SOCIAL REFORMS

Infanticide and Sati
To

the sacred memory
of my son,
Sanjay
PREFACE

The social condition of the people of Rajasthan in the 19th century, characterised as it was by senseless and inhuman customs undermining their vitality and debasing their ideals, was admittedly worst. Social abuses which would not have been tolerated anywhere else were allowed here for quite a long time with characteristic apathy and indifference. So the one task which should have absorbed the energies of the enlightened classes—European as well as Indian—was to endeavour, earnestly, for the moral and social reform of the people of this region.

The reform of the society was foremost, for it was the most basic and potential unit of the state and as such deserved a preferential treatment for making improvements in the latter. The inner life must be made sound morally before an improvement in the outer one is desired of. A people with their women utterly ignorant and basically superstitious, trammeled with all the prejudices, subjected to cruel customs and usages, could never make a healthy impact on the outer life—be it a political one.

But on account of the complex nature of the social organisation and the long duration of the abuses in a rigidly conservative land like Rajasthan, the task of reform—of even the most simple and profile nature—was less encouraging. As every custom, however unintelligible and indefensible, had the sanctity of religion, so every attempt at reform was taken as an interference in religion and denounced as impious. The priestly class which always wielded an authority in special matters—as it still has—and whose interests could be maintained by maintaining these objectionable customs, brought their enormous influence on the ignorant masses to bear with them the task of
keeping the social structure and social usages intact lest reli-
gion might not be polluted by these so-called unsocial
changes. Hence the reforms had a very tough time to dive
deep into the depths of society. It was under these curious
circumstances that the British Political Agents initiated reforms.

The first Chapter deals with the system of infanticide. It
was nonetheless easy to secure its abolition, for the people
were strongly attached to the practice which was made double
difficult by the impossibility of domiciliary visits. It was found
that the inability to bear the expenses of wedding, combined with
the disgrace of keeping daughters unmarried, was one great in-
centive to infanticide. In Rajasthan, marriage was honourable
as honour itself but celibacy was regarded as most disgraceful.
The second Chapter deals with its abolition. The British officers
endeavoured to strike at the very root of the practice through
executive action by curtailing the enormous expenditure incurred
upon marriages. The Jaipur Regency Council issued positive
injunctions fixing the demands of Bhat's and Charans and other
religious sects and forbade them to receive any sum in excess
than the stipulated one. The Charans were also prohibited to
cross the state boundaries on occasions of marriages. At Jodhpur
Col. Sutherland succeeded in organising a system through
which the house-holders of a village agreed to pay the fair
demands of Bhat's and Charans. Though one difficulty had been
overcome but it afforded no remedy against the disgrace attend-
ing a family when a daughter remained unmarried after
attaining maturity. They, therefore, impressed upon the rulers
of Rajasthan to limit the sums to be appropriated in every case
at the time of marriage. In this way alone, they entertained
that female children would no longer be destroyed.

The third Chapter deals with the custom of Sati the sub-
ject of which is now so old that it has fairly become new. Every
one possessed of the most cursory acquaintance with the History
of Rajasthan must have heard of it. It had its rude beginnings
in selfishness, was supported by falsehood and ended in cruelty,
so much so that among the higher classes it was considered to
be an indication that the widow was wanting in affection, if
she attempted to evade the funeral pyre.

The fourth Chapter deals with its suppression. The policy
adopted by the British Governor-General viewed that putting a
stop to Sati altogether by coercion and authoritative interference was a measure too pregnant with danger to be attempted. He, however, allowed the Political Agents to try advice and admonition, deprecation and remonstrances on the sovereigns for its suppression. With the co-operation of some of the rulers the rite was declared illegal and punishment accorded to the abettors. But the major states, excepting Jaipur, showed reluctance for its abolition.

With the growing stock of British Political authority and its consequent repercussions on the States of Rajasthan, they adopted intimidation in reducing the salute of the sovereigns and dropping complimentary titles and phrases here-to employed in addressing them. An immediate effect was perceptible and the last citadel of orthodoxy surrendered inevitably, when the Maharana of Mewar declared it illegal in 1861. Some of these extreme measures were warranteed, but the evil was so firmly entrenched in the social set up of Rajasthan that only fierce action could eradicate it.

It is no small gratification to perceive that the most influential persons in Rajasthan began listening to the voice of humanity, and earnestly, if not cordially, seconded the benevolent ideas of the British officers. The credit for such resplendent success, unhesitatingly, goes to Col. Sutherland, Major Ludlow, Major Shakespeare, Seth Manik Chand and Bhat Shukaram.

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Udaipur,

R. K. Saxena
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CHAPTER 1
The System of Infanticide

Murder is the first specific crime noticed after the fall of man from his avowed state of innocence and righteousness; and in its form of infanticide it was practised by almost all the barbarous and civilized countries, at one time or the other, for reasons which were as different with each other as the character and circumstances of the inhabitants of different regions. But as a custom and practice in which it existed in India in medieval and modern times, it has no parallel. It is not like the sacrificial infanticide of the canaanites or the phoenecians who sacrificed their children for religious motives. It is also not the infanticide of the Spartans who killed their weak off-spring by the severity of discipline lest it should act as a hindrance, due to lack of physical power, in discharging the duties of the State. Again, it is not like that of the Arabs who buried their female off-spring under their altars to save them from falling into hostile hands and thereby defiled and dishonoured.

Nor is it like that of the Chinese who killed the children for fear of the overgrowth of population when means of subsistence may run short of the demands. It was a custom

2. This barbarous practice has frequently been reprobated in the holy Koran. It was closely linked up with their orthodox idea of becoming poor by fostering daughters or with their anxiety that their daughters may not prove to be a source of scandal by some undesirable feminine exuberances during their youth.
4. In Greece and Italy this practice was prevalent and even healthier, children were killed to maintain an effective population.—Malthus T. R.—Essay on Population, Vol. I, pp. 141-146.
peculiar to the Hindus in general and Rajputs in particular where "pride, poverty and avarice are in league with superstition to perpetuate the horrors." Pride of birth engendered and made hereditary by the Hindu social system coupled with the exorbitant expenditure made by the heavy demands of the Charans, at the time of marriages, resulted in such a horrible practice. The Rajputs of Kutch or Kathiawar or the sandy deserts of Rajputana practised it without any reason or rhyme on this score. The tribes of Meenas and Mahirs of Ajmer and Udaipur adopted it from them who were equally proud of their lineage as the Rajputs themselves. The Jats of Bharatpur practised it, for they took it as disgraceful to give their daughters in marriage to anyone.

The beginning of such a cruel custom, whether in India or Rajputana, could not be traced authoritatively. European scholars like Zeimier and Dalbruck\(^8\) relying upon 'Taithiriya Sarnhita' opine that it was prevalent in the ancient Hindu society but it simply refers that the birth of a daughter was not greeted with as much joy as that of a son which could not be termed as infanticide by any stretch of imagination. The undesirability of the birth of a female child has been as explicitly expressed in the ancient Hindu literature\(^8\) along with the rituals for ensuring the birth of a male child\(^10\) that one is likely to be confused to conclude the existence of the practice. If it had been prevalent during the times, the 'Smritis' must have outrightly condemned it, for the destruction of an embryo was taken by them as a most heinous crime.\(^11\)

5. Friend of India, 1818 No. IV, p. 103.
9. 'The wife is indeed a friend, the daughter is distress, (or humiliation) the son is light in the highest heaven. Quoted by Panigrahi. Dr. L.—British Social Policy and Female Infanticide in India, p. 2, Delhi, 1972.
The crime was not prevalent during the Vedic times, for the complexity of the Hindu social system did not exist as there was free-mixing, with all the freedom of inter-dining and inter-marriage amongst the four ‘Varnas’. The complicated system of castes with its elaborate rules and restrictions and the accompanying offensive privileges of the Brahmans had not yet taken its roots which was, in a great measure, responsible for its crude beginning. This is why mixed castes from marriages in and amongst different ‘Varnas’ are traceable in the texts of the later period. Manu, the great Hindu law-giver, specifically advises the king to award capital punishment to those guilty of killing a child and ‘Narada’ reasons that in the absence of a son the daughter would succeed. The only passage in the Hindu scriptures of the later age, which can in any degree, with the utmost stretch of sophistry, exterminate this practice is the solemn injunction on the parents to provide a match for their daughter so as to avert the present disgrace and future punishment attached to the negligence of this paramount duty. But it was becoming increasingly difficult to find suitable matches for their daughters on account of the complex system of social differentiations with the rigid system of caste and clans. It became more complicated when the ranking of different castes and clans of the Rajputs varied from place to place and the ranking of different sub-castes became disputable. As such, the field of selection of a bridegroom became strictly narrower to the disadvantage of the Rajputs as a whole. Marriage became a point of honour and celebacy regarded as a natural condition of an immoral life, led the Rajput society drift away. It was because of this that the daughters were not taken as a welcome addition to the family and the parents were anxious that no daughter be born to them. Sons are greatly hankered after by all

12. Tod, Col. James does not seem to be justified in tracing its origin from the Vedic times, for the exposure of children was current only in cases when a child was an illegitimate one which is being clandestinely practised in every country. Kane, P. V.—Op. cit. Vol. II, part I, p. 500.
13. Ibid. p. 510.
the tribes and castes of Rajputana, as elsewhere.\textsuperscript{15}

The increased complexity of society, due to social differences with innumerable divisions and sub-divisions of castes and classes, accompanied by the constant threats of invasions from Central Asia, resulted in the disruption of society and the Rajputs had a better share in it. Not only were they driven out from the fertile domains of the Doab but had to take refuge in the sandy deserts of Rajputana and elsewhere. Economically, they were ruined and socially, they were completely cut off from their base which made marriages more complicated and difficult in a race which claimed the highest lineage from the most remote times. The execrable pride in this origin with the determination to give no daughter in marriage excepting families of high rank and that too with an inflated nuptial

15. "Pendo bhalo na kos-ko, Beti Bhall na ek
Deno bhalo na bap-ko, Saheb rakha tek."

i.e., A journey on foot even for a 'kos' or two miles is not good nor even a single daughter. A debt even to father is not good (i.e. desirable). May God save us from this.


Vows are generally taken by a sonless couple to perform a ceremony called 'Neolo' in honour of the deity whose help is invoked to bless them with a son.

Dubois in 'Letters on Christianity in India', p. 186, remarks that a female in a Hindu family is despised by parents, friends and all others. This statement should be read cautiously. Had he contended himself by stating that the birth of a son or boy gives more joy than that of a girl, it would have been true for it is the weakness of all nations, castes and classes irrespective of the geographical barriers and specially for Hindu and Rajput parents. But, it sounds unjustified that a female is despised and spurned by her parents, as soon as born, for ample evidence has been provided by the letters of the Political Agents to the effect that infanticide was not practised in the Rathor and Kachawaha families of repute.


Again, it appears exaggerated that among the tribes of Rajputana every mother puts her child to death. (Dubois letters on Christianity in India, p. 206). This is a shocking slander contained in his statement, for had it been true it would have been utterly difficult to trace married Rajput 'Sepoys' in every battalion.
expenditure made Rajputs prefer murder their new-born daughters rather than surrendering their ill-conceived and superficial supremacy. And the Rajputs who assumed unchastity as the necessary condition of an un-married life, resorted to it. 16

Female infanticide was neither practised in the houses of Jaipur and Jodhpur, in the families of the sovereigns or their chiefs nor encouragement provided to it. 17 Among the lesser noteworthy families it prevailed in the house of Asoph. 18 The middle ranks imitated it from the higher ranks but the humblest orders comprising the great mass of Rajput population almost, invariably, preserved their daughters. Thus the problem was confined to a limited stock of Rajputs with excessive pride and poor means to support it.

The subject of female infanticide occupied the attention of the distinguished British officers who were in charge of the various agencies in Rajasthan. Capt. Ludlow, Col. Shakespear, Col. Sutherland and Capt. Burton took it seriously. The latter traced its origin to the great deviation from the laws of nature which more specifically distinguished the Rajputs.


L. Wilkinson holds that except 'Menas' no race pleads anything like divine authority for its execution. It appears that he was not well informed. Calcutta Review, Vol. II, 1844, p. 393.

17. The Marwar precise, p. 146.


It is said that the Thakur of Asoph, at the time of his daughter's marriage, made a vow that he would make good all the demands of the Charans, made upon him for a year. When every item of his belongings was exhausted, a 'Charan' demanded his head which he is said to have, at once, severed from his body himself. From that time onwards the descendants of the house began destroying their daughters. The Marwar Precis, p. 107.


These anevedotes abound more in romance than reality and certain other specific reasons were therefore responsible for adopting such a ruinous course of action.
and the artificial state of society in which they lived. The Rajputs were the only military class having no other occupation and never directed their attention\(^\text{19}\) to any other. Thus they were always exposed to danger and the rearing of their daughters may often have been a surmountable difficulty in their way and in some situation they may have proved an impediment to the profession of arms. When it was coupled with the economy of the sandy dunes of Rajputana where it was difficult to procure food for themselves and their families, the problem became more complicated. The daughter became a liability for them, economically as well as socially. The Rajput could never imagine that his women-folk should suffer a prey in the hands of the enemies and consequently be disgraced and dishonoured. This was why the Rajputs favoured ‘Sati’ and ‘Jauhar’ to save their fair sex from disgrace and dishonour. For this very reason they may have, therefore, adopted the practice of infanticide in some emergency, to their convenience and even to their safety\(^\text{20}\) or to a dreadful superstition as the means of appeasing the wrath, or of propitiating the favour of the Gods.

But the origin of infanticide in the Rajputs cannot be explained so lightly in the light of their being the warrior race alone and has to be merited in the light of other causes carrying a greater weightage. Wilkinson\(^\text{21}\) rightly observed: “Although religion nowhere authorises this barbarity, the laws which regulate marriages amongst the Rajputs, powerfully promote infanticide. Not only is inter-marriage prohibited between families of the same clan (campa) but between those of the same tribe (gotra); and though centuries may have intervened since their separation, and branches thus transplanted may have lost their original patronymic, they can never be regrafted on the original stem . . . . . . . Every tribe has therefore to look abroad to a race distinct from its own for suitors for the females.”

The class consciousness among the Rajputs, thus, led them


\(^{20}\) Peggs, J.—India Cries for British Humanity, p. 129, London, 1830.

to maintain strict adherence to family genealogy and, thus, sprang up sharp distinctions between superior and inferior lineages. As a matter of fact family genealogy became the touchstone of affinities and guardian of the laws of inter-marriage among the Rajputs. Their towering pride in their being superior in lineage never allowed them to contract marriages in families of inferior origin and status.\(^{22}\)

The inevitable result of such rank-consciousness was that all the tribes of the Rajputs clamoured for an equally high descent and lost the power of bartering with the supposed inferiors who with the passage of time were thrown into subordinate gradations, endlessly and capriciously diversified. Under such a social system no females of superior rank — superior in their own estimation — or in that of the community at large, ever thought of being contaminated by having marital relations with inferior ranks.\(^{23}\) So husbands of their daughters must be sought in superior families, who might be separated by long distances and this was often impracticable when coupled with the proverbial poverty of the Rajputs in affording marriage expenses. It rendered for them an absolute necessity of putting their daughters to death instead of being a victim of dishonour and disgrace which inevitably accompanied if their daughters remained unmarried after having attained a mature age,\(^ {24}\) varying with the times and age.

Reading in between the lines of family pride and fancied superiority there sprang up another discouraging fact in the unwillingness of the Rajputs to accept the daughters, etc., as wives so long as they were not accompanied by a large and fair dowry varying with the so-called status and gradation of the family of the bridegroom. This was a stumbling block par excellence and few could cross it with their limited and meagre means. Inability to advance the marriage portion demanded, prompted them to

\(^{22}\) Friend of India, August 1818 No. IV, p. 103,

\(^{23}\) Ibid.

\(^{24}\) (a) NAI : F & P., Dec. 18, 1842, cons. No. 294, from Capt. Ludlow, P. A. Jodhpur to Col. Sutherland, Agent G.G. for the States of Rajputana, dated June 29, 1842.

(b) Copper, John—The Three Presidencies of India, p. 421, London, 1853.
the commission of crime rather than submitting to the dreaded dishonour and degradation of an unequal alliance. In other cases the sums payable by the female side were unalterable, equal to the rich and poor. What precisely first established the payment is unknown but it was so sacred, inviolable that even a partial deviation was taken as disgraceful, so much so that the most necessitous of the tribe could not incur the imputation. The sums payable were beyond the means of many, that daughters remained unmarried even after attaining maturity. To save their skin from such a callous disgrace, they resorted to infanticide as the easiest way out. Not only this but the inveterate persuasion that all nuptials should be performed on a scale of magnificence, prescribed by hereditary usage and in proportion to the real or supposed rank of the contracting parties led the Rajputs to adopt this inhuman crime.

A mess of the inpalatable conditions was made worst by demands of the Charans and Bhats. The payments made to

26. Among the Meenas and Mahirs.
27. Lt. Col. Sutherland holds that Charans are wandering mendicants who assumed a religious character to serve their own purpose. They are perfectly illiterate and are not properly entitled to any sacred character yet they had gained an extraordinary influence over the superstitious Rajputs. They were instrumental in a great degree to the extension of the crime of female infanticide among the Rajputs by their extortionate demands for largess on the celebration of a marriage. B.A.: Ajmer Commissioner’s Office, Basta No. 130, File No. 1493 (210). 1848 A. D. ‘Exactions of Charans from Rajputs and other inhabitants’. From Lt. Col. Sutherland, Agent, G. G. for the States of Rajputana to H.M. Elliot Esq., Secy. to G. O. I. with G. G. dated Jan. 11, 1848. Qanungo K. R. holds that Charán is not a beggarly wandering ministerel but an esteemed and faithful companion of the Rajput sharing his ‘Amal’ (Opium) and half of his loaf in adversity and receiving his extravagant bounty in prosperity. Studies in Rajput History, p. 39, Delhi, 1960.

In Marwar there were two classes of Charans, namely, Barath Charans and Garwi Charans. The former were, originally, Bhats but sometimes during the period of Shivaji, the great, they were named Baraths and received the title of Charan. The village of Dumara in Nagor village of Mallani was granted to them in rent-free tenure. The
Bhats and Charans on a single marriage varied from 2/3 to 3/4 of a year's income excluding the expenses made on the feast spread for them.\(^{28}\)

In Marwar alone there were as many as 20,000 Charans and on occasions of nuptial ceremonies in the families of the principal nobles of the State as many as four to five thousand assembled and it became difficult to satisfy their demands.\(^{29}\) If their claims remained unsatisfied they wrote satires against them which when circulated brought a bad name to the family. Not content with satires alone, they adopted the practice of sacrificing their women and old men by burning or burying alive or wounding themselves. They, then, sprinkled blood upon the threshold of the persons at whose house the marriage was

latter class of Charans, originally, came from Kutch, where they had picked up a quarrel with the ruler. At the time of their immigration Jalor of Marwar was held by the ruler of Rehlanpur. He got them established on the banks of the river Luni. Both these classes of Charans assume themselves as above law and resent any interference by committing self-immolation. The Garwi Charans never accept charity as Barath Charans do.

\(^{28}\) NAI. : F & P., May 1877, cons. Nos. 273-80 Genl. B. The distribution of money to Charans and Bhats at the time of marriage is called 'Tyag'. The custom had its origin in the distribution of money among these classes at the pleasure of the bridegroom but soon it developed into a usage and touched such unprecedented heights that every Rajput who goes to marry is bound to satisfy the heavy and extraordinary demands of these people at any sacrifice.


One or two Charans coming from a village uniformly brought with them barbers, washermen and others numbering about twenty, all of whom they got enlisted as Charans when 'Tyag' was distributed. It was the practice with these Charans to retain what had been received on account of these persons who in reality were entitled to partake the marriage feast.
taking place and this all to extort their dues.\textsuperscript{30} As Charans were regarded at par with Brahman and cow\textsuperscript{31}, in purity, so their sacrifice was considered to rest on the heads of those whom they denounced.\textsuperscript{32}

Regarding the origin of infanticide among the Meenas in Rajputana, which was fortified by the force of sentiments, an interesting legendary tale was current among them. The traditional story reveals that in bygone days, Shalla, a descendant of Shoma, from whom Purriar Meenas\textsuperscript{33} sprang up, paid great reverence to God Mahadeo to whom he offered himself as a sacrifice. He was so much gratified at his devotion that he asked him to pronounce his own reward. Shalla requested that he be granted as many sons as the hairs of his head, which was instantaneously and unhesitatingly granted by the Supreme God. He severed his head in the heat of the moment, but then ill-luck began to take its toll. His daughter entered the temple and her shadow falling upon her father's headless trunk made the God so enraged that he cursed her and allowed Purriar Meenas to destroy their daughters.\textsuperscript{34} From that time onwards female infanticide was practised among the Meenas.

This is, in all, the background of the beginning of this atrocious practice among the Meenas, but such a background is undoubtedly inadequate to trace the history of a


While there were seven cases of 'Sati' reported in Marwar, as many as two hundred cases were reported of this nature in a year. Maharaja Takhat Singh sentenced some guilty Charans to seven-year imprisonment.


\textsuperscript{31} Qanungo, K. R. op. cit. pp, 39-40.

\textsuperscript{32} B.A.: Ajmer Commissioner's Office, Basta No. 130, file No. 1493 (Z 10) 1844 A. D.

Those sacrificed, whether men or women, are believed to be old persons belonging to their own community.

\textsuperscript{33} The Purriar Meenas inhabit the tract in the vicinity of Deolia. They are said to be a cross between the Purriar Rajputs of Mundore, in Marwar, and the aboriginal Meenas of Rajputana who are divided into 38 classes or families. The tribe professes to be of Rajput origin.

practice which involved the fate of numerous female children of this race. As such, there must have been different reasons which prompted the Meenas in favour of infanticide.\textsuperscript{35}

The Purriar Meenas have been more addicted to infanticide than even the Rajputs.\textsuperscript{36} They have had recourse to it in the belief that women born in their tribe are fated to bring disgrace to their families and sect. In justification of their superstitious belief they plead the authority of the Sati, who, while ascending the pile commanded it to its progeny and also of the goddess Bhawani herself who enjoined it.\textsuperscript{37}

Superstition as such was thus a potential factor for the Meenas to favour infanticide. But apart from it, like the Rajputs, the Meenas suffered from pride and to maintain it they

\textsuperscript{35} Poverty and the exorbitant expenditure which characterised the marriage ceremonies of other infanticidal tribes did not affect the Purriar Meenas as the Purriar Meena receives the money for his daughter if he decides to that effect. The price varied in accordance with the decision of the ‘Panchayat’, binding upon the parties. R.A.R., 1865-67, pp. 315-318.

\textsuperscript{36} Wilkinson obtained an accurate census of eleven villages which showed that the aggregate number of boys under twelve years of age was 369, and girls only 87, i.e., 282 or more than 3/4 of the girls were destroyed within a brief period of 12 years. In one village there were only 4 girls to 44 boys; in another 4 girls to 58 boys and in a third with a large population of boys no girls were seen at all. Calcutta Review, Vol. I. 1844, p. 383.

In Paplala, a Meena village near Jabazpur, there were found 22 boys but not a single girl in 1836. There were 60 girls to 103 boys in the four Meena villages of Bundi.

\textsuperscript{37} NAI: F & P., Jan. 23, 1837, cons. No. 17. From L. Wilkinson P. A., Kota to Lt. Col. Lockett., Agent to G. G. for the States of Rajputana. In 1860 when a census of all the Meena villages in Mewar, Jaipur and Bundi was taken it was found that the percentage of girls to boys among Meenas in Mewar was 28.88; in Jaipur 29.60 and in Bundi 53.23. Report on the Pol. Adm. of the Rajputana States for 1865-67, p. 317. The wife of a Purriar Meena in Bundi requested that she may order the punishment for Meenas for even theft and robbery but should not order that their daughters be preserved.


resorted to this practice. The family pride stood in the way to accept any match for the girl from families having inferior rank and as a natural corollary, infanticide was practised. This idle notion of superiority and pride played the most vital role in the socio-psychological behaviour of the Purriar Meenas in favour of infanticide.

Thus, in short, whenever and wherever there appeared no reasonable prospect of contracting suitable marriages for daughters on account of superficial motives of pride and superiority or the parents were not in a position to defray the customary nuptial expenses, or satisfy the demands of the Charans, there and then a resort to infanticide was made. These were the most vital factors to influence the socio-psychological behaviour of the Rajputs in favour of infanticide.

The divergent aims leading to infanticide resulted in the divergent methods culminating in the successful execution of the unwholesome practice depending upon the circumstances and availability of required necessities. The mode and method differed from region to region and so secretly executed that neither there was any reproach attached to it nor was the crime ever heard of by any one else excepting those close relatives present on the occasion. It was being executed in the interior of the ‘Zenana’ and the mother invariably remained as the core of the whole process. Bishop Heber relates that in Banswara a large vessel of milk was set in the chamber of the lying-in woman and if a girl was born, the infant was immediately plunged into it and before the new-born had an independent existence she was done away with life. Brown J.C. assumed that generally the Rajputs dug a hole, filled it with milk and the new-born baby, if

38. "Like the Rajput, the Purriar Meena possesses basic prejudices in marrying a female of his own class but may marry from among the numerous aboriginal classes of Meenas. It is taken as a degradation to allow one’s female child to ally himself with one of inferior blood. The term father-in-law is one of scorn and reproach and the man who bears this relationship is looked upon with contempt and treated as an inferior by the bridegroom, while it is at the same time, considered disgraceful if a girl, after attaining mature years, remains unmarried." R.A.R. 1865-67, p. 315.

a girl, was quickly drowned in it. Some even dispensed with the milk and buried the infants alive. Another mode prevalent among the Rajputs was to put the unbilical cord tightly round the throat and the infant was strangled at its first gap. In Mewar the female child used to be kept without nourishment till she died or stifled her by filling the mouth with ashes.

The customary practice was that the father handed over a pill of ‘Bhang’ to an attendant which was immediately placed in the roof of the infant’s mouth which she roled down with saliva and the circle was complete. If this was not possible, then the mother’s breast was smeared either with a preparation of juice of the ‘Datura’ (Datura Alba) or the poppy which the infant took with the first drought of milk and retired for an everlasting sleep. Such was the ill-fate of the daughters born in a Rajput family.

A total silence on the part of the husband was considered to imply that the child, if a daughter, should be put to death. If the husband wished—that too very rarely—to preserve a daughter, his order was unchallengeable but if the mother entertained a similar desire, while the husband manifested any repugnance to comply, death was inevitable. Sometimes the mothers killed their daughters all by themselves only to show their devotion to family and thereby feel honoured by fulfilling a traditional duty.

Whatever the practice adopted by the Rajputs, it is by no means defensible and the striking note is that the mother whose infant has been drawn from herself played an active and decisive role in it. Though human sympathy and generosity of the Indian woman is proverbial—be they be Rajputs or others—yet social factors acting in collusion with the pride of the Rajput race made her so callous that she destroyed her own off-spring in one way or the other.

The disposal of the dead body was usually done by the female attendant (Dal) of the family or else the same was executed by the slave girl in well-to-do families. As death was taken

41. Friend of India, August 1818, No. IV, p. 103.
42. Brown, J. C.—op. cit. pp. 5-6.
to be an infallible consequence of her birth and was considered to be an event of insignificance, so it was attended by no ceremony and given the least publicity. So secretly it was carried out that excepting the inmates of the 'Zenana' nobody ever heard of it. Natural affection for a daughter-child was thus overcome by socio-psychological and socio-economic factors.

If such a pitiable condition was the tune of the times, it required an instantaneous dose of reform to stop it from further deterioration. Reforms were inevitable but the time to strike at, had not matured. The decline of the Mughal Empire was followed by the forcible intrusion of the Maratha power which shattered the political fabric of Rajasthan. Practically, the whole of the eighteenth century was a tale of plunder and rape for Rajasthan at the hands of the Marathas. They were intensely coiled in its body-politic without showing any signs of abatement. The land of the Rajputs was almost in a state of dissolution—political, economic, social and moral.

The period from the close of the eighteenth century to the first quarter of the nineteenth century was one of crucial transition in the history of Rajasthan. Not only contests between Sindhia's lieutenants were fought on this soil but again in the Second Anglo-Maratha war the fortunes of Rajputana came to be virtually linked up with the vicissitudes of the war and it served as the battle-ground for the British and Maratha armies. Soon the internecine war for the fair hand of the princess of Mewar, Krishna Kumari, and the turmoil regarding the legitimacy of Dhonkal Singh flared up and Rajputana was ablaze with fire and destruction everywhere. The indomitable Maratha chieftains lived upon the spoils of the war and the British policy of non-intervention in the contest for supremacy contributed, largely, to political chaos. Whatever remained was

44. The contest for supremacy between Ambaji Inglia and Lanka Dada from 1792-1803 was fought on the soil of Rajasthan which brought untold havoc and misery to Rajputana in general and Mewar in particular culminating in the depredations of Holkar at the holy shrine of Nathdwara.


45. Krishna Kumari was the daughter of Maharana Bhim Singh of Udaipur and reputed to be extremely beautiful.
ravaged by an uncapricious man like Amir Khan\textsuperscript{46} with whose name destruction and devastation was closely knit in Rajputana\textsuperscript{47}. Placed in a situation like this it was neither feasible nor advisable for the Rajput Rajas to think of abolishing such a practice when their own house was ablaze with fire. The cut-throat rivalry among the nobles of the various capitals vis-a-vis the sovereign contributed no less to this drama of devastation and drudgery so that the Rajput States mortgaged their independent existence to the East Indian Company in lieu of peace and security.

Though treaties with most of the Rajput States were signed by the end of 1818\textsuperscript{48}, yet without an atmosphere of peace and tranquillity—necessary preliminaries for bringing a social change—the political agents could not work out their cherished ideas. The prejudices of the princes, insolence and refractory spirit of the nobles, corruption and inefficiency had to be tackled first. Col. Tod and Ochterloney devoted themselves doggedly to the task and could set the ball in motion. The restoration of normal conditions created an atmosphere when reforms could be talked of. But then the British policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of the Rajput States, as provided in the treaties, came as a stumbling block. But with the passage of time the clauses of the treaties lost their glamour, for it was difficult—if not impossible—to divide the whole structure into water-tight compartments as to the suitability of their being internal or external in nature. The relations of the Rajput States with the Company came to be determined only by the words of the treaties. Yet the Company was hesitant to

\textsuperscript{46} Amir Khan, born in Hijra year 1182 (May 6, 1769) was the second son of Muhammed Hyat Khan who was a Pathan of the Salar-zai tribe. In 1797 he came into contact with the Marathas. Often pitiless and brutal, he was at other times frank, affable and even good-honoured. His audacity and fame in predatory warfare marked him out as a fit auxiliary of Jaswant Rao Holkar.

\textsuperscript{47} Ibid, pp. 229-259

\textsuperscript{48} The Hada State of Kota was the first to sign the treaty on Dec. 25, 1817 followed by Jodhpur on Jan. 6, 1818 and Jaipur on April 2, 1818. The State of Sirohi accepted the treaty obligations by Sept. 1823. The Rajput States were then freed from the day-to-day ravages to which they were subjected at the hands of the Marathas, Amir Khan and the Pindaris. Ibid, pp.254-59.
interfere directly in the so-called religious affairs of the States and wanted to act through the executive heads. Thus, the first quarter of the nineteenth century was more or less a period of sowing which was, inevitably, to be followed with watering to reap a ripe harvest.

Col. Walker, as early as March 1808, observed that the Rathor Rajputs of Jaipur and Jodhpur practised infanticide but when this fact was reported in Europe it was initially doubted and ultimately denied. 49 But Col. Walker confirmed it from intelligent well-informed Rajputs and concluded that there was no ground for questioning its existence but tracing it correctly happens to be a difficult undertaking as the Hindu ‘Zanana’ remains unapproachable and is impenetrable.

