CHAPTER 3

RECONSTRUCTION OF MASCULINITY AND FEMININITY

Notions of masculinity and femininity are closely related to a person's self-image and self-conception as man or woman. The self-conceptions are mainly a reproduction of what society and culture idealize and value in an individual. Self-images and self-conceptions may not be contrasting ideas related to men and women of a particular group or society. The ideals upheld by a community may not be different for men and women but they may have different outcomes for its male and female members.

The values upheld by a society can vary from one group to another on the basis of its forbiddenness, acceptability, desirability and ideality. In other words, what is acceptable for one community may be forbidden in another but may be idealized in the third one. For example, eating non-vegetarian food is forbidden among Brahmins of Rajasthan but is acceptable for Rajputs. Similarly, non-violence is idealized by Jain Banias but Rajput idealize combat, sacrifice, revenge and vendetta.

In this reference, this chapter is aimed to delineate

representations of masculinity and femininity in Brahmin, Rajput and Bania sub-culture. Therefore, efforts have been made to reconstruct notions of masculinity and femininity through the consideration of the ideal type of man and woman. That is, what it means to be a Brahmin/Rajput/Bania man and woman, or what type of man/woman is idealized in these caste groups.

The ideal type is important in the sense that it reflects what society expects from its members in various situations, roles and statuses. In turn, it is "the personality" of the "average", "normal" individuals who keep the society operating in its accustomed ways can be accounted for in cultural terms."2 And society expects from each generation to conform to the ideal.

The concept of ideal type has been adopted because by constructing an 'ideal type' it becomes easier to understand the binding forces behind a persons 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".\(^3\) In the Weberian sense 'ideal type' denotes those standarized 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 phenomenon.\(^4\)

It is not necessary that all the characteristics will always be present in reality, but any particular situation of behaviour may be understood by comparing it with the ideal construct. The concept of ideal type can be helpful in understanding the processes of social change. It can also be important for understanding the highly 'value rated' sub-culture of Brahmins, Rajputs and Banias. Weber has also related the 'value-rated' conduct to the behaviour of persons for whom the convictions matter so much that fulfillment of 'duty', 'honor', 'religiosity', 'command' and 'obligation' becomes the most important.

I. BRAHMIN IDEAL TYPE

Herein, a Brahmin ideal type has been constructed on the basis of conventional values perpetuated by the scriptural writings, proverbs - associated with Brahmins in the

\(^3\) Weber 1964:17 (Henderson & Parsons Trans.).

\(^4\) Weber 1949:90-3 (Shils & Finch, eds.).
Rajasthani society and observable 'styles of behaviour' found among the Brahmins of Jaipur city.

Conventionally, Brahmin dharna is coupled with moral 'deity', right 'action' and related 'privileges'. Just birth in a Brahmin family is not enough to be a Brahmin. On the individual level a Brahmin has certain duties towards himself and the society at large. According to The Gita (IV.13) the ideal qualities and actions required from a Brahmin are serenity of mind, self-restrain, austerity, purity, forebearance, uprightedness, wisdom (spiritual knowledge), knowledge (of all kind) and devotion to god.

Here, the word dharna has been used because it indicates the 'expected action' in the Hindu philosophy. However, it reflects the society's values or rather sanctioned way of life. That is, how one should act as a -man/woman/Brahmin/Rajput/Bania at a certain time and in different situations - familial as well as extra familial.

The word 'Brahmin'5 consists both human and metaphysical elements. The 'metaphysical brahma has often been interpreted in terms of transence, as the ultimate basis of the universe or as the Supreme Spirit and is identified with

power, knowledge, time, fire, air, life, god, protector, provider, cosmogenic energy etc. The 'human' brahmin is associated with scriptural knowledge, magico-religious rites, learning, healing etc. Therefore, is characterized as 'purifier', 'teacher', and 'priest'.

Another related word - Brahmanism is a broad concept dealing with the Hindu religion, accommodating to anything that partakes of the social, religious and philosophical organization of Hinduism including its gods, goddesses, idol worship, ceremonies, rites etc. Here focus is on Brahmin as a caste not on the concept Brahmana in the philosophical sense. Likewise, Brahmanhood is different from Brahmanism.

Since Brahmin is the only caste corresponding to the varna system. And, there are communities all over India known as Brahmans. So they tend to derive their cultural identity from the ancient texts and style themselves as upholder of purity, sacred learning, non-violence etc.

The scriptures like Grihyasutra and Dharmsutras elaborately deal with every aspect of a Brahmin's life from his duties in different stages and statuses as a student, teacher, householder to his daily routine, to rules regard-

ing marriage, occupation, food and privileges. It seems easy to construct an ideal type from the same but there is a problem that all Brahmans do not identify with one single code of conduct. Since there are various endogamous Brahmin subcastes across the country associated with different traditional occupations. Their world-view, self-image, fundamental values, idea of a desirable person and social relationships differ from one group to another. For example, what a priest values in life and what kind of lifestyle he leads is completely different from a secular Brahmin's world-view.

Furthermore, references regarding Brahmin ideals are exclusively and explicitly for a Brahmin man, completely avoiding what a Brahmin woman should do or should be like. The only reference of women is in regard of rituals relating to grahsta where a man needs his wife for the rituals without her presence they are considered to be incomplete. But in respect of education or occupation, her role has been overlooked.

A. The Ideal Type of Brahmin Man

A Brahmin man has always been associated with learning, teaching, performing priestly duties and accepting gifts.
In the Brahmin ethos emphasis is on the good conduct which transverses one's present birth. According to the Upanisadas birth in a Brahmin family is the result of right conduct in the previous birth and proper conduct ensures rebirth in a good Brahmin family.

