Chapter II

MOBILISATION OF JATS

Chhotu Ram realised that in the existing socio-economic structure of Rohtak district and the requirements of the franchise system as introduced by the British the Jats could be readily knit into a powerful political unit. However, for turning them into "a powerful political unit" extensive mobilisation of Jats at the social and political levels was needed. Therefore, like the other castes which were being mobilised extensively all over India in the first two decades of 20th century but with differing results, the Jats were successfully mobilised by Chhotu Ram first in Rohtak district then in the whole of Haryana region. In this connection, Chhotu Ram used all the tools available and fashionable at the time, for example, caste associations, press, education, emphasis on separate identity of Jats, and the demand for the reservation of seats in government services. In these attempts, Chhotu Ram was greatly helped by the British administrators. This help extended from direct monetary assistance and translating into reality the Jat claims to appointments in different government departments to indirect help through participation in the various Jat functions. So much so that Linlithgow could boastfully assert in 1943 that Hindu Jats were a community which "owed everything" to the British.

In his attempts at mobilisation of Jats Chhotu Ram claimed to speak on behalf of the entire 'Jat' caste, regardless of any

2 Linlithgow Coll., 92: Telegram to B.J. Glancy, 17 May 1943.
economic-class division within it. Even though his appeal and base remained confined to the upper stratum of the rich Jat peasantry, 'Jatism' became the basis of Chhotu Ram's actions, both social and political. In fact in a public speech delivered in 1942, on the occasion of his birthday celebrations at Rohtak, Chhotu Ram recalled his earlier activities in organising Jats and in conducting "vigorous campaign" to awaken them from lethargy. "Our initial efforts" he said, "were directed mostly towards the social, economic and educational amelioration of our caste. But we did not conceal our desire to awaken it to a sense of its political rights and duly emphasised its local and political importance." In fact, there was no attempt at concealing the caste basis of Chhotu Ram's political activities.

A great emphasis was laid on bringing the Jats together on the common platform of caste. Chhotu Ram chalked out a detailed programme of organising Jats at the tehsil, district and the provincial level. As early as 1917, Jat sabhas were organised at Rohtak, Sonepat, Ambala, Naraingarh, Aligarh, Bulandshaher, Agra, Muradabad, Bijnaur, and Gujranwala; all places with sizable Jat population. In all this Chhotu Ram was directly encouraged by the

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3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
5 In 1928 Chhotu Ram spoke with obvious pride in a zamindar conference at Lyallpur, of having awakened the "Jat quam" to a consciousness of their political rights. This was quoted by Lajpat Rai in his Presidential speech delivered at the Provincial Hindu Conference, Agra, on 27-28 Oct. 1928. See Lala Lajpat Rai, Writings and Speeches, ed. by V.C. Joshi, II (Jullundur 1966), pp. 452-3.
6 JG, 1 Jan. 1923, p. 3; 28 Oct. 1925, p. 3.
British officials. They were very frequently invited to these "Jat meetings" and many personally participated in the Jat sabhas. Various instances can be cited where Jat Dharamshalas (rest-houses) were inaugurated by the British officials. In 1910, they went to the extent of according recognition to the dedication of a Dharamshala in Delhi to the "Jat nation". The British army officers were given to extensive and frequent touring of the Jat villages of the Haryana region, and although these tours were undertaken strictly for military purposes they had the effect of encouraging the much desired feeling of separate 'Jat-hood' which was in close touch with the British Sarkar (Government).

For such 'Separate Jat nation', Jat Mahasabha was visualised by Chhotu Ram to be the highest instrument of Jat unity. Chhotu Ram had been an active member of the Jat Mahasabha since its inception in 1905. He attended all the annual conferences of this organisation from 1905-1944, and was its Secretary in 1913. According to him this organisation was not merely for furthering the social, educational and economic interests of Jats, but also for an active participation in the political life of the province; for establishing, as Chhotu Ram maintained, "our power and influence". In fact the Jat Mahasabha appears to have been the

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9 H. Gill, interview, 31 Jan. 1979, H. Gill, ex-Punjab civilian, described the conference of Jats as being essentially "political".
10 JG, 2 May 1923, p. 3; 23 Dec. 1925, p. 6.
12IOR: P/8121/1910, F. No. 85.
13 For a detailed account of the tour of 'Jat villages' by Major W.I. Hailes, see Hailes Papers, II (1926-35), pp. 1-24.
14 PLAP, XXVII, 10 Mar. 1944, p. 492.
15 Chhotu Ram's speech in a Jat conference in Rohtak, JG, 28 Oct. 1925, p. 3.
forerunner of the Unionist Party and it certainly continued to propagate the aims and policies of this Party though as an independent body. Chhotu Ram declared in 1944 that the Jat Mahasabha was serving as a "bulwark of strength of the Unionist Party" and it was not going to "deviate an inch" from the policies of that party. He even claimed that in Rohtak district the Zamindar League was known as the "Jat League." He also cited the charges made by his critics, without offering any explanation or contradiction, that Jats alone had gained from the 'zamindar organisation' and the 'zamindar government' was in actuality the "Jat government".

From the beginning, Chhotu Ram looked upon the press as the most potent medium for mobilising the community. He wanted to start a newspaper in every district in order to safeguard the interest of the community and to make effective demands for its rights. In 1916 Chhotu Ram had started the Urdu Weekly, the Jat Gazette, with the help of his friend Rai Sahib Kanhaiya Lal, a wealthy Jat landowner-cum-moneylender from village Matan-Hail of Rohtak. Chhotu Ram himself edited the paper up to 1924. The

16 FLAD, XXII, 10 Mar. 1944, p. 43.
17 Ibid.
18 JG, 27 Sept. 1939, p. 6. The same view was also expressed in JG, 4 Feb. 1931, p. 1. Indeed, there could not be any difference between the two, because in Rohtak district the Zamindar League was mainly financed by contribution of one paisa per rupee of the land revenue paid by the landowners. It was therefore obviously controlled by the Jat landowners. The control of its organisation would naturally depend on the amount of contribution made by the concerned landowners. JG, 14 Jan. 1931, p. 4. Also, see below chapter VIII, p.281.
20 JG, 9 Jan. 1917, p. 4.
21 JG, 8 June 1921, p. 3.
22 JG, 10 Dec. 1931, p. 5.
Jat Gazette, as its name indicates, openly professed to be the mouthpiece of Jats wherever they lived. The need for this weekly and its aim and policies were explained by Chhotu Ram in one of his articles, written on 10 December 1916, titled "The Birth of Jat Gazette".