Still Wilkinson, in 1836, on being told by an intelligent native, reported that as many as 20,000 infants were annually destroyed in Malwa and Rajputana. Another responsible gentleman 50 calculated that the number of infants put to death in Malwa and Rajputana would come to fifty cases annually. 51 He argued that the practice of infanticide was limited to Rajput chiefs of high rank and low means. These two, diametrically opposed estimates of an average of 55 cases per day and 50 cases annually, naturally gave rise to suspicion as to the enormity of the crime in Rajputana.

According to the returns furnished by Wilkinson, it appears that 59 per cent of the females born were destroyed by their parents. John Bax, who enquired from the chiefs of Banglee, and who according to his own estimation was a trust-worthy person, concluded that infanticide did not prevail to the extent calculated by Wilkinson. Had it been so, the Rajputs would have faced tremendous difficulties in procuring wives for their sons, but more in procuring husbands for the few daughters brought up by them. At the same time polygamy was much in fashion among the Rajputs and if the

49. a) J. Peggs-op. cit., p. 126
    b) Wilson, J. History of the Suppression of Infanticide in Western India, p. 73.
returns furnished by Wilkinson had the air of correctness, the Rajput's sacrilege could have been easily written off with all the plots and counter-plots which polluted the entire atmosphere of virgin sincerity and heavenly sacredness so commonly witnessed among the Rajput families.

It is also well established that the high-born Rajputs looked upon the birth of a son as a heavenly blessing and that of a daughter as a curse and misfortune. The former event is ostentatiously promulgated while the latter is passed over in silence or even studiously concealed. As such, it again became more difficult to form a correct judgement as to the proportion of girls to boys. It is also note-worthy that a great proportion of the Rajput chiefs owing to their debauching and excessive use of opium are denied the natural rights of procreation and hence obliged to have recourse to adoption to continue their lineage and so the births of sons would be numerous than those of daughters.

John Bax remarked that it would be unfair to infer that every female child born under a Rajput roof whose birth has been concealed is put to death, for among Rajputs it is a common practice to give away their girls to be brought up in less noble but more wealthy families.\(^{52}\)

Rao Raja Rai Mul, the Jodhpur Vakeel in 1841, informed that there were three to four hundred cases of female infanticide annually in Marwar before the prohibitory rule was enacted.\(^{53}\)

The conflicting statements as a result of the seclusion in which Rajput families of rank live, confuse the whole setting and it became doubly difficult to form a correct estimate of the number of female births and the number which were put to death, for every female was not inevitably subjected to the same fate of meeting the death at the very gates of birth. The estimate of Wilkinson appears to be exaggerated, for if the practice had been so thoroughly prevalent among the Rajputs of Malwa and Rajputana, it could not have passed unnoticed from the discerning eye of the British Residents for such a long time.

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\(^{52}\) Ibid.

\(^{53}\) NAI, F & P., Dec. 28, 1842 cons. No. 295. Tr. of a note in reply from Rao Raja Rai Mul, the Jodhpur Vakeel, to the address of the Political Agent, dated June 2, 1842.
However, in the absence of any accurate census it is really impossible to determine with precision the aggregate of females that perished annually from the cruel practice of infanticide in Rajasthan.

The Rajputs were conscious of feeling the sting of sin incurred by resorting to infanticide and so they performed penitential rituals to absolve them from it. Wilkinson reported that “the poverty and brutalized hardihood of the Rajputs has reduced this expiation to the ‘Seedha Surunjani or a single meal of flour to the family Purohit or Priest.”\(^{54}\) The Rajput themselves then breathed a sigh of relief of having been relieved of their sin.\(^{55}\)


CHAPTER 2

Abolition of the System

Attempts, even before the advent of the Britishers, were made to eradicate this evil which were not met with success but on the other hand established its prevalence. Though it was practised less in Jaipur yet Maharaja Jai Singh, to eradicate it, asked his Rajput subject to repair to the capital and perform the marriages of their daughters under state supervision to avoid harassment on account of the mounting demands of the Charans. He also legislated to reduce the marriage expenses to a single year’s income of the chief.¹ In the absence of recorded history it is difficult to decide if these regulations had any healthy effect on the suppression of the practice but one can fairly conclude that it established, beyond doubt, the prevalence of it among the Rajputs of Jaipur. The struggle which the British authorities had to undergo in eradicating it from the soil of Rajputana once again decides the issue of its prevalence though without any statistics regarding its extent.

Bakhat Singh, the Maharaja of Jodhpur, adopted another course of action, for it was well-nigh impossible to get the marriages solemnized at the capital due to lack of proper provisions in a sandy area. He issued specific instructions regulating the demands of the Bhatas and Charans on occasions of marriages to be paid by the bride’s father in proportion to his income according to a regulated scale.²


2. The Patels were to pay Rs 45 on every Rs 1000 of Rekh. It was to be distributed in a way so that Charans may . . . . receive Rs 25; the Bhatas Rs 15 and the Dhooles Rs 5. Those whose Rekh:
In case of inability to pay the required sum, the deficit was to be made good by the State by imposing a tax on the residents of the village to which the bride belonged. In case the amount still fell short of the stipulated demands, the deficit was made good from the State treasury. Both the recipient and the deliverer were to be punished according to State laws if they demanded more than what was their due or the Rajput sardars paid them more to satisfy their vanity. Maharaja Bijay Singh even forbade the movements of the Bhatas and Charans beyond the State, for he took the exorbitant demands of this class to be solely responsible for the practice, which increased directly in proportion to their growing number on occasions of marriages.

The Raja of Partapgarh and the Rawal of Banswara prohibited the practice within their respective territories before the advent of the nineteenth century. In some families of lesser note the practice was also given up before the British authorities began showing an interest in the problem.

The Maharana of Udaipur, in 1831, had issued a proclamation prohibiting female infanticide among the Meenas of Jahazpur, but it appears that it could not be effectively enforced. The Meenas were a wild and turbulent race and did conceal the fact of committing infanticide among their families. Instead, they took pride in destroying their daughters or female newborn so much so that sometimes the number touched three in a single family. The Maharana forbade this practice on peril of punishment but provided a favourable consideration for those

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exceeded or fell short of it were to adjust accordingly.
F & P., Nov. 20, 1847 cons. No. 78 From J. Ludlow to Col. Sutherland, dated Oct. 30, 1847.
6. In 1876, V.S., the widow of Sultan Singh of Nimaj, while ascending the funeral pyre pronounced a curse upon her descendants and from that time onwards the prohibition has been respected in the family.
7. NAI.: F & P., Dec. 28, 1855, cons. Nos. 118-30 op. cit. Sir Henry Lawrence reported that there were 2441 females to 5911 boys inspite of the orders of the Maharana.
who would preserve their daughters.8

In general the practice was never encouraged by the
sovereigns of the different States of Rajputana, for in 1844 the
rulers of Udaipur, Banswara, Pratapgarh and Dungarpur
denied its existence among Rajputs residing in their domi-
nions.9 That these sovereignsalong with their important and
influential chiefs of their states possessed grown-up daughters10
was ample testimony to prove their bona fide.11 Though the
above statement stands true in a sense yet with all that it
does not form the crux of the problem. The practice was more
or less confined to the Rajputs and other races with high rank
coupled with less income who formed the bulk of the popula-
tion. If it did not reach the hearth of the chiefs and influen-
tial nobles, they constituted a very microscopic minority of the
state and as such could be fairly neglected when counting the
scores.

The work of the British Residents, in Rajasthan, was
made easier, for on the one hand J. Poynder at a meeting
of the General Court of Proprietors, in March 1827, carried
a resolution to the effect that it was the duty of the paternal
government to interfere for their prevention.12 On the other
hand the sovereigns of Rajasthan not only discouraged it but
accorded their willing cooperation in eradicating it. The Rulers
of Kota and Bundi, where Wilkinson happen to be the
Agent, were even prepared to go out of the way in giving
moral boosting to the British authorities. This naturally
encouraged Wilkinson and his successors in the various States
of Rajasthan to endeavour, earnestly, for its subjugation. Lord

8. NAI : F & P., Jan. 23, 1834, cons. No. 17. From L. Wilkinson to
Lt. Col. Lockett, dated April 26, 1833.
Mewar to C. Thoresby offg. Agent to G.G. for the States of
Rajputana.
Deogarh had grown-up unmarried female members.
11. NAI : F & P., Jan. 4, 1844, cons. No. 41. Tr. of a Kharita from
Maharana Swaroop Singh of Udaipur, dated Dec. 27, 1843.
12. NAI: F & P., Jan. 4, 1844, cons. No. 42. Tr. of a Kharita from
Samut Singh of Pratapgarh, dated Dec. 29, 1843.
William Bentick, the Governor-General, who had his lessons in the evangelical movement and was a utilitarian, highly approved of the policy adopted by Kota, Bundi and Udaipur and addressed congratulatory letters to them impressing upon them the desirability of effacing such a scar from the fair face of the Rajputs. He was jubilant at the attitude of the Maharana, being the highest in rank among the Rajputs, for his philanthropic attitude and wished that the proclamation may be equally applicable on all classes irrespective of caste and creed.

The British Residents thus concluded that the evil existed by compulsion among the highest ranks through the extortions of the Charans at the time of marriages and by

13. Utilitarians believed that human society is prone to change and this could be effectively brought through the means of Education and Law. Hence it was necessary, explicitly, to diffuse the ideology of utilitarianism among thinking people, who occupied pivotal positions in the decision-making bodies. For Bentham, human mind was like a 'Tabula-rasa' on which fingers of instruction could move freely transforming the human society. If nothing comes out through persuasion and propaganda in the mitigation of the evils then coercive measures may be adopted to have the desired results.

14. In Bundi it was prevalent among the Solanki Rajputs and the semi-Rajput tribe of Meenas.

NAI: R. R. File No. 3 in No. 58 of 1848. From P. A. Haroutl dated March 9, 1848.

Solanki Rajputs discontinued the practice when one of the Solanki Rajputs was expelled from Bundi on being found guilty of the crime. Though attempts were made by the powerful sardars to undo it but the Rao Raja remained firm in his decision. This exemplary punishment had its desired result. As such after 1846 it prevailed only among the Meenas.


16. Ibid.

17. The extortions of the Charans had attained dingy heights and they exerted such an unblemished influence on the fair minds of the Rajputs that they dared not oppose their demands. The Charans resorted to all sorts of practices in getting their demands acceded by them. Apart from wounding themselves—a practice usually adopted
immolation rather than of necessity among the middle ranks who have been less scrupulous than the higher ranks in finding equal alliances for their daughters and are also less subject to the extortions of the Charans. The lowest order comprising the greater part of the Rajput population, preserved their daughters almost invariably and could find matches without and difficulty.¹⁸ In Jaipur, too, the Kachwaha and Shaktawat Rajputs considered it a detestable crime.¹⁹ It was mostly prevalent among the Bhumia Tomar Rajputs and other Ranas of inferior origin and the ruler has been all the while acting in putting a stop to it. Thoresby, in 1844, reporting on the general prevalence of it in Rajasthan remarked that the practice was common and that it is on the decline as compared to early years.²⁰

Having an idea of the magnitude of the practice prevalent in Rajasthan, the British Residents decided to go slowly but steadily. With the declared policy of non-interference in the religious concerns of the Rajput States, the British Residents rightly viewed that a complete reform would not be brought about except with the cooperation of the protracted States ²¹ and that the Rajput character with a base of fidelity and honest dealing²² was certainly susceptible of

by them to acquiesce their extortionate demands they had even recourse to human sacrifices, usually the old and the wrinkled, the blame for which was laid on the weak shoulders of the Rajput refusing their demands. It had attained such a magnitude that the number of lives lost in the process far exceeded the number of suttees which took place in Marwar annually.


²². J. Sutherland reported that "It is perhaps an unusual thing to say,
improvement, but this improvement should neither be time-barred nor should it be thrust upon them. Improvement by interference would naturally result first in demoralising and degrading the sovereigns which would destroy more than what it could preserve otherwise. As the rulers of these states have had many occasions when they required the good-will of the British representatives and were anxious to cultivate it. So it should be through their officers that some good, if not the whole, could be achieved or through the assembly of the panchayats. The suggestion of Wilkinson of exerting moral influence for its discouragement was highly approved by the court of Directors by commending those who were known to abstain from it and neglecting those who committed it or

but I say it with pride and pleasure that in the four years of my political control over the chiefs and people of Rajputana, I do not remember any instance of any important matter of false dealing or one in which I have been deceived in my personal intercourse with any of them, nor should I expect such, were I to remain four years longer amongst them.


This being the assessment of the Rajput character, the British authorities were naturally inclined to adopt a policy of bringing a change in their attitude and of initiating reforms in a way which may not adversely affect their feelings.


The P.A. Mewar from his past experiences viewed that such an assembly could be attended with no favourable results. In case where infantidal tribes belonged to a certain specified region, the policy of acting through the heads was adopted successfully as in the case of Meenas of Ajmer. But the pre-condition was the density of these tribes located in a specified area. This could not be held true when speaking of Rajasthan as a whole.

25. (a) NAI. : F & P., May 16, 1838, cons. No. 30. Pol. letters from Secy. of State,

(b) NAI. : F & P., July 22, 1844, No. 23 Pol. letters to the Secy. of State.

26. NAI. : F & P., Pol. despatch from the court of Directors, dated April 12, 1854 No. 11.
who were known to approve the commission of such a
serious act.\textsuperscript{27} The British representative was to exert this
influence by the general tone and character of his conduct, by
the tone of justice and good faith and by his friendly advice
given to the sovereign whenever opportunity afforded it. It
should not be giving authoritative advice and directions or
by hearing appeals against the local government. The less
actual interference was exercised by the British authorities, the
more powerful and efficient would be the moral interference or
influence for neither any requisition made on the sovereign
nor any favour asked of him.\textsuperscript{28}

The success of the scheme depended on how the British
authorities could exert upon the sovereigns and chiefs of
Rajputana and also the attitude which the latter adopted
towards these British authorities. The relations naturally
varied from state to state, and from person to person depending
on the personal equation which they could establish between
themselves. However, the influence was clearly visible in states
which were strife-ridden, for the sovereign or the chief acting
under the advice of the British authorities could not have the
rudacity of disapproving their personal and friendly advice on
one issue of the state while accepting it in the other. Though no
political obligations stood in the way, yet for a clear adminis-
tration he had to depend on the British authorities. Parti-
scularly where there was a council of regency, the influence of
the British authorities was clearly marked, for he was supposed
to run the administration in the name of the minor with nomi-
nated representatives. The British representatives thought it
well to adopt persuasive methods rather than of resorting to
prohibitory punishments. It was, nonetheless, possible, for
he crime was not easily detectable due to the seclusion of the
Rajput ‘Zenana’.\textsuperscript{29}

\textsuperscript{27} NAI.: Pol. letters to the Secy. of State, dated July 22, 1844, No.11.
Esq., British Resident, Delhi.
\textsuperscript{29} BA.: Ajmer Commissioner’s Office Records, file No. 7 of 1870. From
Major Brooke to Secy. N.W.P., dated August 18, 1870.
Brooke viewed that the crime can be prevented by discouraging the
heavy expenses incurred on marriage and careful enquiries of those
families and groups in which there was not a fair proportion of girls.
In pursuing this policy the British representatives were fortunate to get the willing cooperation of the sovereigns, rulers and chiefs of Rajputana, and a three-edged attack was launched. The limits of the demands of the Charans and Bhatas were specified, the marriage expenses were curtailed and the movements of this mendicant class was restricted within their own States and the proclamations were issued to that effect by the leading States of Rajputana which the minor States had no hesitation in adopting. Female infanticide came to be regarded as a crime against Nature and God by the Rajput inhabitants of Marwar. Five of the most influential barons of Marwar refrained from such practice and allowed the Charans to collect what was prescribed by the State under its seal. But the difficulty with the proclamations was that they soon died out and their impact was just momentary. Lt. Col. Sutherland held the view, in 1848, that the proclamations regarding prohibiting the deplorable crime were ineffectual in its prevention and some good could be attained by some sumptuary laws like that of Jaipur and Jodhpur, reducing the marriage expenses and facilitating marriages so that girls may not remain unmarried. The former had been promulgated at a number of times but the latter one was of a delicate nature and so delicately touched

30. This was in striking contrast to the experiences gained by Alexander Walker when attempting to eradicate it in Kathiawar. He could get no cooperation from the Jahreja chief of Kathiawar and the Rao of Kutch.


Wilkinson, as early as 1836, also did not believe in the Rajas and chiefs. But he admitted that they would be a little useful in initiating the reform, for the fear of exposure to some superior authority would always act in securing the enforcement of such public declaration and would deter the Rajputs, committing the crime, in making it an honourable undertaking. Wilkinson also favoured sumptuary laws such as the reduction of expenses incurred on the marriages which would go a long way in removing the causes of infanticide.

the sentiments of the nobility that legislation was not possible in this. The British authorities thought that the customs die hard specially in a conservative society like that of the Rajputs, however, they may be prone to change and reform, so it would be worthwhile to educate the general masses in eradicating it. The policy of awarding those who preserved their daughters was adopted in the case of those classes where the practice had been adopted by sheer imitation and adoption alone.

Lord Auckland, who became the Governor-General after William Bentick also favoured the diffusion of education as the only effectual means of putting this practice to an end but the British representatives wanted to dive deep in rooting out the evil. Lord Auckland encouraged Col. Sutherland by writing privately to him as to the importance which he attached to the abolition of infanticide, etc. Sutherland to whom it was as abhorrent as to Lord Auckland, later on, admitted the importance of the Governor-General’s letter in providing him an additional impetus to search for the prohibition made earlier in the territory of Marwar and to exert himself more decisively in it.

When Sutherland proposed a legislation for the prevention of infanticide in Marwar he could find that a rule was already in vogue which was instituted by Maharaja Bijay Singh in 1763


Wilkinson had a plan of setting up an Infanticide Fund for the purpose of awarding rewards to those chiefs who aided the government in suppressing it and the expenses to be meted out from the retrenchment made in the establishment of the Grassia Horse.

34. NAI. : F & P., Aug. 1, 1836 op. cit. But this plan was neither acceptable to G.G. on the G.O.D, who reviewed that moral force and friendly advice should be the basis of the policy. The C.O.D. realised that the problem in Rajputana was entirely different from that of the Jahre as of Kathiawar and as such should be treated differently. So they approved the policy of Sutherland of reducing the demands of the mendicant classes which he termed as the ‘Marwar System.’


36. Ibid. The prohibition was made in 1763 A.D.
but which had fallen into disuse and as such he had only to make it a lively rule once again. The Maharaja by his proclamation dated Chaitra Budi 8, 1821 V.S. (1763 A.D.) had instructed the Parganah Hakims that the practice of female infanticide was most derogatory and in order to stop it completely, every ‘Pattiat’ and Rajput would pay Rs 45/- on every Rs 1000 of ‘Rekh’ which would vary according to the schedule of ‘Rekh’, i.e., increasing in proportion when the ‘Rekh’ increases and vice versa. The ‘Tyag’ dues were to be paid by the bride’s father. An engagement to that effect was also proposed to be taken by the Bhats and Charans that they would not demand more than the stipulated amount and in case of breach, the law would be free to take its own course. The rule was provided with a double edge and asked the ‘Pattiat’ to pay accordingly and in case of abrogation of the law they were to be banished from Marwar. He laid the responsibility on the ‘Paragana Hakims’ in executing these rules and threatened to punish them for their negligence.

Accordingly, the Charans and Bhats vide Maharaja’s letter dated Phalgun Budi 2, 1821 V.S. were instructed to sign the deed. They declared that in case any one of them demanded more than what was specified he would be excommunicated. To facilitate the smooth distribution of the ‘Tyag’ dues, the chief Charan was authorised to collect the amount and distribute it among others. Any violation of the rule in collecting money other than through the chief Charan would amount to breach of laws and as such they would be held

37. NAI: F&P., Pol. letters from the Secy. of State, dated Sept. 21, 1842, No. 16.
38. Out of this Rs 25 to Charans; Rs 15 to Bhats (Purun Bhat, Rs 8 and Bhulede Bhat Rs 7); and Rs 5 to the ‘Dholee’ (drummer).
39. The Rajputs and the ‘Pattiats’ were in the habit of paying more to satisfy their vanity so that the future progeny may come to know of their benevolent attitude through the composition of ballads made current by the Bhats and Charans.
41. Ibid.
Burut Kerea, Sandoo, Adote, Assee, Kowla, Mondura, Melun, Sutus, Rutnow, Sondaya, Bhusso, Mehroo, Boga, Maroo, Goonoo, etc., signed it.
guilty by the ‘Panchyat’ and the ‘Durbar’.

But in the present set of circumstances when the British government had acute differences with Marwar, no decisive step could be thought of. However, when in 1839, normalcy was restored in the relationship, then Sutherland along with Ludlow, in their private intercourse with Maharaja Man Singh impressed upon him the attitude of the higher British authorities in regard to infanticide and their own abhorrence to such an obnoxious practice. The Maharaja was impressed by their humanitarian approach and a favourable atmosphere seemed to carry the legislation prohibiting the crime. The same year when a code of rules was in the way of being framed for the better government of Marwar, a law was also proposed prohibiting the practice in ‘Raj.’ The heads of Bhtags and Charans were assembled in the legislative tent and Sutherland impressed upon them that the British government in conformity with the prejudices of the Rajputs had abstained themselves from the slaughter of kine, and from the killing of peafowl and pigeons and other beasts and birds sacred to them and in turn expected that the Rajputs also, as a matter of grace, put a stop to the practice of infanticide which was looked upon by the British authorities as a disgrace on their doings. The Rajputs solemnly bound themselves not to kill their daughters and the Bhats and Charans agreed to accept the ‘Tyag’ dues as laid down in accordance with the income of the individuals concerned. The Bhats and the Charans bound themselves to

42. NAI. : F&P., August 12, 1841, cons. No. 43, Encl., dated Jan. 3, 1841, From J. Sutherland to J.H. Maddock Secy. to G.O.I, Sutherland also favoured abolishing ‘Sati’ along with infanticide but the feelings of the Rajputs were so strong in respect to ‘Sati’ that no argument could convince them against it. The Rajputs though conceded that no sanction from the holy scriptures was traceable in favour of infanticide but in case of Sati it has been provided therein.


44. NAI. : Agent G.G. for the States of Rajputana to H.M. Elliot, Secy. G.O.I with G.G., dated May 1, 1847. It declared that a jagirdar with an annual income of Rs 1000 would pay Rs 25; the ‘Bhumis’ (holding land in lieu of service) Rs 10; and others who were not landed proprietors would pay Rs 5 to the Charans. Similarly Bhats would be paid Rs 9, 5 and 4 in the same order. The Jagirdars with an annual income of Rs 1000 would pay Rs 5 to the drummers.

BA. : Khas Rukka Parwana Bahi No. 9, P. 28; Kharita Bahi No. 13,
accept the dues accordingly. They even confessed of collecting a better sum under such a system rather than working at random and often at cross-purposes. They assured that infanticide would cease to exist by introducing these rules. Even Sutherland seemed to be satisfied with the inclusion of this article in the code of rules and was convinced that infanticide would meet a natural death.

The Maharaja, in October 1843, got some of the rules inscribed on marble slabs and got them installed in district headquarters of his ‘Raj’ and a breach of these laws was declared punishable by the State.

Capt. Ludlow expressed that the prohibition has been generally obeyed and though on occasions some excessive amount has been paid to the Bhats and Charans but they were voluntary in nature and were never extorted. He also reported that the Jodhpur government was exerting in a praise-worthy manner in preventing its subjects to give excess money than what was fixed by the rules.

The Court of Directors was happy to note that the law has been enacted taking into confidence the Rajputs, Bhats

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45. NAI. : F&P., Dec. 28, 1842, cons. No. 295, dated June 2, 1842. Tr. of a note in reply from Rao Raja Rao Mul, the Jodhpur Vakeel to the address of the P.A. Ibid. They were believed to have said that by the operation of the said article their income would be doubled. The promulgation relived a number of chiefs who had been under the constant worry of being exposed by the Charans who composed satires against them.

Col. Review., Vol. 1, 1844, p. 419.


48. BA., Kharita Bahi No. 10, p. 364.

49. NAI. : F&P., cons. No. 30 of 1834. Despatch from the C.O.D.
and Charans, and as it was with their willing consent so it would be executed more honourably and effectively than the one imposed upon them. On the one hand they directed Sutherland that the aforesaid arrangement may be circulated among other political officers and on the other hand they showed their eagerness for its execution with the natural results that followed it.

At first it appeared to be all favourable when Rao Raja Rai Mul informed that Bhyrjee Bharut, the judicial officer among the Charans, reported that the Charans had been accepting what was lawful and if at times the money was paid in excess it was all with the free-will of the donor. But in the years immediately following the proclamation when marriages in the rank families of Jodhpur took place and though the amount paid to the Charans on these occasions was over and above the prescribed limits, yet when compared with the past it amounted anything between 2/3 and 3/4 of a year's income. The amount was about one-half of the minimum which they paid in the past. It led Capt. Ludlow to believe, and believe rightly that the payments were really voluntary. In the case of Ahwa Thakur the Charans were content to receive their dues according to the stipulated rates. Ludlow collected the statistics of the four rank families of Marwar and assuming that the aggregate receipts of Marwar Jagirdars did not exceed 3/5

50. The Charans were summoned to the agency on June 1, 1842 and were admonished against any departure from the prescribed enactment to which they responded favourably and issued instructions to their fellow Charans in Marwar. The Sardars agreed to impeach any one who having obtained in excess failed to report it to the authorities.


Once the plan of restricting the dues of Charans, etc., was accepted by the Charans and Bhats of Jodhpur, where there were as many as 20,000 of the species, it was easier to get it accepted by other leading States of Rajputana, viz., Jaipur and Udaipur, for without their close co-operation the plan could not be or forced.


of the established ‘Rekh’, concluded that it was paid not so much as it was paid earlier. It is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Thakurs</th>
<th>Amount of ‘Rekh’</th>
<th>Produce 3/5 of the ‘Rekh’</th>
<th>Amount paid to Charans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Ahwa</td>
<td>40,400</td>
<td>24,240</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Bahadrahjun</td>
<td>31,950</td>
<td>19,170</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Rakh</td>
<td>25,100</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Ghanerao</td>
<td>60,550</td>
<td>36,330</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Though the excess payment as against the stipulated ones had been made by the chiefs voluntarily yet the members of the council and respectable Rajputs with whom Ludlow had a chance to converse pleaded for indulgence on behalf of the chiefs and impressed upon him that the evil would be rooted out by degrees. Ludlow himself held that prejudices which had been the part of the social life in Rajasthan for centuries could only be mitigated slowly and steadily. He believed that once the principle had been acknowledged by the rank and file of the Rajput nobility of Marwar and abstained from the evil, the precedent would soon be adopted by others too. It was advisable to use persuasion rather than pressure in correcting it. He maintained that checks may be introduced from time to time to suit the exigencies of the situation. He was able to induce the council to review their pledge of abiding by the 45th Article of the code on the part of the chiefs of Marwar with displeasure of the ‘Durbar’ in case of infringement of the stipulations.

Thus, one of the causes responsible for the practice had been successfully dealt to an extent. As regards the other incentive which arose out of the feeling of disgrace if a daughter

57. Ibid,
remained unmarried even after attaining maturity. Ludlow held that as the proportion of the females reared in the country rose, the nobles and rank Rajputs would have no difficulty in finding suitable matches for their daughters from houses corresponding to their own stature. If this continued, it would be adopted by the middle class Rajputs too and even if some of the daughters remained unmarried, their unmarried existence would no longer be considered a casting reproach, for some of the daughters of the first rank Rajputs would also share that fate. Ludlow thought that the middle ranks who had been less scrupulous than the higher ranks about finding a match of equal status for their daughters and less subject to the extortions of the Charans would thus make matches with members of corresponding ranks but all this would take some time.58 He asserted that female infanticide has been emphatically declared as a crime against God and Nature by all the Rajputs of Marwar. When such has been a change in their outlook, naturally a day was not far off when they themselves would advocate against such a rapacious practice. A feeling of abhorrence in the Rajputs of Marwar was thus transplanted by the humanitarian efforts of the Political Agents who were guided by their superior officers.

Meanwhile, Elenbrough replaced Lord Auckland and the former was a little disinterested in closely following the policy of Lord Auckland due to the problems unleashed by the Afghan episode. He, as such, though never encouraged Ludlow yet never obstructed him and acted as a clearance house between the Court of Directors and British representatives in Rajputana. However, by 1847 the practice was to a very great extent curbed and the Rajputs were satisfied with the advantages that they had reaped out of the laws as they were relieved of a great financial burden in the marriages of their daughters.59

Though a great relief had been attained by the Rajputs but it appears that the Bhat and Charans resorted to self-immolation or putting to death some of their old and haggard relatives to extract ‘Tyag’ dues on occasions of marriages in

58. Ibid.
families of repute. The threat of the Charans in extorting compliance to their demands had touched unprecedented heights.\(^6^0\) Maharaja Takhat Singh, on the advice of the Political Agent, issued a proclamation on Asadh Sudi 1, 1903 V.S. (July 12, 1847) forbidding the Charans and Bhats to practise human sacrifices and self-immolation for extorting ‘Tyag’ dues on peril of suffering imprisonment.\(^6^1\) He also declared that if any chief or Rajput paid more than the stipulated amount he would be held responsible for it. Major Thoresby expressed a belief that the salutary measure of Marwar would be followed by other States too, where such practices were adopted by the Charans.\(^6^2\)

The Maharaja took the proclamation seriously and when the Charans resorted to undo it he imprisoned some of them for seven years and banished others from Marwar.\(^6^3\) The same year when the ‘Thakur’ of Raipur squandered large sums on the Bhats and Charans at the time of his daughter’s marriage and virtually pleased the Charans on two counts—firstly, they got the ‘Tyag’ dues to their satisfaction and more than that the ‘Thakur’ by violating the rules made for their community

   In 1845, a Brahmin of Sirohi, irritated by a Marwari, cut off his mother’s head and proceeded to the house of the Marwari.
   In 1846, a Charan free-booter of Jaisalmer, collected a party from Marwar and proceeded to Jaisalmer clamouring for a bigger share of the ‘Tyag’ dues. When the Rawal ordered him to be driven away, one of his compatriots stabbed himself in the heart. The Charan then brought two aged persons with the avowed purpose of immolating them and was deterred from executing it with Rawal’s succumbing to his wishes. Ibid.
   In 1847, Sati cases from Marwar came to be seven only while the Bhats and Charans adopted suicide and immolation in as many as two hundred cases.

61. NAI: RR., List No. 1, File No. 43/1844, General III, Tr. of a proclamation by H.H. Jodhpur, dated Asadh Sudi 1, 1903, V.S. (July 12, 1847).


had opened the flood-gates of putting their demands more stubbornly—composed odes in his praise. The general body of the nobles lodged a complaint against the infringement of the rules and asserted that if due notice was not taken of this and the 'Thakur' not punished adequately, the old rut would once again dominate Marwar and it would be difficult for them to resist the importunities of these mendicants in future. The Maharaja, consequently, attached two villages of the 'Thakur' to be released only on payment of an adequate fine. 64 The action of the Maharaja was generally taken as satisfactory. 65 The Court of Directors also were happy to receive the news of the judicious enforcement of the rule against a powerful chief of Marwar. 66

With all these steps taken by Marwar 'Durbar' R. Shakespeare held that the measure was very imperfect. 67 He informed that the Maharaja was willing to publish another order prohibiting the crime and threatening imprisonment for its abrogation but he did not anticipate any good from it. Shakespeare admitted that the order restricting the demands of the Bhats and Charans was successful and the Rajputs gave timely information whenever they smelt some foul play but for general improvement, as a whole, the government should have greater reliance on the growth of moral influence rather than resorting to any other means. 68

As such, the Political Agents at Jodhpur never let slip any opportunity when they could convince the Maharaja of issuing a fresh notification just to refresh the past one. One such notice was issued in 1860 prohibiting the Bhats and Charans of Marwar from entering the neighbouring territories

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64. (a) NAI.; F & P., April 7, 1847, cons. No. 99. Report from Greatherd, P.A. Jodhpur to Col. Sutherland.