Moreover, being a Brahmin means to behave like a Brahmin. In reference to right conduct Brahma Purana (56-58) says "birth, knowledge of the Veda or even a samskara (rite for consecration) is said to be no real cause for being designated a dvija (the twice born); it is the behaviour that gives a particular varna it is said; and by behaviour a brahmana can become a Sudra and a Sudra a Brahman". It degrades a Brahmin if he does not follow his prescribed duties.

A true Brahmin, according to the Sutras, is who practices penance, self-restraint, charity, knowledge, purity, education, science a belief in god and is above jealousy, falsehood and cruelty. His good actions should be performed at a proper time, place and with purity.

It is also said that a good nature should characterize

a brahmin. Being a priest or adopting the 'Brahmin' profession is not enough to be a Brahmin. To be a Brahmin means free from wrath, pride, lust, late passion. Buddhist literature writes that one "living by priestly craft is a celebrant and not a Brahmin" (Majjhima Nikaya II.48.2.4, p.465). ⁹

The Jaina literature also stresses on principled living - "one becomes a sramana by equanimity of mind, a Brahmana by chastity, a muni by knowledge and Tapasa by penance". ¹⁰

Hence, most of the ancient texts emphasizes on the moral qualities in the make up of a Brahmin.

Brahmin as a priest is not idealized but his renunciatory attitude towards life provide him the prestige of a Brahmin. Being a priest is just an occupation, important is following the Brahmin code of conduct that gives him the due respect of being a Brahmin. There are examples ¹¹ suggesting that who follow a strict mode of living like being vegetarian, not officiating as priests, not taking gifts from other castes, following secular profession etc.,

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⁹ ibid.:60.
¹⁰ Jain, J.C. 1947:141.
¹¹ See Saraswati, B. 1977:60, for Gujrati Brahmins.
are considered higher compared to those Brahmins who officiate as priests of various degree. Veena Das writes: "...the Brahman's prestige lies in his personification of the renouncer's values. This is what makes him the ideal person to receive gifts although, paradoxically, the very act of acceptance lowers his prestige."

That is, a Brahmin should not be greedy even in his role of accepting gifts. Otherwise it will degrade him as a Brahmin. The gifts are supposed to be given to the god or a deity here as a recipient, Brahmin is just a medium between the god and the giver. Generally, what he takes as dan (gift) is for averting and taking evil forces from the giver. Means that by taking dan he is doing a favour to the giver. What Brahmin accepts for his services is called dakshina, is a kind of fee for rendering services.

However, money and wealth are not idealized in the Brahmin ethos. A Brahmin of little economic standing does not looses his high ritual status.

The Brahmin ideal of purity, which they follow rather strictly, is reflected in their marriage, food and occupational preferences. They follow caste endogamy rules.

with much strictness even marriages between the sub-castes of the same region are not encouraged. On the contrary, Banias do get married with other sub-caste Banias of the same class and Rajputs do not have such conditions of sub-caste they just avoid their own clan.

Vegetarian food is the preferred type for the Brahmins in Rajasthan and in the city of Jaipur Brahmins are mainly vegetarians. R.S. Khare writes, while explaining how and what efforts the Kanya-kubja Brahmins of North India make to approximate Brahmin ideals in their daily life, that "those who do not eat outside their own or their relatives' kitchens and who follow the rules of purity during the preparation and consumption of food are "higher" than those who eat "outside" in restaurants or at "tea parties". Those who wear home washed clothes, wash their feet before and after meals, and take god's name before starting to eat are "higher" or better Brahmins than those who do not do so." 13

The prescribed occupations for a Brahmin, according to Manu (X.75), are teaching, studying, sacrificing for himself, sacrificing for others, making gifts and receiving gifts. Trade and agriculture are not prohibited provided he does not do the work himself. Although in emergency he is

permitted to adopt other modes of livelihood, can accept gift from anyone. Those who failed to observe their prescribed rules were condemned and relegated to a lower position. For example, a Brahmin adopting handicrafts, trade singing, dancing as mode of livelihood were condemned.14

Controlling emotions is another important thing for Brahmins. As Gough15 discovered among the Brahmins of Kumbapetti village (South India) that physical aggression and physical fight among Brahmin men would be a most shameful, unforgettable event.

Brahmin ethos do not give much importance to physical prowess but in the Rajasthani proverbs Brahmins are ridiculed for the same. In majority of the proverbs a Brahmin is depicted as - one who is reluctant to do hard work, incapable for physical labor and can live on charity.

Brahmins are also taunted for adopting priestly functions who accept gifts and food items. They are portrayed as gluttons. The most important thing for a Brahmin is to eat good food, he is considered as an obsessive eater, one who can leave all his works of importance if he gets an invita-

Brahmins are not supposed to be greedy and money-minded. But there are sayings implying that if a Brahmin gets a hint that he can get something (as dan or dakshina) he is not going to leave that person without getting it. At the same time, they are not termed as manipulative but rather treated as stupid. A proverb: "even if you gift away an old cow to a Brahmin though you are not going to earn any 'punya' at least the Brahmin will feed the cow."\(^{18}\)

Brahmins are known for learning but Rajasthani proverbs consider them as one who are devoid of intelligence and foresightedness. They say, "A Brahmin is not as sharp as a Bania, he does not react at the right movement, is rather stupid".\(^{19}\) He is also considered as coward. "It is useless to talk about courage and adventure with a Brahmin",\(^{20}\) Brahmins are also seen as simple and easily satisfied in the


\(^{17}\) Joshi, L. 1978:132 (No.35).