The government took notice of the fact that the Jats of Haryana region wanted their own paper. The Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Harcourt, therefore, greatly helped us in launching the paper. We assure him and the government that they will receive no cause of complaint from our side. Since a large number of Hindu, Muslim and Sikh zamindars belong to the Jat community we propose to make the paper a vehicle for drawing the attention of the government to the social, economic, and educational plight of our community and for demanding our political rights. As regards our policy in matters other than the interests of the Jat community, we shall be loyal to the government. We shall observe the constitutional limits and shall try to bring about mutual and happy understanding between the government and the public. We shall cooperate with the government and shall be ever ready to help them. We hope that the government will continue to be favourably disposed towards the paper even as it had been at the time of its birth.

In keeping with the policy of the weekly Chhotu Ram claimed that its language was moderate. At a more private and secret level, in 1932, he placed the entire resources of the Jat Gazette as also that of the party and the district Zamindar League at the disposal of the British administration for combating any movement of civil disobedience or non-payment of taxes in the Rohtak district.

23 JG, 22 Dec. 1920, pp. 3-4; 2 Sept. 1925, p. 8. Chhotu Ram had considered adopting the name of "Haryana Gazette" for his paper but he dropped it as the name signified a particular region only and his object was to project the paper for 'Jats' of all provinces, districts, and religions. Therefore, the name "Jat Gazette" was adopted. See JG, 10 Dec. 1916, pp. 2-3.
25 JG, 5 Jan. 1921, see "Chhotu Ram and the Policy of Jat Gazette", Leading article, p. 4.
26 CFDC Rohtak, F. No. 11/39, see handwritten letter of Chhotu Ram to DC Rohtak, 8 Jan. 1932.
A sum of Rs. 250 was made over to Chhotu Ram and his paper for his anti-Congress propaganda and for combating "the pernicious activities of the political extremists". Not satisfied with this, Chhotu Ram wanted the Jat Gazette to be given a subsidy for bringing out a series of "very useful and very effective articles" against the civil disobedience movement.

In Chhotu Ram's specific words the Jat Gazette was a "semi-government paper". However, the circulation of the paper was very restricted. Chhotu Ram's constant complaint was that the paper had a circulation of barely 1,000 even though the Jat population in the province in his opinion amounted to 90 lakhs and the Jat Gazette was the solitary paper of Jats. Also, the circulation was limited to the Hindu Jats. The number of subscribers from among the Muslims and Sikh Jats was insignificant; Chhotu Ram admitted that they were prejudiced against it. While the Jat readership of the weekly was strictly limited the support from the general public was utterly lacking. Between 1917 and 1923, through the efforts of the District

27 An offer of Rs. 250 had been made to the DC Rohtak by Googan Singh, a Jat Risaldar of village Sunari-kalan, for such a purpose. The DC diverted this fund to the JG. See handwritten remark of DC Rohtak, 8 April 1930 in CFDC Rohtak, F. No. H-17.
28 Ibid.
30 For Chhotu Ram's appeal for help see JG, 29 June 1925, p. 1; 16 Dec. 1925, p. 8, circulation of the JG was officially estimated to be between 500 to 1,000 in 1920-21, PAR, 1920-21, p. 143.
31 JG, 29 June 1927, p. 1. Other Jat newspapers from outside Punjab were: the Risale Chatri (Hindi fortnightly) from Merath, published by Master Shadilal (a Hindu Jat) from the United Provinces; The Jat Singh (a Hindi monthly) was started in Rohtak in June 1920 by Shrimati Kesara Devi but it had to be closed down after 1½ years (reason not given), JG, 7 Mar. 1923, pp. 3, 8.
33 JG, 29 Dec. 1920, pp. 3-4.
Board of Rohtak, controlled by the nominated British Chairman and the dominant majority of Hindu Jats favouring Chhotu Ram, the Jat Gazette was being supplied at the cost of the Board to all the vernacular, middle and primary schools under its jurisdiction. In May 1923, with the mounting antagonism of the district officials against Chhotu Ram, and the split in the dominant Hindu Jat party controlling the Rohtak District Board, a proposal for the continuation of this privilege to the Jat Gazette was outvoted. The small circulation and consequent financial difficulties led Chhotu Ram to send in 1932 signed appeals, somewhat threatening in nature, to a large number of his Jat supporters and friends. The concluding paragraph of the appeal read:

I shall keep a list of all those whom I am addressing now and those who fail to respond will lose all title to my help either for themselves or for their friends and relations. The gravity of the need should be regarded as a sufficient excuse for this expression of my future attitude.... I will sternly refuse to help all who refuse to help the Jat Gazette now.

The financial position of the Jat Gazette did not improve till direct government patronage in the form of government advertisements was made available to the paper. Although it was listed as deserving of government advertisement as early as

\[34\] JG, 23 May 1923, p. 13. Also HT, 14 May 1923, p. 4; 28 May 1923, p. 4.

\[35\] Ibid. For the antagonism of the dist. officials towards Chhotu Ram, see below chapter VII, pp. 217-218, 292-1.

\[36\] CFDC Rohtak, F. No. 11/39. The lines quoted above were underlines by the DC, with the remark "danger to Jats working in that area", 11 Nov. 1932.

\[37\] John Maynard, the Finance Member, cited in JG, 8 April 1925, p. 7.

\[38\] GI: Home Pol., F. No. 53/1/35, pp. 625-6.
removed from the list in 1931 but was again placed there in 1932.

