CHAPTER V

AGRARIAN REVOLTS

Nearly ninety parganas spread across three Mughal subas, namely, Agra, Delhi and Ajmer, were affected by the agrarian revolts which took place in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. In fact the entire countryside between Agra and Delhi on the one side and Ajmer and Ranthambore on the other was engulfed by these rural uprisings. These revolts were not confined to a particular caste or clan; indeed, the participants belonged to heterogeneous castes. The intensity of the revolts also varied from region to region and year to year. The widespread disturbances in our region were set in the background of a resurgence of zamindari power on the one hand; and rapid impoverishment of the peasantry on the other. Caste affinity often formed a bridge between these two reactive sectors of rural society. These revolts took place by and large, during the same time span (1665-1730). While some

1. See Annexure -II for the names of the parganas and castes.
2. Chapter-IV.
3. Chapter-III.
revolts lasted for four to five decades, others were very short-lived. The degree of success of these revolts of course varied as indeed did their objectives. While the Jats ultimately succeeded in establishing a state at Bharatpur, the Naruka revolt led to the establishment of another state at Alwar. The revolt by some of the other zamindars resulted in the creation of numerous thikanas in Rajasthani. The thikana was a kind of autonomous principality where the thikanadar enjoyed wider power and privileges than a zaminder. Many other zamindars enormously expanded their zaminderie. A large number of patels and other rural rich seem to have joined the ranks of zamindars.

This chapter deals basically with the study of the Jat revolt and the circumstances leading to the formation of the Bharatpur state, and if other revolts have also been included it is only because they formed part of a larger

4. For example the Khangerot's thikana at Diggi (Malpura) C.U. Wills discusses, some of the thikanas in his Report on the Land Tenures, op. cit.


scenario. In the absence of revolts by the Rajput and zamindars of other castes in the sortelab areas it would have been impossible for the Jats to sustain their recalcitrance for such a long period. It is equally true that without abetment and encouragement from the Jats, the other revolts might have been nipped in the bud. It was clearly a two way process.

The peasants of the Agra suba were known for their "rebelliousness, bravery and courage" even during the days of Emperor Akbar. Ever since the reign of Akbar down to that of Aurangzeb, many military operations were organised against the rebellious peasantry living on both sides of the river Jamuna. Such is the pre-history of disturbances in the region which later became the cradle of the Jat revolt. The earlier rebels could have been Jats because the Ain-i-Akbari shows many parganas on both sides of the Jamuna as the zamindari of the Jats. But the actual history of the Jat rebellion dates from 1669 when Gokuls Jat, a zamindar of Telpat near Mathura, took up arms against the Mughal faujdar.

The entire countryside of Sraij (Western Uttar Pradesh and Eastern Rajasthan) and Nawat was seething with peasant unrest when Gokula Jat revolted. The revolt was born in the midst of escalating rural unrest. The economic burden on the peasants was becoming increasingly unbearable.

Group after group of peasants from various parganas went to the Mughal capital for the redressal of their grievances. The number of recorded peasants' 'deputations' that went to the Mughal court during the 1660s are many. The arrival of peasant 'deputations' in the capital was seldom liked by the rulers. Given this attitude of the rulers towards the aggrieved peasants, their economic grievances could hardly be mitigated.

Patels of 20 villages of pargana Lalsot gathered at village Jiwad in 1664 and decided to go to Delhi for the remission of certain taxes. 10

Many peasants of pargana Mandawar who had gone to Delhi in connection with their financial problems, returned to their villages without achieving anything. 11 In a

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10. Amber Record at. Mah Sudi 12, V.S. 1721/1664 and Mah Vadi 3, V.S. 1721/1664.

11. Amber Record at. Vaisakh Vadi 1 and 13, V.S. 1722/1665.
similar attempt the peasants of 11 villages of pargana Kotle approached the Diwan of the Amber state in vain. In 1665 it was reported that the peasantry of the pargana of Newat went to the Emperor at Delhi. The peasants of pargana Khohri and Rewari had gone to Delhi to seek concessions in the revenue rates, those of Bharkol and Jelalpur went to make arrangements of taqavi. Many peasants of pargana Khilohra and Baroda-Meo had reached Agra to complain to the prince about the increasing burden of taxes on them.