\(^{18}\) ibid:338 (No.2420).

\(^{19}\) Joshi, L. 1978:128.

\(^{20}\) ibid:130 (No.17).
sense that they can live off on alms and ask for food from others. Suggesting the extent of impracticality, a proverb says, "a Brahmin can even sell off a useful buffalo for a horse" which is of no use for him.

These proverbs must have had helped in changing the ideas related to Brahmin man and masculinity. What is desirable and acceptable in the classical texts is not admired in the Rajasthani sayings. For example, receiving gifts, living off on the profession of panditai or being a temple prist is considered as a degrading mode of livelihood though they are not dishonoured for the same, probably because of religious reasons. The field work data from the city of Jaipur also suggest that the above professions are now secondary or subsidiary in the families who survived on them for generations. All the more, their children are completely dissociating themselves from their fathers' profession and branching out in different lines. The profession of Vaidik pandits is fast becoming a profession of very few, either they do it as a part time job. Or those who can't get any other job and belong to the families of pandits.

However, what is written centuries back is still part

21. ibid:138 (No.88).
of the social life and plays deciding role in selection of occupation and lifestyle. An example from Jaipur city where majority of Brahmins are into services, very few take up to business. Business is mainly dominated by the Bania community. Similarly, most of the Brahmins are vegetarian and do not drink. Some of the young boys are non-vegetarian and do drink but not at home and parents do not know about their activities. Those who are indulging into eating non-vegetarian, smoking and drinking are in fact, conscious of the fact that what they are doing is not sanctioned by the family and what they are doing is not right i.e. feel guilty about their actions.

Moreover, the Brahmin ideal requires control over one's own self rather than on the others as the martial ideal of Rajput's suggest or controlling of trade and commerce for a Bania. Here, stress is on disciplined and clean way of life.

Thus the major themes in Brahmin culture are vegetarianism, adopting 'clean' occupation, sub-caste endogamy etc. These are also the signs of strongness for a Brahmin. A Brahmin is considered a weak personality if he takes up to non-vegetarian, drinking and other prohibited modes of conduct as well as of subsistence.
So being a man or masculine have different connotations for a Brahmin compare to a martial Rajput or an enterprising Bania as are discussed in the other sections of the chapter.

B. The Ideal Type of a Brahmin Woman

Brahmin women lack history. Even in the classical texts where a lot had been written on the proper conduct for Brahmins, in fact, are mainly directed toward men. The right code of conduct do not differentiate between what is right for a man and what is right for a woman perhaps, it refers to both sexes. But when we look at the duties, privileges and occupation, the focus is completely toward Brahmin men. The Rajasthani proverbs have also overlooked Brahmin women, they treat women as one homogeneous group.

In this section an effort has been made to construct an ideal type of a Brahmin woman on the basis of existential realities in the city of Jaipur.

Though Brahmins are associated with learning and priestly functions, among the respondents, women belonging to the priestly families are the most uneducated ones. They were never taught or initiated into the family tradition of 'panditai' or trained into the Sanskritic learning. Hence
women always stayed at home and adhered to domesticity.

On the contrary, Brahmin women are relatively educated compared to Rajput and Bania women. But these educated women belong to the secular Brahmin families, who were/are into secular services and were also economically better off compared to priests and pandits, these Brahmins not only educated their daughters but also gave them freedom to seek jobs. It may be a part of secular changes taking place in the city and secular Brahmins accepted them with much ease. Being into services they probably find it convenient if their educated women seek 'decent' employment outside the home and contribute to the family income.

However, it is difficult to say that Brahmin ethos idealizes an educated woman as a feminine ideal.

Economic conditions cannot be overlooked in the above cases. For instance, in one case, initially, women were not educated because the family tradition didn't allow them and now their economic condition do not permit them. With the other group - their secular background and economic means helped them to educate their women, who later opted for jobs in schools, colleges and offices and many of them remained unmarried.
Few of the spinsters\textsuperscript{22} from Brahmin community were interviewed in the age group of 30-60 years, who decided to remain unmarried and their family respected their decision and never forced them into marriage alliance. Perhaps, their families could not find equally educated match for their educated daughters and marrying them off outside the community or to other Brahmin sub-castes was not acceptable to them.

Here again an educated or unmarried or career oriented woman is no way an acceptable model of femininity. Because till the 'marriageable' age girls are part of various social functions and many of the festivals, in the city of Jaipur, are directed toward them in anticipation of a married life. The unmarried girls remain in the periphery and their social significance decreases with their age and their unmarried status. Even if they are earning, they are just the earning members, or in other words, they lack social space except their job. Their individual status is not much recognized. Furthermore, in the absence of their wifely motherly roles their social sphere becomes limited how much successful they are careerwise.

\textsuperscript{22} During the field work I come across unmarried working women only among Brahmins not among Rajputs or Banias.
Henceforth, the feminine ideal for a Brahmin woman is that of a married woman, with related roles and duties popularly termed as 'pativrata', chaste wife, dutiful daughter or daughter-in-law and sacrificing mother. Such ideas are also reflected in the various festivals, vratas and custom of exchanging gifts. (These are elaborated in the following chapter.) And a woman's femininity consists in how sincerely she enacts her various social roles.

In this context, here is an example of a Brahmin woman from the field work:

She is an educated and capable married woman in her 40s - the only child of a rich mahant of a famous temple of Jaipur city. Since the mahant has to be a male member of the family, (usually the first born son) her father adopted her son and now she is looking after her father's property for her son. Well, she has no grudges against her father, in fact adopting her son was the most 'natural' or expected thing to do. She is like those regent queens who looked after their son's principality till they reached the right age.