By 1940, it was estimated that the paper was making a sum of Rs. 3,000/- per annum from advertisements issued by the Debt Conciliation Boards. The Jat Gazette alone received this patronage in this region; other urdu newspapers with greater circulation like the Pratap and the Milap were not even considered for this privilege.

The British officials of Punjab had started to deprive newspapers of governmental advertisements as were guilty of criticising the government. Having gained financial stability for the Jat Gazette, Chhotu Ram proposed in March 1943 to start a newspaper for the "Jats of Punjab" known as the "Punjab Jat". This proposal did not however materialise. So, in early 1944, he proposed to turn the weekly Jat Gazette into a daily paper. However, even in 1941 the circulation of Jat Gazette could not exceed 1,000 copies, two thirds out of which were being distributed free or as complimentary copies. The sale of Jat Gazette was openly canvassed by government servants such as tehsildars, inspectors, headclerks and army personnel, who personally enrolled readers from the public.

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39 Ibid. For reasons of its removal see below chapter VIII pp.269-70,276-9
40 PLAD, XII, 14 Mar. 1940, pp. 535-6. As many as 170 advertisements of the Debt Conciliation Boards were given in one issue of the JG. See JG, 5 April 1939, pp. A to J (inserted between pp. 4 and 5).
41 JG, 28 Sept. 1927, p. 2.
42 Sri Ram Sharma charged that the JG was making Rs. 3,000/- a year out of government advertisements when its monthly expenditure was calculated to be Rs. 200/- only. Chhotu Ram, the then Minister of Revenue, neither offered any explanation nor a contradiction of this accusation. PLAD, XII, 14 Mar. 1940, pp. 535-6.
43 Linlithgow Coll, 92: see enclosure no. 1 in Linlithgow's letter to Glancy, 11 June 1943. Also see Tribune, 9 June 1943, p. 6.
46 The names of the subscribers enrolled by these officials were published in the JG from time to time. Significantly, these officials were all Jat by caste. JG, 10 Aug. 1938, p. 5; 17 Aug. 1938, p. 5; 14 Dec. 1938, p. 4.
All this was done to meet the "challenge" and the "menace" of the nationalist press branded by the Gazette as the "Bania press" which continued to flourish with every passing year.

Education of Jats was considered by Chhotu Ram as basic to their unity. He, therefore, helped in the establishment of a number of Jat educational institutions. The Anglo-Sanskrit Jat High School was started at Rohtak in March 1913. The school catered specially for the children of Jats serving in the army. When this school was de-recognised by the government during the non-cooperation movement, Chhotu Ram and Lal Chand started the Jat Hero's Memorial School at Rohtak in 1921. A few years later, in 1925, both these institutions were merged into one with the help from the British officials. This help was openly acknowledged by the Managing Committee of the Jat Hero's Memorial High School headed by Chhotu Ram who at once instituted the 'Maclagan Jat Scholarship' of Rs. 20/- per month for higher studies. The British officials on tour were very frequently the chief guests of this school. Apart from this, the Gurukuls at village Matindo and village Bhainswal, controlled and financed by men belonging to the Jat caste, were also helping the movement of spreading education among the 'Jat community'. During 1918, Chhotu Ram himself toured extensively to collect funds for the education of 'Jats'. He had earlier tried to enthuse the Jats of other states like Jodhpur to start separate Jat educational

48 JG, 1 June 1927, p. 5.
51 IOR: P/11879/1930, F. No. 718/4112/2 B.
52 Helles Papers, II, 14 Feb. 1926, p. 5.
53 JG, 28 Mar. 1923, p. 10; 11 April 1923, pp. 11-12.
By 1930 the Jat High School at Rohtak stood at the top of the list of schools receiving grant-in-aid from the government. It received Rs. 11,304/- for the year 1928-29, whereas the Jat High School at Hissar received Rs. 4,920/-, Gaud-Brahmin School at Rohtak received Rs. 3,984/-, and Muslim Rajput School at village Kalanaur received Rs. 4,968/- only. There was, thus, no mistaking the patronage of the government for the Jat High School at Rohtak. Moreover, in 1927 it was the sole recipient of a liberal grant of Rs. 50,000 from the government for the acquisition of land and construction of the school building.

These educational institutions were expected to promote solidarity among Jats. They possessed, in Chhotu Ram's view, certain special qualities which were calculated to arouse "caste spirit" and to foster "caste unity". He thought that the government institutions did not possess these qualities. But he insisted on Jats and their schools keeping on the right side of the government for that alone would open the avenues of government service and other professions to the Jat youths. In 1923, he condemned as 'futile' the education received in the so-called national institutions.

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54 JG, 23 April 1918, p. 6.
55 PLCD, XV, 24 Feb. 1930, p. 15.
56 Ibid.
57 PLCD, XII, 26 Feb. 1929. See answer to the question no. 1744 of Chhotu Ram.
58 JG, 1 June 1927, p. 5. Also see "Jat Education and Non-Cooperation", an article by Chhotu Ram in JG, 11 April 1923, pp. 11-12.
59 JG, 1 June 1927, p. 5.
60 Ibid. Also see "Our Community and Non-Cooperation", an article by Chhotu Ram in JG, 11 April 1923, pp. 11-12.
So opposed was he to non-cooperation in education that for those who wanted to go to institutions free from governmental control he recommended the two Gurukuls in Rohtak district which were privately managed but had not incurred the disapproval of the government. Obviously, Chhotu Ram did not want to incur displeasure of the government and to cause a reversal of their general benevolent attitude towards 'Jats' and to invite discontinuance of governmental financial-aid to the Jat institutions. In decrying the 'national education', Chhotu Ram employed all kinds of arguments calculated to appeal to the obscurantist and traditional side of the Jats. He said that national institutions would allow Bhogis, Chamars, Isaís (Christians) and others to sit with Brahmins, Khatris, and "us", i.e., the Jats. The government educational institutions on the other hand would help maintain the caste exclusiveness of various higher castes. Many Jats of Rohtak, who were proud of their superior economic position and were eager to maintain social exclusiveness and distinction, easily fell in line with this reasoning.

