groups. Brahmins are not supposed to strive for 'mundane' purposes like power and money and they were expected to be priests, teachers and advisors to the rulers.

A Rajput is supposed to be brave, loyal and self-sacrificing. 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". Banias give importance to the same ideal values as Brahmins but are taught in practice to earn money above everything. And they are known for their business skills. Banias who hail from Rajasthan, later known as 'the Marwaris' are the foremost business and industrialist community in India, and their success in business has been attributed to their caste based co-operation and joint family system.

Scope of the Study:

Most of the research work on caste and gender in India has emphasised only on the status of women, without taking into consideration the dimension of man's role. What it is to be a man? What are the gender role stereotypes for men? What are the social expectations they face by virtue of


being man? What are the man's role-strains? Researches which take masculinity, men and their social roles into focus have hardly reference to India. And many of these studies are either a critique or a reaction to feminist and other liberation movements in the West. In other words, masculinity is a theme which needs scholarly attention.

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. It is equally important to study man's roles as well as woman's roles for proper understanding of total societal reality. For example, Liddle and Joshi in *Daughters of Independence* (1986) discuss the gender and social hierarchy. They take caste in general and relate the gender issue with women's subordination to caste and class, in particular, S.C. Dube (1963) gives a general view on men's roles and women's roles in India and emphasizes that they are "shaped by the authority of classical texts."

An important study in this field is by G.M. Carstairs' *The Twice Born*. He takes up the role-models of the three

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high caste groups, from a remote village of Rajasthan, and gives a psychological account of the personality formation among them. By focusing on the family relationships, the 'Hindu body-image' and 'traits shared and not shared' he attempts to understand "the difference in character, attitude towards life" and "what sort of people" the Rajputs, the Brahmins and the Banias are.

Pauline Kolenda (1987) also brings into focus the male and the female world in India. But hers is, primarily, a kinship study where she compares the lower caste 'chuhras' with the high caste Rajputs of a village in U.P. She takes marriage system of these groups as a basis for contrast, specifically, the custom of preference or absence of widow remarriage.

Again, much of the literature on socialization/masculinity/femininity does not specify caste as a variable. For example, in The Inner World (1978) Kakar incorporated both the themes caste and masculinity/femininity but he deals caste as ubiquitous. Effectively, it is an exploration into the high caste Hindu 'psyche' in the light of social roles, traditional values, customs, and kinship regulations. He also generalizes Indian concepts of femininity and masculinity on the basis of mythical figures like Sita, Krishna and
Shiva. In a more recent work *Indian Childhood* (1979) Kakar deals with how the Indian child is socialized into male or female roles by focusing on the traditional Indian ideas. In another psychological study *Intimate Relations* (1990) Kakar focuses on Indian gender relations, i.e., relations between sexes, men and women -- lovers, husbands and wives. Here his sources are mainly textual narratives from contemporary Hindi novels, folktales, the laws of Manu, proverbs, hits of Indian cinema, Gandhi's autobiography etc. He takes Indian society as one and undifferentiated.

Nandy (1980 & 1983) in his various psycho-political essays associates the political concepts, such as colonialism, power, authority, dominance, legitimacy, movements, reforms, fascism etc., with definitions of masculinity and femininity in both greater Sanskritic culture and folk versions of Hinduism. In fact, he tries to interpret different socio-cultural and political movements in two ways: firstly, by relating them to the principle of masculinity/femininity in Indian cosmos, and secondly, by comparing them with the Kshatriya and Brahmin ideas of manhood.

O'Flaherty (1980) also discusses the male/female dimension but her major focus is on sex as depicted in
mythology, that is, "the use of sexual metaphors and animal symbols to express religious concepts of the relationships between men and women, gods and goddesses and human deities". Her study is based on the Puranic stories about Hindu gods, goddesses and mythical beasts.

Williams and Best (1990) in their multinational cross-cultural study of sex stereotypes also take India and compare it with Pakistan and South Africa. The comparison is based on the differences in statuses and roles between women in the Hindu tradition of India and the Muslim tradition of Pakistan. They derive Indian male/female concept from the Hindu pantheon and portray how 'high caste' Hindu women are viewed in literature. Here the comparison in differences in sex stereotypes is religion-based, rather than on factors of social stratification like caste or class.

Brahmins in spite of a large proportion in the population of Rajasthan particularly in the city of Jaipur, have not been studied as a community. The studies on Brahmin either deal with the other regions of India or are based

11. O'Flaherty, 1980:IX.

on classical texts in relation to the varna system.\textsuperscript{13} However, there are a few references on Rajasthani Brahmins.\textsuperscript{14}

Only study that deals with Brahmin community is Renaldo Maduro's (1976) ethnographic work on the Brahmin folk painters in a small town of Rajasthan, Nathdwara. He looks into the psychological, experimental and social correlates of artistic creativity of the small Brahmin community. The focus is on "creative artist's personality, his self-image and the socio-cultural factors that influence his expressive symbolic behaviour in India."