(b) NAI.: F & P., Dec. 24, 1847, cons. No. 132. From J. Sutherland to Elliot Esq., dated June 14, 1847.

65. Marwar Precis, p. 140.


67. NAI.: F & P., April 12, 1854, cons. No. 11. Political despatch from the C.O.D.

At Jodhpur in 86 families there were 56 daughters and 101 sons.

68. Ibid.
on marriages on pain of their Jagirs being confiscated by the Durbar. 69

It appears that the measure could not succeed completely, for the Charans in Marwar were numerically superior in comparison to other States of Rajasthan and enjoyed better prestige and lands than elsewhere. But the Maharaja was eager to take advantage of the first opportunity by taking the 'Jagirdars' into confidence and enforce it strictly. 70

While such measures were being devised at Jodhpur, L. Wilkinson discovered the existence of infanticide in Udaipur in 1821. 71 As compared to other parts of Rajasthan, it was more avowedly practised in Mewar not only by the Rajputs alone but by the Purriar Meenas 72 of Jahajpur too. 73 Capt. Wilkinson narrates that the Meenas who had families admitted that a few—to the extent of rare—were those who did not put their daughters to death and sometimes it came to as many as three in a single family. 74 The uneasiness of the Political Agent was easily discernible but to his utter surprise he found that


(b) BA: Records of Ajmer Commissioner's Office, Basta No. 130, File No. 1494 Z (11).

70. Though ultimately infanticide could be curbed with the growth of consciousness among the Rajputs and a general improvement in the civilization yet the measure of keeping the wandering Bhuts and Charans within their territories was productive of good results and advantageous to the families of rank.


73. The Purriar Meenas, out of 42 tribes of Meenas, inhabit kheisara, a hilly district in the vicinity of Jhazpur proper, of Mewar, at the junction of the borders of Mewar, Jodhpur, Bundi and the southern portion of the British territory of Ajmer.


74. In the principal Meena villages of Jhazpur the ratio of boys to girls came to 30.4% in 1834. From Fort William to Col. Lockett, Agent to G.G. for the States of Rajputana.

74. Ibid.
the Maharana had issued a proclamation dated Magsar Sudi 4, 1888 V.S. prohibiting it in the villages of Jahazpur.\textsuperscript{75} 
The culprit would be punished but those preserving their daughters would deserve consideration from the Durbar.\textsuperscript{76} 
Lord William Bentick addressed a congratulatory letter to Maharana Jawan Singh for issuing prohibitory orders against infanticide among the Meenas of Jahazpur.\textsuperscript{77} 
He appreciated the conduct of the Maharana that his issuing the prohibitory orders was ample proof of his genuine philanthropy and his readiness to use his good offices in putting down this horrible crime which could not be carried into effect due to the culpable indifference of his local officers.\textsuperscript{78} 
Again, at the initiative of the Political Agent the Maharana issued another order against the practice,\textsuperscript{79} but the Rajputs had not yet realised the gravity of the practice which they had been following from hoary past and as such inspite of the efforts of Maharana it continued as usual. Eventually a letter was circulated to all the rulers of Rajasthan to put this practice to an end. The Maharana, rightly, concluded that so long as marriage expenses were not reduced the practice would continue and so he took some positive steps to stop it. A proclamation was issued in V.S. 1901 by which 10 per cent of the yearly income was fixed as alms for the Bhats and Charans. If the Charans collected over and above the prescribed scale, the money thus collected would go to the State and as a measure of punishment the estate of the Charan would be confiscated.\textsuperscript{80} 
The Maharana forbade all the Charans and Bhats of other States from entering Mewar. A notification to that effect was

\textsuperscript{75} Col. Brooks was satisfied that infanticide was not practised by the Maharana or his nobles as the leading chiefs of Deogarh, Salumber had grown up unmarried sisters and daughters. Pp. 97-99.

\textsuperscript{76} NAI.: F & P., Jan. 23, 1834, cons. No. 17, dated April 26, 1833 From L. Wilkinson, Agent at Kota, to Lt. Col. Lockett, Agent to G.G. Ajmer.


\textsuperscript{78} NAI.: F & P., Jan. 23, 1834, cons. No. 22. From Fort William to Maharana of Udaipur.


again issued in V.S. 1907.\textsuperscript{81} The very fact that the order was issued twice proves that, at any rate, the first order might have remained ineffective. Still the evil did not die and the Maharana again issued a proclamation vide his orders dated Asadh Sudi 3, 1916 V.S.\textsuperscript{82} The officiating Political Agent, Mewar expressed that it, if carried out fully, would be a great relief in rooting out the practice and earnestly solicited the cooperation of the neighbouring States to support this desirable measure of the Maharana.\textsuperscript{83} This time the Maharana got a deed executed by the Bhat's and Charans\textsuperscript{84} solemnly affirming that they would neither go to territories beyond Mewar nor allow the Charans from outside the State to collect ‘Tyag’ dues from Mewar.\textsuperscript{85} A reminder to this was again effected on Posh Sudi 10, 1919 V.S.\textsuperscript{86}

But all these pious efforts of the Political Agents though backed by the authority of the Maharana did not bear fruits, for though Capt. Showers reported that the practice had been discontinued in the Purriar Meenas of the Kheriar village, yet Major General Lawrence did not agree to it\textsuperscript{87}. Lawrence addressed the Meenas and pointed out the utter abhorrence of the British government in regard to this cruel practice. The Meenas were highly impressed by the lively interest that the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{82} NAI.: R.R. List No. 1, File No. 3/1844 Vol. I.
\item \textsuperscript{83} NAI.: F & P., Sept. 1860 cons. Nos. 542-45, Part A op. cit.
\item \textsuperscript{84} NAI.: R.R. List No. 1, File No. 3/1844 Vol. I. Gulab Singh, Ram Lal, Bhanrat Ram Ratia, Begat Ram, Rao Bakhtawar Singh executed the deed on Shrawan Sudi 2, 1917 V.S.
\item \textsuperscript{85} NAI.: R.R., List No. 1, File No. 3/1844 Vol. I.
\item \textsuperscript{86} NAI.: R.R., List No. 1, Mewar Residency, Mewar, file No. 3/1844, Vol. 1.
\item \textsuperscript{87} NAI.: F & P., Sept. 1862, cons. Nos. 30-31 Genl. A. From Major General Lawrence, Agent G.G. for the States of Rajputana to the Secy. G.O.I. dated August 26, 1862. In the whole of the Meena population there were about 31 girls to every 100 boys while in Hindus it was 68 girls to 100 boys. In the Joharra of Mewar there were 18 girls for 146 boys. Capt. L. Wilkinson observes that the Rahanal tribes of Meenas still practised it. Cal. Review, Vol. I, 1844, p. 382.
\end{itemize}
authorities were taking in suppressing it and handed over a written undertaking for each village promising that every female child would be preserved in future and that in the event of infanticide being ever committed in their villages, the circumstances would be reported to the authorities and the guilty would render himself liable to any punishment that may be considered expedient.

The persuasive measures pricked the conscience of the Bhats and Charans towards their debt to society and the association of the latter vide letter dated March 11, 1879 resolved to regulate the scale of payments on occasions of marriages. They laid down that on the marriage of an eldest son, 1/10 of the annual income would be paid as 'Tyag' dues while on that of a younger son it was limited to 1 per cent only. If however the younger son happened to receive a separate maintenance, he would be treated at par with the eldest one. But the most revolting resolution was that in future the share of the Charans was to be remitted to Udaipur Durbar to be devoted to the education of their sons. In pursuance of the above resolution a school for the Charans was established at Udaipur, in 1880-81 where free boarding and lodging along with clothing and other necessities were provided to the sons of the Charans.

The lead given by Mewar in educating the sons of the Charans out of their share money was adopted by Bundi too. Banswara and Jhalawar States vide their notifications dated Oct. 1879 and Feb. 1880 respectively adopted the same rules regulating the dues of the Charans and forbidding them to go

88. NAL.: RR., List No. 1, Mewar Residency, Mewar, File No. 3/1844, Vol. I, dated March 11, 1879. Kharita from Manakma Khas, Udaipur. Out of 10% charged as 'Tyag' dues, 5% were to be given to Charans, 3% to Bhats and 2% to other entitled for 'Tyag'.

89. Thirty-seven Charan boys receiving education in the school at a cost of Rs 4,000 p.a. It was hoped that with the increase in the income some sixty scholars would be admitted.


outside the State for collecting ‘Tyag’.\textsuperscript{92} Pratapgarh followed suit.\textsuperscript{93}

This state of affairs seemed to continue in Mewar for some time when after the death of Maharana the rules were no longer considered binding and the assistance of the Resident to restrict the distribution of the ‘Tyag’ was invited.\textsuperscript{94}

The day-to-day infringement of the ‘Tyag’ rules led Col. C.K.M. Walter to think in terms of some rules which may be adopted throughout Rajputana for regulating the expenses of the marriages and ultimately formed the basis of Walterkrit Rajputra Hitkarini Sabha in 1888.

It goes without saying that the British efforts in eradicating the cruel practice did go a long way in rooting it out from Mewar.

In Jaipur, too, the Political Agents were fortunate to find that a law prohibiting female infanticide was promulgated by Maharaja Jai Singh in 1731. The Maharaja, to make his regulation effective, ordered that the marriage expenses should be limited to one year’s income of the estate.\textsuperscript{95} In order to avoid the sufferance heaped by the Bhamas and Charans he asked his subjects to celebrate marriages in the capital under

\textsuperscript{92} Ibid.


The Rao of Mayjoe insisted upon the Gaṁta chief that ‘Tyag’ rules have been set aside by the present Maharana and as such he should distribute not less than Rs 20,000 in ‘Tyag’ while according to the rules he was to give only Rs 4,000. Col. C.K.M. Walter assured him to prevent the excessive expenditure. RR. List No. I, File No. 3/1844 Vol. I From C.K. Walter to Barley, dated Feb. 7, 1887.


\textsuperscript{95} (a) NAI. : RR., List No. II File No. 279 of 1844.

(b) Brown J.C.—op. cit. p. 29.

(c) Tod.—op. cit. p. 506. Panigrahi op. cit. mentions that the marriage expenses were not to exceed 1/8 of the annual income of the chief, p. 77. It seems that Dr. Panigrahi missed these references and so her conclusions are a little bit different.
the protection of the Durbar. Ludlow, taking clue from this, successfully impressed upon the Regency Council to enact a law forbidding the Bhat's and Charans to move to neighbouring States for collecting the 'Tyag' dues. If they demanded more than what had been prescribed, their 'Sanads' would be confiscated, at the same time forbidding the Rajputs to distribute 'Tyag' to the Charans assembled from neighbouring States on pain of being held guilty before the 'Durbar'. The Jaipur Durbar laid down specific rules for the distribution of 'Tyag' dues. The prescribed scale would act favourably for the chiefs and Rajputs, for they would be saved from the impositions of the Bhat's and Charans and in turn would also relieve the peasantry, as, ultimately, the Jagirdar used to collect it from them by imposing uncalled for taxes. The Durbar, in order that the whole burden of feeding and distributing the 'Tyag' may not fall on a single family, laid down that the father of the bride was to feed the Charans and Bhat's of his own State for a single day while the father of the bridegroom was to distribute 'Tyag' as prescribed. The sharing of the burden by the two parties along with the restriction imposed upon the movements of the Charans was supposed to favour the discouragement of the practice.

Major Ludlow strongly supported the move on two


97. NAI.: R.R., List No. II, File No. 279 of 1844, dated Shrawan Sudi 1, 1900 V.S.

On an income of Rs 500/- p.a. the Jagirdars and Islamardars would pay Rs 50/- as 'Tyag' dues. Rs 20/- to Charans & Bhat's each and Rs 5/- each to Dholi and Naccarchi; other Rajputs would give Rs 13 only, Rs 5 to Charans and Bhat's each. Rs 2 to Dholi and. Rs 1 to 'Naccarchi.'


99. Panigrahi, Dr. L. at p. 78 writes that the Council of Regency did not wish to come forward to infringe a time-honoured custom does not seem to hold good as it was proclaimed on Shrawan Sudi 1, V.S. 1900. R.R. List No. II, File No. 279 of 1844. From this it appears that the 'Durbar' not only forbade the Charans and Bhat's to move out of the States but fixed the dues to be paid to them.
counts—firstly, as British position at Jaipur was quite comfortable and the administration attuned to their liking, so he felt that the promulgation would be more effective. He felt that Mohammadans could be sent to other States during the marriage season to stop the movements of the Bhat and Charans. Ludlow, who had a host of experience with the Rajput chiefs, thought that the Rajputs took it sincerely and administrative machinery would be effectively evolved to execute it. At the same time as it was for the first time that the movements of the Bhat and Charans were restricted in the State, so he rightly thought that the initiative would be picked up by other States too and thus an effective step would be possible in the successful eradication of the obnoxious practice. He was justified in his contention, for immediately after the proclamation, Ludlow addressed letters to various States to that effect who expressed their high approbation of the scheme and simultaneously issued proclamations in their States forbidding the Bhat and Charan to go to other States for collecting 'Tyag' dues on pain of their property being confiscated or their 'Sanads' cancelled.  

The rules were given time for enforcement and the British Resident, on the reports from Ajmer, felt that some good had resulted from these rules in Jaipur and other States of Rajputana and the Rajputs there were free from the fear of the Bhats and Charans as compared to what they had only a few years ago. Sutherland also reported the satisfactory working of the rules in other Rajput States but he regretted to report that the Charans and Bhats from Ajmer made intrusions in the various States. The Rajput States requested the British authorities and the Lt. Governor of N.W.P. to stop their intrusions. Even the Jat Raja of Bharatpur specifically asked to stop the mendicants at Ajmer was advised to take necessary precautions so that the Bhat and Charans might not


101. BA : Ajmer Commissioner's Office, Basta No. 26, File No. 310 of 1870. From Ajmer Commissioner to Secy. to Govt. of N.W.P.

102. NAI : F & P., August 8, 1846, cons. No. 66, dated July 13, 1846. From J. Sutherland, Agent to G.G. for the States of Rajputana to F. Currie, Secy. to G.O.I.
move to other neighbouring States. The local Bhats and Charans of Jaipur also created disturbances in Jaipur itself in 1847 for demanding their unwarranted dues but were duly punished by the Regency Council.

The attitude of the Jaipur Regency Council accompanied with the decisive steps dampened the spirits of the Bhats and Charans and they avoided going to other States which were peaceful and well-administered. Sutherland was satisfied to find that the people in general have developed an abhorrence for this long established custom and as an evidence of their social consciousness, the Jaipur Durbar intended to frame more laws to give a ceremonial burial to the practice.

The Council of Regency in 1847 enacted another law by which the demand of the Bhats and Charans was restricted to 1/8 of the yearly income of the estate but this could not produce any substantial result, for it was at the option of the 'Thakurs' to give what they preferred. Sumptuary laws, if issued at all, should have been directed against payments by the 'Thakurs' and not the recipients of the money. To make it effective, the Regency Council adopted a scheme of rewarding informers in those cases where rules had been abrogated.

It was assumed that these measures would limit the marriage

Similar precautions were taken when Rao Raja of Alwar desired to abandon the expenditure of 'Tyag' on his marriage with the daughter of Jhalawar chief. Several Political Agents were requested to use their good offices to urge their respective courts to take effective measures to prevent Bhats and Charans assembling at the time of marriage.

104. BA. Ajmer Commissioner's Office, Basta No. 26, File No. 310, op. cit.

105. NAI. F&P., Feb. 11, 1848, cons. No. 74, dated Jan. 11, 1848. From J. Sutherland to C.A. Elliot.

106. BA. Ajmer Commissioner's Office, Basta No. 26, File No. 310, of 1870, dated June 28, 1870. Also see file No. 7 of 1870 From J.C. Brooke to Secy. N.W.P.

107. NAI. F&P., April 1, 1847 cons. No. 48, dated Feb. 20, 1847, Tr. of a letter from Regency Council, Jaipur to Pol. Agent.
The informers were to be rewarded to the tune of Rs 300,00.
expenses and also save the bride’s father from humiliation. He further added that it would have the effect of contracting marriages in families of corresponding ranks and thus the Rajputs would be benefitted and the evil would die away.

In 1863 the Jaipur Maharaja issued orders to restrict the movements of the mendicants from going to other States during the marriage season. Though it had a good effect temporarily, for the orders were issued just before the marriage season commenced and the Charans and Bhatas had hardly any time to recover from their surprise before the season was out. The Charans later on adopted vigorous means to enforce their demands by having recourse to mutilation but that was only an exception to prove the rule. Thus by the end of 1870 the expenditure incurred in paying ‘Tyag’ dues ceased to exist in Jaipur State and with that the root cause of infanticide was buried deep into the soil.

To stop it completely the Maharaja viewed that infanticide prevailed because in most of the cases suitable matches for daughters, in point of honour of the family, were not forthcoming and so long as this was not overcome it would be difficult to uproot it. This he thought could be better achieved through the leading members of each class whose very position would make them as the fittest person to interfere in any affair of such a domestic and private nature. He held that once the cooperation of these leading members was enlisted and the ‘Panchayats’ were formed for the purpose, the practice would disappear in no time.

With this object in view a ‘Panchayat’ of the leading representatives of the different castes formed was to draw a code of rules to be observed on such occasions which would become law under the sanction of the State.

108. NAI : F&P., April 17, 1847 cons. No. 47. From J. Sutherland to F. Currie, dated March 10, 1847.
109. Ibid.
The Maharaja had a successful time with the assembly and was in a position to enforce laws. He got the rules published and instructed the Bhatas and Charans, through their headmen, to act accordingly.114

In the case of Kota and Bundi116 States, L.Wilkinson was fortunate that both the rulers abhorred infanticide as much as Wilkinson himself and wanted to stop the practice completely. Both the rulers unhesitatingly accorded every possible cooperation to effect its eradication.116 The Raj Rana of Bundi following the Maharana of Udaipur issued a proclamation as early as Chaitra Sudi 13, 1889 V.S. directing the Meenas to refrain from destroying their daughters and warned them against it. The promulgation assured of some consideration on the part of the Durbar if they preserved their daughters. It enjoined on the ‘Patels’ of every village to fix up a stone in their respective villages to that effect.117

Again, at the instance of Wilkinson, the rulers of Kota and Bundi issued strict orders against infanticide among Rajputs and Meenas and agreeably with the suggestions made by the Political Agent, the rulers declared the assistance to be provided by the ‘Raj’ in effecting the marriage of their daughters.118 But at the same time they were sounded that the disregard of the rules would be treated strictly and119 would


115. The Hara Rajputs were much given to the practice but Wilkinson was unable to testify to the extent of its existence. Calcutta Review, Vol. I, p. 382.


118. Ibid.

119. (a) NAL: F&P., Oct. 17, 1846, cons. No. 255. Tr. of a Kharita from Moohktar of the Kota Raj received on April 22, 1833.

(b) R.R., File No. 43 General-III/1847-52. From P.A. Harowtee, dated March 9, 1848.
receive the fit récompense for the crime.\textsuperscript{120} The Maharao fixed
a scale for the distribution of ‘Tyag’ according to the practice
prevailing in the other States of Rajputana.\textsuperscript{121} The G.G.
showed his happiness, unreservedly, at the readiness with which
the Kota ‘Durbar’ acted in acceding to the request of Wilkinson
for issuing orders against the practice. He also left a note
of caution by adding that he would follow up the measures
already adopted by some effective and unremitting precautions
as would render the repetition of the crime in his territory
altogether impracticable.\textsuperscript{122} The Bundi ‘Durbar’ issued pro-
camation on the same lines but was even more enthusiastic to
ffect its eradication. The G.G. had nothing but praise for his
cnest endeavours.\textsuperscript{123} The Rao Raja was equally eager to
punish and reward accordingly. Wilkinson was highly satisfied
to note that in one instance in which the order had been
disobeyed, the offender was called to account for it and was
ultimately fined by the ‘Durbar’.\textsuperscript{124} The Bundi minister at the
uggestion of Wilkinson offered to his Vakeel some presents
consisting of silver anklets, bracelets and clothes of the value of
Rs 15 to Rs 20 each to be distributed to all who had preserved

\textsuperscript{120} The Kota Durbar fixed capital punishment for the crime and forbade
the Charans of Kota to collect ‘Tyag’ from territories other than
their own.

\textsuperscript{121} NAI : RR., List No. II, File No. 279 of 1844. Date not given. Copy
of promulgation to all Jagirdars, Ismardars, Free-holder Charans,
etc.

\textsuperscript{122} a) NAI : F&P, Jan. 23, 1834, cons. No. 24. From Fort William to
Raja Rao Madhoo Singh of Kota.

\textsuperscript{123} b) NAI : F&P, Jan. 23, 1835, cons. No. 25. From Fort William to
Lt. Col. Spiers Acting G.G. to Agent, Ajmer.

\textsuperscript{123} NAI : F&P, Jan. 1834, cons. No. 23. From Fort William to Raja
Ram Singh of Bundi.

\textsuperscript{124} NAI : F&P, July 19, 1834, cons. No. 22. Tr. of a Kharita from Bundi
Raja to Agent G.G. for the States of Rajputana.

\textsuperscript{124} NAL : F & P, April 3, 1834, cons. No. 67A. From L. Wilkinson to
Col. A. Spiers, dated Feb. 25, 1834.
their daughters.\textsuperscript{125} Though the scheme cost the State exchequer to the tune of Rs 300 only yet it served to focus public attention on the crime and could give an impetus to the generous feelings of the spectators in the cause of humanity. The meagre investment and that too for such a genuine case was adequately compensated and worked towards the gradual eradication of the crime.

A more effective step was taken when Maharao Ram Singh on Magh Sudi 3, 1893 V.S. got an agreement executed by the feudal chiefs and Sardars to the effect of preserving their daughters.\textsuperscript{126} If the offence was established against any one, they agreed that he would be banished from the country or fined to any extent that might be deemed proper. He would also be excommunicated. The Maharao out of consideration of the rank of the ‘Sardars’ provided some assistance in negotiating the marriage of their daughters.\textsuperscript{127} This agreement was brought into operation strictly and when in the following year the offence of the ‘Thakur’ of Kuchowala was proved his entire family was ignominiously expelled from the Bundi State. Though attempts were made for the remittance of the sentence passed, but the Rao Raja most judiciously remained firm and got his orders executed.

Thus by a policy of liberally assisting the Purriar Meenas and at the same time advocating a tough line of action in case of breach of the code, infanticidal cases became more or less negligible—till by 1874-75 no cases were reported.

\textsuperscript{125} (a) The mothers of ten to twelve girls born since were given these presents. Wilkinson himself gave presents to some who had brought their infant daughters but could not receive any presents.

(b) NAL : F & P, April 3, 1864 cons. No. 67A op. cit.


\textsuperscript{126} NAL. F & P., Oct. 17, 1846 cons. No. 255. Tr. of a copy of the memorandum, dated 1893 V.S.

Thirty-nine Sardars whose seats were fixed on the left and right side of the Maharao signed the agreement.

\textsuperscript{127} (a) NAI. : RR. List No. II, File No. 2°0 of 1844, dated Shrawan Sudi 9, 1901, V.S.

(b) NAI. : F & P. 17, 1846, cons No. 253 op. cit.
Though the practice seems to be apparently suppressed, yet the very circumstances of the Purriar Meenas with marriageable daughters remaining unwedded and others coming up, offer a possibility of the continuance of the crime for not getting suitable matches, and makes one hesitate to conclude that it was eradicated root and branch in Harowtee.

In the minor States of Rajputana the suppression of the crime was not a difficult task. The rulers themselves abhorred it outrightly and long before the humanitarian outlook of the Political Agents could grasp at the issue, some of the States had already prohibited it. The ruler of Pratappgarh, Samant Singh, prohibited it in his territories during the closing years of the 18th century. Bishan Singh, Rawal of Banswara, prohibited it about the same time. At the instance of the P.A., the Raja of Pratappgarh and the Rawal of Banswara issued fresh proclamations which had a sanguine effect in putting this practice to an end in these two minor States. On Capt. Ludlow's initiative, the Maharaja of Jaisalmer issued a notification dated Shrawan Sudi 5, 1900 V.S., forbidding the Charans to accept the "Tyag" dues.

To make it more effective it was declared by the beat of drum in the far-off lands and the Charans and 'Thakurs' present at the Court were informed accordingly in unambiguous terms. Purohit Sardar Mal informed Major Ludlow that the orders against infanticide had been already promulgated during the time of 'Bara Maharaja'. It appears that his persuasive measure did not bear fruits and the very next year specific instructions regarding the acceptance of "Tyag" dues were circulated. It was laid down that the Charans would not make a mess at the time of marriages and would accept 10 per cent of the Rekh' at their largess. Charans would be subjected to heavy punishment in case of break of the rules and their villages granted by the 'Raj' would be confiscated as a last resort. They

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130. NAL: R.R. List No. II, File No. 279 of 1844, dated Shrawan Sudi 14, 1900 V.S.
131. The name of the Maharaja has not been specified.
were forbidden to move out of their state to collect ‘Tyag’
dues at the peril of imprisonment.132

The difficulty with these princely states was that like the
other states of Rajputana the orders were obeyed for some
time and then fell into disuse simply because the rulers issued
notifications and orders to please their British officers for if
they could collect ‘Nazars’ and the revenue dues under such
embarassing conditions, they could have easily suppressed it.
Equally weighty is the argument that unlike the other states of
India where legislation was sought for to eradicate it, in Raj-
putana it was attempted through executive action which in itself
lacked that cohesive force which was indeed the base for
rooting out such deeply rooted superstitions backed by religion.

An attempt was again made in V.S. 1910 to regulate the
distribution of largess and the Charans were asked to accept
whatever the party offered them but in no case more than 10% of
the total expenses incurred on the marriage.136 It was again
announced that the offenders would be liable to punishment.134

The same procedure was adopted in the states of Bikaner
and Kerowlee. Maharaja Ratan Singh of Bikaner, while on
a pilgrimage to Banaras and Gayaji,135 in 1836, swore to use
all measures to stop female infanticide in his dominions and
also made his followers swear to give up the crime.136

Again, at the instance of Political Agent, Jaipur, the
Maharaja of Bikaner explicitly forbade the Charans neither to
insist on a large portion of the ‘Tyag’ nor to move to other
territories for its collection. He declared that the Sardars with
no landed property would make an expenditure of Rs 100 on
the marriage out of which Rs 10 were earmarked for Charans.

132. NAI. : RR. List No. II, File No. 279 of 1844 dated Shrawan Sudi 12,
1901 V.S.

133. In the previous promulgation it was taken as 10% of the ‘Rekh’ while
according to this it was 10% of the actual expenses incurred on
marriage. It seems that the ‘Rekh’ estimates might be higher in
comparison to the actual expenses made by the party.

134. NAI. : RR. List No. II, File No. 279 of 1844 dated Shrawan Sudi 8,
1910. V.S.

135. He reached Gayaji on Posh Sudi 14, 1893 V.S. (Jan. 20, 1837) Ojhā,

136. R.A.R. for 1893-94 V.S. p. 34, Powlett, Gazetteer of the Bikaner
State, p. 82; Dayaldas Khayat Vol. 2, letter Nos. 126-29.
Any infringement of the rules was to be dealt with severely.137

As a result of these measures, infanticide came to a virtual end in the territories of Bikaner, Pratapgarh, Banswara and Dungarpur.138 Some stray cases were heard as far as 1883-84.139

Among the Mhairs of Ajmer—Merwara the practice was very common140 because of the heavy expenses attending marriage contracts. It was peculiar with a Mhair that the money was paid by the bridegroom’s party and it was unalterable for the rich and the poor even without any abatement in favour of the latter. The payment was so sacred and inviolable that a partial deviation was taken so disgraceful that even the most needy Mhair would not incur the imputation. As Lt. Col. Hall, Supdt. Mahairwara, reported that “the sums payable were beyond the means of so many that daughters necessarily remained in hand after maturity, entailed immoral disgrace and thus imposed a necessity for all female progeny becoming victims of their family honour”.141

The British Residents of Ajmer were interested from the beginning to eradicate it. The Mhairs also entertained to stop it by a reduction of the regulated sum of contract but they were averse to make any alteration in this long established sacred custom and earnestly entreated that the same might be effected by the authorities themselves. But the British Government,

(b) NAI.: F & P, Jan. 4, 1844, cons. 40, From F. Robinson to C. Thoresby. The Rajas of Pratapgarh, Banswara and Dungarpur possessed grown-up daughters.
139. In 1883-84 three cases of infanticide from Pratapgarh and one each from Kerowlee and Kishangarh were reported. The widow of Dabi Brahman who had murdered her illegitimate female infant was condemned to imprisonment for life. R.A.R. 1883-84. P. 10. Such a crime arose out of social etiquettes which stood as good in the past as they stand true even today.
from the very beginning, had adopted a policy of neutrality in matters of religion and appreciated if the move for social reform would be indigenous and not enforced from above, for in the latter case if the co-operation was not forthcoming, it was difficult to command it. The British Government felt that it was advisable to ascertain the general feeling so that the Mhaies might share the feeling of participation in the proceedings and the whole plan might be carried out by themselves.

In pursuance of the above policy, a 'Panchayat' (Meeting) of the Mhaies was called. The Mhaies under the supervision of the British Supdt. lowered the sums payable at marriages by the bridegroom's party, and abolished all rights of subsequent sale of women. They fixed a fine of Rs 200 or a year's imprisonment along with ex-commnunication. Though the fear of the Charans was not felt in Ajmer, yet as a further measure to root it out, Col. Dixon, in 1844, issued orders to stop the payment of 'Tyag' entirely in his dominions. With this infanticide received it death-blow as expenses attending a marriage were reduced considerably, excepting in Kharwa and Sawar. To put a stop to it in Sawar, the Chief Commissioner thought it advisable to warn the inhabitants of the place and order for a census after two years to feel the pulse of the people.

As a general result of the methods adopted by the British Supdt. there came a marked change in the outlook of the people so much so that the Commission of such a crime was looked upon as a heinous one. The inhabitants were thoroughly

142. It was decided at the convention that the remuneration to the bride's father be restricted to Rs 106 only out of which the priest would receive Rs 7 only.
144. NAI: F & P, June 22, 1842 cons. No. 40 From Capt. Macnaughton to J. Sutherland, dated Nov. 9, 1841.
In Kharwa and Sawar the population of boys to girls was 40.28 and 22.72 per cent respectively.
convinced of the penalty prescribed by law. Capt. Macnaughton thought it unnecessary to promulgate an order on the subject as it was non-existent in his domains.149

Thus, concluding the policy of the Government towards the states of Rajputana one is inclined to take stock of the various difficulties which had beset the way leading to reforms as well as the prevalent atmosphere of a possible mutual distrust and suspicion which naturally is the result of two races and two civilizations coming into contact with each other.

In a priest-ridden country like Rajputana, full of absurd inconsistencies and superstitions, many of which are held with such tenacity of belief as to induce the forfeiture of life rather than the idea, it is almost a hopeless task to expect a man brought up in such an atmosphere to ignore a superstition whereby he believed himself enabled to avert sickness and other earthly calamities appearing in so many forms in the land of the Rajputs. Much as education played its positive role in civilizing European countries still superstitious beliefs are entertained and superstitious forms are still kept up to a marvellous extent, similarly in Rajputana it should and must have taken a long way in bringing that air of social change which is always a prelude to social reforms, howsoever minor and ineffective they may be. This is not to belittle the efforts of the British Political Agents and Residents, for whatever change was visible was partly a result of their earnest endeavours and that too in the private domains of the Rajputs. While viewing the things in this perspective, one should not lay aside the peculiar circumstances under which they had to work and specially the purpose for which the Company had been established in India. If one loses sight of such an interplay of force and circumstances, one is likely to make matters more complicated and less comprehensive. In the absence of it, the results are not likely to be sound and there is a possibility of the whole thing being laid waste.