Chhotu Ram also voiced the demand for the greater employment of Jats in government services. Through the columns of Jat Gazette, he demanded a 'special position' for Jats in Rohtak district. "Justice demands", Chhotu Ram wrote in 1932, that in Rohtak district "the zamindars should rule and among them the majority should be of Jats". Consequently, "special share" for Jats was claimed in all

63 JG, 12 Jan. 1921, pp. 8-10.
64 JG, 5 Jan. 1921, p. 11. Also see leading article in JG, 16 Feb. 1921, p. 7.
65 JG, 5 Jan. 1921, p. 11.
66 JG, 9 Sept. 1932, p. 2.
branches of administrative services, government patronage, and even in the awards of land. He justified this claim on grounds of their numerical strength, their loyalty to the government, and the "services" rendered by Jats to the government which overshadowed the services of all other castes combined together in the entire region of Haryana. These 'services' were sought to be traced by references to the help rendered by Jats to the government during its moments of crisis, i.e., during the 1857 uprising, during the controversy regarding the martial law in Punjab, and during the movements like those of non-payment of land revenue and civil disobedience. Recruitment figures of the World War I were often cited in support of the thesis that Jats were loyal to the Government. Even in private correspondence Chhotu Ram advised Jat boys to secure "pedigree tables" of their ancestors in order to show which of their ancestors had fought during the World War I. The special contribution of Jats to the provincial exchequer in the shape of land revenue, as owners of the bulk of agricultural land, was also cited for establishing their political importance. After mentioning the contributions of Jats in various fields of activity Chhotu Ram

67 Ibid. Also see 20 May 1925, p. 8; 28 Jan. 1931, p. 3; 4 Mar. 1931, p. 5. Also, PLCO, VI, 6 Mar. 1924, p. 396.
69 JG, 24 July 1917, p. 3.
70 JG, 20 April 1927, pp. 3-5; 23 Nov. 1927, p. 3.
71 JG, 24 July 1917, p. 5.
74 Letter to Hardwari Lal, 19 Dec. 1934, see Appendix IV.
posed the question: "Do we still need to show our political importance?"

The steady rise of desire among the well-to-do Jats to have their sons educated led to a corresponding demand for jobs for them. This was inevitable, for in Rohtak as elsewhere in Punjab the educated young men had little intention of following their father's calling of cultivating the soil. Moreover, in a region like Rohtak where the agriculture was so uncertain there was bound to be a rising demand from interested quarters for assured income as well as security of tenure of a government post. To assure them government jobs, Chhotu Ram opposed competitive examination and instead demanded reservation of seats for them. Here again, Chhotu Ram was voicing the demands of the emerging rich Jat peasantry of Rohtak district as also the army personnel, who because of the colonial underdevelopment of Indian economy, society and culture were experiencing difficulty in finding employment for their sons suitable to their educational attainment. The British administrators were conscious of this economic disaffection among the richer peasantry, as also of the ex-servicemen desire for civil employment for themselves and their sons.

A counterpart of this demand was the 'exposure' of the underprivileged position of Jats in the administration. The existing

76 The Board of Eco. Inq., Punjab Village Surveys: an economic inquiry of Naggal, a village in Ambala dist. of Punjab (Lahore 1933); p. 72.
77 Letter to Hardwari Lal, 19 Feb. 1935, Appendix V.
78 The difficulty which the rich zamindars faced in procuring jobs for their sons was fully realised by the British rulers. See GI: Home Poll, F. No. 112/1931. Also, Linlithgow Coll, 87: H Craik to Viceroy, 25 Nov. 1938.
79 GI: Home Police, F. No. 8/1/29.
share of Jats in government services was described by Chhotu Ram as "indifferent", "unsatisfactory" and "inadequate" as compared even to the other agricultural castes. He maintained:

If there are certain zamindars to be found in certain government departments, they come either from the Gaud-Brahmin community or from the Punjabi Muslim. Although the Jats form two thirds of the population of agriculturists in Rohtak district they do not occupy two thirds of the government posts. The Jat representation in different departments should conform to their ratio in the population of agriculturists.

Among the agriculturists, Jats were held to be a separate group and, among the Jats, Hindu Jats were again treated as a separate category by Chhotu Ram. It is true that he made a general appeal for due representation of Jats in government services regardless of religion. But he was predominantly interested in the Hindu Jats of the Haryana region, so much so that he took keen personal interest in promoting the careers of individual Hindu Jat boys.

Detailed figures were collected and published regarding the representation of Hindu Jats in administration as compared to the strength of non-agriculturist Hindus and other Hindu or Muslim agriculturists, not only concerning the district of Rohtak but

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80 JG, 16 Sept. 1931, pp. 4-5. Also see letters to Hardwari Lal, 1 April 1937 and 2 Mar. 1941. Appendix VI, VII.
81 JG, 16 Sept. 1931, pp. 4, 5.
82 JG 8 July 1925, p. 5.
83 Letters to Hardwari Lal, 19 Dec. 1934; 1 April 1937; 2 Mar. 1941. Appendix IV, VI, VII.
the whole of Punjab.

This subject came up in the Legislative Council through innumerable questions raised by Chhotu Ram. Most of them related to the inadequate representation for Hindu Jats in government services. However, finding the scope of his 'Jatism' too narrow

The following figures were given to show the 'injustice' done to the zamindars generally and Jats specially in the subordinate posts of the department of education on 1 April 1931.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>HINDU POPULATION</th>
<th>HINDU ZAMINDARS</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of Non-Zamin-dars</td>
<td>Brah-Rajput-Jat-Ahir-Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>posts</td>
<td>castes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2) (3) (4) (5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rs.222-500</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rs.140-190</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>58</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rs.110-135</td>
<td>320</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rs.80-100</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total 900</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