In 1666 a large number of peasants of pargana Khilohra and Kotle slipped out of their villages. The smil did not know whether they had gone to Amber or Agra. The patels and peasants of 25 villages of pargana Malerna started for Delhi to meet the Emperor and get the cancellation of the

The peasants continued to pour into Agra from Khohri, Khilohra and Udai. In 1666 Raja Nahar Singh wrote from Delhi about the unabated arrival of peasants in Delhi from the parganas of Dewat. In 1665 the peasants of 8 parganas jointly appealed to the Emperor to cancel certain cesses. These parganas were: Rinsi, Behror, Dadri, Manawar, Faridabad, Sohne, Pilgawa and one more.

During these years the prices of food grain had declined considerably. In the Dewat region this crash in grain prices was due to declining demand. The authorities insisted on cash payment of the taxes while the peasants offered to pay in kind. This was yet another issue which the peasants took to the court. Meanwhile a chauhba (in lumpsum) cess was imposed on the peasants of Dewat to compound their misery.

The peasants of parganas Sakras, Sonkhar, Sambhar and Handiwar were subjected to a lumpsum chaubha of Rs.12,000, 8,000, 13,000, and 15,000 respectively. If the increasing number of watchmen (shuhás) added to the burden of the peasants, it did not prevent theft in the villages from becoming very common. The cumulative result of all these inter-related developments was an increasing unrest in the countryside. This message was not lost on the zamindars living in these parganas.

The zamindars of those parganas where peasant unrest was more widespread immediately intervened. Raja Ram Jat was one of such zamindars and his village Sinsini of pargana Ac was in the centre of those parganas which were in the grip of peasant unrest. The first shot fired by Gokul Ram Jat at Talpat in 1669, proved to be a premature attempt. On the other hand the rebellion started by Raja Ram Jat in 1683 turned out to be a lasting nature.


With the entire countryside seething with unrest it was not difficult for zamindars like Raje Ram Jat and others to defy the Mughal authority in their respective areas. The zamindars' open defiance in the form of refusal to pay revenue which they had collected from the peasants as well as forcible raising of money from outside their own jurisdiction immediately invited military action against them. The tucus of revolt alarmed the nobles who held their jagirs in this region. Military action became inevitable even as the Mughal authorities treated it as a law and order problem. Though the zamindars were rebellious in a much wider area, there was no unity of action or purpose among them in the initial stages. The repeated failure of the Mughal campaigns against them created conditions out of which a distinct leadership was thrown up from amongst the ranks of the zamindars. Many zamindars who were so far lying low, were emboldened to revolt. A zaminder-front was born out of the confrontation between the Mughal armies and the rebels.

Nawab Khan-i-Jahan Bahadur organised two campaigns against the Jats. The Amber ruler and Mehrab Khan, Faqihdar of Mathura, were also asked to extend help to Nawab Bahadur
This campaign of the Nawab ended in failure. The Jats not only repulsed the three armies sent against them but extended their control over Bhura, Kuthumbar, Nodal and Palwal. This victory of Raja Ram Jat over Nawab Khan Bahadur was not due to the military superiority of the former over the latter but because of a general uprising of all the Jats living between Delhi and Agra. Imperial Kiroria and the agents of the jagirdars were driven out of the parganas lying between Delhi and Agra. The entire area went out of the control of the Mughals for a while and Nawab Bahadur Khan was stranded at Kama. The Nawab had to beat a retreat to Mathura after a month.

Nawab Khan-i-Jahan Bahadur marched against Sisani again. This time he besieged the garhi (fortress) of Sogher where Ram Chaher Jat lived. The garhi fell to the

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Nawab and Ram Chahar along with many other Jats, was killed. The Nawab in a fit of his easy victory over Soghar, marched against Sinsini and dreamt of vanquishing Raja Ram Jat for good.\textsuperscript{31} Near Sinsini an encounter took place between Raja Ram Jat and Nawab Bahadur Khan. The Nawab lost the battle. Many prominent Rajput seindars who had been sent by the Amber ruler to help the Nawab, were killed in the battle.\textsuperscript{32} The Nawab again retreated to Mathura. The Jats became more belligerent and removed the thana (police posts) of the Nawab from Khohri, Bhusawar, Ao, Sonkher and Sahar and established their own thanas there.\textsuperscript{33} Nawab Bahadur put the blame of his failure on the 
emis and emis of the region.\textsuperscript{34}

The Jats established an outpost at Harsana from where Bahatri was only 10 kos away. Raja Ram Jat then sent letters to all the bhoomis of the neighbouring parganas — especially


\textsuperscript{32} Arzdaasht dt. Kati Sudi 4, V.S. 1744/1687.