By the treaties of 1817-18 with the states of Rajputana, political stability was emerging out, yet socially Rajputana was basically in a backward state. The ostriched Hindu social system had created an extremely conservative society, ridden

with numerous rituals and shocking practices and infanticide was one of them. It was prevalent not only among the Rajputas but also among the Meenas and Mhairs. The Company had its own limitations too, as it was founded, obviously, for purposes of trade only and was not supposed to interfere in matters of social set up which in turn was dominated by religion. Such a policy would have been taken by the Rajputas as an interference in their religion and their age-old customs. So a policy of religious neutrality was adopted by the Company. But by sheer force of circumstances in the early years and as a result of deliberate policy in the later years the Company began to think in terms of political sovereignty. This is amply evident in the treaties signed with the states of Rajputana where they assumed 'de facto' paramount authority with its wide range of interests and obligations on one hand, and strict non-interference in the internal administration of the states, on the other. But the two were apparent paradoxes and could not be reconciled, for the exertions of the British Government to maintain its interests and discharge its obligations would necessarily involve interference to a certain extent. At the same time, there could never be a line of demarcation as to what came within the purview of the internal affairs. This dilemma, in fact accounts for the deviations and adjustments in the policy that the Company followed towards the Rajput states of Rajputana. But when all this is said, it is equally important that the Company in her dealings with the states of Rajputana was dealing through a set of human beings who thought they were British residents yet influenced by the social movements and the ideological trends that had developed in England by the close of the 18th and the beginning of the early 19th century. The evangelical and the utilitarian movements had significant impact not upon Lord William Bentick alone but also the civil servants of the Company and at least quite a good number of these civil servants were genuinely interested in the problems of Rajput society. Thus, the individual as well as collective interests of the British representatives in the abolition of such an inhuman practice were the outcome of the feelings of piety and compassion which had been stirred by the humanitarian movement and gained an indomitable place in the social and cultural history of India, as a whole. J. Ludlow, C. Thoresby
and R. Shakespeare were more or less actuated by these lofty humanitarian ideals as reflected in the despatches sent by the Directors to India and their own reports about the affairs of the possessions falling within the purview of their residencies. They had a profound respect for the past glory, galantry, and honesty of the Rajputs and had been in the know of many eulogistic anecdotes which had gained currency at this time.

As such, they were keen enough to rid the Rajput society of its very incompatible contradictions. They were also aware that a direct interference on their part would undo the whole things, for the Rajputs would regard it as an interference in their religion and long-established social customs and usages. So the only course of effectively pursuing reforms lay in through the agencies of the Sovereigns, Chiefs and Princes who looked upon British co-operation as a necessary condition for their existence.

Fortunately in Rajputana the willing co-operation of some of the princely states was forthcoming and at the same time the states like Jaipur, Jodhpur, Kota, Bundi and Mewar had promulgated against such a rite in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. So the British authorities impressed upon the Rajput Durbars of eradicating such an inhuman practice by repeating promulgations and on the other hand to bring a change in the outlook of the people that infanticide was not only a disgrace but also a crime. It also implied to induce them to agree to a common and reasonable scale of marriage expenses. The rulers who were always ready to oblige the British authorities issued proclamations to that effect. What was still lacking was provided by the minority of the rulers at Jaipur and Jodhpur which afforded opportunities to the British authorities to assist the Councils of Regency in the work of administration and thereby press them morally, though with a back hand of force, to come forward with legislation in suppressing the crime. Once the ice was broken, it was easier for the British authorities to work more relentlessly.

151. NAI. F&P, April 17, 1847, cons. Nos. 47. From J. Sutherland to F. Currie dated March 10, 1874.
and impress upon the other Durbars the desirability of opting and ultimately adopting such a course of action. The lesser and minor states were inclined to follow the lead given by the affluent and powerful states. Steadily by persuasion the claims of the Bhaits and Charans were brought under limits and their crossing the state boundaries for collecting the ‘Tyag’ dues was forbidden.

But this was not sufficient enough to eradicate a long-established usage so inveterate among the Rajputs. So long as the system of dowry persisted and actually dominated the entire marriage proceedings, it was all the more difficult to make an over-all change. It naturally went afar in giving impetus to the crime of infanticide, the detection of which was as difficult as it was impossible to restrain it. The growing enlightenment among the Rajputs could only come over such an impasse and the British authorities rightly diagnosed it. It was left to the future progeny to develop, more lucidly, such a ray of enlightenment and cure the malady.

Another obstacle in its complete eradication was the usage which prevented inter-marriage in the same class and deferred any solution which could be enforced through promulgation or legislation. A devouring patience was essential to bring a change in the outlook of the Rajput which could only develop slowly and gradually in proportion to the enlightenment attained by them. During all this period although no effort was spared, no energy relaxed but the custom had become so deep-rooted in the habits and feelings of the people that it was impossible to eradicate it either by edicts or engagements.

The whole of the problem was picked up by ‘Walter-krit Rajputra Hithari Sabha’ established by Col. Walter at Ajmer in 1888. The ‘Sabha’ with the help of the Bhaits, Charans, Rajputs, the Sovereigns and Chiefs was also to enforce marriage legislation in Rajputana. Before the body was declared defunct in 1935, the practice of infanticide had been rooted out by framing effective rules in the domains of marriage.

Thus, due to the humanitarian outlook of the British Political Agents and Residents and their constant endeavours to efface it from the soil of Rajputana ultimately bore fruits. It was at their initiative alone, in the beginning, that sumptuary rules were promulgated in the various states of Rajputana and
the rulers who were reluctant, initially, ultimately gave way. Thus pursuasion and personal influence which the British Political Agents exercised, with great prudence, the evil began gradually dying out. When all this is said, one is not to overlook that the result was partly the product of the judicious checks placed by the rulers on the exorbitant demands made by Bhatas and Charans on occasions of marriages but also because of the self-realization of the Rajputs themselves that they were following a crime of a heinous nature for which there was no religious sanction or authority.\footnote{152. Report on the Political Administration of the Rajputana States for 1865-67, p.16.} If even after this some cases were heard in the twentieth century, they were exceptions only to prove the existence of the rule against it.
CHAPTER 3

The Custom of Sati

Sati is a practice of voluntary self-immolation performed on the demise of the husband either due to the inner urge of the widow arising out of complete and uninstincted fidelity to her husband or the social forces having a promise of a bleak future where nothing short of utter scorn, patiently awaits her doom. But this horrible practice was not restricted to wife or wives only, for instances of mothers, slaves and concubines

1. The name Sati is given to the wife of Lord Shiva who, when angry with her father’s omission to ask her Lord to a feast, consumed herself in the presence of the assembled Gods. But in this case though she proved herself a ‘faithful wife’ yet she did not burn herself with her Lord’s body. But as she manifested her faithfulness and devotion to her husband up to the last moment, the name has been given to those widows who by this act of fidelity (Sati) manifest a similar devotion.


2. The obligation of self-immolation was not reciprocal in as much as it did not apply to the husband when his wife died during his lifetime.

3. In Rajasthan sometimes a mother burnt herself on the funeral pyre of her son known as ‘Ma-Sati’ (Mother-Sati), considered to be the noblest of all kinds of Sati and received special honours.


Ordinarily wives and concubines followed the pyre of their master. Men slaves who accompanied their masters were termed as ‘Satu’. In 1818 the barber of Maharaja Jagat Singh of Jaipur preferred burning himself with his master.


In the Arab account of India of the 14th century we find a strange way of committing ‘Satu’. When some person decided to burn himself to death either due to his age or he made a bet or simply out of anger,
committing the act are on record. European travellers like Bernier and Travernier have wrongly described it as self-immolation whereas it actually denotes a virtuous and pious lady who by her devotion and attachment to her husband earned a virtuous living in life and in death. It becomes explicitly evident, for the word has been derived from the Sanskrit word ‘Satyavrata’ which applies to the burning of a virtuous lady with the corpse of her dead husband.

The burning of a widow on the death of her husband has also been termed as ‘Sahamarana’ or ‘Sahagamana’ when the widow is burnt along with the corpse of the husband but ‘Anumarana’ or ‘Anugamana’ when the husband is cremated elsewhere and the widow resolves to be burnt to death with some remains of her late husband, as a token of the departed soul, or even without any remains of his, if none are available.

He moved round the city with a drum-beater three days before he actually committed it. He maintained a stick in his hand and was always accompanied by friends and relatives collecting wood and oil. The fire was set on the third day. The man took his seat in an iron pane and burnt himself to death. His relations stood with maces of iron around the fire. If he attempted to come out, they pushed him back with their maces. Relations and friends standing thereby, mentioned the names of those, loudly, who had passed away or burnt themselves.


6. In case of wives or queens more than one, the chief queen had the privilege to be burnt with the corpse of the husband while others performed the rite in separate fires meant for it.

Ashraf K.M.—Life and condition of the People of Hindustan, p. 186, Delhi, 1959.

But sometimes co-wives reconciled their life-long differences and arranged to share the pyre together. The two co-wives of Raja Ratan Sen of Chittore giving up their life-long bitterness agreed to sit on each side of the corpse in perfect unity.

Padumavet, Calcutta, 1896.

The burning of widows owes its origin to the oldest religious views and superstitious practices of mankind in general.\textsuperscript{8} It was prevalent among ancient Greeks, Slavs and other races but was more or less confined to princes and nobles. The Spartan practice of making the helots shooting targets and the burning of Christian heretics very closely resemble the practice of Sati. In India, of the earliest times, one fails to find any Vedic passage prescribing it in any imperative manner an allusion to the practice. There is no ‘Mantra’ in the Vedas\textsuperscript{9} which could be said to have been repeated at the time of such a burning nor do the ‘Grhya-Sutras’ contain any direction prescribing the procedure of widow-burning.\textsuperscript{10} It, therefore, appears very probable that the practice of widow-burning enveloped the Aryan society during Brahmanical India—a few centuries before Lord Christ.\textsuperscript{11} It is uncertain if the

\textsuperscript{8} Ibid. p. 625.

\textsuperscript{9} Wilkins holds that by a wilful mis-translation of a certain text of the Vedas it has been recommended by the priests to be an authority for practising it. Max Muller condemns it outrightly when he says, “This is perhaps the most flagrant instance of what can be done by an unscrupulous priesthood.”

Quoted by Wilkins W.J. in Modern Hinduism, p. 379.

\textsuperscript{10} Kane, P.V.—History of Dharmas\textsuperscript{a}stra, Vol. II, part I, p. 625. Bhandarkar holds that though there is no allusion to the practice in Rigveda but it must have been prevalent among the Indian Aryans before the hymns were composed. On the basis of the two verses appearing in Atharva\textsuperscript{a}veda Samhita and Tr\textsuperscript{a}thriya Aranyake—the first depicts the wife of an Agnishotrin made to lie down by the side of the funeral pyre of her husband and the second when she is raised from it. He concludes that the fact of raising the women from the pyre shows that it was afterwards given up. Thus the Vedic Aryans had given up the practice. The practice again became current with the moral deterioration of the Aryans who adopted it from the many Aryan tribes that migrated to India.


\textsuperscript{11} Ashraf maintains that it was probably based on some primitive customs of Indian tribes and was incorporated by the Aryans and other invaders into their system,

Ashraf, op.cit., p. 186.

Temple Sir Richard C. in “The World of Lalla,” p. 222, writes that a copper coin is invariably put into the mouth of the corpse for making payment to the ferrymen on the waters of the Vaitarani, the Styx of
practice was indigenous or adopted from other tribes who migrated to India as none of the 'Dharmasutras' excepting 'Vishnu Puran' contain any reference to the practice. The Mahabharata though gives profuse descriptions of sanguinary fights is very sparing in its references to the practice of Sati. Madri, the favourite wife of Pandu, is said to have committed herself with the corpse of her husband. While the death ceremonies of the Kauravas have been vividly discussed when their weapons, clothes, etc., were confined to fire yet no mention appears of any widow immolating herself on the funeral pyre. It substantiates that it was originally confined to regal families and great warriors alone and that it was rarely practised. During the time when 'Surtis' were composed the practice seems to be widely prevalent as there were many restrictions enjoined on the widows.

The earliest epigraphical evidence of Sati of a widow in Northern India dates from an inscription of 310 A.D. and

the Hindus, for the passage of the spirit over the river. This is still prevalent among a section of the Hindus till this day.

Abul Fazal in Ain-i-Akbari, Vol. II, pp. 191-92, Calcutta 1872-73 refers that the Hindus believe that the dead husband required a female attendant in the heavens and so naturally his wife should accompany him, makes it an institution of the Hindus based on primitive customs. Similarly the lightening of a lamp among the Sikhs to make it easier for the departed soul to tread its way in the darkness of the next world amounts to that belief.

Macauliffe, M.A. in 'The Sikh Religion', Vol. I, p. 349, Oxford 1909 mentions that the act of feeding the departed soul on milk and rice for maintaining the vigour and vitality also amounts to its prevalence in the hoary past and being adopted from it.

12. In Ramayana, the mother of Vedavati, the wife of a 'Brahamarishi' when molested by Ravana immolated herself in fire.

Kane, op. cit. p. 627.

13. Women who were pregnant or possessed a child of tender age or did not attain the age of puberty or in a state of uncleanness were not allowed to mount the funeral pyre of their husbands.

The wife in a state of uncleanness was allowed to burn herself on the fourth day after she had taken a bath.

14. Carey on the basis of the narrative of Diodorus Siculus traced its origin from B.C. 314. Its origin among the Rajputs was because of the crime of one wife who destroyed her husband by poison.

after it various compositions of the period abound in examples when the widow committed it.  

Though Sati appears not to be of high antiquity, yet it cannot be ascertained when it began in Rajasthan. In earlier days the practice was not common, though women of rank in Rajasthan were always willing to accompany their husbands to the funeral pyre purely out of religious considerations, for it was believed, though falsely, that religion sanctioned it. But in medieval times the practice of voluntary Sati, at least nominally, became a compulsory rite and the Muslim invasion was one additional factor responsible for it. The Hindu women were subjected to harsh and cruel treatment at the hands of the invaders and sought to end their life honourably rather than be a victim of impious one. That is why Jauhars during the medieval age became a common practice among the warrior classes for defending the honour of the women, taken so sacred by them. Sati became very common as is evident from the numerous Sati-stones and palm impressions on which the figure of the husband and wife, who burnt herself after the

In the South an inscription of the third century A.D. proves its existence there.


15. 'Rajtarangni' cites several examples vide VI-107, 1915.

16. According to Smith, V. the slaughter of a wife at the obsequies of deceased husband seems to have been a Seythian custom. Bingley also holds that the rite of Sati as practised by the Rajputs is of Seythic usage which was modified by Aryan culture as the two closely resemble each other.


Thompson views that this rite glorified the warrior race and that it was prevalent among the Dravadians.

Thompson, E.—Suttee, pp. 20-21.


There were few cases of Sati among the lower classes.


19. The 'Jauhar' shows Sati in its noblest form. The Jauhar committed by the Rajput women when Allauddin sacked Chittor or when Akbar captured it or when Jaisalmer was conquered in 1295 A.D. are too well known and require no elaboration.
death of the former, are engraved. Such mementoes are found in almost every village and sometimes the figures of two or three females being carved there upon.\textsuperscript{20} The history of Rajasthan affords numerous instances bearing on the practice which was prevalent, most commonly, in the houses of Mewar, Marwar, Jaipur and Bikaner.\textsuperscript{21} There were few houses where it was not in vogue since long.\textsuperscript{22}

The practice was not only confined to the princely houses, but the higher classes in the Hindu hierarchy\textsuperscript{23} comprising of Brahmans\textsuperscript{24}, Rajputs\textsuperscript{25} and Charans, who were associated with

\begin{enumerate}
\item[20.] Six wives and fifty-eight concubines accompanied Ajit Singh of Marwar to the funeral pyre.

No less than sixty-eight women committed the rite on the death of Raja Budh Singh of Bundi.
Thompson E., op. cit., p. 35.

\item[21.] Ojha, G.H.—Udaipur Rajya ka Itihas, Vol. I, p. 469. Nensi’s Khayat, f 78B.
Bika’s memorial slab of the 10th. of the bright-half of Asadh, 1561, V.S.; Raj Singh’s memorial of the 30th of the dark-half of Magh, 1668 V.S.; Nensi’s Khayat, pp. 199-200 and p. 304. B.A.: Kota Records, Bhandar No. 3, Raj Lok Kagit, 1707. V.S.
B.A.: Bhandar No. 1, Basta No. 12, 1775 V.S.
Ajitodya Cant. 23, VV 2-10.

\item[22.] Sisodia family of Pratapgarh committed no Sati for three generations and Raja Sawant Singh was totally averse to the idea. When the Raja of Banswara died in 1891 A.D. no lady accompanied him to the pyre though the family lords tried unsuccessfully by repeating the fame of the former heroines.
Malcolm Sir John—A memoir of Central India including Malwa, pp. 207-08, London, 1832.

\item[23.] Jain inscription 1, No. 719, V.S. 1648 mentions that four wives of Tara Chand of Sadri committed Sati.

\item[24.] Thompson, E.—op. cit., p. 22, mentions that Brahman women burnt freely in Rajputana.
A Brahman lady committed Sati in Amla (Mewar) in order to save herself from the molestation of Sawant Singh, a Bhumiya of that village.
Sharma, Dr. G. N.—Social life in Medieval Rajasthan, p. 129, Agra, 1968.

\item[25.] Malcolm, Sir J.—op. cit., p. 208 says that among the Rajputs the females of the Bhuttee tribe were most prompt to sacrifice themselves with their husbands.
\end{enumerate}
the ruling houses, adopted it. The Jats, Mahajans and the lower classes seldom practised it. The women of these classes did not even follow the biers of their husbands to the cremation ground.

Thus, barring a few minor states and the lower classes the custom of Sati was almost prevalent in all the states and castes of Rajputana and by the close of the eighteenth century the rite had adopted unimaginable magnitude so much so that the practice which was once prevalent on a voluntary basis had for all practical purposes became almost compulsory at least in the Royal Houses. The imposters who regulated marriages bestowed upon it a divine sanction. But rumblings were perceptible even in the 18th century against such a

26. (a) NAI.: F & P., Dec. 1868. cons. No. 16, Genl. B.
(c) Vanshhbasker, Pt. 2, P. 1848.

It was practically non-existent among the lower clans like Rebaris, Sunars, etc., for widow re-marriage was commonly prevalent and actually practised by them. It was, as a rule, common among the Jats that the younger brother of the deceased married his sister-in-law if she happened to be of tender age irrespective of the fact if she possessed some incumbents from his first master or the proposed bridegroom happened to be a bit younger than her would-be-partner. F & P., cons. Nos. 273-80 Genl. B. dated May 1877.

Even as late as 1973 we find such marriages being performed among the Jats. Mahendri married Chander Pal younger by a year and Sumitra Devi 21 married her husband's younger brother, Sukhpal, who was only 16 years old.


29. (a) NAI.: F & P., Sept. 30, 1843, cons. No. 54. From Ludlow to Sutherland dated Sept. 6, 1843.
practice as is evident from "Sati Puran". It provides numerous examples when the practice was frowned upon in various quarters of Rajasthan decrying it as against the precepts of religion and morality and depicting that a life of chastity of the widow carried higher rewards than that of self-immolation with the pyre of the husband.

The rite of Sati was more or less performed in a singular manner in Mewar, Marwar, etc., with a little bit of difference.

30. It is a composition of the 18th century in verse which is possessed by Pandya Pyare Lal, Udaipur. The manuscript was discovered by Dr. G.N. Sharma.

31. "The royal corpse" dressed up in regal attire, was conveyed from the place to the burning place (called the Mahasati) in a species of Sedan chair; the funeral procession, composed of all royal subjects of the state, one and all, high and low, rich and poor even the successor to the throne proceeded the whole distance on foot; one alone in this vast multitude was allowed to ride. . . . . Mounted on a gorgeously caparisoned horse, herself richly attired as for a festive occasion, literally covered with jewels and costly ornaments; her hair loose and in disarray, her whole countenance wild with the excitement of the scene and the extra-ordinary effects of the drugs she had swallowed, she issued forth with the body. As customary on such occasions, the victim, as the procession moved on, unclasped the ornaments with which she was profusely decorated and flung them to the right and to the left amongst the crowd. On reaching the Mahasati, in a space closed by tent-walls, the corpse was unrobed and the slave-girl seating herself with the head of the lifeless body in her lap was built up, as it were with wood steeped in oil. The canvas walls were then removed and the pyre lighted and as the flames shot up, bright and fierce, the crowd around raised a great clamour, which lasted until the dreadful scene was over."

In case of more than one woman, the corpse was placed in the centre of the pyre and the Satis took their place around it.

32. In the later part of the 17th and first quarter of the 18th century Bhatt Jagajwan, Court-poet of Maharaja Ajit Singh of Marwar gives a graphic account of the rite of Sati as practised there. No sooner did the news of the wives, death was conveyed to the they resolved to perform Sati, took a dip in the sacred water applied perfumes, put on saffron dress and decked themselves in choicest ornaments and flowers. Before starting on their way towards the spotted place meant for its performance aims containing gold, silver, horses, etc., were distributed freely. Then they rode the palanquins headed by the chief queen seated
when compared with other states.\textsuperscript{83} From the Sati-Slab of Amar Singh’s ‘Chhatri’, it is evident that during the medieval times the queen must have been seated on a horse-back with her unveiled face having a bold posture and possessing a sword in hand.\textsuperscript{84} Tod also gives a graphic narrative of the whole on a horse-back with their faces unveiled. As the funeral procession passed the streets, they parted with their ornaments and threw them away to be picked up by any one. On reaching Mandor, the place of cremation, the pyre in the form of a hut, which was got prepared well in advance was circumambulated by the Satis who then boldly plunged into fire. The chief queen in the absence of the dead body took her husband’s pillow in her lap.

Ajitodaya canto. 4, ff. 21-24.
Ibid. canto 5, vv. 1-9.

33. In Bengal the widows invariably took a bath before mounting the pyre, preferably in the sacred water of the Ganges. The dead and the Sati were bound together to the pile before the altar was put to fire, so as to preclude the possibility of the latter effecting an escape. In the South the widow used to sit on the pyre with the head of the departed husband in her lap and awaited, with firmness, the moment when the towering flames would consume her. In other parts the widow leaped into the burning mass from an eminence or the funeral pyre prepared below the surface of the ground.

Cooper, J.—The three Presidencies of India, pp. 420-21, London, 1853.
In Western India the widow sat in grass-hut supporting her husband’s corpse with her right-hand, while setting the pyre of fire with a torch held in her left-hand.

Crooke, W.—Things Indian, p. 449.

34. Sharma, G.N., Rajasthan Studies, p. 127, Agra, 1970. Ibn Batuta has given a graphic description of ‘Anugamana’. The Sati receiving the news of the death of her lord first took a bath and clothed herself in the best attires and putting on ornaments was conducted to the site in a huge procession. The Brahamans and others showered their profuse greetings for the decision she had taken and the glorious fortune that awaited her in the Heavens along with her Lord. The Sati only had the privilege to ride on a horse taking a coconut in her right-hand and a mirror in her left. The procession going through the main streets reached a grove which possessed a pool of water and a stone idol, perhaps of Lord Shiva. A huge fire, consistently fed with sesamum oil and screened from public view was kept in radiance. The Sati after taking a dip in the pool, parted with all her clothes and jewels and took coarse unsown cloth to cover
sordid affair at Mewar.  

Immediately after the demise of a ruler or prince each wife and even concubine was successively asked to declare her intention as to whether she intended to become Sati. The Bhattis chanted the praises of the Satis who, of late, perished with the fire that consumed their lords. In case the consent was not willingly forthcoming, pressure tactics were adopted and some one or the other was made to acquiesce.  

The reasons for such a practice varied from region to region but were generally applicable for the entire society of Rajputana wherever the practice prevailed.  

The society in Rajputana was patriarchal as it still is, in nature where everything revolved round the personality of man. The existence of the women of a Rajput Chief was nothing more than a mere toy and most akin to the ladies of the Mughal 'harems' picked up for their beauty and loveliness and solely possessed by or belonged to the master only. The husband or the master stood to her in place of the deity. This was not restricted to the society of Rajputana alone but stood as the arch-base of 'Sri-Dharma' (the rights and duties of a woman) in Hindu mythology. This concept was duly supported by political vicissitudes and social institutions. The Rajputs were not only driven, ruthlessly, from the fertile plains of the

her body. Then paying her last regards to 'Agni', the goddess of fire, and meditating for a second, jumped into the flames. Trumpets, drums, etc., were beaten hard at this moment—obviously to distract the attention of the people and to die out the skirmishes of the dying woman in the noise. People standing nearby pushed heavy logs of wood in the pyre to undo any bid on the part of the Sati to escape from it.  

36. As late as 1861, on the death of Maharana Sarup Singh, all the wives declined to commit Sati, when an appeal was made to a favourite slave-girl, by her brother. As Erskine narrates, "He dwelt strongly upon the fact that all the late Chief's lawfully married queens had refused to preserve the honour of the house; and that the greater credit would rebound upon her, were she prepared to set an example of devotion to those who so wilfully declined to evince any themselves; that their perversity, in short, had afforded her an opportunity to earn a world-wide reputation for fidelity . . . ."  
Erskine, K.D.—op. cit. p. 27.
Doab to the sandy planks of Rajputana but were put in entirely new environment where they had to face the additional responsibility of defending their dominions from the onslaughts of the invaders time and again. Wars became a common feature and directly in proportion the honour of their woman was at stake every time. Hordes after hordes from Central Asia crossed the Indian borders to invade, plunder and establish a kingdom here. But so long as the Rajputs could not be subdued, the dream of carving a kingdom could not be materialised. As such, Rajputana became the veritable target of these invaders. Every action had an equal reaction and the women clung more closely for safety, in the face of the only other alternative of being molested by the invaders which not only tarnished the fair institution of womanhood but brought infame and agony on the class as a whole. The woman became more of a liability under such a set of circumstances and looked for some means or the other to save herself from a possible disgrace. This feeling of insecurity either because of the invaders or the evil eye of others kindled a strong desire to burn herself with the husband or the master. Archaic eval assets provide numerous examples to substantiate the thesis.\footnote{37}

\footnote{37. On the death of Hamirdeo, the Chauhan king of Ranthambore, his women willingly offered to perform Sati as an act befitting true womanhood. They discarded the idea of living a life of dishonour in the absence of their lord. Purush Pariksha of Vidyapati Thakur, Tr. by R. Neruker, p. 13. Kanwar Amar Singh's wife embraced death by committing Sati rather than exposing herself to indignity. Karnidan—Suraj Prakash, Vol. IV, folio 32. At Kota, Kapuri, a Rajput lady, desired to burn herself as her neighbour had a vociforous eye upon her. BA. : Kota Records, Bhandar No. 3, Basta No. 36, Natthi No. 11, 1877 V.S : Khata Biladaron Ka 1878 V.S. A Brahman lady of the village of Amli performed Sati to save herself from the molestation of Sawant Singh. When the report reached the Rana, he convicted the Bhomiya and appointed Rawat Fateh Singh instead. Sharma, Dr. G.N. op. cit., p. 129. In Dungarpur Sampat burnt with her husband as she felt that Bhanwar had an evil eye on her. BA. : Dungarpur Records Register No. 2 dated Shravan Sudi 2, 1888 V.S.}
In addition to it, the frequent famines in Rajasthan were one of the causes of its prevalence here. Men died in large numbers than women, as they were often killed in battle, so they took the rite of Sati as a way out for keeping down the population. As the food was not sufficient to go round the year, and the fewer women there were to feed, the more food would be available for the men who did the fighting.

These were individual Satis committed at different periods of our study, but we find it in a more aggressive and terror-stricken form in ‘Jauhar’ bearing a testimony that the urge to maintain one’s chastity was supreme which made them take a decision of momentous consequences. This was why of all the races in Rajputana, the Rajputs more faithfully adhered to it and what was taken as an exceptional measure to meet an exceptionally odd situation was later on imbibed in the social fabric, as a common-day affair.

This alone could not be taken as a sufficient cause for such a custom with so horrible consequences. Other factors also contributed towards it and the feeling of being left alone was quite weighty. The pangs of separation with their noisy

38. The ‘Jauhar’ committed by the Rajput women at the siege of Ranthambore by Alluddin Kihili in 1301; at Chittor in 1535 A.D. when Bahadur Shah besieged it (Nemi Khayat, f. 119b); and later on by Akbar in 1568 A.D (Abul Fazal—Akbnama Persiant ext. Vol. II, p. 404) are too well-known to the students of medieval Indian history. After the Jauhar was performed the Rajputs, freed from the anxiety of their women, could dash against their enemies with a dogged determination and sacrificed their lives, unhesitatingly to save the honour of their country.

Abul Fazal in Aina-l-Akbari Vol. II, p. 5 mentions, that when the Rajputs found losing a battle, they ordered their mansions to be surrounded with oil and hay.

The women were soaked in it and a confidential servant was deputed to watch the outcome of the battle. If he was satisfied that his master would lose the battle he lighted the fatal pile and the whole of the womenfolk was consumed in it.

39. Of the races of Rajputana, there are three different classes which are generically distinct. The aboriginal tribes comprised of the Mairs, Minas and the Bhils living in a state of wild and savage independence.

The next class which is more peaceful and settled comprised of the Jats, Sonis, Goala and the third class consisted of the Rajputs, who had been exercising sovereign power since long.

and irksome sufferings which usually accompanied the death when matched with the heavenly bliss in the company of the husband by undergoing the horrible but sacred rite naturally, impelled a woman, ignorant as she was, to perform it. There are numerous examples in the history of Rajputana when the faithful, unhesitatingly committed it. It stood equally good among the princely classes and the masses and the one dominating idea behind the decision was the feeling that they were completely overwhelmed with grief and could not tolerate the pangs of separation from their husbands. The widow took herself to be left alone where no one was there to look after her

40. The Jaisalmer princess performed this rite on Ajit Singh’s death, Ajitodaya canto. 23 VV 2-10.
Bhola the wife of Balu burnt herself with his remains after Balu died in the battlefield.
Sharma, Dr. G.N.,—op. cit. p. 126.
Ranchori surrendered herself to the red glow of the funeral pyre and Kasturi decided in its favour, for no one could take care of her in future.
BA.: Kota records, Bhandar No. 1, Basta No. 13, dated Asadh Sudi 3, 1867 V.S.
The daughter-in-law of Nanki Darzi (Tailor) became Sati on this score.
BA.: Kota Records, Khata Billadaron Ka 1883 V.S. It mentions that Kumbhi committed Sati as she was overwhelmed by sorrow on the death of her husband.
She is reported to have said that her master awaited her in the heavens and she would be at peace with him than survive here without his company.
Radhu being inconsolable for the loss of her husband burnt herself with the latter’s body. The P.A. admitted that the intention to commit Sati was not pre-meditated nor was she persuaded by any one to carry it into execution.
There were as many as 227 Satis, including Ranis, concubines, female slaves and men, committed in 281 years in Marwar with the rulers beginning from the death of Rao Maldeo in 1562 to Man Singh in 1843 A.D. Appendix I.
NAI.: F&P., Oct. 21, 1843, cons. No. 87-91. From Capt. Ludlow to Col. Sutherland.
interests.41

This material separation has been evolized and idealised by the spiritual unity and the concept of oneness fitted in to suit the occasion. The Hindu view of life revolves round the basic concept of this life as a preparation for the next with all the acts of omission and commission accounting for its debit and credit sides. The circle of life goes on unabated and the sins of the past life having a reflection on the present till one is relieved of re-birth and becomes immortal. It is a conception unknown and uncalled for in the Western hemisphere but carried all the weight in the ‘Eastern court’. The Hindu ladies bred and brought up in such a charged atmosphere developed a belief of perpetual bliss in heavens in the company of their husbands once they were prepared to face the ordeal of undergoing the rite.42 This is why the action has been very often

41. Hindu society, in general, revolves round the idea of the supremacy of the male over his counterpart. Economically, socially and practically in every walk of life, the woman is supposed to play a second fiddle to her husband. The development of her personality is marred completely by the joint family system which existed in Rajputana, as elsewhere, and her existence is for the common good of the family. The humility of the Indian women is proverbial so much so that though she possessed the undisputed right of inheriting the property of the deceased husband, in the absence of any specific will left by him, yet she always surrendered her rights resulting therein that conventions and customs were made good over law for to her the former was an inheritance while the latter represented a mechanised society. Acting under the impulse of emotion rather than reason, she invites her own ruin of being discarded and uncared for and favoured immolation with her husband rather than pass a life of utter want and humiliation. Even in the present day set up though law specifically provides for a division of the property among sons and daughters yet the old convention still holds good. Thus this economic dependence and the consequent results flowing therein do speak favourably of performing the rite.