For details of questions regarding the Hindu Jats raised by Chhotu Ram in the Punjab Council and Assembly, see PLCD, VI, between 2 Jan. 1924 to 24 Mar. 1924, a total of 24 questions were raised by Chhotu Ram, pp. 396-8; VIII, 19 Jan. 1925, p. 10; 12 Mar. 1925, pp. 407-8; VIII B, 3 Dec. 1925, p. 1336; IX, 19 July 1927, pp. 870-1; 22 Nov. 1927, pp. 739, 1204; XII, 25 Feb. 1929, pp. 335-9; 26 Feb. 1929, p. 345; XIV, 3 Dec. 1929, pp. 606-7, 610; XV, 24 Feb. 1930, p. 14; 21 Mar. 1930, pp. 389-90; XXV, 26 June 1934, p. 229; 28 June 1934, p. 274. Also, PLAD, XXII, 10 Mar. 1944, pp. 492-3. All these questions which pertained to Rohtak dist. and specially to the Hindu Jats, were unfailingly cited in the JG within days of their being raised in the Council or the Assembly. The dates of the JG, therefore, correspond roughly to the dates given for PLCD and PLAD; for example, see JG, 20 April 1927, pp. 3, 5; 23 Jan. 1931, pp. 1-3; 20 May 1931, pp. 6-7; 27 May 1931, p. 1. For other demands made by Chhotu Ram on behalf of the Hindu Jats see JG, 24 July 1917, p. 3; 4 Mar. 1923, p. 8; 1 July 1925, p. 2; 8 July 1925, p. 7; 15 July 1925, p. 8; 26 Jan. 1927, p. 3; 23 Nov. 1927, p. 3; 6 Feb. 1929, p. 3; 20 Feb. 1929, p. 5; 21 Jan. 1931, p. 1;
in relation to the whole of Punjab, Chhotu Ram often changed his emphasis to include not only the Hindu Jats but also the 'Hindu agriculturists' in general; and made similar demands on behalf of the 'Hindu agriculturists'. But his weekly, the Jat Gazette, continued to speak almost exclusively for the Hindu Jats.

Over the years, a series of articles titled "Chirag Tale 87 Andhera" appeared in the Jat Gazette under Chhotu Ram's name in order to bring the "sorry plight of Jats", especially those from Rohtak district, to the attention of the government. The departments specially mentioned in these articles were: general administration, judiciary, excise, agriculture, cooperation, police, education, public works, revenue, income-tax, railways, medical, post and telegraph, and provincial and subordinate branches of the civil and military secretariat. Since jobs in these departments required certain educational qualifications, he made a demand for admission facilities through reservations of seats in educational institution so that Jat boys could equip themselves for entrance 88 into government services.

28 Jan. 1931, p. 3; 4 Mar. 1931, p. 5; 15 July 1931, p. 1;
12 Aug. 1931, p. 3; 9 Sept. 1931, p. 4; 16 Sept. 1931, p. 4;
23 Sept. 1931, p. 2; 18 Nov. 1931, p. 4; 2 Dec. 1931, p. 3;
17 Feb. 1937, p. 3; 23 Feb. 1937, p. 4; 16 June 1937, p. 4;
7 July 1937, p. 3; 14 July 1937, p. 2; 29 Sept. 1937, p. 3;
8 Dec. 1937, p. 4; 12 Jan. 1938, p. 6; 2 Mar. 1938, p. 6;
9 Mar. 1938, p. 1; 28 Mar. 1938, p. 1; 6 April 1938, p. 4;
25 May 1938, pp. 3-4; 17 Aug. 1938, p. 3. For objections by the dist. officials regarding such questions and Chhotu Ram's motive in raising them see below chapter VIII, pp. 292-7.

86 For Chhotu Ram's advocacy of 'Hindu agriculturists' see below chapter VIII, pp. 253-61.


88 PLCD, VI, 6 Mar. 1924, pp. 396-7.
In justification of his overall demand, Chhotu Ram recalled Michael Edward's circular issued to regulate the Punjab Public Services based on resolution no. 4572-S of the Executive Council of Punjab dated, Simla, 3rd October 1919. The circular laid down that 66 percent of government services must be enjoyed by the zamindars, i.e., statutory agriculturists of the province. In certain departments the reservation was to be even higher than 66 percent. This ratio was declared to be in keeping with the percentage of the statutory agriculturists in the population of Punjab. But as far as the spokesmen of 'Jat rights' like Chhotu Ram were concerned, this executive resolution was interpreted as "preserving the rights of zamindars generally but of Jats specially". The government was repeatedly attacked for not acting upon the resolution in relation to Jats. Innumerable requests were made to give figures showing employment of the Hindu Jats in government services since the publication of the government resolution.

In 1933 Chhotu Ram made a determined attempt in the Punjab Council to get 'minority status' for the Hindu Jats. Since 1930, the Jat Mahasabha had also been passing resolutions demanding recognition of the Hindu Jats as a minority community. Minority status would have immensely helped the educated supporters of Chhotu Ram who had rightly come to look upon him as the representative of their interests. Chhotu Ram, on the other hand, by

90 JG, 4 April 1923, p. 6. Also, PLCD, VI, 6 Mar. 1924, p. 397.
91 PLCD, VI, 6 Mar. 1924, pp. 396-7.
92 Ibid. Also JG, 17 Aug. 1927, p. 2.
93 PLCD, XXIII, 2 Mar. 1933, p. 559; 17 Mar. 1933, p. 60.
demanding minority status for Jats could effectively claim to stand for the 'Jat community' as such. Although this status was not granted, British officials certainly gave recognition to the employment claims made by Chhotu Ram on behalf of Jats. D.J. Boyd, the Chief Secretary to the Government of Punjab, had as early as 1930 issued special instructions to the various divisions and heads of departments in Punjab that the claims of Hindu Jat community for appointments under the government should be carefully considered. Even prior to this instruction, British officials had been accused of favouring the Hindu Jats. John Maynard, the Revenue Member of Punjab, had been hard put to explain in the Council the selection of a large number of Hindu Jat candidates for the posts of sub-inspectors in 1924-25.