\textsuperscript{33} Arzdaasht dt. Kangeir Vadi 2, V.S. 1744/1687.

\textsuperscript{34} Arzdaasht dt. Asoj Vadi 13, V.S. 1744/1687.
the Narukes and the Kilenots -- asking them to join him immediately. The bhomies quickly responded to his call irrespective of their caste. The economic and political conditions in sarkars Ajmer, Ranthambore and Alwar were similar to those prevailing in sarkars Sahar, Agra and Mathura. The only difference was that it is the Rajput bhomies of various clans who revolted in the first three sarkars while the Jat and other middle caste zamindars were more active in the latter three sarkars. But all were pitted against the Mughal jagirdars. Hence it was not difficult for some of them to coordinate their activities. Some of the bhomies who had been wavering in their loyalties, openly took an anti-jagirdar stand after Raja Ram Jat's victories over Nawab Khan Bahadur. The Narukes and Kilenots who had been acting as a buffer between the Jats and the Amber Keja, definitely joined the Jats after the failure of the campaigns of Nawab Khan Bahadur. Earlier the Narukes had been vacillating between the rebels

and the loyalists. In 1685 Vijay Ram Naruka and Udai Singh Naruka had illegally collected Rs.4,00,000 each from the 14 mahals of Kewat. But in the second campaign of 1687, Vijay Ram Naruka and his son Pratap Singh fought against the Jats. Vijay Ram Naruka was killed in the battle and Pratap Singh took to flight.

The Narukas and other Rajput nobles had a conflict with the Amber Raja over the samindari right. In the mahals of Kewat the Narukas, Kilenote and Panchanote wanted to expand their samindaries and the Amber ruler aimed at incorporating the sarkar of Alwar into his expanding watan (hereditary dominion). In order to contain the Amber ruler's ambitions, the Jats supported the Narukas etc. This was the objective basis for the formation of the samindar-front in this region.

The Jat menace reached its peak in 1688 when they looted the tomb of Akbar at Sikandra and burnt down those

39. Chapter-IV.
villages which had been assigned for the maintenance of the Taj Mahal.\textsuperscript{40} The Jats were moving from Nathura to Ranthambore with impunity. Disturbances were increasing day by day. The imperial mansabdars, subezars and faujdars posted in this region did not have sufficient force to curb the revolts.\textsuperscript{41} This ascending scale of disturbances caused by the Jats forced Emperor Aurangzeb to pay some more attention to the problem. So far the main command of the forces sent to suppress the Jats was in the hands of prince Beder Bakht. In May 1686, Maharaja Bishen Singh of Amber was appointed to stamp out the Jats.\textsuperscript{42} The leadership of the Jat revolt was in the hands of well-to-do semindars.\textsuperscript{43} They were aiming at the expansion of their seminderis in the neighbouring parganas.

In eastern Rajasthan their ambition clashed with the interest of the Amber rulers who themselves were eager, taking advantage of the disturbed conditions, to expand

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{40} Vekil Report, Kesho Rui to Raja Rom Singh dt. 5th Jammedal awwal, 1099/A.H./1686.
\item \textsuperscript{41} Arzdehst dt. Jeth Sudi 8, V.S. 1744/1687.
\item \textsuperscript{42} Vekil Report, Kesho Rui to Bishen Singh dt. 28 Jammedal akhir, 1099/A.H./1688.
\end{itemize}
their watan in sarkars Agro, Alwar and Ranthambore. Therefore, a direct confrontation between the Jats and the Raja of Amber was inevitable. Gradually, as a result of repeated set-backs at the hands of the Jats the Emperor was veering around to the idea of transferring this command against the Jats to the Amber ruler. From Amber's point of view, a successful campaign against the Jats would not only amount to carrying out their duty but also giving them a chance for consolidation of territorial gains in the process.

Maharaja Bishan Singh gave an undertaking of "suppressing the Jats and raising Sinsini to ground within six months". In return he demanded extensive powers, adequate finance and jagirārī and samindarī rights of various parganas. He knew how to get things done for he waited for the Emperor to send repeated directives through his...

44. Ibid., p.320.
46. Vakil Reports, Kesro: Rai to Bishan Singh dt. 13 Rajab 1099 A.H./May 4, 1688; 4 Sabban 1099 A.H./May 25, 1688 and 26 Hamajjan, 1099 A.H./July 18, 1688.
vakil Kesho Rai before he moved bit by bit from Amber to Sinsini. He was bestowed with most of what he had demanded to suppress the Jats whose nucleus was the fort of Sinsini. A jagir worth 20,00,000 dana was granted to him in Kama. He was also asked to look after the feujdari of Kama. Though he failed to secure the feujdari of Khobri and Sonkhar, he was accorded the semindari of the Jat villages in parganas Ao and Sonkh.