Rajput community in Rajasthan has attracted many researchers, Indian\textsuperscript{15} as well as foreigner,\textsuperscript{16} including James Tod (1829). However, most of the studies are either historical or focus on the Mewar region. A recent example is Lindsey Harlan's (1992) work, \textit{Religion \& Rajput Women}. She investigates into caste duty and gender roles with the help of Kuldevi, Satimata and ancestral heroine traditions among

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{13} E.g. S.N. Sharma, 1977; V. Das, 1982; B. Saraswati, 1977 etc.
\item \textsuperscript{14} Wilson, pt.II, 1976 (rpt.); Dave, 1992; J.N. Bhattacharya, 1896.
\item \textsuperscript{15} V. Joshi, 1995.
\end{itemize}
the Rajput women of Udaipur region. Rudolph and Rudolph's essays on Rajputana (1984) deals with various aspects of the socio-political history of Rajputs in Rajasthan including Jaipur state.

So far, a very few sociological studies have been conducted on the city of Jaipur. However, they do not take caste and gender aspects into account. Though T.K.N. Unnithan and Yogendra Singh's (1969) unpublished survey report on Jaipur city take caste into consideration but the study was mainly undertaken for the purpose of town planning. Likewise, it includes many aspects of the city life, its structure, ecology, demographic characteristics etc., and caste is not of a primary significance.

Robert W. Stern's "The Cat and the Lion" (1988) provides a political history of Jaipur state under British Raj beginning from 1818 to 1947. It gives an interesting account of the zenana politics during the reign of a minor ruler, particularly, British irritability during Man Singh II's initial years when the powers of the Imperial were checked by the inaccessibility of the zenana.

Joan L. Erdman has also worked on the city of Jaipur.
Nevertheless, her papers, the book and the thesis discuss the social organization of cultural performance in the context of tradition and change in Jaipur and other parts of Rajasthan.

Banias of Rajasthan, particularly from Shekhawati region, have attracted many research scholars and most of the studies deal with their migration and entrepreneurial skills. Important among them is Timberg's study on the 'Marwari' Banias. He gives an insight into their family system and communication network which helped them into becoming successful industrialists. However, the emphasis is on the out-migration of Banias in mid and late 19th century and the study is not related to the Banias of Jaipur city.

Reynell's paper though deals with women and Jain community of Jaipur city but it examines only their religious system.

In fact Banias of Jaipur city, like Brahmins and Rajputs, have not been sociologically studied so far.

**METHODOLOGY:**

The material collected and conclusions drawn are based on the field work carried out in the city of Jaipur. The review of literature on caste, gender, life-course, social change, history, psychology is based on literary work. Census reports, biographies, autobiographies and proverbs also provided significant input to the study.

The study was conducted with the help of an interview guide. The main focus while administering the interview guide was on the background information, caste affiliation, festivals, religious activities, family relationships, family decorum, self-image/life history and familial division of labor.

120 interviews consisting of men and women among Brahmin, Rajput and Bania communities irrespective of their age and class/status. Apart from these 120 interviews a few other caste men and women were also interviewed to cross-check information. Not more than one person was interviewed from a family. Each interview took about a minimum time of 45 minutes and many of them stretched to several hours.
Appointments were fixed in advance or some kind of introduction/reference was made, and in rare cases, (like few shop-keepers and jewellers), some respondents were approached them directly.

Most of the field work was carried out in the summer months of 1993 and 1994, when the mercury was fluctuating between \(42^\circ\text{C}\) to \(49^\circ\text{C}\) during the day time. It was difficult to go out and take interview, but it was the right time to find people relatively free at their home or work place to give an interview. Another plus point was that no major festival falls during these months and hence women were less busy in social activities.

The city of Jaipur has particularly been selected for the study and data collection because being a traditional as well as the capital city of Rajasthan. All the three caste groups are well established here, from generations, and are easily accessible.

Jaipur is a planned city established in 1727 A.D. by Sawai Jai Singh, and was the most prosperous city of the princely Rajputana. Jaipur is still a traditional city\(^{22}\) in the sense that traditional stratification system is still

persisting. Religion and caste bindings are still strong and the social position of a person is significantly affected by his religious and caste status which is also apparent in the living pattern. There is clustering of identical castes, religions and occupational groups. Certain castes and religious groups are located in certain areas, and they are excluded from others groups. The 'elite' or the upper castes in the city are Brahmins, Rajputs and Banias.
CHAPTER 1

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: GENDER, CASTE, SOCIAL CHANGE AND LIFE COURSE

A set of concepts has been used to find out the notions of masculinity and femininity in three caste groups i.e. Brahmins, Rajputs and Banias. In fact, throughout the study, with the help of various conceptualisations and perceptions efforts have been made to find out the ideas related to men and women among these communities.

This chapter is divided into four parts. The first part discusses gender, and how masculinity and femininity are defined, while the second part briefly deals with the concepts used for studying caste and to see how they are relevant for the present study. The third part refers to how gender, caste and social change are related while the last part provides a general idea on the life course as a perspective and its applicability on the present study.

I. GENDER

Masculinity and femininity are often treated as dichotomous 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,