42. Rao Rattan Singh’s Vachaniika, p. 287.

The Brahman priest would not let the opportunity slip of explaining to the widow the essentially transient and deceptive character of this life and the reality of the life beyond. He would assure her that it was the only means to unite with her husband for all eternity, apparel honour and happiness beyond measure. She was led to believe that her self-immolation was even more auspicious than the day of her nuptials for the latter promised a temporary company with her
termed as 'Sehagaman' or ascending together to heaven. Kota records prove beyond doubt the heroism of the womenfolk of Rajputana who were always ready to embrace death in the hope of a re-union with their husbands in the next world, who unfortunately had been separated from her by the cruel jaws of death. She, as such, took the idea of death with comprehensive indifference which in itself was pregnant with such momentous consequences. The whole of the procedure adopted in executing it, invariably helped in giving a perfect grasp of spiritual significance of Sati when in the performance of the rite ritualistic symbolism was never relegated to the background.

When all this is said, one cannot afford to miss the plight of widowhood prevalent in the Hindu society. Hindu religion with its doctrine of retribution, pedantic in its exactitude, holds widowhood as a sin lotted to her for her past doings. If a young wife possessed no individuality apart from her husband, a young widow had practically no existence. It does not hold that Hindu society, and Rajputs a part there of, is most materialistic as mother-widows have been accorded all care, and command a respectful position in the family but

husband and the former lasted till eternity without a break or interruption.


43. Maharana Bhim Singh's 'Chhatri' of the 2nd of the bright-half of Shrawana dated 1769 V.S.

44. BA. : Kota records, Bhandar No. 3, Nathi No. 37/1, Shrawan Sud, 2,901 V.S.

The wife of Harlal of Kalyani accompanied her husband to the pyre for this reason.

BA. : ibid., 1883 V.S.

45. Emer in Calcutta Review 1867, 'Suttee' p. 246. opines, that the sacrifice was more often designed to secure the temporal good of the survivors than the spiritual welfare of the sufferer or her husband. The son was relieved of the expense of maintaining his mother; the male relatives, reversioners in the absence of direct issue, came in at once for the estate which the widow would have held for her life; the Brahmans were paid for their services and were interested in the maintenance of the religion; and the crowd attended the show with the savage merriment exhibited by an English crowd at a boxing match or a bull-fight.
child-widow is taken as worst than dead. The knowledge that they cannot unite themselves with a second husband without degradation from caste and family, accompanied with the life of hunger and scorn to which they would be subjected made their lot pitiable beyond comprehension. The relatives imagined of the expenses that would be entailed, however minor, on the upkeep of the widow and wished to rid themselves of this burden when it could be done in a way which instead of being taken as dishonourable on the contrary reflected a high degree of lustre on the character of the family. They also expected trouble and vexation arising out of the female relatives living together under a common roof, for they could scarcely be expected to possess any affection for each other. This was highlighted by another consideration too. The widows they generally believed would bring indelible stain on the family and possibly involve it in disgrace. As such they impressed upon the widow the desirability of the rite. Whatever still remained to complete the circle was ably provided by the Brahmans who always had their eye on extracting something from the widows’ relatives for solemnising the whole ceremony.

46. If widows refused to perform Sati the Hindu inhabitants of the place harassed them so much that they preferred death to life.
Ain-i-Akbari Vol. II, pp. 191-92,
A Hindu widow escaped to Babylonia as a result of the social persecution that followed due to her refusal to become Sati.
Ashraf Dr. K.M.—op. cit. p. 189.
A widow is subjected to such rigorous restrictions in Rajputana that her life, indeed, becomes a living hell. She is sarcastically remarked as ‘Beta Nay Khagi’ (devoured the son); given the coarsest meals just sufficient for subsistence; never invited on ceremonial occasions; not allowed to put on bangles or a colourful set of dress; her mere apperance taken to be insidious and to crown it all she is subjected to all domestic servitude and drudgery and her shadow even being capable of enveloping the family in misfortunes. She is subjected to undertake fasts and ablutions for the husband. In short she undergoes everything leading to an untimely death. With all this she is assigned the hardest duties and treated nothing more than a degraded menial servant. This is what awaits her lot when she is hard-pressed with the irreparable loss of her husband. This life of hunger and scorn weighs considerably in favour of committing the rite.
There interests coincided squarely with the relatives of the widows in pursuing them to perform the rite. These experiences, so desolate and crammed with misery and neglect made widow opt for the performance of the rite of Sati, for it would lead her from a position of sinner to one of beatification. People flocked, from far and wide, to receive her dying blessings or imprecations, for she was supposed to be empowered with divine virtues and her last word would be carried out absolutely.\(^47\)

This set of negative social forces always recoiled on the widow and she took it advisable, willingly or unwillingly, to submit herself to this practice and be relieved of the humiliations staring in her face.

Apart from the torture to which a widow was subjected among the Hindus where she was, generally, looked upon with utmost scorn, the aggrandisement of the reputation of the family and thirst for immortality worked as a strong impetus in favour of the rite, and the victim being unwillingly urged to it. Now and then, undoubtedly, one may come across a favourite wife or concubine, in all sincerity, desiring to evince the earnestness of her devotion to the dying soul by laying down her life but as a general rule the victim was sacrificed not to the despairing dictates of love and affection but induced to commit the rite for maintaining a time-honoured custom so that the family of the deceased be enabled to boast of the honourable and faithful performance of the last rites of the departed soul. The honour was supposed to rise in proportion to the number of unhappy victims who consigned themselves to the flames. The numbers thus surrendering, though apparently from love for the departed soul, provided ample satisfaction to the relatives, who viewed them to be no better than a log of wood, that their womenhood possessed that excellence of character which rendered it impossible to survive the loss. That when the woman was regarded with such callous indifference, she preferred dying than living.\(^48\)

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To effect this objective, every persuasion was used. The bards sang highly eulogistic songs before the aggrieved soul by recalling fame and immortality which had been attained by the Satis of the family who perished in the flames which consumed their lords and the blessings which would be showered upon the family. If such a persuasion fell short in achieving the desired object, the women was taunted with cruel accusations of disgracing the family and bringing a slur on its fair name. One or other of these devices prevailed upon a woman who was already dipped deep into the sorrows of the day and once induced to acquiesce, the bards took care that she did not go back on her words, by administering maddening and intoxicating drugs whereby she was brought to the scene of immolation and then retreat was not permitted. 49

The practice was accorded a befitting grandeur in almost all the states of Rajputana by the creation of mausoleum or monument. 50 The monuments of the Hadas are far more explicit than the other states of Rajputana for every such Sati is sculptured on a small altar in the centre of the cenotaph. 51

House of Udaipur showed much readiness to perform the rite, for they were taught right from their infancy to consider it as a most meritorious act which they were capable of performing. It was a common belief prevalent in this House that the honour of the deceased chief, in public estimation, increased with the number of Satis and that his memory would be cherished longer.


(c) Relationship with a Sati gave a certain rank in India in the estimation of the people. The son of a woman who had performed the rite ranked as a Knight; if the sister had also committed it he would be taken as a baronet; if other relatives had also sacrificed themselves he would be considered as a baron, and as such the members of the family were interested in the right.

Gilchrist quoted by Carey, W.H.—Good old days of Honourable John Company, p. 127, Calcutta 1906,

49. Ibid.

50. Bushby, H.J.—Widow burning, p. 6, Longman 1855. He mentions that "The mausoleum of the Suttee with the sole towards, on the face of it is taken by the Hindus as worthy of being worshipped" This is not common in Rajputana.

51. Thompson, op. cit. p. 46.

'The deceased' is also represented on the slab riding on horse-back, horse and men finely ornamented, and in front of and behind this
These temptations speak themselves of an urge bringing additional honour to the family to which the magnanimous victim belonged.\footnote{52}

In addition to this, the Surya-vanshi origin of the Rajputs\footnote{53} accompanied with the war-like sentiments and the devotion for Durga—the apostle of strength, vigour and vitality—no less effected the Rajput nobility and the people towards committing Sati. The responsibility of defending the borders of the country which always obliged them to stand in a battle array had inculcated in them a harder attitude towards life with the result that the Rajputs embodied a tough attitude towards their womenfolk which was equally matched by that heroism of character inherent in the ladies of the Rajputs\footnote{54}. This physiological background coloured their approach so much so that most of the institutions of the Rajputs became a veritable part of it and could be easily identified

\footnotetext{principal form, or in rows under it, are also engraved the figures, each with arms crossed over the bosom, of the poor creatures who became the dead man's Suttee on the occasion.
In Benares it is common to set up stone monuments in memory of the widow, who performed the rite, by the side of the Ganges. Persons returning after taking a dip in the river bow before these monuments to receive felicitations.
In Rajputana this practice is adopted whenever there is a possibility of creating an artificial lake or by the side of a meadow.

52. In Rajputana a peculiar custom developed by which the highest vow which a Rajput could boast of taking was: 'Sati Mahasari Ki Ann'. It binds him to execute the things undertaken, faithfully. 'Ann' is an oath of allegiance.

53. Female immolation originated with the Sun-worshippers and was traceable wherever and whenever the 'Saivas' resided.

54. Thompson holds that as the Rajputs formed the militant class in Rajputana, a feeling among the women of sacrificing themselves at the pyre was most dominating than among the women of peace-loving races. Not only wives but even girls hardly in their teens and merely betrothed, whose weddings were not performed, preferred to die.

Thompson, E. op. cit. p. 53.
with it. The worship of the sword, the sacrificial ceremonies at the festival of Dussehra⁵⁵ are but glaring examples to prove the contention. Naturally, their approach towards the fair sex was also dictated by it and best their women might not tarnish the fair name of Rajput glory they took it worthwhile to adopt cruel means to meet an equally cruel end. In this they were very much dictated by their social and psychological make-up and this was why we find the rite so much current among the Rajputs of Rajputana. In short, there were at best five species of Satis, namely, those who deliberately and with a cheerful countenance accepted the ordeal for their devotion to their departed husbands; those who were swayed by considerations of family traditions and customs and regarded the rite as a means for the aggrandisement of the reputation and social status of the family; those who could not bear the tortures of widowhood; others whose honour was at stake and craved for immortality and finally those who were actually dragged into the fire against their wishes.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Tod. op. cit.
⁵⁶ In the words of Harvey, "Excessive jealousy of their female connexions, operating on the breasts, of Hindu princess, rendered those despots regardless of the common bonds of society, and of their incumbent duty as protectors of the weaker sex, in so much, that with a view to prevent every possibility of their widows forming subsequent attachments, they availed themselves of their arbitrary power, and under the cloak of religion introduced the practice of burning widows".

CHAPTER 4

Suppression of the Custom

By the time Muslim rule was firmly entrenched in the saddle the practice of Sati had also become equally well-established among the Hindus, particularly the Rajputs, who looked upon it as a religious institution and a heritage from the hoary past. As co-operation of the Hindus was urgently required in order to run the administration, the Muslim rulers of the country were reluctant to interfere in the religious observances of the Hindus specially when they could not reap any good out of it. For this reason, any effective interference was only possible when the ruler could win over the confidence of the ruled and if it was not possible, at least of the majority who by dint of their power and prestige had an effective say in the administration. That is why a few attempts were made by the Muslim rulers to ban it.  

1. The Sultans of Delhi in order to discourage the use of compulsion or social pressure to force a widow to burn herself enacted a law which required a license for every Sati within the kingdom. But it soon developed into a formality and the license, was issued as a matter of routine! Excepting this system of official permits, the state ventured nothing till the reign of Humayun. He was the first monarch who thought of an absolute prohibition of the practice where a widow was past the age of child-bearing, even if she willingly offered herself to commit suttee. This was a hilarious attempt on the part of the emperor towards eradicating a social evil to which the Hindu priesthood offered no protests or demonstrations. “But the credulous monarch was persuaded to believe” writes Dr. Ashraf, “that the interference in the religious practices of another people and the forcible prevention of a hallowed custom was sure to arouse the wrath of the Divine-being and result in the downfall of the dynasty and perhaps in his own death”. So the emperor cancelled his orders but even after this the state officials were always present at
till the accession of Akbar who toeing the line of his father issued an order against forcible Satis and appointed officials to see that compulsion should not be brought to bear on the widows who were reluctant to commit Sati. He issued an order that Hindu widows who had not shared the bed with their husbands should not be compelled to become Sati. As regards other widows they could be permitted to commit Sati only of their own free-will. Jahangir, in 1620, also prohibited it on pain of death for those implicated in its performance. It could not be performed without the explicit permission of the emperor especially in case of widows of tender age. But this order could not be strictly enforced. He could not succeed in preventing Sati at Agra itself.

Thus, forcible Sati was abolished by law and the woman who desired to be a Sati had to seek permission from the state but in practice this, however, led to no serious impediment as the permission in due course of time degenerated into a mere legal formality. The willingness or reluctance of the widow

2. His abhorrence of the rite of Sati has been manifested by an act of his personal interference. On a certain occasion when he heard that attempts have failed in persuading the widowed daughter-in-law of the Raja of Jodhpur from the pyre, he rode out to the place of cremation and carried her off.

Thompson, E.—op. cit. p. 57.

It seems however difficult to conclude from such stray cases where the emperor interfered, for personal reasons, that any general prohibition was contemplated or even enforced.


Thompson, op. cit., p. 57.


7. It seems worthwhile to quote the words of John Kaye when he says, 'The Hindus were compelled to obtain the permission of the Mohammedan officers before a widow proceeded to the sacrifice, but this permission was never withheld. It seems, indeed, to have been a
depended upon the peculiar circumstances which were a result of custom and convention in which she had been brought up and constant goading which desired her voluntary announcement to become Sati. The decision so announced had a touch of genuineness when placed under extreme unfavourable surroundings and once the decision was announced it was irrevocable.

Again, Aurangzeb in 1663 issued an order putting the practice to a stop in his dominions and strictly forbade the officials to allow a woman to be burnt excepting widows possessing no children. With the disruption of the Mughal empire all these rules were thrown into the limbo of oblivion and the rite, for all practical purposes, flourished unabated.

The Rajput rulers of Jaipur, Jodhpur and Bundi attempted to prohibit it in their respective dominions. Maharaja Sawai Pratap Singh (1778-1803) of Jaipur, Maharaja Bhim Singh of Jodhpur (1793-1803) and Maharao Raja Bishan Singh of Bundi prohibited it in their respective territories. Thus, the most illustrious sovereigns who considered this rite as against the injunctions of religion and humanity enacted for its prohibition but it seems that its continuance up to the first-half of the 19th century was entirely due to misapprehension and force of example. It is also to be accounted for that the arrangements to make it effective were lacking on the part of the sovereigns

source of profit to the local authorities. The Musalmans governors had their pickings before the Brahman came in for their share.

Kaye, J.W.—op. cit p. 530.

8. The regulations which were issued from time to time against the compulsory performance of Sati, either by seeking permission of the officials concerned or allowing the victim in case of having no issues, on the one hand encouraged Sati while on the other it regularised it for the proceedings, worth the name, could not be initiated or installed against it. Had the awarding of permission been an exception than a general rule it would have positively acted as a deterrent against this rite but its throwing away at a marketable rate simply qualified it as half-hearted attempt towards its abolition. As things stand, under such circumstances the practice was as good as it was in the past, but even after this the credit for putting it to a stop, however, nominal, goes to the Mughal emperors.


10. Ibid.
and the mere prohibition remained a show-piece of the goodwill and the enlightened attitude of the executive authorities, for nothing was even attempted to let the masses know of such a proclamation being in force. Excepting a handful of officers it went unheard and people were ignorant of it. They were taken unaware when they were informed that such a rule existed.

By the time the alliances with the Rajput states were concluded,\textsuperscript{11} the policy regarding the prohibition of Sati in the British administered territories had been taking shape, though rudimentary. Evangelical movement began commanding a profound influence and the purity of life came to be linked up with the material prosperity which was alien to the Hindu society. The British Political Agents who were in Rajputana, though some of them, were more or less influenced by it and could not be left untouched with the growing consciousness. Col. James Tod who was the first Political Agent in Mewar and Harouti (1818-22) inspired by this movement and his own sympathetic attachment for the qualities of the Rajputs picked up the opportunity of advocating its abolition in Rajputana. When Rao Bishan Singh of Bundi had interdicted his wives from following him to the pyre and bequeathing to his son and successor Ram Singh to him,\textsuperscript{12} he had specifically laid down that Col. Tod be summoned to Bundi immediately after his death and he would take all precautions against the rite being committed. Accordingly, the presence of Col. Tod in Bundi prevented any Sati rites being performed there. This was a personal triumph for Col. Tod who, motivated by human considerations, apart from his official routine work, successfully exerted his influence. But this solitary example rather proved an exception to the rule and could not be emulated by the other states of Rajputana.\textsuperscript{13} On the other hand it established,

\textsuperscript{11} By the end of 1818.
\textsuperscript{12} Tod, op. cit. Vol. II, p. 552.
\textsuperscript{13} While we have every praise for the daring achievement of Col. Tod, but it must not be forgotten that the imperative order of Rao Raja Bishan Singh and the minority of his son, Ram Singh, were also decisive factors which weighed heavily in the non-performance of the rite. For we have on record that inspite of strong remonstrances and lucrative temptations Col. Tod could not effectively check the
in unequivocal terms, that the support and sympathy of the Rajput Rajas was to be the core of the policy to be adopted hereafter in the suppression of the practice for the motives of an alien government are always liable to be misconstrued. Though reforms were inevitable but the time to strike it had not reached, for Rajputana was in a state of dissolution—political social and morality the one hand and the Company had her own limitations which did not speak favourably of making any slides in this field.

The chaotic condition of the Mughal Empire and the constantly declining power of the Emperor made the Marathas embark upon a systematic expansion of their power towards Rajputana. The whole of the 18th century practically witnessed an unprecedented tale of plunder and rapine in Rajputana so much so that it smashed and shattered the body-politic of the Rajput states completely. The Marathas dominated Rajputana like a colossus. The collection of tribute furnished Marathas with a pretext of either actually invading their countries or menacing them with the devastation inseparable from the presence of a Maratha army an evil from which no regularity of payment could protect. As the expenses of equipping an army to enforce payment, which might never have been refused, furnished a never failing plea to require reimbursement, and threw such difficulties in the way of final adjustment that the Rajput states were constantly at their mercy.14 This state of sordid affairs continued unabated till the fag end of the 18th century resulting therein that their armies were annihilated, the finances distracted beyond repair and left the Rajputs disorganised and disunited. Under such a set of circumstances when one’s house was ablaze, the delicate problem of reform could not be thought of.

The period from the close of the 18th century to the first quarter of the 19th was one of crucial transition in the land of the Rajputs. Not only the Rajputs remained a passive spectator to the embroils between the generals of the Marathas

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but the fortunes of Rajputana came to be virtually linked up with the vicissitudes of the second Anglo-Maratha war fought on its soil. Hardly Rajputana was free from it, when inter-necine wars for the fair hand of Princess Krishna Kumari began, and enveloped Rajputana for quite a good number of years and it was ablaze with fire and destruction everywhere. If life was visible after these atrocities, it lay only in the barren fields, a groaning peasantry and a demoralised populace. Amir Khan, the uncapricious leader of the Pindaries, completed the ruin. The Rajput States were relieved of this menace when they were taken under the protection of the Company in 1818.

Such was the state of affairs and it was too much to expect from an alien government, however humanitarian their approach, to strive and strike headway for social reforms. The Company was formed for purposes of trade only and supposed to safeguard it religiously. The incapability of the rulers to deal with the difficult work of reconstruction coupled with the deteriorating relations between the nobles and the supreme authority in Rajputana and the rule of the minor rulers at

15. Referring to Pindari atrocities, Prinsep notes, "that every one whose appearance indicated the probability of his possessing money, was immediately put to the most horrid torture, till he either pointed out his hoard or died under the infliction. Nothing was safe from the pursuit of Pindaree lust or avarice—"


16. The Pindaris, "a class of the lowest free-booters were mere collection of vagrants from various countries, different castes and religions, brought together from an inability of otherwise procuring the means of subsistence, divided amongst themselves, and ready at all times to desert their leaders and enter service of any prince or state who may support them".

Origin of the Pindarees (preceded by historical notices on the rise of the different Maratha States) by an officer in the service of the Hon. East India Company, London, 1818, p. 128.


18. Tod, op. cit.
Jaipur and Bundi were not conducive to reform of any kind, least of all in the social field which was closely linked with age-old customs and rituals.

At the same time the monarchical system of government at the apex of which stood the king with the conservative approach of its inhabitants were not conducive to a change. The will of the sovereign was the law of the state which was subjected to change without any judicious ground and as such affected the very existence of the subjects. What was practised at the capital was emulated by the nobles truly in their respective estates and as such instead of a single law governing the state there were as many laws as there were estates or nobles. The sovereigns were more conveniently engaged in the embroils with the nobles\(^1\) and the result was that neither the sovereign nor his nobles showed any interest in social

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19. At Jodhpur Salim Singh of Pokaran with Dewan Akhay Chand systematically proceeded to gratify their old animosities by striking at their opponents. In 1820 Maharaja Man Singh threw off the yoke of insanity and punished the ‘Pokaran faction’. Man Singh’s cold-blooded tyranny completely estranged all the Chiefs. Peace could not be restored in Marwar till 1827 when some disaffected nobles decided to place the pretender, Dhonkal Singh, on the throne.

At Jaipur Mohan Singh, a minor of nine years of age and a distant relative of Siwai Jagat Singh was installed on the throne after the death of the latter in December 1818. But it could not secure the acquiescence of the nobles. During the regency of Bhattiani queen (1819-33) Jaipur was almost on the verge of civil war which was made more complicated by the conflict between Jota Ram, the Bhattiani Rani’s paramour and Rawai Bairisal. It could only conclude in 1835.

At Kota after the death of Maharao Ummed Singh two factions sprang up. Prithivi Singh, the third son of the late Maharnao, was supported by Goverdhan Das, the illegitimate son of Zalim Singh against Kishore Singh, the eldest son of Ummed Singh and Madho Singh, the legitimate son of Zalim Singh.

At Bundi during the minority of Ram Singh the British Government had to interfere on more than one occasion in the internal administration.

At Kishangach, Kalyan Singh began a protracted quarrel with his Sardars which resulted, ultimately, in his abdication in favour of his son Mokham Singh.

At Alwar in 1815, after the death of Bakhtawar Singh, two factions sprang up supporting Banni Singh, the nephew and adopted son of
awakening of the ruled. Specifically speaking, the sovereigns were disinclined to deal with the difficult work of reconstruction which confronted them. No adjustment was possible between the clan system and the demands of the new age, nor could there be any reconciliation of the Prince’s so-called absolute power with the traditional privileges of the nobles.

Added to this was the conservative character and orthodox outlook of the rulers as well as the ruled who felt alarmed even at a proposal of change in their established customs and practices. They presumed that innovations led the way to reforms the consequences of which they shuddered to imagine. This is because of the attitude that the sale and purchase of children and women, ‘Begar’, witch-swinging, etc., remained established practices in all the states of Rajputana. Whenever a reform was talked of, the Rajput rulers either defended it on grounds of religious sanction, so often miscalculated by them, or delayed its execution simply because the nobles on whom the ruler possessed no control opposed it vehemently, so much so that personal liking came in the way of implementing the reform. Rajputana, as such, retained its conservative character and lagged far behind other states in the realm of social

the late Rao Raja, and Balwant Singh, an illegitimate son. This continued up to 1826.
Banerjee. Dr. A.C.—op. cit., pp. 308-421.
21. Ibid. p. 419.
23. Maharaja Jai Singh II of Jodhpur introduced widow re-marriage in his dominions but had to give up his plans because of the opposition of his mother who defended it on antiquity.
Indian Social Reformer, p. 290.
Sawai Jai Singh and Sawai Pratap Singh, the rulers of Jaipur, and Maharaja Bhim Singh of Jodhpur tried to introduce prohibition of Sati in their respective dominions but their attempts proved abortive for want of example.
NAI. : F & P., cons. No. 267 dated Oct. 17, 1846. Tr. of a note addressed by the Jaipur Council of Regency to Lt. Col. Sutherland, Agent to G. G. for the States of Rajputana dated August 23, 1846. Similarly, the attempts of Maharaja Ratan Singh of Bikaner for abolishing female infanticide could bear no fruits against the orthodoxy of the people in general.
Sharma, G. N.—op. cit., p. 115.
reforms till by the general enlightenment and unfailing zeal of the Political Agents\(^{24}\) they were brought into the main stream of thinking. Mewar, though adopted other reforms, but stood doggedly against the prohibition of Sati. Thus necessary preliminaries of peace and tranquility which were inherent conditions of bringing a social change were completely missing in Rajputana. At the same time, as a pre-condition for social reforms, the refractory spirit of the nobles and the inefficiency of the administration had to be tackled first. The masses were to be taught elementary lessons leading to a change in their outlook. It was almost impossible to bring any reform before the stage was well set for it.

When such impediments were in the way of reforms, the Company had also its limitations. They were anxious to maintain a policy of non-interference\(^{25}\) in the affairs of the state and a strict neutrality in religious matters, for they never liked to hurt the susceptibilities of the inhabitants. As such they refrained from measures likely to alienate the sympathies of the people. Not only this but they even went to the length of discountenancing missionary activities within the states in their jurisdiction. This policy continued to the great benefit of the contracting parties of the treaty of 1818. But the British Political Agents honestly believed that they represented a superior race, and a civilized administration could not, for long, tolerate the inhuman practices of immolation of innocent people. They showed their anxiousness to share the blessings of Western civilization with the people here. Lord Amherst, however, shrank from this onerous responsibility for the thought that the reform, irrespective of the ideas working behind it, would prove unpopular and align the people. Col. Sutherland never conceived the idea of interfering with an ancient custom which was held in high esteem by people in Rajputana.\(^{26}\) But the rude beginnings had been made by Col. Tod and Octorloney and the idea of social reform was

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24. The Political Agent's designation was changed to Resident after 1857.
25. If interference was necessary, Col. Tod was directed to use it "with utmost moderation, caution and discretion and in the form of private advice, not of authority".
slowly and steadily creeping into the minds of the Political Agents who awaited proper time to strike at it.

Lord William Bentick confined the operation of Sati among the British subjects but Rajputana remained outside the pale of British hegemony, for the Company possessed no right to interfere in the internal affairs of the states. The Company adopted a policy of keeping itself quite indifferent to what was happening in Rajputana on this score. The Agent viewed that the government should not indulge directly in its suppression without a formidable law, for it has added to its frequency whenever the government tried to intervene. Sutherland contended that as late as the thirties of the nineteenth century the cases of Sati increased where the government started taking interest in it for the purpose of suppressing it. As such he held that "Nothing short of law, which rendered it penal for any person to assist in the celebration of such a rite could effectually stop it."

The cautious note of Sutherland stopped any active interference on the part of the government and it hoped that the practice would be viewed with abhorrence by the people here with the passage of time. The Company for the time being kept its hands off and thought that the examples of the enlightened rulers would soon be adopted into the general body of the society. At the moment it left the entire responsibility for a break-through on the shoulders of the rulers themselves with the sanguine hope that time would act as an effective catalyst. The government must have felt gratified when Boileau reported that a spontaneous abandonment of Sati was on its way in the Western Rajputana States of Jaipur, Bikaner, etc. But it was otherwise, and a strong current was underway going on up-

27. It was supposed to be applicable in Ajmer only which happened to be directly under the British administration. But people from here flocked to neighbouring states to perform the rite of Sati.
above the smoothened surface of the turmoiled area. The government was shocked to hear that as many as two Rani's and six other females accompanied the pyre of Maharana Jawan Singh\textsuperscript{32} and that the Maharawal of Banswara was followed by six ‘Satis’.\textsuperscript{33} These ‘Satis’ awakened the British authorities from their slumber and made them conscious of their own responsibility in suppressing this inhuman crime. It was the point from where the British authorities began showing their concern at the rite and thought of interfering in it.\textsuperscript{34} But necessity as well as state policy required great caution in interfering with the customs of society even though the object sought might be the prevention of a crime of this nature. A Rajput was as much against innovation as the class of priesthood in the West. They inherited a superstitious regard for the rules and customs of the society and an implacable hatred for progress and change. Consequently innovations were generally looked upon by them with jealousy, suspicion and distrust.\textsuperscript{35} As such the British government moved cautiously and took it advisable to the expression of the painful sentiments of the government on the subject.\textsuperscript{36} Col. N. Alves, Agent to G.G. for the States of Rajputana, was


(b) Maharani Bhayani, Maharani Baghali and three concubines namely Jamuna Bai, Uda Bai and Dace Bai along with Praveen, Heera and Manbhavan committed Sati.

Ojha.—V.V.P. 1808.


Ruwal Bhawani Singh of Banswara who expired on Nov. 6, 1838 was followed by a Rani, a concubine and four female servants. The principal Rani who had communicated to the Rawal a short time previous to his death of her intention to commit Sati was forbidden to do so by the Rawal. On finding that she persisted in it he unpardoned his curses on the heads of the attendants if they suffered her to burn and then she could be prevented from committing it.


(b) NAI.: F & P., Jan. 13, 1841. cons. No. 2. Political letters from Secretary of State.

\textsuperscript{35} Singh, Futtah.—Autobiography of the Chief of Khetree, p. 293, Calcutta, 1869.

accordingly instructed to convey to the Maharana the sentiments of deep concern and regret with which the British government viewed the solemnization of the obsequies of Maharana Jawan Singh, in which eight Satis committed themselves to the fire. He was further directed to impress upon the new Maharana, Sardar Singh, that in promoting the friendship between the two governments, he would in future exert to prevent the repetition of the sacrifice. The agent was to convey the displeasure of the government on the prominent part played by the new Maharana himself in setting fire to the funeral pyre and in future the Agent was directed not to leave any opportunity in expressing the abhorrence entertained by the British government to the practice.

F. Robinson, officiating Political Agent, Mewar had no personal acquaintance with the Maharana, and was aware of the veneration in which the rite of Sati was still held among the Rajputs. He did not deem it advisable to speak directly to the Maharana which he thought might prove embarrassing to him. He, therefore, contacted the Maharana through the minister in conveying the sentiments of the G.G.

