

'O Lord, our parents and we would be so happy if you give us a son.'



Manoj is a good Hindu friend of mine. A man with integrity. Manoj had two beautiful daughters. He confided in me and asked me to pray for him that he would be blessed with a son. We prayed together and I prayed for him to have a son. Then nine months later... Lo and behold, another beautiful girl was born.

Two years later Manoj and I were sitting together and he was quiet. "Is there something that we should talk about, Manoj?" – "Sir, I have three daughters and would so much like to have a son." –

"Manoj, we prayed last time for a son and you got a daughter. Then what went wrong? I know that God is not deaf, then why would he give you another girl? Why would he do that ...?...?..."

Manoj, now that we are talking, I think I have the answer. If you would have had a son, then you would have treated him like 'a little god' and your beautiful daughters would have become second-class citizens within your family."

He nodded quietly.

"Manoj, if you promise that you will treat your daughters and your son as equals then I will pray for you to have a son."

"Sir, give me some time to think this over."

"There is no rush, take your time."

He left the room and returned a half hour later.

"Sir, I promise you that I will treat them all as equals."

"Don't promise me Manoj, you make your promise to Jesus. This is between you and him." - "I did, Sir." -

"Good, then let's pray."

We prayed together that his request would be answered. Nine months later, another baby was born... and yes, you guessed right... it was a beautiful baby boy. Manoj has been true to his word and has faithfully treated his lovely daughters with the same respect and privileges as he gave his son.

One day I was sick in bed, I did something which I
HEADLINES seldom do; I turned on the TV.

TODAY There was a shocking [documentary by Preety Choudhary](#) (June 2011) about female infanticide, stating that in Rajasthan as many as 2,500 female babies get killed daily in abortions or right after birth.

I was shocked. Thoughts raced through my head a mile a minute. "Dear Jesus, do we start an orphanage where they can drop off the little girls that people don't want? Should we get a bus and collect them? What do I do?" - "Slow down, Johan. The babies are given to them so teach them to take care of them." "How do I do that?"

"Teach them through literature. You can write a pamphlet and make posters." Half an hour later the text was ready, called '[A Challenge](#)'.

A friend translated it into Hindi. The printer whose ancestors were from that area was thrilled with it. "You just give me the paper cost and I will print for you." - "Done!"

I asked a lawyer friend if he wanted go to the Jaisalmer district to start putting up the posters and give out the pamphlets. He was born in the Jat caste which was respected in that area. A lady volunteered to also go.



They also wanted to see if these statistics were true. After a week, and surveying ten villages they found a ratio of **one girl to eight boys**. Yet, Mother Nature has a higher percentage of girls than boys born.

2001 Gov't, Jaisalmer area statistics: males 2,79,101; females 2,29,146. That is 50,000 females missing.

A lady pulled our female volunteer into her house, as women there do not talk to men. This lady explained that her first baby was a girl and her husband told her to kill it, but she had said, **"I can't, you kill it."** The second baby was again a girl and he was furious, insisting that she should kill it. Again, she gave him the same response.



You have to realise that the husbands won't kill the babies. They tell their wives to do it. It is done either with a pot of soft clay, opium, large rocks or just starvation. Their third child was another baby girl. The husband ran away to Mumbai.

Some people loved us and helped to put up the posters and distribute thousands of pamphlets, while others tried to scare us with death threats.



"How dare you come here and try to change our culture? This has been in our culture for hundreds of years. This will not change."

We discovered that this was notoriously in the Basiya Belt villages between Jaisalmer and Jhunjhynali.

On the third trip, I went with a friend from Jaipur. We started a sewing course for ladies to get them out of their houses and enjoy each other.



In 2011, my Jaisalmer trips became regular. I was invited to attend an official Bhati Rajput wedding and was taken under the cover of night to a village near the Pakistani border.