In this case if we look at the situation closely we find how smoothly a daughter has been sidelined from an heiress to a caretaker and moreover her daughters' claim on
their mother's parental property has been eliminated. Here no one is to be blamed, probably, that is how social system works. What her father did was in fact against the family tradition, earlier heirs were adopted from the paternal side of the family not from affinal relations or daughters' or sisters' son.

It seems the femininity of a woman lies in following her family traditions in her respective roles in different stages of her life whether she is a Brahmin or a Rajput or a Bania.

II. THE 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 Ksatriyas, they not only derived their cultural identity from the ruler-wavior 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 to the honor of their women. 23

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. 24

A. The Ideal Type of Rajput Man

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 Rajpus 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.)

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 mustache, high turban, 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".25

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 Jauhar.26 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.

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.27 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

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 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 faith and protection while binding the people to loyalty and service.

An exchange of turbans was a mark of fraternal adoption and a bond of friendship. 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.

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 impor-

tant, signifying status, occasion and season. Volume and heaviness of a turban was associated with the distinction of the bearer.30

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 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 while fighting was the best way of dying.31 For a woman the most glorious form of death was committing sati or Jauhar. 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 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 upheld the Rajput code of conduct whether they won or lost a battle.

For Rajput 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.

We do not see the same kind of appreciation for the Jaipur rulers for their diplomatic skills or for their high profile commandarship of Mughal army etc. Though Jaipur rulers too styled themselves on the basic Rajput ideal of loyalty and cooperated with the Mughals and consequently led a much secured and prosperous life.

If the founding principles for a Rajput are honor, obligation (gratitude) and loyalty, the greatest crime for him is "forgetfulness of favors" (Gunchor). Tod\textsuperscript{32} writes that "gunchor" is the most powerful term for ingratitude and infidelity gratitude for a Rajput embraces every obligation.

\textsuperscript{32} Tod 1971:156.
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, especially of the Jaipur rulers, with the Mughals and later with the Britishers are the examples. In J.F. Richard's33 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' tradition of the Rajputs intact. In fact the Mughal emperors exploited the Rajput loyalties to

33. Richards 1977.X.
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 generation 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.34

Closely related to the idea of loyalty was that of revenge.35 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 be born under the debt to die in taking revenge on behalf of his family: the first commandment is "avenge

35. For example, see Tod 1971:237-9.
thy father's feud". 36 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 then 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. 37 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. They were very sensitive towards their mustaches. Raising mustaches with a stroke was associated with power, i.e., an indication that the 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), Abhav (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.38

The favored 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 to their status as Rajput. Handling of a plough or pen was considered as

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38. Tod 1971:60.
demeaning. There is a saying that "a Rajput who reads will never ride a horse". It shows that for a Rajput man physical prowess was a matter of pride and a sign of manliness but not physical labour.

For Rajputs 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, Jauhar, dowry and female infanticide.

The Ideal Type of a Rajput Woman

The history of Jaipur city do not provide any feminine ideal for Rajput women or to women in general. Though a Rajput woman is supposed to be 'courageous' and 'self-

39. In Jaipur city satis are not worshipped or idealized similarly Jaipur do not have a history where women commited Jauhar and even female infanticide was not prevalent. But still we cannot separate Rajputs of Jaipur from Rajputs of other region as most of the important clans are connected through marriages.
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 man are also idealised in a Rajput woman. 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 sub-culture.

If we look at Jaipur's history we find rani and maharani who acted as regent to their minor son and ruled the state from the zenana, i.e., from the strict purdah. They never came out of the zenana or interacted with the public but managed the state with the help of a few advisors.

However, the queen mothers' who acted as regents were never appreciated and they could not emerge as the ideal women. And Jaipur state under the zenana rule are remembered as the years of mismanagement, corruption and
controversies.

For instance, Madho Singh I's (1751-1768) widow Chundawatji became the regent of her step-son Prithvi Singh (1768-78) who died or was murdered at the age of 15. He was succeeded by Pratap Singh, a son of Chundawatji. So it is believed that she conspired her step son's death. During her regency she even called her father, the Rao of Devgarh (Mewar) to help her out with the state affairs. As a result the kinmen and the thikanedars of Jaipur state became restless with the arrangement and conflicts started within the nobility. Moreover Madho Singh's minister Kushaliram Bohra also became very powerful. During this period, Pratap Singh Naruka took advantage of the weak administration and he managed to establish his own separate state Alwar. So her period of regency is referred as a period of conflicts, bankruptcy and conspiracies.40

The second phase of regency41 started when Jagat Singh died without a legal heir in 1818. But one of his rani Bhatiyani was pregnant and she became the regent of her posthumous son, Jai Singh III. He was murdered by Sanghi Jhotaram, a minister, in 1835. Now 6 month old Ram Singh

became the Maharaja and his mother young Chandravatji became his caretaker and regent. Ram Singh started working as a full fledged Maharaja in 1860.

During these long period of regency (1818-1860) many conspiracies and controversies took place regarding selection of the heir apparent, the regent and power within the zenana. As a result the nobility divided into many groups. Moreover, on the one side was British Resident the other side was the regent queen-mother and her favoured advisors, Jhotaham and a concubine Rupa budarum.