The Maharana was terribly shaken to hear the horrors of Sati but saved himself on the plea that there was no one of the family or government possessing sufficient influence to have ventured on such hazardous an experiment as that of interdicting it. He showed his sincere disposition to conform to the wishes of the British government. The Political Agent had his own doubts and informed the government that the period of close and cordial co-operation from the Maharana had not yet arrived as the rite carried all the force if not the sanctity of an enjoined religious observance which had been observed for such a length of time. But the G.G. was pleased to note that some of the Chiefs and ministers endeavoured to dissuade the ladies from their designs though unfortunately

without effect.\textsuperscript{41} The Agent was asked whether the conferring of a ‘Khilat’ or some positive honorary distinction with a letter of acknowledgement, for the humane endeavours, would carry an encouraging effect on the part of influential Chiefs to interfere decidedly in future on a similar occasion\textsuperscript{42} and the reply was noteworthy. Lord Auckland was apprised that though the Chiefs would feel flattered individually at the approbation of the government of their conduct but they would shirk from a public acknowledgement of their service as it would put them in the invidious position of being considered as the declared enemy of the rite of Sati.\textsuperscript{43} He warned the government against such a step, for it would bring disgrace to them from the community as the rite of Sati was taken in great veneration, without securing any advantage to the government.\textsuperscript{44} Viewed against the context of the age and the occasion a wiser and more wholesome counsel could not conceivably have been given by the agent to G.G. He, however, viewed that the letters issued to Rajput Chiefs would produce

\textsuperscript{41} The G.G. was satisfied that a very short time was left between the sudden death of Maharana Jawan Singh and the determination to become Sati, that it was impossible on the part of the British government to, successfully, prevent it.


Some Chiefs and ministers endeavoured to dissuade the Ranas and the concubines from becoming Sati and especially the younger Rani in whose family the rite was not usually solemnised but she did not hear to all these remonstrances and was determined to become Sati.

One of the females who was a favourite of the late Rana showed her determination to survive.

\textsuperscript{42} NAI. : F & P., March 13, 1838, op. cit.

\textsuperscript{43} (a) RR. List No. 1, File No. 33/1838-39 dated Nov. 27, 1838. It is always customary on the part of the male relatives of the family to dissuade the females from committing Sati. Such attempts are seldom sternly urged or long preserved in and are a result of momentary impulse of humanity than to any settled conviction of the practice being wrong or meriting reprobation.

(b) NAI. : F & P., Feb. 11, 1839. Cons. No. 88, From F. Robinson to Capt. Ludlow.

\textsuperscript{44} (a) NAI. : F & P., March 13, 1839. op. cit.

(b) NAI. : F & P., Feb. 11, 1839. op. cit.

(c) RR. List No. 1, File No. 33/1838-99, op. cit.
salutary effect. He hoped that the present Rana, Sardar Singh, was more likely to pay attention to the wishes of the British government.45

Inspite of the remonstrances made by the government to the Maharana and the latter appreciating the horrors of rite, Mewar shrugged its shoulders and followed its bloodstrewn way. The British government and the Maharana had different reasons for it. The former chose to interfere, though humbly and cautiously, for it opined that the Rana would accede to give his consent for the discontinuance of the rite, the moral effect of this would be so weightily, as Mewar was taken to be the premier state in Rajasthan, that other states would follow suit and the observance of the rite would cease by a single stroke of pen. The British authorities could not read the signs of the times that religion is based on faith, absolute and unflinching, and the reason, however sound, could not stand the volleys of faith.

The Maharana had his own reasons, for he hailed from a jagir and was under the complete influence of the priesthood who would not easily allow such a revolutionary change without giving a dogged fight to it. At the same time the Rana’s position vis-a-vis the Chief’s was comparatively weaker at the time and this they could have manipulated to make him more unpopular.46 The Rana as such took the affair lightly by paying lip service only. The attempt of the British government, though a failure, highlighted the attitude of the government towards reforms and was a depiction of the humanitarian outlook irrespective of the political advantages that they were supposed to reap out of it.

During the time when such unofficial displeasure was being shown towards Sati in Mewar, Maharana Sardar Singh


N. Alves argued that as Rana Sardar Singh hailed from a jagir away from the pomp and prejudices of the Mewar Court so he was likely to pay more attention to the wishes of the British Government. Again he being a man of plain habits and good understanding was likely to acquiesce in the demands made “upon him and his influence and power used as a step forward in the extinction of the rite.

met his death in 1842 and was followed to the pyre by a concubine. Apparently it looked like a success of the British policy but Col. Sutherland rightly observed that the less number of sacrifices was not because of the decline of the rite in Mewar due to the sentiments with which the British government took the sacrifices but because the late Maharana was estimated quite low in public as well as private life. It was because of this that such a negligent number of Satis followed the funeral pyre. Col. Sutherland’s contention stood the test of time, for Mewar witnessed some more horrible scenes of the rite and opposed the British attempts with dogged resistance till by turn of events and its apathetic condition, Mewar had to give way as late as 1861. At the same time the contention of Col. Alves that much could be expected from the present Rana, Sardar Singh, was dashed to the ground.

Inspite of their initial failure at the Sisodia capital, the British government did not feel disheartened. When negotiations were in vogue in Mewar, official and unofficial attempts were made by the authorities in the other capitals of Rajputana too, knowing it well that the other states would not acquiesce to their proposal so easily. A move was initiated with regard to Marwar and the Harouti states of Kota, Bundi and Jhalawar. The failure of the British government at Mewar was not due to the lack of initiative or interest but unfortunately they chose a wrong place which was rigid and conservative to the extreme and preferred sticking to her own rituals even though they might have been irrelevant and irksome.

The British authorities had a genuine reason to interfere in the affairs of Marwar, for in Nov. 1839, the code of rules was being framed by the Thakurs and public functionaries under the immediate sanction and authority of Maharaja Man Singh, in consultation with Col. Sutherland and Capt. Ludlow. It was naturally presumed that the Maharaja along with his advisers had come under the canopy of the British authorities for the better government of Marwar and would willingly accede to the abolition of the crime. This was substantiated by getting a proclamation issued prohibiting infanticide, mutilation and

47. NAI: F & P., Nov. 16, 1845.
"Saran" (asylum) in the territory of Marwar. Accordingly, Sutherland and Ludlow impressed upon the gathering that in conformity with their prejudices the British officers had bound themselves to abstain from the slaughter of kinc, etc., in Marwar which they held so sacred—and as a reciprocal gesture the rite of Sati which was being looked upon by the government with greatest horror and a relic of uncivilized time, should be abandoned and abolished altogether. He further fortified his request that the right was not in accordance with the Hindu Shastras. To all such protestations the Thakurs had a ready reply that the female about to become a Sati was foredoomed and possessed a perpetual influence against which human efforts for restraining her would prove unavailing. The Thakurs believed that the bolts and bars were naturally flown open, of their own accord, whenever attempts were made for restricting the lady from committing Sati which they took to be heavenly ordained. The opposition of the Thakurs led Ludlow to think no further of any legislative consideration for it.

The natural result of such sentiments at the Rathor capital resulted in the immolation of six Satis on the death of

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54. (a) NAI: R.R., List No. 1, File No. 52/Jodhpur 1843. From Capt. Ludlow to Col. Sutherland.
(b) NAI: R.R., List No. 1, File No. 52/Jodhpur 1843. No. 325 dated Sept. 6, 1843.
Out of the seven Ranis and fourteen concubines of the Maharaja, one Rani, four concubines along with a slave girl committed Sati.
NAI: F & P., Sept. 30, 1843, cons. No. 54 dated Sept. 6, 1943. From Ludlow to Sutherland.
Though it is true that the number of Satis on the death of Man Singh was the least, leaving Maharaja Bijay Singh, in the last 281 years (1562-1843) yet it could not be concluded that it was because of the impact of the British authorities.
NAI: R.R. List No. 1, File No. 52/Jodhpur 1843. From Capt, Ludlow to Col. Sutherland dated Sept. 18, 1843, 
Maharaja Man Singh on Sept. 5, 1843.\textsuperscript{55} Though all influential persons, including Raja’s natural sons, the Vakils, the Dewan, the Dhabhaee and some of the principal servants exerted themselves prior and subsequent to the death of the Maharaja, but were met with no success.\textsuperscript{56} The G.G. in council expressed regrets at the melancholic sacrifices of life, notwithstanding the exertions made to avert it. While forwarding the report of the rite, Col. Sutherland once again emphasised that except expressing the horrors which accrued to a British subject, the less notice the government took of these rites the better it would be, for without having the means to prevent it, it tended to an increase of Sati by giving additional ‘eclat’ to the rite and by arming the prejudices of the people against the government.

When Robinson and Ludlow were struggling hard in the Rajput States of Mewar and Marwar for the suppression of the rite, Capt. Richards, offg. P.A. in Harouti, at his own initiative, attempted to prevent it in the Harouti states of Kota, Bundi and Jhalawar. Like the other two British officers, Richards was deeply concerned at the horrors of the rite and had favourable grounds for such an interference. It was his contention that Kota had been saved from the internal turmoils and refractory attitude of its Sardars solely by British intervention and as such he naturally expected that Kota would react favourably to his proposals. The independent state of Jhalawar was more or less the creation of the British authorities as late as 1838 and so was supposed to have a favourable inclination towards the British plenipotentiaries. To quote his words, “The Raj Rana would most likely have given his unqualified consent to its prohibition, and the Maharao in its suppression by every means short of actual compulsion.” With these two States

\textsuperscript{55} NAI.: RR. List No. 1. File No. 52/Jodhpur 1843. op. cit. Also No. 325 dated Sept., 6, 1843.


virtually under the influence of the British suzerainty. Bundi, the third state of Harouti could not be left out and it was expected that it might follow the lead given by the other states in the region.

As such Capt. Richards addressed circular letters to the Rao Raja of Bundi, the Maharao of Kota and the Maharaj Rana of Jhalawar expressing dissatisfaction at the continuance of Sati on his own part as well as the distinguished members of the government and urged upon them to prohibit it. The Maharao of Kota in his letter dated May 9, 1840, described it as a custom alluded to have been handed down from time immemorial and it was beyond the power of a human being to nullify the decrees of Heaven, yet conceded that since it would afford the British government “particular pleasure”, he would adopt measures leading to its prohibition in the state. The ruler of Jhalawar promised every effort to prohibit it in his dominions. The ruler of Bundi, perhaps, did not respond to it. This independent action of Capt. Richards was decried by Col. Sutherland, the Agent to the G.G. in Rajputana, but conceded that it was possible to make the Maharaj Rana amenable to the demands of the British government and thus initiate a beginning for its abolition even with a minor state. He cautioned him against any written discussion on the rite of Sati with the states but advised that every opportunity should be made use of in discussing the question personally with him. Col. Sutherland made it specific that the time was not yet ripe when it should be taken seriously without running the risk of


59. NAI.: F & P., July 27, 1840, cons. No. 33, copy of a letter from Maharao Ram Singh of Kota received May 9, 1840.

60. NAI.: Ibid. Copy of a letter from the Maharaj Rana dated May 26, 1840.

doing more harm than good. The Court of Directors, also, disapproved of the action of Capt. Richards, for he possessed no authority on the part of the government to enter into such delicate questions with Rajput states unless circumstances called for the expression of the views of the British Political Officers. The G.G. however expressed satisfaction at the enlightened ideas of the Chief of Jhalawar. When all this is said it should be borne in mind that the British government was not prepared, at the moment, to come out of its shell for discarding it outright for it fairly believed that this would unnecessarily hurt the religious sentiments of the people and so long as a law could not be enacted it was just to give an undue importance to it which might lead to an increase in the frequency of the rite.

Thus both were hesitating to take an action for divergent reasons. The British government feared an uprising and the rulers of the Harouti region dreaded for fear of being thrown away from the main currents of Rajasthan's social life by disapproving the act in the face of stiff opposition by the elderly powers—the rulers of Mewar, Marwar, Jaipur etc., even though some of them developed a repugnance for the custom. Soon a test case came up to test the sincerity of the Maharao's pledges when on Oct. 29, 1840, Luchman Brahaman died and his widow declared to commit Sati. The permission of the prince had to be obtained for it. The Maharao, if he would have preferred, could withhold it but he declined, absolutely, to use his authority. Ordinary dissuasions were used unsuccessfully including the promise of a livelihood. Capt. Richards viewed that whatever attempts were made by the ruler were simply the result of the wishes

(b) R.R. File No. 43, Gen., List No. 1. letter from the C.O.D. of 1842.
64. Ibid.
expressed to him through the Kharitas issued from the Agency.  

Bukshee Manik Ram reported to the Maharao Raja that the victim was confined to a room under lock and key and the bursting of the locks and doors, unequivocally proved the sincerity of her disposition after which it was useless to oppose its performance.  

The resident then sent a personal servant to make a final effort in dissuading the victim and reminded the Maharao of his pledges. But the dread that the dying woman might utter some imprecations fatal to the state-made the Maharao stand uncommitted.  

He, however, sent two of his officers with the Company's servant to try to induce the woman to forego her determination.

Capt. Richards was scolded for his unsavoury manner in dealing with the matter. The C.O.D. were displeased to note that it was highly questionable if this sort of interference through a common servant with Maharao and that too in his dominions could be at all pleasing to him or could produce any good effect when interference was undesirable. They held that decorum should have been maintained in dealing with a matter of such a delicate nature.  

They felt that even when a Rajput chief desired to co-operate with the British government in the extinction of the rite, he would find it difficult to exercise his influence over the Brahmans and though there should be no relation of earnestness, but the British officers should exercise discretion whenever it might be necessary to urge the

68. NAI : Ibid. Extract from the Political Diary of the Harouti Agency from the 2nd to 8th Nov., 1840.
   (b) Bushby, H.J. — op. cit., pp. 15-16.
70. (a) Ibid. Arzee from the Akbkar Navees at Kota dated Nov. 3, 1840.
   (b) It appears that the permission was accorded, afterwards withheld and when this was likely to cause commotion amongst the Brahmans who approached the palace with the woman than the tacit authority was given and as usual the government music headed the procession.
adoption of any direct measures for the purpose.\footnote{71}

This was the first instance in the Haroutie region, after the attempt of Col. Tod, when the Raja made some shabby attempts for the suppression of the inhuman rite. But the British authorities were mortally afraid of the consequences of interference so much so that a policy of official neutrality was prescribed for the Political Agents in Rajasthan.\footnote{72} They were advised to avoid making any use of the sentiments of the individuals, for it was believed that it carried danger to the British hold without promising any good.\footnote{73} They were permitted to impress upon the rulers the desirability of putting down such a custom in their private conversations.\footnote{74}

When, more or less, the British policy had come to a standstill in Rajasthan, a small principality like Pratapgarh once again inspired the British statesmen and administrators to re-new their attempts in suppressing Sati. Actually speaking this was the beginning of a new era in the realm of social reforms and the modest success of the British policy. Maharawal Sawant Singh died on 5, January 1844 and his Rani and two ‘Pawans’ expressed their desire to become Sati at the obsequies of the deceased ruler.\footnote{75} Lt. Col. Robinson who happened to be at Kajlee, when apprised of the sudden demise of the Maharawal, sent a word to ‘Kanwar’ Dalpat Singh, the then regent of the Dungarpur state and heir-apparent to the ‘Gadi’ of Pratapgarh, about the attitude of the British government who viewed it with ‘utmost abhorrence’ and impressed upon him to use his good-offices in preventing Satis.\footnote{76} Dalpat Singh was basically against its abolition, yet for political gains\footnote{77} he wanted to win over the P.A. and as such he successfully persuaded

\footnote{71}{NAI.: F & P., cons. No. 44-45. Extract from the Haroutie Agency Diary from Dec. 14 to 20, 1840.}

\footnote{72}{Bushby—op. cit. p. 17.}

\footnote{73}{NAI.: RR. File No. 43, General Vol. I.}

\footnote{74}{Ibid.}

\footnote{75}{NAI.: F & P., Feb. 17, 1844, cons. No. 45 dated Jan. 6. 1844. Tr. of a Kharita from Kanwar Dalpat Singh to Lt. Col. Robinson.}


\footnote{77}{Dalpat Singh aspired to become the joint ruler of Dungarpur and Pratapgarh for which he needed the favour of P.A. Mewar.}
the three victims to retrieve their decision.\textsuperscript{78} As such, his political aspirations came in for a healthy social change.\textsuperscript{79} Major Thoresby had succeeded where Capt. Richards had failed and it afforded much satisfaction to him as well as the British Government.\textsuperscript{80}

This signal success of Major Thoresby once again made the British authorities to think of the best possible means of breaking the ice in this field and bring out an effective, coherent policy for its suppression.

Major Ludlow, charge-de-affairs at Jaipur (1844-48) had achieved success in abolishing female infanticide from Rajasthan, now embarked upon a policy of eradicating this evil too. He knew it that the permission granted to him to use his personal influence with the convention of the Vakeels against infanticide would not be granted to him in this case for all the difference in the reputed sanctity of Sati; and so he adopted a different line of action. He was impressed by the procedure adopted for its abolition in Bengal where the government had asked the Chief Pandit, Mrityoonjaya Tarkalankar, of the Fort William to study the scriptural texts and decide if the rite was permitted by the Shastras.\textsuperscript{81} The success which had been attained on the pronouncement of the Chief Pandit against the rite encouraged Ludlow to adopt it and attack the superstition in its very stronghold. He had read, with enthusiasm, how the Chief Pandit had established, on the basis of Hindu scriptures, that the rite was not only unsanctioned, but infamously forbidden and he applied the same stick here with which to beat the Pandits of Rajasthan. He not only desired the ‘Rajguru’ to publish a tract that Sati had no warrant in Hindu scriptures but relied on the good-will of the Thakurs, whom he wanted to take into confidence, for on the one hand there was no social consciousness in Rajasthan and on the other without their co-operation the move was destined to fail.

This approach of Ludlow suited the exigencies of the time

\textsuperscript{78} NAI: F & P., Feb. 17, 1844, op. cit.
\textsuperscript{80} (a) Ibid.

(b) NAI: F & P., Feb. 17, 1844, cons. No. 43. Thoresby to F. Currie dated Jan. 16, 1844.
\textsuperscript{81} Friend of India, Oct. 1819. No.-XVIII, pp. 475-76.
too, at Jaipur, for he had all the advantages of being the charge-de-affairs and head of the Regency Council during the minority of Maharaja Ram Singh (1835-1851) and thus in a position to impress upon the Council the desirability of abolishing such a rite.\textsuperscript{83} Not only this but Ludlow had gained the sympathies of the Rajputs by his policy in regard to infanticide and the Rajput states were conscious of the positive role played by him in the domains of social reforms. This not only alienated the antipathies likely to arise between the two due to the interference of a alien power in the domestic customs but brought them close and sounded a note of confidence in the undertakings of Ludlow.\textsuperscript{83} It was amply corroborated by the gesture of the government in making remission of the tribute from Jaipur in 1842 at the recommendations of Ludlow which made his healthy influence felt by one and all.\textsuperscript{84}

With this Ludlow proceeded ahead. He did not share the views of Sutherland that more Satis would follow if the Political Agents interfered in it.\textsuperscript{85} Still the apprehension of such a possibility made him work unseen. He held that Sati cases in Bengal were exaggerated, for they were reported on heresay evidence in a frenzy to please the British officers by providing erroneous returns.\textsuperscript{86} He pleaded with Thoresby that “I was disposed to consider that discussions temperately and judiciously encouraged and supported by doctrinal evidence against the rite would be productive of a beneficial effect in so far as it would furnish the sovereign chiefs of Rajputana who are in the balance or who still hesitate with the power of breaking

\textsuperscript{82} (a) NAI. : F & P., June 7, 1847, cons. No. 845, dated June 1, 1842. From Sutherland to Secy. G. O. I.

\textsuperscript{83} Bushby—op. cit. pp. 23-27.

\textsuperscript{84} (a) NAI. : F & P., Aug. 7, 1847, cons. No. 837, dated May 21, 1847. From Sutherland to Elliot.
(b) NAI. : F & P., Oct. 17, 1846, cons. Nos. 269-70, dated July 5, 1846. From Sutherland to F. Currie.
(c) NAI. : RR., File No. 43, Vol. I, from Ludlow to Thoresby, dated Sept. 23, 1844.


\textsuperscript{86} Ibid.
through the trammels cast upon them by a rapacious and corrupt priesthood. . . . so armed it may be assumed as incontrovertible that the decree of a sovereign who should pronounce against the cremation of any of his own wives would be imperative on his subjects. . . ." 87

Ludlow worked warily but steadily and utilised his favourable official position for social purposes. He, in his own case, twisted the prescribed policy of Sati and began contacting the members of the Regency Council and the influential Sardars, frequently impressing upon them the desirability of stopping such a practice. He, for one, knew that such a step should be taken with the consent of the Chiefs and principal advisers of the Council as without their approval the mere signature of the sovereign among the Rajputs was a dead letter. 88 This was the first step, to be followed, as Ludlow conceived, by posting two to three trust-worthy and influential people with all the objections drawn from the old Hindu scriptures against the practice so that public opinion might favour its abolition all itself but keeping himself unseen in the show till time demanded it. 89 Thus a two-way attack was made on the citadel simultaneously—Ludlow convincing the Thakurs of Jaipur while influential people making a headway in making the Rajguru amenable to their views. All the while Ludlow marked time for a final assault.

Fortunately, Ludlow could find in Seth Manik Chand, financial member of the Council, an admirably adopted man for his purpose. He hailed from an Oswal tribe whose distaste for destruction in all its forms was proverbially known throughout the country and as such disapproved and deprecated Sati. 90 He won him over along with his own head Munshi and posted them with all the arguments against Sati based on old scriptures and they betook to the ‘Rajguru’. Major Ludlow wound up his arguments by a shrewd appeal to national pride. He argued that Sati, unwarranted by Manu, the Hindu law-giver, was the crude remedy applied by some degenerate race.

88. NAI. : RR., List No. 1, File No. 43, op. cit. dated Nov. 25, 1845.
89. Kaye—op. cit. p. 542.
whose women were worthless and would have brought slur on the fair name of their masters if they survived. To such it might be left 'but the honour of Rajput husbands was in safer keeping; and the fair name of their daughters was aperced by the mere retention of so disgraceful a security.' This worked the miracle and had the desired effect.

These emissaries of Ludlow convinced the 'Rajguru', Bhat Sukha Ram Pandit, that Sati was unwarranted and insisted on issuing a directive to that effect. The 'Rajguru' received these representations with surprising candour and within six months he was induced to put forth a document in which the practice was condemned. He argued that by burning herself with the dead husband she might obtain connubial bliss in Heaven, while by a life of abstinence and chastity she would obtain final beatitude. Hence to destroy oneself for a little evanescent bliss, could not be the duty of a Rajput female; burning was for none but for those who despising final beatitude desired nothing beyond—little short-lived pleasure. Hence a life of abstinence and chastity—a living Sati—was worthier than all kinds of self-immolation. The Rajputs could not lightly brush aside the views of their 'Rajguru' based on scriptures and the reaction was at once perceptible in their camp. Whatever hitch they had in proclaiming against Sati was cleared by the verdict of the 'Rajguru'. Ludlow taking advantage of such a favourable set of circumstances began moulding them in his favour.

The establishment of the Regency Council in Jaipur for Maharaja Ram Singh, opened vistas for a successful attempt for the suppression of the rite. Though Major Thoresby was a bit reluctant for its abolition but with the appointment of Ludlow, who had successfully attempted against infanticide, the crude but systematic beginnings were made. He

91. Ibid, p. 32.
92. NAI: RR., List No. 1, File No. 43—general dated Sept. 23, 1844. From Ludlow to Thoresby.
95. NAI: RR., List No. 1, File No. 1/1847, Mewar Residency, Enclosure
endeavoured to create a public consciousness against the rite and successfully made the Jaipur Chiefs consider the practice as of questionable efficacy regarding its object. He rightly perceived that if the Rajputs who occupied the highest ranks joined him in declaring against the continuance of Sati, the groundwork for encouraging the entire Rajput community to accept and adopt such views would be made much easier.

The thinking of Ludlow at once indicated how far-sighted he was, for when attempts to abolish it were made in Mewar and Marwar the sovereigns always harped upon the argument that though they were prepared for it but they were not strong enough to thrust their decisions on the recalcitrant Thakurs and nobles, on whom they possessed no authority and without their consent it was well-nigh impossible to embark upon such a course of action.

Slowly and steadily, he began to make his marked influence on the members of the Regency Council and was able to win over Bhopal Singh of Jhullae, the heir-presumptive to the throne who was also a member of the Council, to declare openly against Sati. He was soon followed by the Thakur of Begroo. Some Thakurs and Sardars of note opposed it, but Ludlow was an iron-man and could not forsake his plan with only a semblance of resistance and he vigorously continued his efforts and won over some Thakurs to his cause. Soon Ishwari

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98. The Thakur of Puchawar at first also consented to the proposals but he retracted as Lachman Singh, Thakoor of Chaemoo withheld his concurrence for it. Rawal Sheo Singh Nathawat of Samodh, who had taken the responsibility of winning over his brother, Lachman Singh, failed and so he also evinced a disposition to withdraw from it. But the Nathawat brothers and the Puchawar Sardar, who were also the members of the administrative Council adhered to their objection to pronounce against the continuance of Sati.
Singh of Neendur and Hardee Singh of Lawan of Sheobuinpoli and Bankawat tribe conceded to his arguments and pronounced against it. Soon a host of other Thakurs and Rajas joined Ludlow in eradicating the rite. Within a year, Ludlow was able to enlist most of the clans of the Rajputs, at Jaipur, against the continuance of Sati and he naturally concluded that the Rajputs would follow the head of their respective clans. The maiden attempt of Ludlow seemed to bear fruits as he had made a successful inroad in the citadel by dividing the loyalties of the people who were sticking to this crude idea and they began considering the very practice as of questionable efficacy. This was not a mean achievement as for the first time there was a group of people surcharged with the imprint of the Western thinking likely to make positive impact on the social life of the region. It, unequivocally, emphasised the fact that individual British Officers could do more good to the cause of suppressing an inhuman practice than the government. A policy of persuasion actively helped by the prevailing circumstances in favour of the ruling authority could uproot a long established custom.

Ludlow had won over a host of important Thakurs to his cause as also the members of the Regency Council but they did not favour to pledge the infant sovereign to so crucial a measure


102. Ibid. dated Sept. 23, 1845. From Major Ludlow to French. The following persons and clans favoured Ludlow—Thakur of Jhullae—Rajawat; Rao of Doomee—Jogawat; Thakur of Bagroe—Chuterbhoojot; Ex-Raja of Nar-war—Rajawat; Thakur of Doongree—Nathawat; Thakur of Moreenjha—Nathawat; Rao of Manoharpur—Shekhawat; Raja of Khetree—Shekhawat; Ram Nath, Mukhtair of Khetree—Purohit; Thakur of Cheokru—Shekhawat; Thakur of Mandha—Kungarot; Thakur of Dadoo Kungarot; Rao Raja of Seekur—Shekhawat; Rao Raja of Ooneera—Naruka; Thakur of Diggee—Kungarot; Thakur of Busao—Shekhawat and Thakur of Mundwa—Shekhawat.

and Ludlow had to wait for some time more to make public his achievements.

In the meantime Ludlow circulated the anti-Sati pronouncements of the Jaipur Thakurs to other agencies of Rajputana in order that the pace of success might be uniformly maintained and a favourable atmosphere might prevail in other states too.\textsuperscript{104} The initiative of Ludlow was not only highly applauded by the Political Agents but they wished success for the unique attempt at Jaipur. They attempted to prepare the heads of the states to promulgate against such a practice which in time would also be accepted by the major states. Long before any such change in policy could be initiated by the major states, the smaller states of Rajasthan picked up the gauntlet and lead the torch for a change in the social fabric of Rajasthan. Rao Raja of Sirohi issued a proclamation forbidding the cremation and inhumation of widows but did not make it a penal offence.\textsuperscript{105} The Rao held the view that the proclamation would prove ineffective so long as it was not backed by an order from the government.\textsuperscript{106}

Anderson’s successful attempt at Sirohi sent a wave of change in the states of Rajasthan when some states following Sirohi announced likewise. But in Harouti Burton could not pick up the policy of Ludlow as censors were passed by the British government against him and his predecessor for the policy adopted by them.\textsuperscript{107}

The Nawab of Tonk made a favourable response informing the government that the practice of Sati had long been prohibited throughout his dominions and practically there


\textsuperscript{105} (a) NAL. : RR., List No. 1, File No. 43 general. Vol. I dated November 1844. From P.T. French to Ludlow.


\textsuperscript{107} NAL. : RR., List No. 1, File No. 43, op. cit. dated November 18, 1844. From Burton to Ludlow.
were no cases of Sati in his territory since a long time. 208 He issued a fresh proclamation to desist any attempt of the kind.

The proclamations issued by these two minor states along with the success Ludlow achieved at Jaipur made other sovereigns too to act favourably. 209 The Maharaja of Bharatpur pronounced against the continuance of Sati in his dominions. Jaisalmer, Dungarpur, Pratapgarh, Banswara and Karauli followed suit. 211 The Maharaja of Kishangarh showed his readiness to acquiesce with the wishes of the government on an invitation to that effect. 212 The Maharaja of Bikaner pledged himself to pronounce against the rite if the Maharana was won over. 213 Thus by the end of 1847 the states of Dholpur, Bharatpur, Jaisalmer, Sirohi, Pratapgarh, Banswara, Dungarpur and Tonk made suitable arrangements for the prevention of Sati.

This initiative of the minor states was pregnant with momentous consequences, for on the one hand they had abandoned the old rut and thereby made the British authorities more enthusiastic to try their hand elsewhere in the major states, and on the other clearly manifested that a policy of persuasion would bear fruits. Though all these states had a comparatively lesser population where the grip of the ruler was tight and the anti-Sati feelings had not matured completely, but still with that

108. NAI : RR, File No. 43 op. cit. dated Jan. 11, 1845. From Ludlow to Thoresby.
110. NAI : RR, File No. 43, op. cit. dated Nov. 7, 1844. From Ludlow to P.T. French.
111. (a) NAI : RR, File No. 43, op. cit. From Sutherland to W. Edwards Esq.
(b) NAI : E & P, April 17, 1847, cons. No. 52.
(c) Pratapgarh issued proclamation on Kartika Budi 3, 1903 V.S. Banswara on Ashoj Budi 13, 1903 V.S. and Dungarpur on Kartika Sudi 10, 1903 V.S.
113. Ibid.
it was a bold and daring adventure which the rulers had undertaken. While discussions still dominated the atmosphere of the Rajput capitals, precipitating in actions and reactions all the time, the hilarious act of these states deserve every appreciation.

During this time French, the Political Agent at Jodhpur (1844-45) despatched the entire correspondence to the Thakurs of Jodhpur and desired to discuss the issue with them when they meet next to celebrate Dussehra in the Capital. 114 He was so much encouraged by the response from the states of Rajputana that he impressed upon Thoresby, the Agent to G.G. in Rajputana, to exercise his own influence on the heads of the states to suppress this rite within their dominions.

When Thoresby came to know of the attempts made by Ludlow, he expressed mixed feelings. He enjoined on his subordinate Political Agents to adhere as much as possible to the authorised course of policy regarding the discouragement of Sati. 115 Even after this he was convinced of the useful work done by Ludlow which might, if attempted systematically would bring an end to the practice. 116 As such he sought permission from the government for issuing a circular to the different heads of the States calling upon them the desire of the Supreme government to suppress the rite of Sati as it was not sanctioned in the old Hindu scriptures. 117 For the time being he forbade Ludlow from addressing any letter regarding its suppression to the heads of the States pending the instructions from the Supreme government. 118

With permission granted for it, Thoresby made a cautious move. First he earnestly waited for some time if the rulers of

117. Ibid.
118. NAI : F & P, July 11, 1845, cons. No. 46, dated Nov. 27, 1844. From Thoresby to Ludlow.

Thoresby sounded the Jodhpur Darbar in person but was given a vague and evasive reply when the Maharaja said, “let the matter take its own course.”
the states took an initiative in discouraging Sati and when he was satisfied that none was forthcoming, he began executing his own plan of action. He addressed a Kharita in Dec. 1845 to the various rulers of Rajasthan impounding upon them that there appeared no mention of the rite in the well-known Hindu scriptures from which it could be conveniently deduced that it had its origin in the unaied device of the human mind and the force of example. Therefore the supreme government wished that the heads of the states should endeavour in a way as to bring its complete extinction in their respective territories. He advised them, that as a first step to stop it, it should be fully explained to the victim that the prescribed and authorised life of purity and devotion was infinitely preferable to the act of concamation and more beneficial to the dead. If she might not listen to it then it should be so arranged that she received no assistance from her relatives or others in the way of collecting fuel and setting fire to the pyre. Thoresby believed that in this way the practice would cease to exist. 119

The circular addressed by Thoresby was approved by the Supreme government as highly judicious for without urging the direct abolition of the practice, this was well calculated to induce them to take every means of discourtenancing it. 120 Simultaneously, he instructed all the Political Agents of the Rajputana Agencies to persuade the rulers, by their personal influence, to issue proclamations against Sati. 121 Thus a change was perceptible in the official policy of the government and when it came to this it was difficult for the Rajput states to postpone it indefinitely.