At the district level, Chhotu Ram openly helped his Jat followers whenever he could; thus directly and immediately benefitting the affluent and the educated section of Jats. In the Rohtak District Board, for example, where the followers of Chhotu Ram had gained control by 1931, the district officials commented upon the preference being given to Jats in allocation of jobs, in granting of contracts for public works, and filling vacancies in schools and other branches of the Board. Regarding this, E.H. Lincoln,

96 GL: Home-est., F. No. 21/6/30, see letter of D.J. Boyd to the Chief Secretary Govt. of India, 26 April 1936.
98 Ibid. The Inspector General of Police promised to send special instructions to the SPs in the provinces to ensure that 18 Jat youth would be recruited within a month. See JG, 20 Feb. 1925, p. 5.
99 HO Notes, Malik Zaman Mehdi Khan, 4 Nov. 1931, op. cit.
the Deputy Commissioner of Rohtak, wrote in 1933:

The District Board is now in the hands of what may be called "the Chhotu Ram Party", though this gentleman prefers to remain in the background. This party has clear majority and will require very careful watching as the policy of "Rohtak for the Jats" is likely to be enforced as far as possible. Already the non-Jats "do not count" except K.S. Shafi Ali Khan who rather goes with Chhotu Ram's party.

It may be noted, however, that such political interference in official appointments, etc., was a common phenomenon in the Punjab of those days. R.M.K. Slater, an ex-civil servant of Punjab, recalls the length to which the ministers and even the Premier would go to secure the appointment of their "protégés" as village accountants or headmen or even to lesser posts. But it was Chhotu Ram who came in for open and public denunciation by his political opponents in the Punjab Assembly, thereby enabling him to emerge as the champion of 'Jat rights'. In 1942 he was attacked in the Assembly for showing favouritism to the Hindu Jats of Ambala division. It was suggested that a large number of appointments under his control had been made from amongst the Jats to the detriment of the just rights of other communities. Chhotu Ram categorically denied these allegations, even though in the Jat Gazette he had been boasting all this time for being "the only one" to give recognition to the "otherwise neglected claims of Hindu zamindars" in the government branches under his ministry. The

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100 HO Notes, E.H. Lincoln, 4 April 1933, op. cit.
102 PLAD, XIX, 16 Mar. 1942, p. 394.
103 Ibid.
104 Ibid.
105 JG, 21 July 1937, p. 2; 18 June 1942, p. 3.
allegations persisted and a question enquiring about the number of Hindu Jats of Ambala division promoted to gazetted ranks since April 1937 and about the details of persons whom they had superseded in Chhotu Ram's ministry (Development) was sent to the Assembly secretariat. An answer was interestingly refused on the ground that it "soured of communalism".

Chhotu Ram kept on enlarging the areas of demand for the rights of Hindu Jats. Several representations over the years were made to the Viceroy by the Jat Mahasabha under the guidance of Chhotu Ram for reservation of some posts for Hindu Jats in the Central and Provincial services, and for the nomination of a Hindu Jat to the Indian Civil Service. Chhotu Ram had in 1923 demanded the allocation of the department of agriculture at the ministerial level to a Jat. Jat 'separatism' reached its limit when Chhotu Ram demanded the representation of Jats on the Round Table Conference. The Jat Mahasabha in a resolution contended that despite a Jat majority in areas like Delhi, Haryana, and certain districts of the western United Provinces the Jats had no representation on the Round Table Conference even though the community was not lacking in men with brains.

106 PLAD, XIX, 19 Mar. 1942, p. 494. The question was asked by Khan Sahib Khawaja Ghulam Samad and answered by the then Minister for Development, Dasaundha Singh. However, the period for which information was sought, i.e., 1937-41, was the period when Chhotu Ram was the Minister for Development.

107 Ibid.


109 JG, 14 Nov. 1923, see "Time for the Test of Jat Community", an article by Chhotu Ram.


111 Ibid. Also, 12 Aug. 1931, p. 3.
Under the Provincial Autonomy Chhotu Ram did not consider one Hindu Jat minister, one Hindu Jat Secretary and one Hindu Jat member of the Public Service Commission at the topmost level of the Punjab Government to be a fair representation of the massive Hindu Jat population. The state of affairs was considered much worse in the United Provinces which also had a large population of Jats who were considered to have been represented in the Assembly in fair numbers but not in any position of political importance.

The aspiration of Chhotu Ram for 'Jats' was very well summed up by him in the remark, "Raj Karega Jat", made in a public meeting in the Haryana region in 1944. When criticised in the Assembly for wanting to create "Jatistaan", Chhotu Ram gave the following explanation:

It is true that on one occasion I had used the expression Raj Karega Jat in my own constituency to a gathering of 25,000 to 30,000 people, 95 percent of which were Jats. All that I mean by this expression is that under the principles of democratic rule which ever community's strength is larger in numbers, whether in India as a whole, or any other province, that community is ultimately bound to get a representation in Government in proportion to its strength.

"Raj Karega Jat" could be possible only in a homogeneous Jat province or state. Therefore, Chhotu Ram visualized an enlarged province of Delhi. The first time Chhotu Ram made

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112 JG, 5 Jan. 1938, p. 3. For similar views see JG, 9 Feb. 1938, p. 4; 27 April 1938, p. 5; 4 May 1938, p. 3. Chhotu Ram remarked that the United Provinces showed the "political death of Jats". JG, 24 Nov. 1937, p. 6.
113 Ibid.
114 PLAD, XXII, 10 Mar. 1944, p. 493.
115 Ibid.
this demand publicly was in his presidential address to the Jat Mahasabha in Agra in 1929. From then onwards the Jat Mahasabha became propagating it very actively. It passed several resolutions regarding extension of the Delhi province and made a representation to this effect to the Viceroy. The enlarged province of Delhi was to include the Ambala division of Punjab (with its five districts of Hissar, Karnal, Gurgaon, Rohtak, and Ambala) and the Meerut and Agra districts from the United Provinces. The new region was to constitute a "homogeneous Hindu Jat region".

One British official, F.L. Brayne, openly supported this demand on grounds of encouraging "provincial nationality".