The Britishers were coxing the kin-jagirdars and thik-kanedars against queen-mother, the regent and her advisors. At one point the security person of the zenana, Mohan Ram Nazir an eunuch became so important that "...the British government formally announced its acceptance of the Nazir's choice as the Maharaja of Jaipur".42

Therefore, the zenana rule in the city of Jaipur is remembered as "years of decay". Since the zenana could not prove its capabilities as an efficient ruler so do the women of the zenana. Whatever may be the reasons of the failure of zenana administration none of the women could put forward

a model of womanhood. The women remained in periphery where their main job was to raise the Maharaja apparent.

The zenana rule was devalued to the extent that during the minority years of Man Singh II, the last maharaja of Jaipur - "The British consulted with the ministers of the old Maharaja and with the nobles of Jaipur State, and together they made up a minority council to rule the state until Jai (Mansingh II) came of age. The British Resident, who became one of his guaradian, and a Rajput noble, Donkal Singh, his Indian guardian, arranged for him to move as soon as possible into Rambagh, a palace outside the city walls."43 That is, away from the zenana's influence.

There are also references of ranis, maharanis and concubines who were educated and pursued their literary interests in the zenana like, Ram Singh's mother Anand Kanwar Chauhanji wrote `Bihari Satsai' for her son. Jai Singh II's rani Khijanji was also interested in religious books.44 The women from the royal zenana also constructed temples45 and were administering their jagirs from the

45. See the list of the temples in Ray 1978:227-32; Chapter 6 for a photograph.
purdah. Somehow these women could not provide an ideal for the Rajput women except that the women from good families do not come out in the public.

In fact the women who came out of the zenana have a notorious reputation in the public memory. For example, Jagat Singh (1803-1818) had 22 ranis but he gave importance to a concubine named Ras Kapoor to the extent that even coins were issued in her name, she rode on the elephant beside him in the public. Moreover thikanedars were asked to pay due respect to her which was not acceptable to the nobility in general. Another such scandalous woman was Madho Singh II's (1880-1922) concubine Roop Rai. Such instances further enforced the feminine ideal of a woman who stays at home as a matter of family honor. Even Maharaja's efforts to bring women out of zenanas could not change the situation much. As Gayatri Devi writes. "He (Man Singh II) had tried giving parties for me to which he invited the state officials and ministers, asking them to bring their wives but very few of the women came. They maintained purdah quite as strictly as Jo Didi (Man Singh's second wife). "...We both knew that the deep-rooted customs of centuries could not be erased overnight. I understood, too,

that the public purdah that had observed in Jaipur was necessary if I was not to shock and alienate the tradition-bound nobility."\textsuperscript{47}

Even in the recent times, when Maharani Gayatri Devi came out of the purdah in 1940's, opened up a school for girls and later joined politics, however Rajput women find it difficult to identify with her or idealize her. When the respondents especially Rajput women were asked during the fieldwork, whether they would like to follow Rajmata Gayatri Devi answers were usually like this - "I admire her guts"; "She could do things of her choice because she was not born or brought up in the Rajasthani Rajput family"; "She was an outsider"; "She is so pretty and was the maharaja's favorite that's why she could manage to do whatever she wanted to do".

So, Gayatri Devi's not observing purdah in the strict sense is attributed to her unconventional upbringing, outstanding beauty, cosmopolitan tastes and interests. Gayatri Devi herself writes, "...I dare say that one of the reasons, apart from being in love, that Jai (Man Singh II) had married me was that a liberated and travelled maharani might

\textsuperscript{47} Gayatri Devi & Rama Rau 1976:195.
set some sort of example for the orthodox ladies of Jaipur".48 However, Rajput women in the city find it much easier to identify themselves with the royal women who always stayed behind the purdah and belonged to the other princely states of Rajasthan.

So much has been said and written about Satī and the Rajput ethos but in Jaipur city we do not find any temple or shrine or a place of worship in the memory of a woman who committed satī. Though there are instances when maharanis, ranis and concubines of a Maharaja committed satī after his death. For example, a few ranis of Jai Singh II became sati after his death. Ishwari Singh who ruled Jaipur for seven years, his nine ranis and eleven padayat committed sati. Later, on the death of Madho Singh his six ranis and four pardayat opted for sati.49

It seems that only those women who commit sati under extra-ordinary situation are remembered and admired. These above mentioned women are not part of Jaipur city's public memory as Rajput women of Udaipur region are. Though there is no comparison between the two region or women of these two regions because they faced different situations and

48. ibid.
lived in different historical times. What is important is that in reality women of Udaipur region are still admired and they provide an ideal of womanhood to Rajput women in general. We cannot compartmentalize Rajputs on the basis of region or a city as all the major clans are connected by kin or affinal relations. Here are few historical examples of Rajput women who had been idealized for their "heroic qualities","virtuous deeds" and "self-sacrifice":

1. **Karma Devi**, 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".50

2. **Padmini,** married to Bhim Singh, an uncle and protector of the minor prince, was 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 Chittor 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 Jauhar to the dishonor of falling into the hands of Alaudin Khilzi.

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

52. ibid.:237-9.
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, as she led the army 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". Meanwhile, Rana Sanga's wife -

5. Karnavati, 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 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

53. ibid.,:249-50.
54. ibid.:249-51.
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 siege. 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 father's nurse -

6. **Panna Dhai**, the nurse in charge 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 babe was murdered (1538 A.D.). After that she joined Bari (Nai), who had helped in smuggling out the 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.

55. *ibid.*:252-3.
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 Mother, 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 remembrance to her husband. Then she pulled the sword and struck her own neck.

56. *ibid.*:261.
9. **Krishna Kumari**,\(^57\) 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 Sindhia's 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 internal rivalry of the 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 loyal 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

\(^{57}\) Tod 1971:365-9.
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. 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".58

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 man was of no less importance. Her expectations, as sister, wife mother, from her male 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 decorum. 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 man 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.