The official pressure exerted by Thoresby added a greater weight to the humanitarian and logical exertions of Ludlow so much so that the latter had to encounter only the least opposition

119. (a) NAI. : F & P., April 25, 1846, cons. No. 118-21. Tr. of a Hindu Kharita addressed by Major Thoresby to the Chiefs of Jalpur, Jodhpur, Udaipur, Bikaner, Jhalawar, Jaisalmer, Kota, Bundi, Dholpur, Sirohi, Banswara, Dungarpur and Pratapgarh.


120. NAI. : Pol. despatch from the Secy. of State dated Sept 8, 1847, No. 19.

when the question was discussed by the Regency Council.\textsuperscript{122} On 23, August 1846 a proclamation was issued prohibiting the rite of Sati in Jaipur\textsuperscript{124}, impounding upon all Jagirdars, ‘Thana-dars’, ‘Jamadars’, etc. who should securely provide against any woman being suffered to burn. It equally laid the responsibility on every one—including the authorities of the ‘Ilaqua’, the relations of the deceased, those who were residing nearby, those who assisted in collecting fire-wood and abetting the victim and even those who neglected to use their exertions for preventing the sacrifice—all to be punished in proportion to their guilt.\textsuperscript{126} It was signed by all the important and influential Sardars of the Raj.\textsuperscript{125}

Col. Sutherland himself met with the members of the Regency Council and was deeply impressed by the sincerity of purpose on their part.\textsuperscript{126} He impressed upon the Supreme government to publish it in the government gazette for it would, unequivocally, prove the keen interest of the G.O.I. in such matters and would aid the local officers in their humanitarian work.\textsuperscript{127} Ludlow’s efforts were crowned with success, for Jaipur was not only a centre of orthodoxy but ranked as the second powerful state in Rajasthan. Ludlow waited for its follow-up from his fellow-brothers posted at different Agencies of Rajputana.

The sincerity of the protestations of the Regency Council was put to a test when on 17, Oct. 1847, Rutnee, a Charan woman formerly of Marwar, burnt herself with the

\textsuperscript{122} It is conceivable that the demise of Thakur Megh Singh of Diggee and his Rathi or Widow having become a Satl, offered an opportunity to Ludlow to open the question once again.


\textsuperscript{124} NAI.: F & P., Oct. 17, 1846, cons. Nos. 266B-68. From Sutherland to Currie dated August 27, 1846. Tr. of a proclamation of the Raja of Jaipur of date corresponding with August 23, 1846.


\textsuperscript{126} NAI.: F & P., Oct. 17, 1846. op. cit.

body of her infant son near Peeloo Khera in the Bonlee Pargana of Jaipur. The four Charans were sentenced to five-year imprisonment as this was the first occasion of the commission of the offence and they pleaded ignorance of the prohibitory enactment. The other culprits involved were also judiciously punished.

The lead taken by Jaipur was of momentous consequences for the other states of Rajputana which had yet not toed the line of action could not withstand the tidings of the time for long. At the same time the Political Agents in the various Agencies began exerting their influence empatcically on the rulers which brought about a change in their sentiments and feelings. Ludlow was also elated at his success and wished to try it elsewhere.

As such when he was incharge of the Harauti Agency, he addressed a letter to Maha Rao Raja of Bundi for abolishing this rite. Accordingly, the Rao Raja issued a proclamation on the Sixth day of the dark-half of Jaistha, 1903 V. S. (May 6, 1847) declaring that the rite was against the spirit of the Shastras and that all officers of the state who failed in making arrangements in their respective jurisdictions and all those who would be found involved in the burning of a widow would be charged with blood-shed and punished accordingly. The G.G. showed his approbation for its abolition, but still more

129. Tara Meena, 'Patel' of Peeloo Khera was imprisoned for five years and fined Rs 50; Soortee Brahmin and Pulka were also sentenced to the same term of imprisonment; Hira Lal 'Thanasar' of Boonlee was dismissed from his office and declared unfit of serving the government in future.
130. NAI. : RR., File No. 43, general III. Tr. of a proceeding of the Jaipur Council of Regency dated Nov. 17, 1847. The Council of Regency offered to remit the punishments in case of such offenders who belonged to Marwar on condition that the proclamation be published in Marwar too, to which the Maharaja acceded.
than this Capt. R. Morrison, offic. P.A. Harauti expressed his satisfaction as the Maha Rao declared that he was satisfied that the prohibition was in entire agreement with the spirit of the Shastras.\textsuperscript{132}

The proclamation of Bundi was highly important in the sense that it was the principal state in Harauti—one of the four divisions of Rajputana—and its sovereign was the head of the Hada tribe of Rajputs. It might have its impact on the Raja of Jodhpur, Man Singh, too for his daughter was the queen of Maha Rao Ram Singh.\textsuperscript{133}

The singular success attained at Bundi was followed by a proclamation at Jahalawar. Raj Rana, Madan Singh of Jhalawar, a few weeks prior to his death issued a proclamation abolishing Sati in all the ‘Paraganas’ of Jhalawar\textsuperscript{134} and issued instructions to all Sardars, etc. to that effect. He forbade anyone in procuring fire-wood etc. on an occasion of Sati taking place or assist in the inhumation of a person, about to sacrifice himself on pain of being considered as a murderer and punished accordingly.\textsuperscript{135}

But in spite of it one of the widows performed Sati on the death of Raj Rana in July 1847.\textsuperscript{136} The Political Agent viewed the infringement seriously and the Agent to G.G. in Rajputana refused to forward any communication to the G.G. of India until punishment was awarded to those who were engaged in persuading or assisting the late Rani of Jhalawar to become Sati.\textsuperscript{137} The Agent to the G.G. in

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\textsuperscript{132} NAI: F & P., Dec. 24, 1847, cons. No. 146, op. cit.
\textsuperscript{133} NAI: F & P., Dec. 24, 1847, cons. 145. From Agent G.G. to Sutherland dated July 22, 1847.
\textsuperscript{134} NAI: R.R., List No. 1. File No. 43, general III. No. 101 of 1847, dated April 30, 1847.
\textsuperscript{136} NAI: R.R., List No. 1, Mewar Residency Office, File No. 1/1847, dated Sept. 1, 1847.
\textsuperscript{137} NAI: F & P., July 29, 1848, cons. No. 77-78. Tr. of a Kharita from the Raj Rana of Jhalawar dated 17, Jamadusami, 1246 Hijra. The Agent to G.G. Rajputana viewed that the innocent people might be punished to satisfy the requirements of the govt, but this was perhaps the best mode of dealing with the matter for it would not involve the authority of the G.G. in a case in which the govt. was
Rajputana viewed that the punishment of the culprits would lead to a systematic discouragement of the rite and would create the desired result that the government intended to enforce the regulations sincerely. As a mark of displeasure the Agent stopped all epistolary correspondence with the Jhalawar Chief and resolved not to recognise, in a formal manner, the accession of the heir apparent, Prithhee Singh, to the Gadi.

This at once brought the Raj Rana to senses for communication with G.G. was taken as an honour and privilege and a deprecation of which degraded the former in the estimation of the other princes and his subjects alike. The Raj Rana had to bear the anguish which had fallen his lot and at once instituted an inquiry. He could not, squarely, fix responsibility on any and as such showed his inability to punish. He, however, issued another proclamation dated January 21, 1848 and assured Col. Low of suppressing the rite.

The Raj Rana repeatedly expressed his regrets and deputed his Vakil, Goojor Mal to impress upon the Agent the

powerless to punish. Even if the govt. had the authority to do so it was liable to do more harm than good by exciting the sympathy of others. The agent firmly stood by his contention that more good could be reaped through the influence of British Officers with sovereigns and chiefs than any direct measure.

NAI. : RR., List No. 1, File No. 1/1847, dated Sept. 11, 1847.

139. The Raj Rana was not much affected by withholding the recognition of his accession but when the Secy. of State thought of dropping the title of Maharaj Rana and reducing his rank too, thereby allowing him a lower seat than that occupied by his father and treating his representative in a corresponding manner, than the Raj Rana became nervous and got ready to carry out the instructions of the British government.


142. NAI. : RR., List No. 1, File No. 43—general III. Jhalawar File No. 12, p. 32.
desirability of restoring the right of correspondence with G.G. The Agent was convinced that the Raja Rana was either personally disposed to screen the culprits or was too much wanting in resolution to punish them and as such deserved the displeasure of the British government, but as he had been sufficiently punished and earnestly desired to put a stop to the practice so the renewal of epistolary correspondence might be restored to him. It appears that the Agent felt that the lowering of the dignity tended to lessen the power of the heir-apparent to adopt effective measures for the improvement of the government and so on his recommendation the Secretary to the G.O.I. with G.G. allowed him the privilege of correspondence. He, however, left a note of caution that any step in stopping the rite should be taken by the Raj Rana himself, uninfluenced by the British officers excepting by such friendly counsel as the Raj Rana might ask for.

The proceedings at Jhalawar showed that the British government was vigilant to see that the proclamations issued by the rulers were strictly observed and in the case of breach they were prepared to punish outrightly. The British government not only postponed the formal recognition but stopped the right of correspondence of the heir-apparent, thereby making him amenable to the wishes of the government. They even threatened him with more stringent measures if the desired result was not forthcoming. A new factor emerged out of the proceedings at Jhalawar that whenever pursuasive methods failed, the British government was prepared to have recourse to punitive measures, if needed for the attainment of their objects.

(b) NAL.: Pol. letters to the C.O.D. dated Dec. 7, 1842. No. 8
The sincerity of the protestations of Jhalawar Durbar were explicitly clear when in 1867, on the death of Roora his wife prepared to perform the rite but the prompt action of the Durbar stopped it but not without an altercation lasting for nearly nine hours with the Hindus who contended that it was against the precepts of religion to interfere once the lady declared to commit herself to the flames. Some ten persons who aided and abetted in the performance of the rite were seized and imprisoned. Again in 1870 when the widow of a Mahajan of Koondee Khera determined to immolate herself, the local officers warned the people of their responsibility if the woman was allowed to carry out her designs. When this could not have the desired result, they confined her in a room and had the corpse removed and consumed. On both these occasions the British government conveyed her acknowledgements for the action of the Raj Rana.

The success attained at Bondee and Jhalawar made the Political Agents even more energetic to impress upon the Maharao of Kota to put a stop to the rite. They were encouraged in their undertakings by the appeal of Sutherland to utilise every opportunity in getting it repudiated from the rest of the states of Rajputana. Burton, the P.A. at Kota, represented to the Maharao, Ram Singh, the cherished intentions of the Supreme government in eradicating the evil which had no sanction in the Holy scriptures. The Maharao, at his request, issued a notice dated March 23, 1848 to different officials denouncing the practice and declaring condign punishment to all permitting or assisting in the accomplishment of the rite.

148. In Soorlee village of Pachpahar district
153. (a) BA.: Kota Records, Bhandar No. 2, dated Chaitra Sud, 12, 1919 V.S.
(b) NAI.: F & P., April, 1848, cons. No. 53. Tr. of a Kharita from Maharao Ram Singh.
Capt. Burton held that the proclamation of Kota Durbar would be more effective for a matrimonial alliance existed between Maharao and the Udaipur Durbar. But events proved otherwise, for Mewar was the last of the Rajput States to promulgate against the rite.\textsuperscript{154}

Major Malcolm viewed that the facility with which Sati had been abolished in almost all the states of Rajasthan, excepting Marwar, Mewar and Bikaner showed that the rite was considered less as a ceremony inculcated by religion but one associated with customs and habits and bequeathed by ancestors.\textsuperscript{155}

Thus within two years after the proclamation at Jaipur all the states of Rajasthan, excepting Jodhpur, Bikaner, Alwar and Mewar had prohibited the rite of Sati in their jurisdiction.\textsuperscript{156}

When such momentous events were happening in some capitals of the Rajput States, the Sati committed by an old woman belonging to a party of the Bhats, led the Political Agents to revive his interest in the affairs of Jodhpur for stopping the practice.\textsuperscript{157} Hardly, had this fresh case of Sati come to a completion when the daughter of Singheev Jusraj declared to perform the rite on the pyre of her deceased husband. The Maharaja sent his emissaries\textsuperscript{158} to dissuade the woman and to assure her that if she complied with the wishes of the Durbar

\textsuperscript{154} NAI.: R.R., List No. 1, File No. 43 gen.-III. From Burton to Sutherland dated March 9, 1848.

\textsuperscript{155} NAI.: R.R., List No. 1, File No. 43-gen-III. From Major D.A. Malcolm, P.A. Jodhpur to Col. Low, dated Dec. 24, 1849. Malcolm forgot to mention that Alwar had also not issued any notice against Sati to that time.


The Bhats belonged to the village of Kowla in Jodhpur. They reported that Sati was still permitted in Marwar although forbidden in Palanpur.

\textsuperscript{158} First Mehta Laxmi Chand was sent and then Rao Riddh Mal and Bhandari Shri Chand were followed by Dewan and Bakshi to dissuade her.
she would be granted a village and that any patronage, which
she might ask for, would be conferred on her father. But
they all failed in their mission. H.H. Greathred, P.A. Jodhpur,
unsuccessfully impressed upon the Maharaja to declare it
against the spirit of Hindu scriptures. It appeared to him that
the policy of the government should be denounced, stigmatizing
it as a blot on the Hindu institutions for which they were held
in horror by all civilized nations.

The subject was picked up once again by Col. Sutherland
when he was officiating P.A. at Jodhpur and he tried to get a
proclamation issued abolishing Sati in Marwar. He discussed
it in all its bearings in the full assembly of Chiefs and members
in the presence of the Maharaja. Though he was unable to
make the Maharaja amenable to his request but succeeded in
persuading him to publish the Jaipur proclamation in his
dominions. The Maharaja limited himself to the employment
of dissuasive means for the prevention of Sati holding out
hopes that their frequency would be diminished, thereby.
He viewed that dissuasion would operate indirectly towards the
discontinuance of the rite, for a practice so much opposed to
the ordinary precepts of humanity would not long survive
against authoritative discouragement. He was convinced that
the rite had fallen into comparative disrepute within the last
two years. The Maharaja, however, held that he was anxious
for its total abolition but some weighty reasons deterred him
from adopting more effective measures.

159. NAI: F & P., Oct. 17, 1846. op. cit. Tr. of an extract from the
Jodhpur Akbhar dated Shrawan Budi 2, 1903 V.S.
160. The State provided Rs 200/- and a horse to meet the expenses as
was the custom in Marwar of those days.
Jodhpur, to Sutherland dated August 12, 1846.
162. NAI: F & P.: April 17, 1847, cons. No. 53. dated March 18, 1847.
164. NAI: RR., File No. 43-gen. III, op. cit. No. 92, of 1847.
165. NAI: F & P., April 17, 1847, op. cit.
166. Ibid.

He apprehended that direct prohibition would excite hostility among
the nobles and awaken their prejudices.
Malcolm now planned to work in a circuticus way and was able to get the proclamation denouncing under certain penalties the immolation of victims practised by Bhat and Charans. He thought that the question of the abolition of the rite of Sati was a touchy one and if he worked patiently but cautiously he would extract the requisite proclamation from the Maharaja within a short span of time. He expressed to Capt. Showers, officiating Agent to G.G., Rajputana that he considered the suppression of rite of this description as a step gained towards the immolation of female Sati in Jodhpur.\footnote{167}

The policy of Malcolm had the desired effect, for there appeared a change in the very outlook of the Thakurs.\footnote{168} When on March 1, 1849 a young woman of the Nath tribe committed Sati, the P.A. took it advisable to open the issue once again with the Maharaja and *Pradhan* Bubbott Singh, the Thakur of Potran, vehemently advocated its abolition to all parties present. This was a streak of light in the otherwise gloomy skies of Jodhpur indicating a change. Never before this such an open advocacy of its abolition had come off, and the most striking thing was that it came from a Thakur who had always held to uphold the practice. The Maharaja held consultations with other Thakurs, individually as well as collectively. Not only they alone advocated the propriety of adopting measures for the discontinuance of the rite but even the civil servants of the 'Raj' joined them.\footnote{169}

The attitude of the Thakurs coupled with the relentless pressure of the P.A. led Maharaja to issue an order in 1849 by

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\footnote{167} NAL: R.R., List No. 1, File No. 43-gen-III, op. cit. dated March 18., 1847.


\footnote{169} (a) NAL: R.R., List No. 1, File No. 43-gen-III, No. 36 of 1848 From Capt. D.A. Malcolm to Col. J. Low dated April 1, 1849.

(b) NAL: F & P., May 19, 1849, cons. No. 45. From J. Low to H.M. Elliot, Secy. to the G.O.I. dated April 16, 1849.
which the local authorities were directed to stop the rite by persuasion but if the parties persisted in executing it they should punish them by inflicting a fine leviable at a fixed rate on the "Rekh" of the Thakur or their houses as individuals.179

Though the amount of fine was quite low and was not likely to deter persons from assisting in the rite but Malcolm viewed that it was an effective point gained by the government as it would explicitly make it evident that the rite was no longer countenanced by the government. Again, to this time, it was taken to be within the purview of religion, but this order would positively strike new grounds in the false notions of religion. He, however, left a note of caution that the sincerity of the Maharaja even in inflicting such meagre fines would only be judged by the passage of time when cases against this order come up.171

The pretensions of Malcolm proved to be correct for within first eight months of this order as many as four cases of Satis' were reported and the measures adopted by Jodhpur Darbar proved of no avail in stopping the victims from performing it.172 The Maharaja showed his helplessness excepting levying fines and argued that no pains were spared to ascertain the wishes of the widows and to afford them relief.173

This sort of affairs led Malcolm to believe that a policy of persuasion would not have the desired effect. He, unhesitatingly, recommended to his superior officers that a distinct demand on the part of the government for the abolition of the rite would be attended with success but if the government felt that the time for it had not arrived, it would be better to give up the agitation against the rite any more.174

170. (a) NAI.: F & P., May 19, 1849, op. cit.
(b) NAI.: RR., List No. 1, File No. 43-gen-III. Tr. of and order issued by H.H. Jodhpur dated Chatra Sudi 9, 1905 V.S.
The fine imposed was to be at the rate of Rs 10/- per every Rs 100/- of 'Rekh' on Jagirdars and Rs 7/- on every householder.
171. NAI.: RR., List No. 1, File No. 43-gen-III, No. 30 of 1849 dated April 1, 1849.
174. NAI.: Ibid. No. 103 of 1849.
When all these proceedings were in the making, the death of Budh Nath, a priest of high rank and the rite of Sati committed by his wife, almost within sight of the palace of Maharaja, highlighted the futility of the attempts made to stop the practice. The Agent viewed that the Maharaja could have stopped its execution had he been sincere in his protestations. The Agent expressed that the Supreme government should come forward with a demand made on the Maharaja for abolishing it. The Maharaja possessed the power of preventing the crime but unless compelled he would not exercise his power. He informed that Baboot Singh of Pokrun, the head of the nobility at the Court also shared his views. The remonstrances of Lt. Col. Shakespeare were immediately complied with when Col. Low, through him conveyed his ‘earnest desire’ to the Maharaja to issue a positive order ‘without delay’ for the total abolition of the rite, declaring it to be a crime amounting to murder and punished accordingly. He recommended that in case the Maharaja avoided giving a positive promise to issue the ‘required mandate’ he should leave the audience without allowing to converse with him on any other subject at that audience.

The threatening attitude of Shakespeare yielded favourable results as the Maharaja showed his willingness to meet the wishes of the government. But as it was customary that such orders should be issued after consulting the Thakurs so he gave an understanding to collect them at any early date. R. Shakespeare, at last, regretted that he had failed to get a positive response on the plea that the Thakurs did not respond favourably to the proposal of the Maharaja. He, however,

177. NAI.: RR., File No. 43-gen. III. From Low to R. Shakespeare, dated Sept. 25, 1852.
179. Ibid.
180. NAI.: RR., List No. 1, File No. 43-gen-III. From R. Shakespeare to J. Low dated October 12, 1852.
requested that he be permitted to abstain from the routine court-sies of the Court till the Maharaja made a compliance with the wishes of the Supreme government in issuing a prohibitory order against the rite. As Dussehra was fast approaching, so he requested for an immediate advice\(^{181}\) as it was the most opportune time when the Maharaja could be coerced into complying with the views of the British government. The threatening posture of the P.A. had a sobering effect on the Maharaja and he at once despatched his Vakil on October 16, 1852 to him. The Maharaja was uneasy to feel that the hostile attitude of the Thakurs would not let him hold the Dussehra Durbar in the absence of the P.A. and as such requested him to reconsider his decision in the light of the fact that though he acquiesced to his demand but it was impossible to carry the measure through, before Dussehra.\(^{182}\) The firm stand of R. Shakespeare had the desired result and as he refused to attend the Dussehra Durbar before the issue of a positive prohibition, so the Maharaja on Oct. 20, 1852 issued a proclamation to that effect. In case of Sati taking place a fine would be levied on Jagirdars at Rs 200/- on every Rs. 1000/- of ‘Rekh’ and from others according to the assessment of the property of the concerned culprits.

The difference between the two was quite marked for the first recognised an allowed Sati on paying a small fine but the latter order distinctly prohibited it and raised the amount of fine to twenty times of the former. The proclamation put Sati and murder at par and the fine was exorbitantly high to deter people from practising it which the supreme government would have preferred to impose for murder.\(^{183}\)

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183. NAI: R.R., List No. 1, File No. 43-gen-III, enclosure No. 54 of 1852, dated Oct. 20, 1852. Tr. of a proclamation issued to the 'Hakims' of Paragana's' in the territory of Marwar.

Capital punishment was not in vogue in Marwar; imprisonment and fines were the only punishments but amongst the 'Thakoores' fine was taken as the only punishment for murder. It was believed that if the fine declared proved insufficient to stop the practice, there would be little difficulty in getting it enhanced for the main hurdle in issuing a distinct and positive prohibition against it had been over-come.
Though Sati had been prohibited in Marwar yet the feelings in its favour were as strong as ever. The Maharaja had yielded to the pressure put by the British Officers when his own house was most disorganised and as such the consent was a forced one. To strengthen the bonds of union between the two governments and to root out an evil in accordance with the wishes of the British government, the consent was extracted. So it was all the more possible that the Maharaja would have tried to avoid cases of Sati unless the discerning eye of the British Officers made him take some action.

But apart from it a change was clearly visible in the policy of the British government, for far from expressing their abhorrence at the rite and impressing upon the heads of States the desirability of stopping it, the government had now resorted to pressure tactics. The rulers of Rajasthan were not in a position to withstand this pressure due to internal turmoils and their own strained relations with the nobility. But in such a dilemma of choosing between the devil and the due—the recalcitrant nobility and the imposing British authorities—they preferred the latter to save themselves under the canopy of the British umbrella for some time. Though this was the unusual way of introducing reforms on the part of the British officers, but they were left with no choice except exerting force and making the heads amenable to their demands. Force in itself is brutal but even then it is pregnant with healthy results is a crude riddle of history. R. Shakespeare deserved all the praise which was bestowed upon him for the prompt and judicious use of it on a favourable opportunity for exercising a legitimate influence. The G.G. showed marked satisfaction at the conduct of the Maharaja.

With Jodhpur succumbing to the views of the British government, the three states of Alwar, Bikaner and Udaipur still remained outside the pale of anti-Sati movement. The British government adopted a threatening attitude towards

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these states. Henry Lawrence, the Agent to G.G. in Rajputana asked the rulers to abolish the rite 'without delay' or else there was a possibility that the relations between the two might deteriorate which would not be in their interest. He reminded them of an appeal made by Thoresby as early as 1845 which went unheeded. Under the pressing circumstances it was not possible for Alwar to keep itself aloof from the trend adopted by almost all the states of Rajasthan. The Raja of Alwar proclaimed against it but begged, however, that it should not be deemed culpable. The Agent expressed his satisfaction at the proclamation.

With the prohibition of rite in Alwar, Bikaner, and Jodhpur, Mewar remained the only oasis where the rite was legally recognised by the Maharana who showed his utter disinclination to stop it. Col. Alves, the Agent to G.G. for the states of Rajputana, who always cherished a fond hope of securing an effective step towards its extinction from Maharana Sardar Singh, who hailed from a Jagirdar's family where the rite was not practised, looked very pale and dejected when a concubine performed the rite at his death.

Inspite of the initial failure, the British officers continued to urge for its abolition as doggedly as the Maharana was opposing it desperately. Major Thoresby impressed upon the Maharana that the rite was not permitted in the Hindu scriptures. He pressed the Maharana that this fact should be impressed upon the victim and in case she did not yield to it, then no help in providing fuel etc. should be afforded by the relatives or the people. But the appeal of Thoresby had no sobering effect on the Maharana. Again in 1846, when the tribute of Mewar

189. Ibid. dated Nov. 10, 1856.
was reduced by Rs 2 lakhs a year, Col. Sutherland remarked, "The most important feature of granting remission of this kind is that of strengthening the hands of the local officers of the government to carry through the object of their mission in the diffusion of good government, after which may be expected to follow, almost as a matter of course, the spread of education and enlightenment, in process of time the abolition of infanticide, Sati and slave dealing in the native states." But it was ineffective. When Robinson referred the Jaipur proclamation to the Maharana he gave a rejoinder, "the practice has always obtained and has repeatedly been fully expatiated on". As such the Maharana could not be reconciled to the changing views of the other Durbars of Rajasthan.

In 1854 two Satis occurred and the British Political officers again persuaded the Maharana in acquiescing to the demands of the Supreme government. Col. Lawrence viewed that a distinct expression of the will of the government would meet with early compliance. He remarked, "But to make the rule effective we must satisfy ourselves that the orders are known and in each case of Suttee we should be informed of the circumstances and punishment inflicted. Uniformity cannot be expected. The power-position of the offender will always be considered, but when the authorities know that the attention is attracted to every case, I have very little doubt that Suttee will soon cease."

The Maharana was himself averse to order the discontinuance of the rite but showed his inclination to order against it. He was, at the moment, afraid that his orders might be disobeyed by his Chiefs as in the case of his proclamation against witch-swinging. So he thought of reconciling the

193. (a) V.V. Vol. IV. pp. 2016-17, dated Magh Sudi 8, 1904 V.S.
(b) NAI. : F & P., Dec. 12, 1846, cons. Nos. 47-49, Tr. of a Kharita from Mehta Sher Singh, P.M. of Udaipur to Lt. Col. Robinson, P.A. Mewar, dated Kartika Budi 11, 1903 V.S.
Chiefs first. He also made it explicitly clear that in such matters he had rarely acted without the consent and concurrence of the Sixteen Chiefs of Mewar for they would at once make it a handle to accuse him of ingratiating himself with the British government at the expense of religion of his ancestors. As such the Maharana considered that if the Thakurs did not adopt the order in their Jagirs, it would be ineffective. H. Lawrence, therefore, did not press the question.

Though Maharana showed his helplessness to promulgate due to refractory attitude of the Chiefs but this very reason led to a more positive policy of the British government. They rightly argued that if the Maharana could not promulgate an order in general, he was empowered to get his orders executed at least in the Khalsa lands. Soon the British government were favoured with an opportunity when four widows committed Sati in Mewar and Lawrence expected that the Maharana would act decisively in the matter for the Chiefs were not concerned in these cases. As the Maharana again remained a passive spectator so the Agent reminded him of the favours that the Supreme government had shown towards him and naturally expected some return of it. He even threatened the Maharana that the Agency would be removed from Mewar and he would be responsible for the ruin that might beset the state. The Maharana again pleaded helplessness because of his refractory Sardars.

199. V.V. Vol. IV, pp. 2025-27 dated July 5, 1856.

The Maharana informed that the Sardar would not obey his orders that about two to four lakhs of Rupees for 'Chatond' etc. remained
The British officers viewed that the Maharana would have prevented the Satis taking place, for he was reasonably powerful to act likewise and that the assertions of weakness were put forward for evading unpleasant requisitions. As such the Agent to G.G. for the States of Rajputana suggested a hard line of action. He recommended that it should be forbidden throughout foreign states as was done in the case of British territory. He felt that the Maharana would prefer such an action, for his pride prevented him in joining the prohibition of Sati, voluntarily. He also recommended a stringent punishment for the offenders.

When such views were held by the Agent and their seemed a possibility of putting the practice to an end, violent bloodshed broke out in Rajasthan too, as elsewhere. The Rawat of Salumber, one of the principal Chiefs among the sixteen Chiefs of Mewar, ventilated his feelings against the Sati measures and instigated the ‘mutineers’ and the recalcitrant Chiefs in Mewar to rise against the Company. The British officers and the Maharana, who favoured the English were in a tight corner till the uprisings were calmed down.

unpaid; that it would be deemed as irreligious act by the Sardars.

202. NAI; F & P., April 22, 1859, op. cit.
Half of his Chiefs were obedient to him. If at all the use of force was required, he had three regiments with some guns at his command.

203. NAI; F & P., April 22, 1859, cons. No. 232-33. From H. Lawrence to Edmonstone, Secy., to G.O.I dated Feb. 5, 1857. He recommended that the penalties be according to circumstances—a fine equal to 3/4 of the estate for two to three years or imprisonment for periods varying from 1 to 5 years. The money on no account should be appropriated by the Raj but it should be applied to works of public utility in consultation with the P. A. If the offence was repeated more stringent punishment be inflicted involving at least a sum double to that which was imposed earlier or proportional imprisonment be awarded. The government should be prepared to use force to enforce the punishment.

204. (a) NAI; RR., List No. 1, File No. 88-Mewar (old) S.N. 325.
At Ajmer too the people made capital out of it and the Hindu population regarded it as an encroachment upon their religion.
The Governor-General neither approved of the recommendations of the Agent to G.G. in Rajputana nor consented of withdrawing the Political Agent from Mewar. He, however, contended that in order to show his displeasure at the attitude of the Maharana, he would be informed that his salute would be reduced, his title of Maharana be dropped and other complimentary titles and phrases which were, heretofore, employed in addressing him could be suspended.

This might have sounded a note of caution to the Maharana but he was under an illusion that the prohibition of Sati was against the spirit of the proclamation of the Queen, Victoria. He contended that the proclamation of 1858 permitted the observance of religious rites and as Sati was covered by it so the British authorities had no genuine grounds to abolish it. As Maharana persisted in it, the Agent to

The abolition of Sati resulted in a general upheaval signifying resentment against the humanitarian acts of the British officers. Chauhan Suraj Mal Mundatree revolted against the suppression of the rite and became all the more known for his acts of bravery against the British government.


Not only Hindus but the Muslims had also their apprehensions for they believed that if the British government interfered with Hindu customs and practices with impunity, there was every possibility of their interference in Muslim law and practices too. There was a microscopic minority even among the intelligentsia at Ajmer who viewed the social legislation favourably. Even this minority was not unanimous in their support to the British Government and complained of unmitigated tyranny.


The G.G. contended that it was against the treaty obligations of 1818 and the withdrawal of Agent from Udaipur was hardly justifiable on the score that the Maharana had refused to adopt the views of the British government on a point of internal administration.