The primary motive behind this demand, which reveals Chhotu Ram's religious and caste bias was to have an overriding numerical superiority of the Hindu Jats in the new region. The Muslim Jats were now grouped by Chhotu Ram with their co-religionists and not with their Hindu caste fellows. About Sikh Jats Chhotu Ram, finding the situation worse, observed:

Sikh Jat is a slave of religion. He is very much under the influence of his clever non-zamindar co-religionists. There does not seem to be any

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117 "Presidential Address" of Chhotu Ram delivered to the Jat Mahasabha, Agra, on 30 Nov. 1929; JG, 4 Dec. 1929, pp. 4, 8. Also see "The Province of Delhi", an article by Chhotu Ram in JG, 4 Nov. 1931, pp. 4-5.
118 See GI: Home Poll Index 1931, for the subject abstract of F. No. 111/31; and GI: Home General Index 1932, and 1934, for the subject abstract of F. Nos. 117/32 Pub and 230/34. These files were not transferred to the NAI, but the subject abstract in the index is an adequate reference.
119 JG, 4 Nov. 1931, p. 2.
120 Ibid.
121 JG, 4 Dec. 1929, pp. 4-5; 4 Nov. 1931, p. 2.
122 Brayne Coll, 275: see "Collection of Articles".
123 JG, 4 Nov. 1931, p. 2.
124 Ibid.
125 Ibid.
indication of any bond or unity between Hindu and Sikh Jat in the near future. Therefore, I have decided that I should help those Jats in coming together who are inhabiting both sides of the river Jamuna and where there is no religion to divide them.

Hindu Jats were visualised as dominating the new province. It was realised that a caste found in such large numbers in so many connected areas was going to have extraordinary facility in organising itself. The new 'Jat homogeneous province' could, of course, function as such under a limited franchise which alone could ensure the continuing benefits to the upper stratum of the Jat peasantry. Chhotu Ram's advocacy of such a 'state' or 'province' based as it was on the existing limited franchise and continuing British domination was, therefore, seen as a step towards increasing the benefit to the upper stratum of Jats under the euphemism of "Raj Karage Jat".

Surprisingly, Chhotu Ram after having extensively advocated such a plan through public platform and press, did not recommend it to the Indian Statutory Reforms Committee. This question had been left entirely to him, but he along with others raised objections to such a scheme. The reason may perhaps be found in the report made by the Provincial Re-Distribution Committee of the Indian National Congress in 1928, which also advocated such a scheme.

126 JG, 3 Jan. 1923, p. 3.
They (Hindu Jats) themselves are not happy in the Punjab and sometimes their temporary cooperation with non-Hindu representatives of the Provincial Council has been a cause of embarrassment to the Hindu population of the Punjab. The separation of the Ambala division would straight away solve a number of political problems of the Punjab, regarding which there is a conflict of opinion today.

Chhotu Ram's dominance in Punjab politics based on his alliance with the Unionist Muslims, as against the so called 'Hindu' Congress, would certainly have been endangered by the proposed scheme. This political calculation alone explains his dropping of the scheme meant to bring about a 'homogeneous Hindu Jat province'. But Chhotu Ram shrewdly continued to exhibit now and then his commitment to the 'Jat province' and did not drop the idea publicly. He kept on propagating it through public platform and press till as late as 1935, and thus kept alive the feeling of 'Jat separatism' by demanding a separate "home-land" for the Hindu Jats.

As seen earlier, contrary to what was being publicly propagated, all attempts of Chhotu Ram at mobilisation of Jats were clearly limited to the upper stratum of Jat peasantry. This does not however mean that Chhotu Ram's attempts met with full success in this respect or that the upper stratum of Jats accepted him as their undisputed leader. His attempts to woo 'Hindu agriculturists' of the same stratum, amongst a larger audience of 'Hindu agriculturists', was an indication of not only the limited nature of his 'Jatism' but also the limited support from the upper

129 JG, 16 Jan. 1929, p. 13; 7 Mar. 1929, p. 8; 18 Feb. 1931, p. 5; 8 April 1931, p. 2; 3 Nov. 1931, p. 8; 10 Nov. 1931, p. 3; 22 Jan. 1935, p. 4
stratum of Jats. This stratum of Jats in Rohtak had always indulged in factional politics. Till the first elections to the Punjab Council in 1921, there had been two factions among Jats of Rohtak district: the Sanatan Dharam faction and the Arya Samaj faction, both headed by the same kind of men, i.e., Rai Sahibs, Rai Bahadurs, landlords, and big landowners. Because of certain reasons the Sanatan Dharam faction declined after 1921. Within a short period the remaining Arya Samaj faction also got split into two led by Chhotu Ram and Lal Chand. In May 1930, Chhotu Ram in a confidential letter to Lincoln acknowledged the existence of 'two parties' among the Jats. In fact Chhotu Ram openly wrote in the Jat Gazette about "Jat Party Bazi" in Rohtak district. In 1932, the Deputy Commissioner of Rohtak also acknowledged in his official report that "Rohtak affairs were largely Chhotu Ram vs. Lal Chand".

These two factions of Jats were drawn from the same social groups in Rohtak. Lal Chand who started a new political party in January 1932 called "Haryana Liberal League" under the instructions of British officials, drew its membership from the military

131 Ibid.
132 See below chapter VII, pp. 219, 221 and chapter VIII, p. 297. Also: "Men to be known", op. cit.
133 Ibid.
135 Chhotu Ram wrote articles titled "Jat Quam me Bhoot ki Devi", "Jat Quam me Kala Sana", see JG, 3 Oct. 1929, p. 3. For similar views see JG, 26 July 1923, p. 9; 5 Sept. 1923, pp. 8, 10; 7 Nov. 1923, p. 15; 12 Dec. 1923, p. 11; 26 Dec. 1923, p. 12; 18 Nov. 1925, p. 7; 9 Dec. 1925, p. 8; 12 June 1929, p. 3.
personnel, both retired and serving, lawyers, and even from among the rich pro-British 'lalas' and 'sahukars' of the Haryana region. Lal Chand's party and that of Chhotu Ram had the same aims and objectives; both were loyalists, believers in constitutional methods, and anti-Congress. The British officials too commented on this similarity. Both, therefore, tended to cut into each other's strength. However, out of the two Lal Chand steadily lost his political support. After 1924, when he was unseated on account of his election being held void, primarily due to the efforts of Mukand Lal Puri and Shadi Lal, Lal Chand could never stage a come back to the provincial politics in an open contest with the Chhotu Ram group. Chhotu Ram on the other hand made successful inroads among the supporters of Lal Chand. The situation regarding the relative strength of the two factions becomes clear after Chhotu Ram's success in the first election to the Punjab Assembly in 1937, and his assumption of ministership. Chhotu Ram by this time emerged with a clear edge over Lal Chand as the leader of 'Jats of Rohtak' and of the 'Hindu zamindars' of Punjab. For this Chhotu Ram built up a 'caste ideology' to bind Jats of different social strata.