Bishan Singh marched against the Jats at Sinsini cautiously, even lackadaisically. The fort of Sinsini was surrounded by a thick forest and a ring of other forts.

47. Kesho Rai wrote about 40 letters (between May 1689 to September 1689) to Bishan Singh exhorting the latter to march against the Jats.


50. Vakil Report, Bhawani Das to Bishan Singh, dt. 15 Zilhijja, 1099 A.D./October 1, 1688.

in various Jat villages. These forts were at Banghar Kasot, 52 Soghar, 53 Rorch, 54 Pingora, 55 Sonkh, 56 Sakora, 57 Raissie, 58 Shattawali, 59 Chakora, 60 Gaddo, 61 and Sonkhar-Sonkheri.

On 30th July, 1688 it was reported that Raja Ram Jat had been killed in an encounter with an advance party of the imperialists. 62 His son Zorawar Singh assumed leadership of the Jats for a short period. Soon he gave way to Churaman Jat. On the other hand after a concerted campaign of 14 months (December 1688 to January 1690) the imperial forces, having broken the ring of forts mentioned above

52. Eight miles east of Sinsini.
53. Six miles south-east of Kasot.
54. Six miles east of Alwar.
55. Twenty three miles south of Sinsini.
56. Eighteen miles south-east of Sinsini.
57. Six miles south-west of Sinsini.
58. Four miles east of Ndbai.
59. Eight miles north-east of Ndbai.
60. Six miles south-east of Fatehpur Sikri.
61. Ten miles north-west of Ndbai.
were able to conquer Sinsini. The Jats were evicted from their zamindarie and driven out of the parganas surrounding Sinsini. The expelled Jate not only waged a guerrilla warfare in order to regain their lost places but did not allow any cultivation in these parganas. The peasant population was hostile to the imperialists and extended its support to the rebel zamindars. Hence the temporary occupation of Sinsini instead of containing the rebellion, forced them to spread out in other directions.

One section of the Jats now turned its attention towards Nawan. The water of Amber bordered on the parganas of sarkar Alwar. Here the Nerekai and other zamindars (mostly members of the zamindar front) were already rebellious, against the Amber ruler, as will be seen below in this chapter. The Jat zamindars got unflinching support from these rebel zamindars of other castes. Their help proved crucial to the Jats in conducting guerrilla warfare for regaining Sinsini. The Jats divided themselves into four


64. Arsdaal dh. Kangeir Sudi 2, V.S. 1746/1689.
guerrilla bands. Three of these bands attacked Shura, Handewar and Behleri respectively. The fourth went on a burning spree in Raipur, Raipur and Antre. As a result of these moves, the Jats became irresistible in these parganas. After a month the combined forces of the Jats, Harukas and Meos conquered tappa Rani of pargana Behatri. Thus they had made inroads right inside the hereditary dominion of the conqueror of Sinsini. Behatri was one of the three parganas that comprised the original Amber watan. The conquest of Rani not only contained the further expansion of the Amber Raja's watan in Mewat but also blocked various trade routes passing through the Amber territories. Moreover, the links that the Jat zamindars had forged with the other rebellious zamindars were further strengthened. It is evident from the fact that four Kilanot zamindars - Ran Singh, Raj Singh, Chhatter Singh and Sentokh Singh - wrote letters to the Jadom, Gorya, Gujar and Jat zamindars from village Fatehpur of pargana Machilpur. They suggested

to all the saminders to coordinate their activities and pool their resources to face the imperialist forces. 68 This swelled the ranks of the rebellious saminders who decided now onwards to move under the leadership of Churaman Jat. This front was not based on some organisational lines but on the tacit understanding among the saminders that whenever one of them was under attack, others should extend their immediate support to him. It was a critical time for the rebel bhoomis of Rewat too. Here Kamaluddin Khan who was looking after the feudal of Toda Bhim, Bayana and Hindum became more ruthless with the rebels. He had expelled the Kilanote from Toda Bhim, 69 and was determined to weed out all turbulent elements from Bayana and Hindum. 70 Kamaluddin Khan's victory in Toda Bhim, Hindum and Bayana was as ephemeral as that of Bishan Singh in Sinsini.