206. (a) NAI.: R.R., List No. 1, File No. 43, gen-VI (1858-60) Tr. of a passage from a Kharita addressed to the Maharana of Udaipur by Major Eden offg. Agent to G.G. for the States of Rajputana dated Nov. 22, 1859.

(b) V.V. op. cit. pp. 2031-32.
G.G. had to clarify that he was at fault in supposing that the Queen’s proclamation gave any countenance to Sati as a religious observance or that it implied any diminution of the abhorrence with which the British government viewed it.  

At this time two Satis took place in Udaipur. Major Taylor not only declined to see the Maharana or paid him the usual compliments of a visit on his arrival at Udaipur, as was usual, but at the same time conveyed a strong abhorrence at his conduct for he had not tried to interfere in the two cases. This awakened the Maharana from his slumber and he resolved to issue an order to the effect that when persuasion should prove ineffectual and the rite was persistently carried out, a fine would be realised from the relatives. He clarified that all possible steps should be taken to prevent the widow from committing the rite by holding out threats, accompanied with the promises of her maintenance in future but even then if these methods failed to stop her, he would be helpless then to go ahead. The Agent viewed that the order of the Maharana would have a salutory effect and practice would die soon.

The initial hitch had been conceded by the Maharana, it only remained to make it more stringent and impressive.


The Agent to G.G. wrote, ‘The proclamation directs that none be in any case favoured, nor molested or disquieted by reason of their religious faith or observances and that those in authority abstain from all interference with the religious beliefs or worships of Her Majesty’s subjects’

208. NAI.: RR., File No. 43, gen-VI, dated Nov. 20, 1860.

209. NAI.: F&P., April, 1861, cons. No. 297, Part A.


(b) Rao Chitambere Narain mentions the date as Shrawan Sudi 10, 1918, V.S.


On the occasion of a Sati in Beygoo, the Rana fined the parties concerned. It was the maiden attempt to check the rite and the officiating Agent, Mewar rightly foresaw that the Maharana would not adopt vigorous measures. This made the officiating P.A. more keen to demolish the last remnants of the rite and he impressed upon the Maharana the feasibility of such a measure. The Maharana showed his readiness to support it if the British government issued an order to that effect, as owing to the sacred nature of his office as the Vice-regent of Lord Shiva, he could not initiate it. The ‘Thakurs’ were also convinced of it but they suspected that if they participated actively in its suppression than the Rana would have stick with which he could handle them and would bring them into conflict with Brahmans. Thus he would create in his favour a powerful element in their complete extinction.

Such was the bad harvest lotted to the people of Mewar as a result of mutual distrust that had been creeping since long. Eventually, the Maharana forbade the performance of Sati at his funeral obsequies. The Agent viewed that the dying request of the Maharana would result in checking the practice effectively throughout Rajasthan as he was virtually taken as the head of the Rajputs.

The British government felt gratified at the promulgation of the Maharana against Sati and responded favourably for his philanthropic act.

Though Maharana had issued the orders twice against Sati but they could not be strictly enforced for he had issued them in compliance with the wishes of the British government with his half-hearted conviction. But the very fact that the orders were issued indicated a change which has dawned upon Mewar and soon a test-case appeared in to judge it.

216. NAI. R.K., List No. 1, File No. 43-gener-VI: (1858-60).
The Maharana died on Nov. 16, 1861 and all the queens unanimously declined to perform the rite inspite of the threatening posture of Khooman Sing, the 'Thakur' of Asind. As such Gopal Das encouraged Aiza Bye, a favourite slave-girl to commit Sati.\(^{217}\) The government viewed that the refusal of the queens to commit Sati had given a severe blow to the institution as a whole but it was deeply deplored that a slave-girl, at last was forced to be a victim.\(^{218}\)

The government took the matter seriously. Gopal Das was put under surveillance immediately and his two villages were confiscated. He was also forbidden to return to Udaipur. A mere subsistence for him was granted.\(^{219}\) The 'Thakur' of Asind was excluded from the Council and was also prohibited to return to Udaipur during the minority of the Maharana.\(^{220}\) Kothari Keari Singh was forbidden to use the designation of Prime Minister. He was made an executive subordinate to and not a member of the council of Regency.\(^{221}\)

\(^{217}\) NAI: R.R., List No. 1, File No. 85, Mewar.
\(^{219}\) Major Taylor held that the 'Thakoor of Asind took the initiative.

NAI: F&P. March 1862, cons. No. 62-63. Pol. A. From Major Taylor to G. Lawrence dated Jan. 23, 1862. She resolved to commit Sati partly because she thought that being the favourite slave-girl it was expected of her, the more so as all the queens had refused, and partly because she had become excessively obnoxious to the queens by poisoning her Lord's ears against them which had at times resulted in their villages being confiscated by the Maharana.

Ojha is of the opinion that as no one was permitted to visit the Zanana so Anja Bai 'Aiza Bye' committed Sati of her own accord. V.V., p. 783. Gopal Das walked by the side of the palanquin in the funeral procession.


\(^{221}\) NAI: R.R., File No. 85, Mewar, op. cit., No. 519, of May 1862. From Col. H.M. Durand Esq. Secy. to G.O.I. to the Agent to G.G.
The Maharana had favoured the concubine with Rs 52,000/- which ultimately fell into the hands of her mother. As she was not prepared to proceed to Benaras and spend it in charity as desired by the deceased slave-girl, so the P.A., inspite of opposition from all quarters seized the money from her. It was decided by the Regency Council that a School and a charitable trust be instituted in the name of the late Maharana.\textsuperscript{222} The proposal was executed immediately.

Though the amount involved was not a lucrative sum yet the policy initiated by Major Eden in Mewar showed new vistas. Instead of swelling the coffers of the State which, more or less, amounted to a tax on Sati, profitable to the rulers, the Agent channelised its use for the uplift and enlightenment of the masses. He viewed that it would act as a lever against the sentiments of Sati in proportion to the enlightenment diffused by the spread of education, and would enable them to oppose the Brahmans on their own ground and expose their absurdities.

While the stone was set rolling in Mewar too, the British government was giving thoughtful consideration for making the punishment more deterrent and emphatic. E.C. Impey believed that though the Chiefs were prepared to suppress Sati yet their orders remained ineffective. He suggested that if the estate, where Sati occurred was forfeited as a penalty, it would soon cease to exist.\textsuperscript{223} J.C. Brooke shared the same and suggested some other punishment than mere fines as it did not affect the guilty parties. He elaborated his suggestions.

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for the States of Rajputana.

Major Taylor had charged Kothari Keari Singh with apathy at the Sati and not for aiding and abetting her. Major Eden afterwards found that he did his best to dissuade the slave-girl from becoming Suttee and that he could do no more. At the same time it was becoming difficult to carry on the administration in his absence.


in detail. Col. Durand seconded the view put forth by the P.A. and sounded the Agent G.G. for the States of Rajputana that the Chiefs be informed that punishment by fine had not been found efficacious and the government viewed that imprisonment be restored where it was not applicable till now. In the absence of prison facilities, imprisonment should take place in a British jail. He asked him to inform the sovereigns that if the state neglected to exert itself to stop the rite the G.G. in Council would consider the propriety of reducing the number of guns with which the Chief of the state was saluted.

The government thought of initiating some strict policy with more severe punishments, for in the foregoing period quite a good number of Satis took place. The sovereigns imposed fines as usual. It was clear that the performance of Sati was not as usual as it was in the past but the government feared that the practice might be revived if it went unnoticed without severe punishments. Hence the government adopted severe measures. The government was justified in adopting such a course of action for the practice was so deep-rooted that only a sterner fierceness could have stopped it. The sovereigns were not in a position to oppose the move of the British authorities.

The test of executing this policy came in Mewar when three Satis occurred in the first four months of 1862. The first case took place at the village, Bhadesar when the widow of late Chief of the place committed Sati on March 15, 1862. To apprehend the culprits, the Maharana withheld the investiture

He remarked that in small estates punishment by imprisonment of the guilty parties and temporary attachment of the property might be carried out. In estates which were a bit larger but yet it would be difficult to divide, the yearly quit-rent payable to the sovereign might be increased in addition to the property being attached. In larger estates comprising of several villages the actual sequestration of a portion of the estate could be carried out but the portion so sequestrated should not be too large as to excite opposition.
226. Ibid.
ceremony of the young chief until the orders of the Regency Council were carried out in surrendering the culprits. They were sentenced to one year’s simple imprisonment in the Udaipur jail. The punishment was taken as inadequate by the British government.

In the case of Bhynsoorgarh the widow of ‘Kamdar’-committed Sati on April 5, 1862. The Rawat who was present at the time was suspended and ultimately removed from the membership of the Regency Council and forbidden to approach the Capital. The main culprit, Ram Gopal was sentenced to a rigorous imprisonment for a year along with a fine of Rs 1000/- in default of which he had to undergo a second year of imprisonment.

In the case at Bheender where a low caste woman committed Sati but as Maharaja Hamir Singh was not present in the estate so the G.G. conveyed his resentment at the happening. The Maharaja awarded imprisonment of one year to the abettors.

Major Eden, P.A. Mewar, viewed that measures adopted by the Udaipur Durbar would prove a success in eradicating the evil and the government should not trouble itself with the idea that the Durbar had acted under the sense of subjection and deference to the wishes of the government. He further added that though the punishment awarded was disproportionate to the crime but still it was a good beginning, for the

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228. Taijara, the agent of the late Thakur and the priest Kripa Shankar were the culprits. NAL: F&P., July 1862., cons. Nos. 27-32, Gen. A. From Lawrence to Secy. to the G.O.I, dated June 13ml862.


231. NAL: F&P., June 1862., op. cit.
co-operation of the Durbar was forthcoming. He held that it was convenient to be satisfied with a little than to insist on so much as would create a sense of humiliation.\footnote{232}

In the case of Kharalia (Banera) where a Sati took place on the death of a Bhomia, Laxman Singh on Sept. 24, 1862, a threatening party was deputed to remain there at Raja’s expenses till he apprehended the culprits and paid a fine of Rs 500\footnote{233} imposed on the village as a whole.

While on the one hand the government handled the culprits strictly, on the other it provided annual expenditure to the tune of Rs 20,000\footnote{234} p.a. for the maintenance of Bikameerjee, mother of the young Maharana of Udaipur and added another Rs 10,000\footnote{235} to the income of Mairtanjee, the only surviving widow of the late Rana, Swaroop Singh.

The sanctioning of the expenditure was no gesture of liberality on the part of the government for it had to be met out of the revenues of the state but it at once showed that the government was prepared to reward those who were not prepared to toe the traditional line of action. By this the government had drawn in its stock the candid support of a weighty authority in the person of the mother and widow of the late Rana whose example, it was believed, would be adopted.

The Regency Council, with the consent of Maharana Shambho Singh issued a proclamation against the rite dated Shrawan Sudi 12, 1913 V.S. (April 26, 1862) on pain of fines and rigorous imprisonment in addition to what was declared by the late Rana.

\footnote{232} NA\textsc{i}.: F&P., July 1862. cons. Nos. 27-32, gen. A., op. cit. dated June 9, 1862.


\footnote{234} NA\textsc{i}.: F&P., Jun. 1864. cons. Nos. 176-78. From G. St. P. Lawrence to Col. H. M. Durand Secy. G. O. I.

\footnote{235} NA\textsc{i}.: F&P., May, 1862, cons. Nos. 79-80 gen. A. It read, “Be it known to all Chiefs, Sardars etc. that a proclamation in prohibition of Sati was twice issued by the late Rana Swaroop Sirgh but as yet the practice has not been arrested...the Chief of the village or his agent will himself make every effort in the power by assurance and the exercise of his own proper authority to prevent the commission of the crime and by no means to allow the sacrifice to take place...”
Though the proclamation was repeated a third time yet cases of Sati were witnessed in Mewar and the British government adopted sterner methods to eradicate it. On April 18, 1864 when a Sati occurred at Begun the P.A. held the Rao along with others responsible for it. He imprisoned the Rao for nine months and imposed a fine of Rs 5000/-. 236

This action of the P.A. sent a wave of consternation among the nobles of Mewar who could not find a parallel to it. What added more intensity to their feelings was that the prisoners were transferred to Ajmer jail. 237

The Chiefs remonstrated against it by addressing a communiqué to P.A. Mewar. They put forth that if such proceedings continued they would be ruined and rendered wretched. They emphasised that the Sardars should be allowed to punish their own subjects or they might be tried by P.A. and if convicted be made over to them to suffer their sentences 238. But the G.G. upheld the decision of the P.A.

The remonstrances of the Chief were in conformity with the dictates of autonomy but the British government was bent upon stopping this obnoxious rite and did not care to act against their own commitments. They preferred sacrificing a lesser evil for a bigger gain if it could result in social awakening of the people.

236. NAI.: F&P., April, 1865, cons. No 71 A. Tr. of of a joint communication addressed by the Chiefs of Mewar to Lt. Col. W. F. Eden, P.A. Mewar dated Phalgun Sud 9, 1921 V. S. (March 3, 1865). Nine persons were imprisoned. The imprisonment of the Rao was not a unique thing for as early as 1857, the Thakur of Dungapur was imprisoned for three years. NAI.: F&P., April 22, 1859, cons. Nos. 232-33. From Lawrence to Edmonstone Secy to G.O.I. dated Feb. 5, 1857.

237. NAI.: F&P., April, 1865, cons. No. 72 A, op. cit. Though the P.A. had resorted to a new method of sending the culprits to Ajmer jail yet it was not in contravention of their earlier declarations wherein they had provided to that effect. In this case the P.A. had a genuine fear that as it was the first occasion in Mewar where such a punishment was meted out to the Rao, so there was every possibility of the law and order situation taking a turn for the worst if the culprit was kept near the estate. The P.A. seemed justified in resorting to such an action for public peace and security.

238. NAI.: F&P., April, 1865, cons. No. 73 A, op. cit. dated March 16, 1865.
Though the intensity of Sati was decreasing yet the British government thought it advisable to punish the guilty sternly to stamp it out completely. The Maharana also favoured it. So when a Sati occurred on August 28, 1868 at Sellode, in the parganah of Kumbhalgarh, 68 persons were apprehended and even onlookers were punished.239

The Viceroy felt much gratified at the energy and promptitude of the Maharana but held that the sentences were severe in nature.240 He, however, instructed Keating to recommend the Maharana for a reduction if it pleased him.241 The sentences were reduced accordingly.242

The strict punishments reduced the recurrence of Sati in Mewar but a knotty problem arose on the death of Maharana Shamboo Singh in 1874 when as many as four palace-ladies sought to burn themselves with the corpse.243 They attempted to escape but were prevented due to the vigilance of Lt. Col. Wright. The interference of the P.A. was unpalatable to the mother of the late Maharana who took it as an act of disgrace to the dead if it was consumed all alone. She offered herself for it. But the P.A. turned down her request and thus saved a Sati in the Maharana’s family itself for the first time. The credit for it goes to Col. Wright and Rao Bhadur Bakht Singh.244

239. NAL: F&P., Jan., 1869, cons. Nos. 28-30, general A. From Lt. Col. A. R. B. Hutchinson, offg. P. A. Mewar to Lt. Col. R.H. Keating, Agent to G. G. for the states of Rajputana dated Oct. 9, 1868. The Patel, Patwari were sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for seven years. The other six were sentenced to three years rigorous imprisonment.

The second category of culprits comprised of five persons out of which Luchman, Roopa and Rutneshur were sentenced to rigorous imprisonment. The fourth one escaped and the fifth Bijay Ram was let off. In the third category ten persons were collectively fined Rs 500/-.

In the fourth category some twenty-two on lookers were collectively fined Rs 250/- and the rest twenty-one were discharged.


From this time onwards Sati virtually began dying out in Mewar and for twelve years no case was heard. When, however, a case occurred at Jalkhera, the Maharana inflicted deterrent punishment to the culprits ranging from fourteen years to two years imprisonment with a collective fine of Rs 500/- on the village.245

The rite was thus prohibited in Mewar but the Residents in their earnestness never hesitated even to stand on guard at the ‘Zenana’ door of the palace to avert its recurrence.246 At Kota too the same policy was adopted on the death of Maharao Ram Singh.247 Thus the last rites at two major capitals were performed without any Sati which the P.A. held would go a long way in stopping it completely.

The same measures were adopted to prevent illegal Sati in the other capitals of Rajasthan. At Jodhpur, before the proclamation of 1852, there was not a single year without one or more Satis being performed but since that time a few instances came up. When a Sati was performed on July 31, 1835, which was the first after the proclamation,248 the Durbar levied a fine of Rs 1800/- according to its terms and sequestered the

245. NAI: F&P., June 1880, cons Nos. 166-69 Pol. A. From Agent G.G. for the States of Rajputana dated May 22, 1880. Ram Singh was imprisoned for 14 years; Hamir Singh and Umar Singh, the uncles of the deceased, to 5 and 2 years respectively. Two young lads—Dulia and Agar Singh—of 11 and 12 years of age for 2 years each for the help they provided in carrying the corpse. The last sentence passed on the lads appears to be severe.


247. In the case at Kota on the death of Maharao Ram Singh the ‘Zenana’ apartments were locked and carefully guarded so much so that the news of the death of the Maharao, was held back as long as possible. When one of the queens, Bhuteeanslyaee declared to perform Sati and succeeded in bursting open the door she was confined once again. The P.A. remained in person during the incineration of the corpse till all passed off without any disturbance.


The widow of the late ‘Thakur’ Shamboo Singh of Kuldanpur burnt herself with the corpse of her husband.
village of Bhikooriya until the fine was realised.

The Agent viewed that the penalty was inadequate and there were apprehensions that it would not be honestly and actually collected resulting in the continuance of the rite.\textsuperscript{249} R. Shakespeare suggested another means of putting pressure upon the Thakoores by intimating that if the offence was repeated their name would be struck off Capt. Ludlow's list which conferred the privilege against unjust sequestration of their possessions.\textsuperscript{250} He believed that the Thakurs valued a lot for the protection afforded to them and they were very sensitive to any mark of displeasure, more particularly if this was linked with a matter of ceremony and courtesy.\textsuperscript{251}

Thus a policy of imposing fines was carried out at Jodhpur, for the government at the moment felt a little embarassed in resorting to any other means.\textsuperscript{252} A little later the P.A. threatened to leave Jodhpur if the crime was permitted. This worked well and the Maharaja came out of his shell, though unwillingly, to stop it.

The Maharaja and the P.A. assembled the Thakooors and urged upon them to stop the rite. This had a mild but sobering effect on them, but they added that as it was a custom of long standing so its total cessation could not be effected outrightly. The Maharaja again issued a fresh notification dated May 23, 1856.\textsuperscript{253}

But, inspite of it as many as seventeen Satis occurred within three and a half years. When the Thakoor of Ganeerao died and his two wives along with a slave-girl performed the rite, the P.A. viewed to take some sterner measures against it. He

\textsuperscript{253} NAI : Ibid, dated July 26, 1856.
suggested that it be recommended to the Maharaja to sequester the whole of the estate for two years in all cases of Sati in the house of a Jagirdar. He recommended that the money realised from the Thakoor of Ganeerao be spent on the repairs of the Marwar portion of the high-road between Sirohi and Beawar. He further remarked that so long as Maharaja derived profits out of the fines he was unlikely to be earnest in its total suppression. Furthermore the principal persons concerned with it should be kept under open arrest. The family of Ganeerao was struck off Col. Ludlow's list of Jodhpur nobles and was refused any aid from the British government.

Thus a further step was taken in putting a stop completely to the rite by sequestering the whole estate and employing the fine for public benefit. At the same time, in the annals of Jodhpur, open arrest was resorted to which acted as the forerunner of imprisoning the guilty. So when a Sati occurred in Marwar in 1861, the Thakur was fined Rs 200/- for despatching an inadequate force to stop it and the relatives of the Sati were imprisoned for terms ranging from a year and a half to six months according to the culpability of persons involved in the crime.

Thus punishments in terms of imprisonment were begun and with the passage of time the awards became more strict. Jodhpur was thus brought in line with the rest of the states of Rajasthan for awarding stringent punishments.

Once the proclamations were issued at Jaipur and Alwar,
the government had no practical difficulty in executing them. Fines and imprisonments were resorted to in order to prevent illegal Sati. As such, when a case of Sati occurred in December 1847 at Jaipur, the ‘Thanadar’ was dismissed and the abettors were sentenced to five years imprisonment. When again a Sati occurred at Baori-Khera in February, 1873, the Patel of the village was imprisoned for seven years and the whole of the ‘Biswadari’ rights there were forfeited. The village was fined Rs 1000/- and the ‘Nazim’ Rs 5000/- and the police force of the place was dismissed from the services of the ‘Raj’. Not only this but the four persons who carried the corpse and prepared the pyre were sentenced to imprisonment for three years. In the case of Sati at Utarna, in the Jaipur territory, where the widow, Chandra Kunwar, committed it, the Durbar acted promptly and the sons and brothers of the deceased were sentenced to imprisonment for seven years. Even the spectators were imprisoned for three years. At Tonk, where a sweeper-woman committed Sati, the abettors were punished with imprisonment ranging from four to ten years.

In the case of Alwar too when a Sati took place at Bannee Khera in December 1863 the Durbar acted vigorously and imprisoned the principal culprit, Sadhoo Singh, for ten years and confiscated his share of the village.

The Secretary of State gave an unqualified pat to Rao Raja and added that the punishment of the leading priest would help in eradicating the rite.


258. NAI : F & P., Jan., 1863, cons. Nos. 64-69, general I.

259. NAI : RR., List No. 1, File No. 26/Tonk/1863.

260. Fifteen miles east of Alwar.


SUPPRESSION OF THE CUSTOM

At Bikaner also when two Satis occurred in 1865, twenty-five persons were implicated and imprisonment was awarded to many of them. The Maharaja declared that severe punishments would be meted out to stop its recurrence. 263

The declaration of the Maharaja sounded heavily as for some time no cases of Sati were heard of in Bikaner. But when in 1872 there occurred a case of a Sati in the Mahajan family of Garubdesur, the Maharaja imprisoned the brother of the deceased, who had taken a leading part, for ten years in irons while the manager of the village, Dool Singh, was awarded imprisonment for seven years. 264

When the system of Sati was nearly dying out in Rajastan and only the burial ceremony had to be performed, the government had to face a show of resentment and even armed resistance from the Jagirdars and Istmarardars.

Bhinai had witnessed three Satis within twenty years (1840-60). On the second occasion in 1858 the Raja thought that British rule was at an end and so did not attempt to stop the rite. He even showed disrespect to the British authorities when he was called to Ajmer on summons. He not only took a large number of followers than usual but his tone also was unbecoming of his position as a subject. 265 The Asstt. Commissioner reported the matter to the government and recommended that his action might be taken notice of, and dealt at some

263. NAI : F&P., Feb., 1865 cons. [No. 5-6 Judl. A. Tr. of a note from the Bikaner Vakil dated Feb. 14, 1865.

264. (a) NAI : R.R., List No. 1, Historical Record No. 144, File No. 3/ Suttee/1872.


266. NAI : F&P., April 22, 1859, cons. No. 234-36, Political. From Brig. G., St. P. Lawrence, offic. Commissioner to Edmonstone, to Secy. to G.O.I. dated Feb. 26, 1859. When General Roberts was returning from Kota, the matter was decided and the two villages of the Raja were confiscated for two years.
convenient time.\textsuperscript{267}

When Sati was again repeated in 1880, Sir Henry Lawrence thought that an imperial order obligatory to exertions on all States and also on all British officers was necessary for its suppression.\textsuperscript{268} But the British government did not deem it advisable and a fine of one year’s revenue was imposed on the Raja of Bhinai. Not only this but Major Lloyde forbade the construction of a ‘Chabutara’ (monument) within a radius of 500 yards.\textsuperscript{269}

Such a defiant attitude was also witnessed in the Sati case at Beechawara, in Dungarpur, where Thakur, Suraj Mal, refused to surrender his son, Bakhat Singh and ultimately decamped in the jungles. He even threatened to attack Dungarpur.\textsuperscript{270} Though the threat proved abortive yet it indicated which way the wind blew for the Thakoors still persisted in maintaining the old order even by show of force. Some portion of his estate was attached by the government as a measure of punishment.\textsuperscript{271}

Thus by a policy of judicious interference on the part of the British officers and the co-operation extended by the rulers of Rajasthan the time-honoured but barbaric custom of Sati was virtually stopped by 1862, and only stray cases were heard. Echoes of it were heard though very rarely. The widow of a Jagirdar at Jodhpur committed Sati in 1956 and a fair is still held to commemorate her.\textsuperscript{272} Till recently as many as four Satis in even months were committed in Sikar district,

\textsuperscript{267} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{268} NAI : F&P., Dec. 1861, cons. Nos. 79-83. op. cit.

\textsuperscript{269} BA. : Ajmer Commissioner’s office, Basta No. 26, File No. 305 No. 104 of 1862. From Major B.P. Lloyde, Deputy Commissioner, Ajmer dated March 25, 1862.


The government allowed the proceeds of the estate to be used for public good.

\textsuperscript{272} Adrian, C. Mayer,—Caste and Kinship in Central India, p. 193, 1960.
the last of which was performed on October 3, 1973.\textsuperscript{273} Opposition members in the Rajasthan Assembly showed their concern at the incidents and charged the government with 'criminal negligence'. They even submitted that despite advance publicity,\textsuperscript{274} the government failed to stop these incidents. These were the rare cases to show that the customs, however inhuman and barbarous, die hard.

Thus concluding the policy of the British government towards the suppression of Sati in Rajasthan one is inclined to think that this rite began in selfishness, was supported by falsehood, and ended in cruelty. The false notions of religion were consistently fed on the carcass of the society and the Brahmin eulogised the rite to unprecedented heights for he had always the eye on his pie which he was likely to extract for solemnising the whole ceremony. It assumed the form of compulsion so much so that among the upper classes it was considered to be an indication that the widow was wanting in affection, if she attempted to evade the funeral pyre.

The British officers who had their lessons in the humanitarian movements of the century proceeded cautiously in the matter for the rite was taken to come from religion which they never wanted to touch. But by methods of pursuasion, ridicule, intimidation they induced the rulers to declare the rite illegal in their respective jurisdictions. Fines were imposed for the performance of the rite but it was more or less a tax on Sati, for the money was always appropriated to the coffers of the state. As such the rulers of Rajasthan were profited by it. So long as this continued it was not possible to suppress it completely. So the British officers adopted threatening postures of reducing the number of guns with which the rulers were saluted, or dropping the customary titles which were used in addressing the rulers or even declined to pay the sovereign the usual compliment of a visit on arrival or even striking off their names from the rolls of Ludlow's list which conferred the privilege against unjust sequestration of their possession by the-


\textsuperscript{274} Ibid.

sovereign. Some of these measures were warrantable but the practice was so deep rooted among the Rajputs that only a sternier fierceness could have stopped it. But with all this the selection of right time for the introduction of reforms is one of the highest triumphs of the British officers.

The success of the British officers was though primarily due to the personal equations which they had established with the rulers of Rajasthan but even more than that the political conditions contributed a lot to it. The remission of the tribute in the case of Jaipur and Mewar coupled with the minority rulers at the various capitals of Rajasthan went a long way to complete its suppression. The British political officers were quite influential in running the administration of the states with the help of the Regency Council but practically they began dominating it. The Political factions and the deteriorating relations between the rulers and their nobility made the British officers the arbiter. The mounting tensions resulted in the ruler coming under the canopy of British umbrella. Thus by 1846, 11 out of 18 states of Rajasthan proclaimed against the rite of Sati. Only the major states remained outside the pale of British influence.

Between 1846 and 1861 the rising stock of British political power dazzled the rulers of Rajputana. The defeat of the great Sikh confederacy strengthened the prestige enormously and made even Rajputs to concede to the wishes of the British government. They, however, tried to evade it for one reason or the other. But the laurels gained by the British in 1857 made the rulers conscious for they favoured a power, unpopular with the masses. They as such were thrown out of favour with their own subjects and had to draw closer to supreme government for their safety. They could not ignore the strong abhorrence that the British government had been showing all these years. They were made to acquiesce to the demand of the government.

When by 1861 all the States of Rajasthan proclaimed against the rite, the British government took every care of getting the guilty punished strictly lest the rite might not revive once again. The government even awarded open imprisonment to Chiefs and Raos which ultimately led to complete imprisonment in the later years. The government never hesitated to
attach their estates and utilized it for purposes of public good. Even the onlookers were punished strictly and no one was spared irrespective of his position. Force in itself is brutal but even then it is pregnant with healthy results is a crude riddle of History.
## APPENDIX I

*F&P October 21, 1843 Nos. 87-91*

*From Capt. I. Ludlow P.A. Jodhpur to Col. Sutherland Agent G.G. for the States of Rajputana*

*Statement of Suttees in Marwar in 281 years*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>V.S.</th>
<th>A.D.</th>
<th>Ranis</th>
<th>Concubines</th>
<th>Female slaves and others</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Rao Madeo Ji</td>
<td>1619</td>
<td>1562</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>24</td>
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<td>Oodu Singh</td>
<td>1651</td>
<td>1594</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Soor Singh</td>
<td>1676</td>
<td>1619</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guj Singh</td>
<td>1695</td>
<td>1638</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jaswant Singh</td>
<td>1735</td>
<td>1678</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ajeet Singh</td>
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<td>1723</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>66</td>
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<td>Ubhee Singh</td>
<td>1805</td>
<td>1748</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>27</td>
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<td>Bheem Singh</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>Man Singh</td>
<td>1900</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>—</td>
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<p>| Total           | 47   | 101  | 74    | 5          | 227                      |     |       |</p>
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<th>Pergunnah</th>
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<th>Number of Victims</th>
<th>Number of Suttees in 1900 A.D.</th>
<th>Number of Victims</th>
<th>Number of Suttees in 1901 A.D.</th>
<th>Number of Victims</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>Meertha</td>
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<td>5</td>
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Total: 27
**APPENDIX NO. 2**

**Detailed Statement of Suttees Which Occurred in Marwar During the Sumbut Years 1899, 1900, 1901**

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<tr>
<th>Pergunnah</th>
<th>Year of occurrence</th>
<th>Name of deceased</th>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Relation of Suttee to deceased</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jodhpur</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td>Maharajas Maunsingh</td>
<td>Rahtore</td>
<td>1 Wife 4 Concupives 1 Slave-girl</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sewarnah</td>
<td>1899</td>
<td>Bhotu</td>
<td>Brindoree</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>Wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td>Rantya</td>
<td>Mahajun</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>1901</td>
<td>Bhaga</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>-do-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meertha</td>
<td>1899</td>
<td>Kunjeetsing</td>
<td>Rahtore</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>Jagirdar of Chundawur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>Nuroka</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td>Mokundass</td>
<td>Bundaree</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>1901</td>
<td>Nursingdas</td>
<td>Kathu</td>
<td>-do-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sojiet</td>
<td>1899</td>
<td>Son of Shera</td>
<td>Purohit</td>
<td>Mother</td>
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<tr>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td>Sumbhusingh</td>
<td>Rahtore</td>
<td>Slave-girl Jagirdar of Kurretaheea</td>
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<tr>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>1901</td>
<td>Kosla</td>
<td>Mahajun</td>
<td>Wife</td>
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<tr>
<td>Syetarun</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td>Bhagsingh</td>
<td>Rahtore</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>Jagirdar of Punera</td>
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<tr>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>1901</td>
<td>Chundamul</td>
<td>Bundaree</td>
<td>-do-</td>
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<td>Godwar</td>
<td>1900</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Names of the parties probably strangers forgotten</td>
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<td>-do-</td>
<td>1901</td>
<td>Jetea</td>
<td>Sonekurra</td>
<td>-do-</td>
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<td>Rahtore</td>
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<td>1900</td>
<td>Dyaram</td>
<td>Purohit</td>
<td>Mother</td>
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Signed/- H.H. Greathed  
Political Agent
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   (iv) Despatches from the Secretary of State to the Governor-General in Council,
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