I was informed that this was the first wedding in this village between a Bhati Rajput boy and Bhati girl for over a century. We arrived in the village late that night. The following morning the village elders got together to see the dowry to approve the wedding. The dowry was a room full of furniture and household items. When we were all seated in the courtyard, a tray of about forty centimetres in diameter with silver was brought out. On the tray were silver bangles, ankle bracelets, rings, etc. If that wasn't enough, next came another same size tray with gold: necklaces, watches, bangles, rings, etc. I learned that the dowry had the value of about one kilogram of gold.



This is the reason they prefer to kill their girls and keep their gold, as the girl's family pays for the dowry and the wedding. Hence, the girls are seen as a liability for the family fortune, as according to the men, "all women do, is drink tea and talk." The women live in a separate section of the house and don't come into the men's quarter unless asked to serve tea or food.



Actually, I kind of liked the Bhaties and told them, if I'd ever change my name, I would change it to Johan Singh Bhati. I was accepted as their friend.

We talked about education for the women.

I used the example of a lady, who I knew; she was born in Jaipur (Capital of Rajasthan) and she was the CEO of a multinational company.

When she was born her father took a stand at her crib and vowed that he would give her the same privileges as if she had been a son. He pledged that he would not pay one paisa dowry for her, but that he would give her the very best education available.

She did not want to disappoint her father, a man of great courage, and she excelled in her studies.

As CEO, she was now overseeing more than 100 men and receiving a salary, far surpassing her husband's. **I explained that if they educated their girls, they would no longer be seen as a liability.**

I then went on to address the female infanticide, but my translator refused to further translate.

Later I learned that young girls from elsewhere in the country are brought into the household as servants. These young girls are bought directly from the parents or on the market. A former high-court judge told me that this market was near Agra.

One of the elders explained, that if a Bhati takes a servant girl, or someone from another caste to have children with, then these are the **Soni Rajputs**.

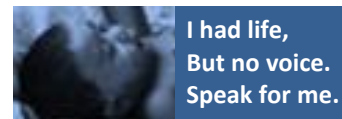
Shortly thereafter, in January 2012, was a meeting in Jaipur for PIOs (Persons of Indian Origin) to invest in their mother's, or grandmother's land, Rajasthan. Dignitaries and industrialists from all over attended.

The President Mrs. Patil and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh distributed gold medals to the VIPs.



Through an Indian lawyer friend, I got a surprise invitation to this meeting.

I organized 27 four-page reports, with beautiful photos of Rajasthan, the statistics and the solution.



I had life, But no voice. Speak for me.

Each report had a heart-touching brochure: 'I had life, but no voice.'

When I arrived, in the early afternoon, the meetings had already started and I took note of the people who wanted to invest in Rajasthan.

One person planned to invest 600 crores, or around sixty-five million dollars. A young Italian couple wanted to start a shoe factory. Business was booming and money was flowing. At the end of the meetings, I went around to the key investors, dignitaries, and the ministers to hand them a copy of my report, explaining that I have also invested in Rajasthan, but mainly my time.

I could already see the Italians exploding, "Madre mia, you allow killing of baby girl, 'bambina'. We will put factory in other state, where they do not kill bambina. This is folle!"

Within fifteen minutes I was getting feedback.

The ministers called me, "What is this?" I explained the statistics and what was happening. I tried to get them to help build a girls' school and although the promises were good, nothing came of it.



About two or three weeks later I was again in Jaisalmer visiting an old friend and shop-owner. He excitedly showed several front-page news articles. A well-known Bhati Rajput was given a prison sentence, as their new-born baby girl had died shortly after mother and baby came home from the hospital. It was the talk of the town. **Now, a social worker, a doctor and police officer, were going around taking autopsies and checking up on new-born girls**. It seems that female infanticide came to a slow-down as several jail sentences were given. Shortly after we left the area.

What couldn't be changed because it was in the culture for hundreds of years came somewhat to "an end" when it would mean big financial losses. This was February 2012. Hopefully it is past history. May 2012 onwards, the actor **Aamir Khan** did several TV programmes 'Satyamev Jayate' on the subject.

Let's pray that even this simple pamphlet will cause one more father to take a courageous stand at his daughter's crib, like that father in Jaipur did.

To know Jesus better; [click HERE](#).

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