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 supposed to lead to Muslim rule in India. Tarabhai 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 sons' rights preparing them for battle. For a mother the heroic death of her son was the greatest fulfillment of her life. They say death while fighting makes "mother's milk
There are many examples when women became regent and looked after the state and administration and even took part in battles in person. 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 sati's - "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.

Motherly duties in different positions could be seen in the second sack of Chittor when the queen mother Jawaharbai fough to her death. Karmavati, the mother of the infant-heir headed 13,000 females for Jauhar 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 Rajput queens in the history either became satis or committed jauhar 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 Mirabai, 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 widow opted for the life of an ascetic. Although she is admired for her devotion for Lord 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

60. Also see Sangari 1990:1465-6.
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 sub-culture. 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 emphasizes a particular region i.e. Mewar or the Sisodia Rajputs, who consistently faced hostile threats. Probably that is why they are ranked highest in the Rajput clan hierarchy. As Maharani Gayatri Devi writes, "Udaipur, considered the foremost Rajput state, whose Maharana takes precedence over all the other Rajput princes".61

III. BANIA IDEAL TYPE

Here a 'typical' Bania has been constructed on the basis of biographies, autobiographies of Banias originated from Rajasthan, Rajasthani proverbs and the way Banias have styled themselves in the city of Jaipur.

There is a tendency of associating Banias with Vaishyas

of the Varna scheme. Accordingly, a Vaishya's duty\textsuperscript{62} is to give gifts, learning, sacrificing, agriculture and trade. But most of the Bania communities (Maheshwaris, Agrawals, Saraogis Oswals and Porwals) in Rajasthan do not claim to be of Vaishya Varna rather associated with Rajputs who opted for trade and business and became Vaish. Some have to leave martial affiliation because of religious reasons (mainly Jains) and took to commerce. They are generally known as Banias at the same time, they preferred to be known by their sub-caste names as Agrawal, Maheshwari, Oswal etc.

G.D. Birla's biographer\textsuperscript{63} writes, "The Birlas were originally Kshatriyas. But there came a time in history when they laid down their swords and took up the scales of business. They were adventures and took great risks".

Here, focus is not on the differences or similarities between Bania or Vaishya/Rajput or Bania categories. Aim is to construct an 'ideal type' which is relevant and Banias of Jaipur city are identifying with. Whatever may be the origin of Banias, in reality they give importance to the same ideal values as Brahmins but are taught in practice to earn money above everything.


\textsuperscript{63} Jaju, R.N. 1985:308.
So the major themes in the Bania subculture are: to earn money, speculation, hardwork, family solidarity, business orientation, enterprise, commercial success, vegetarianism and teetotalism.

A. The Ideal Type of A Bania Man

A Bania man has always been portrayed as "adventurer capitalist" willing to take "speculative risks" and the one who is closely tied to household and joint family, to ritual observance and to caste restrictions.64

His world is the world of "artha" i.e., "instrumentality", "wheeling and dealing",65 "profit and loss", "conquest and subordination", "thriftiness", "utility and thoughtful calculations".

Though the major thrust is on money, there are certain ethics for the same, i.e., how to earn money, how to keep it and where to spend it. As a result, certain professions and business of certain item are prohibited for a Bania.

A Bania man is not supposed to get involved in profes-

sion like - in the art of making jewelry, though gems and jewelry are the main business of Banias in the city of Jaipur since its inception but Banias do not make it. There is a community of Sonars who are ornament makers but they are not part of Bania community. Similarly, Banias are not into oil processing but are oil commission agents. They are involved in the cotton and cloth business but are not into dying or printing which is done by Chipas or Rangrej. One of the respondent informed that they also avoid setting up small eating joints, hotelling, tea-shop, pan-shop and selling of vegetables.

Evident is that Banias deal, more or less, with the final stages of production or are middlemen who invariably, make more profit while putting less physical labor. What they earn is mainly commission. However, the Banias of Jaipur city are businessmen of middle range since last two centuries. We do not find big industries or known industrialists belonging to the city.

Furthermore, in relation to money, idea is that, it should not corrupt a person. So the emphasis is on to settle one's son into business as early as possible. A great value is also associated with starting on one's own independent business. G.D. Birla writes in his autobiogra-
phy that "when I concluded my so called schooling I was directed to join the family business and at the age of 12, I took a plunge into it." 66 At 16, he started his own independent business as a broker.

It is said that G.D. Birla, the industrialist, was very conscious of his Bania status and he strictly followed and lived upto the Bania standards. His biographer describes him as "a vai which means 'earn money by the right means, use it as a means and not as an end'... he truly lived the life of a Vaishya 67 .... He never permitted his personal feelings to over-rule his duty as a Vaishya he instituted industries and increased production...." 68 His unquestioned financial support to Mahatma Gandhi shows his idea of spending freely on good deeds and later on construction of temples, opening of educational institutes etc.

Another leading businessmen of his time Jamnalal Bajaj (1889-1942) led a simple life and treated wealth as a trust to be utilized for the public good. "At the age of 18, (in 1907) he inherited property valued Rs.5-6 lakhs out of which

67. The use of the word 'Vaishya' is becoming more popular and prestigious compared to 'Bania' word in writings and caste association literature.
he had donated Rs. 75,000 to a temple... (later). He gave huge donations to the Congress to support the lawyers who had had left their practices." 69

What is appreciated, by Banias, is a knack for business rather than achievement in any other field. For example, G.D. Birla writes, "we had no political background in the family or the village or the community in which I was born. My interest in politics, therefore was not looked upon with great favour by those around me." 70

None of the Marwari Banias who helped Mahatma Gandhi, financially 71 during the National Movement, in fact, never tried to grab political power or high posts in the Congress party, showing that their priorities in life were different. The idea behind giving the examples of these few successful Bania industrialists is to focus on what ideals they upheld and what sort of model of Baniahhood they placed to the society.

