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Sati, A Custom of Hindu Fundamentalism and Violence

In Indian (Hindu) Culture to become a Sati is an ancient practice whereby Hindu widows were voluntarily or forcibly, sometimes even dragged against her wish, burned alive on their husband's funeral pyre. It is believed that the uncontaminated, unpolluted widow whose fidelity is beyond doubt, will become Sati. It is emphasized that Sati is not a monolithic tradition but a composite one. Banned in 1829, it was banned again in 1956 after a resurgence. The last reported case is on 11th Oct. 2008.

The paper will analyse how this practice is nothing more than a ritualized instance of fundamentalism, violence and oppression and a practice born on feudal control-freakery against women in Hindu society. The paper will examine how this obsolete tradition still enjoys sanctity in many hearts in 21st century and often threatens to become a practiced ritual as a form of religion that has a political dimension also.