138 Ibid., see "Aims and Objects of the Haryana Liberal League", p. 303.
139 CFDC Rohtak, F. No. 11/39; C.C. Garbett, Chief Secretary, Punjab Govt. to DC Rohtak, 19 Jan. 1932.
141 C & MG, 15 July 1924, p. 4. For details see above chapter I, p.31.
and projected and claimed the 'caste interests' on behalf of all Jats. In this attempt he was aided by the successful strengthening of 'caste awareness' by the British census operations which had built up the caste consciousness from a small local sphere into a phenomenon embracing wider regions. Similarly, the recruiting methods of British officials leading to monthly publication of elaborate caste-wise statistics admittedly "designed to stimulate inter-district and inter-tribal rivalry" also aided Chhotu Ram's efforts.

Chhotu Ram was inadvertently helped in his attempts of creating and building up caste awareness among the Jats by the popular press of the time. Chhotu Ram's very frequent utterances in the public regarding 'Jat Raj' and 'Zamindar Raj' were greatly criticised in various newspapers. The Haryana Tilak led in this attack on Chhotu Ram. The popular press played into the hands of Chhotu Ram by attacking him as a Jat leader and by doing so in a manner which could be declared to be hostile to the Jats. Direct attacks on 'Jat Raj' and on attempts at establishing it also meant an acknowledgement that such a 'Raj' existed or could exist in Rohtak district. Chhotu Ram could, therefore, justifiably assert: "all communities complain that Jats are ruling Rohtak".

144 For this read Chhotu Ram's speeches reported in the Vir Bharti, 8 Nov. 1937; 3 Feb. 1938; 6 April 1938; 10 Aug. 1938; 17 Sept. 1938; 21 Sept. 1938; 28 Feb. 1940; cited in Gokal Chand Narang, Plight of Punjab Minorities under the so called Unionist Government (Lahore 1941), pp. 4-8, 9.
146 JG, 17 Feb. 1937, p. 3.
Interestingly, the *Jat Gazette* took care to publish the views and opinions of those newspapers which commented on the 'dominance of Jats in Rohtak', e.g., the *zamindar* and the *vakil* newspapers were quoted in the *Jat Gazette* as saying: "only one caste is powerful in Rohtak, i.e., Jat." The Congress charge that Jats wanted to separate themselves from the Hindus was also greatly publicised. Other newspapers like the *Milap* recognising the 'puppeteer' behind the scenes blamed the British Government for encouraging Jats in their separatist tendencies. The paper insisted that Chhotu Ram's selection as a minister in 1924 was to please the Jats. The general feeling of the contemporary press indeed was that the government was favouring the Jats. The *Milap* went on to add: "by its diplomacy the government has caused disunion among the Hindus and while carrying on propaganda for years it has persuaded the Jats into considering themselves a separate community".

The *Jat Gazette* gave a great deal of publicity to the denunciation of Chhotu Ram by Lajpat Rai who declared Chhotu Ram and his projection of 'Jat interests' as "anti-national". In a

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147 For quotes from other newspapers see *JG*, 24 Sept. 1923, p. 3; 17 June 1927, p. 2; 30 Nov. 1927, p. 3; 23 Sept. 1931, p. 2; 18 Nov. 1931, p. 4; 2 Dec. 1931, p. 4; 17 Feb. 1937, p. 3.
150 Ibid. For a similar opinion see *HT*, 22 Sept. 1924, p. 3; 29 Sept. 1924, p. 10; 16 Feb. 1925, pp. 5-6; 4 May 1925, pp. 3-4.
151 *Prataap*, 15 Nov. 1925, Native Newspaper Report, Punjab. The *Prataap* emphatically contradicted the popular belief that Lal Chand and Chhotu Ram were taken as ministers because they were Jats. This contradiction indicates that contemporary press was advocating such a view.
152 *Milap*, 20 Sept. 1924, see Native Newspaper Report, Punjab.
153 *JG*, 25 April 1927, p. 6; 18 May 1927, p. 3; 1 June 1927, p. 3; 8 June 1927, pp. 6-8; 15 June 1927, pp. 4-5.
greatly publicised debate between Chhotu Ram and Lajpat Rai, the latter was reported to have remarked:

Chhotu Ram's move may prove beneficial to the Jats, as the Jats because of this movement may demand and succeed in getting certain privileges for themselves. But it would prove injurious to the national spirit.

The frequent charges that Jats were 'selfish', 'separate', 'anti national', or that 'Jat benefits' were being looked at from the narrow point of view of 'caste' and not 'nation', or the frequent advice to Jats to sink their differences and join the 'national cause' successfully aroused a counter charge from Chhotu Ram: "did the national benefit exclude those of Jats?"

It was clear that the 'nationalist' press also erred in its criticism and showed its own weakness and bias by accepting for criticism casteism in terms propagated by Chhotu Ram. By attacking 'Jat interests' they accepted the existence of a homogeneous 'Jat community' and its consequent 'interests' where in fact neither existed. Chhotu Ram, therefore, could justifiably claim to speak on behalf of the 'Jats' of Rohtak and make demands on the basis of their large proportion in the population of Rohtak. Chhotu Ram's 'Jatism' could not be successfully exposed; and under this projection of 'caste ideology' the upper stratum of Jats could continue to benefit.

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155 JG, 23 April 1921, p. 5.