Importance is also attached on calling a man seth for that he should have enough money and a house. Again rein-

70. Birla, G.D. 1952:XIV.
forcing the ideal of a Bania man that is a man with money.

In the Jaipur City business and money are so highly valued in the Bania sub-culture that its influence can be seen in their marriage alliances; caste associations - their working; religious practices including donations made to various agencies etc. Their marriage preference goes for economically high status families of the community irrespective of their subcaste difference unlike Brahmins who still prefer marital alliance in their own subcaste of the region.

Caste associations run by different subcastes are most active and involved in various diversified activities. Moreover, participation of the members is very high and election for the posts are taken vary variously.

As N.K. Singhi also observed among the Jain business community of Sirohi city of Rajasthan that "the business ethos has created competition in the ritualistic and institutional dimensions of religious practice." 72

High value and social prestige is also attached on giving donations or dan for religious purposes like construction and maintenance of temples among the well-to-do Banias. The large number of temples in the city of Jaipur can also

be attributed to this. Similarly, of lately, the Birla family also started showing interest in the city, and are renovating old temple-complexes like Galta and Kanak Vrindaban.

Banias have been ridiculed for their extreme indulgence with money, profit making and business by other castes to the extent that if someone shows interest in money or is miser or wealthy is called "bania". And it is considered demeaning and derogatory even by the Banias who themselves do not like to be called by the name 'bania'.

Rajasthani proverbs depict a Bania as 'coward', 'corrupt', 'exploiter', etc. Referring to his tricky nature there is a saying - "only Bania can understand a Bania." Another suggests that a Bania can never be a good friend if he is, means he is making profit out of that friendship. Russell73 also compiled a few proverbs about Banias - "He cares only for his profit and his business is conducted with a single view to that end." "If a Bania gets a rupee he will have an income of eight rupees a month". "He considers the transactions merely from business point of view getting as much profit as possible." "The rogue cheats strangers

and the Bania cheats his friends."

Hardwork is the key word for a Bania man. How much rich or successful one is, he never takes life easy, for him success means expanding business, investing money for earning more money. Proverbs say, "There is no substitute for a Bania's hardwork", and a "Bania can earn from anything. He cannot sit idle". The success of Marwari Banias in Bengal since late 19th century has been attributed to their "hard work", "commercial acumen", and their "family solidarity" which helped them in raising capital and establishing into business of their own.

Qualities like being soft spoken, good natured, not loosening temper, maintaining good relations with friends and relatives are highly desired in a Bania man. Basically these are the principles of being a good and successful businessman. Perhaps they cannot afford to be rude or "militant" like Rajputs or "arrogant" like Brahmins.

A proverb says than "through his behaviour Bania can win his friends and foes back, i.e., Bigadi banave Banio." 76

74. Sahal 1961:710, 785, 848.
Another suggests that a Raja, at least, must appoint a Bania minister in his ministry so that he can please and win everyone by his sweet talking.77

It seems for a Bania man masculinity lies in making money, expanding business, being polite, cool, calculative and foresighted. For the same a Brahmin may call him "cunning" and a Rajput may term him a "coward". But for Banias if a person is high strung, short tempered, spendthrift, economically dependent means he is a weak personality. Someone who is not a proper Bania man.

B. The Ideal Type of a Bania Woman

What the Bania ideal upholds and values in a man is not applicable on Bania women. Women are not supposed to earn money, participate in business deals or sit and help their male family members in the shops etc. Now question arises what is the expected type of a Bania women in a subculture where so much emphasis is placed on earning money.

There seems to be no feminine ideal from the Bania community itself to whom Bania women in general could appreciate or emulate. Like Brahmin women Bania women also lack history and are also absent from the proverbs. They do not

77. Joshi, J. 1978:129 (No.8).
have any historical ideals like Padmini, Karmadevi and Hadirani to whom they can identify themselves.

Here, an effort has been made to construct an ideal type for a Bania woman on the basis of day-to-day life of Bania women in the city of Jaipur and biographies and autobiographies of Banias originated from Rajasthani.

"...the victim of my boorishness and inhuman cruelties, an ungrudging servant in my poverty, yet greatly devoted to me, having made service of her husband the one duty and principle in life." 78

That is how a Bania man, Ram Krishna Dalmia, the famous Marwari industrialist, writes in reference to his wife, who died at the age of sixteen, was uneducated but "wise and self-sacrificing". He often beat her and she calmly tolerated him. He was then a straunc belief in the purdah system and she observed it fully. That time he was poor and had rented a room, in Calcutta, which was divided into three parts with no electricity his wife used to fan him to sleep with a hand fan till early morning. She used to try her best to satisfy his ideosyncracies and never complained to her or his mother about hs misbehavior. 79

79. ibid.
Further, Dalmia describes her mother as a forceful personality "who always stood by me in times of trouble and infused patience and courage in me again and again throughout my life." 80

While daughter was "a solace in hard times". 81 He educated her and spend money on her education to the point of borrowing. But it was his son-in-law who helped in managing the Dalmia Jain Enterprises.

What he admired, though in retrospect, in a woman as his wife, is her self-sacrificing and uncomplaining nature, her unquestioned service to husband.

At the same time, his wife at such an early age, adhered to the 'expected feminine ideal' and learned to be tolerant, dutiful and devoted towards her husband. Her tolerance is not seen as her weakness but rather taken as braveness of character.

Here, woman as a mother becomes "courageous" and "forceful". A commanding figure but supporting her son in every situation.

80. ibid., p.4.
81. ibid., p.5.
Since not much is expected from a woman as a daughter, he like an affectionate father educated her and as a responsible man got her married to a suitable boy and his son-in-law took charge of his business in place of his "educated" daughter.

Another example is of an industrialist's wife reflecting how she looks at herself as a woman and what ideals of femininity she emulated.

Janaki Devi Bajaj\textsuperscript{82} writes in her memoirs that when she was about five or six year old, a Brahmin was sent to arrange her marriage, a good and religious family was the primary consideration. Subsequently, she got married at the age of nine. In the first year of marriage she did Gangaur puja for 16 days. Initially she did not like sasural because of food and purdah system and wanted to get out of the marriage. Her mother-in-adored her with jewelry, pearls and cloths. Once a helper gave her a book called "Pati-Bhakti Prakash" accordingly she started taking food after her husband that too in the same plate, i.e., with the leftover, started washing his cloths etc. Though her husband was against it and these were her self-imposed rules.

\textsuperscript{82} Bajaj, J.D. 1965:9.
Since Sati was worshipped in her sasural on bhandon ki amavasya, she used to harp on the idea of becoming sati if her husband dies before her so that she too will be worshipped. She obeyed and followed her husband without questioning. According to his wishes she started taking part in the freedom movement though she had no interest in political or social movements, was rather shy as she always stayed in purdah. Later, she discarded purdah, stopped using bor (forehead ornament), ghagras took place of lahngas and also started wearing khadi sari etc. She also mentions that she was very careless towards her third daughter, since her birth, and used to beat her a lot while Jamnalalji (husband) was found of daughters.

Her every action reflects the "feminine ideal" she upheld was of 'duty bound' and 'pativrata' wife. She discarded purdah because her husband wanted her to do so.

Here is rather an exceptional example, from the fieldwork, of a 45 year old Bania woman who took on her husband's business, a chemist shop, after his death. Now her 21 year old son helps her in the shop (recently converted into a

83. ibid., p.48.
84. ibid., p.59.
85. ibid., p.101.
shoe-shop). Her two elder daughters are well educated, married into well-to-do families and are housewives. The third unmarried daughter is studying and helps her in household work. She never took help of her daughters in the business though they are elder to her son. She finds caste associations useless but sometimes attend contributory dinners. She is religious, prays at home, read religious texts like Hanuman chalisa, Gita, Ramayan and Sunderkand. Now she keeps only Akadashi fast as it supposed to benefit the dead relatives. She keeps organising Akhand Ramayan Path and Sahastra Ghat (i.e. pouring hundred pots of water on shivaling). She offers dan on all ceremonial functions. Recently she contributed Rs.40,000 for the construction of a Agrawal Dharmashala.

She celebrates all the Hindu festivals observed in the city of Jaipur. Apart from Holi, Divali, Teej, Gangaur, Rakhi, Sankranti she also mentioned Sinjara, Sheetala asthami, Bar pujani Mavas, Bichi baaras, Nag Panchami, Dubdi atheh and Kola panche. She also celebrate birthdays of her children and herself. She keeps sending gifts to her married daughters especially on Teej, Gangaur and Sankranti. Recently she gave gifts of about Rs. one lakh on the birth of her daughter's son. She also gives bhat and bayana to
her sisters-in-laws' children's wedding and she received bhat from her father and brother on her daughter's marriage. Her relatives are mainly into business. She feels tensions are mainly related to family problems and safety of self and property. Her worries are related to her son and daughter's marriage and business. Her daughters are married into the same caste and one gotra was avoided. She covers her head in presence of her husband's elder relatives. She avoids eating food at her married daughter's house. She is vegetarian and do not smoke or drink. She did her primary schooling in Bombay and Burma and high school from Jaipur. And got married at the age of 14. (Her father and grandfather owned a general store in Burma). She was very close to her mother. She never confined in anyone and no one was her ideal.

She took over the duties of her husband on the domestic as well as on extra domestic level. In spite of her business orientation what she depicts is the picture of a pativrata women, who keeps akadashi fast for the well being of her husband in the other world. She fulfills her husband's duty as a brother towards his sisters by sending sweets on festivals and bhat on the sister's children's marriage.

Even her early upbringing in the cosmopolitan atmos-
phere could not influence or change her. She idealized and followed the values of her caste and family.

Though she has a career of her own as a business woman but that is forced on her not out of her choice. Similarly, she, like her husband who might not have liked the idea of his daughters joining business, got them married off after their college education. And now grooming her son for the business, basically waiting for his son to take over the business reign.

Even after running the business her ideals remained the same. Like any Bania she got her daughters married off at the 'right' age and she never initiated them into her business or helped them to start off something of their own. Though she faced uncertainties when her husband died 15 years back, she did the required pharmacy diploma and took charge of his shop. But her attitude towards life remained the same. As she confessed that "I never thought of doing anything before my husband's death.

This example not only focuses but also perpetuates the idea that women of high status families work outside home under certain circumstance otherwise they need not work outside and earn money.
In sum, intercaste comparisons show that there are various types of masculinities as each community idealizes different values in its male members according to the respective caste ethos as Brahmin, Rajput or Bania. In contrast, for women there is a single model of femininity and that is common for the women of the three communities, i.e., of a self sacrificing, duty `bound married woman'.