The Jat saminders of the trans-Jamuna region had also been turbulent since the days of Raja Ram Jat. They had

occupied pargana Tapal and extorted an amount of Rs. 9,000 from local officials.\textsuperscript{71} When Sinsini was attacked by Maharaaja Bishan Singh, the Jat zamindars of the trans-Jamuna parganas where he had his jagirs, revolted against him. In pargana Kol (Aligarh) Amer Singh Chauhan who was a zamindar of 250 villages in tappa Khair of the pargana revolted against the Mughal jagirdars.\textsuperscript{72} In tappa Lageema of Kol another zamindar, one Mande Jat, had also revolted. These two and another 11 zamindars of Kol were under attack from Nawab Shaista Khan. These Jats had already brought pargana Antrauli under their control. The rebels came out of their garhia of village Vagavarya and Jawar in tappa Khair and joined a gathering of the Jat zamindars from both sides of river Jamuna. In this gathering the rebel zamindars took the decision to loot the camp of Nawab Shaista Khan and lost no time in implementing the decision; they also removed the thana of the Amber Raja from pargana Baliram.\textsuperscript{73}

\textsuperscript{71} \textit{Arsdaasht} dt. Kati Vadi 13, V.S. 1740/1683.

\textsuperscript{72} U.N. Sharma, \textit{A New History of the Jats}, Jaipur, 1977, p.176. He tells us that Amer Singh was a Jat zamindar. These Jats might have tried to climb the social ladder by adopting Rajput titles. There are many Chauhan Jats in this region even today.

\textsuperscript{73} \textit{Arsdaasht} dt. Vaisakh Vadi 11, V.S. 1749/1692.
When the jagir of the Amber Raja was transferred from Kol, the zamindars and peasants made it impossible for his nahi-feudar Gaj Singh Khangarot to collect arrears from there. The Jats beat up the revenue collectors of the Raja and themselves collected 5,000 maunds of grain.

After the death of Hari Singh Khangarot, the Jats reconquered the garhia of villages Veron, Hirpura and Sukhpura in Kol. In the neighbourhood of Mathura, the Jat zamindars and peasantry of villages Aruki, Tarut Reo, Sarai Tavarkhan etc. became increasingly aggressive. When prince Sedar Bakht was carrying Jorawa Jat, who had been arrested at Sinsini, to the Deccan, the Jats looted gaghra Haujpur with an army of 500 soldiers in retaliation. Looking at their activities it does not appear that the Jats had become peaceful after the fall of Sinsini in 1690, as has been noted by Irfan Habib. The fall of Sinsini forced them to shift

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77. Arasaht dt. Sawan Vadi 14, V.S. 1754/1697.
and spread out their areas of disturbances. In fact, in the Mewat and trans-Jamuna regions the Jats became more aggressive and volatile after the temporary loss of Sinsini.

The aggressive posture of the Jats in the two regions—one on the border of the Amber state and the other far away from his territories—compelled Bishan Singh to adopt a conciliatory attitude towards a section of the rebels. He began to placate the Jats of the trans-Jamuna region. In August 1692, Megh Raj, a vakil of the Raja in the imperial court, wrote to his master suggesting that prior permission of the Emperor for rehabilitating the Jats at Pinghor should have been taken. 79 Nawab Saidat Khan had alleged that the Raja was settling the Jats in the trans-Jamuna area and got one-third of the booty in return. 80 Kamaluddin Khan who was pursuing a strict policy towards the rebels in Mewat, had also lodged similar complaints against the Raja regarding the settling of the Jats. 81 The fact that this

policy earned imperial displeasure shows that the step had been taken at Bishan Singh's personal initiative at a local level to win over a section of the Jats to his side. Clearly, he had not reckoned with other nobles with their own interests in the region, who would not let him displace the existing lot of cultivators with whom they possibly had established links.

Nawat became a battle-ground for the rebels and the imperialists for many years to come. In Nawat zamindars belonging to various castes had already formed a united front against the Mughal jagirdars. The region was a hub of the Naruka bhomas' revolts. Hore Rao Hathi Singh, Kishan Singh and Ude Singh formed the backbone of the rising Naruka power. They established their military control over a vast area. They had stabilised themselves in the parganas of serkar Alwar by 1686. Sensing this, peasants of Jalalpur, Sherkol and Umarni thought it wise to extend their support to the rising Narukas. All

82. Arzdaasht dt. Mah Vadi 11, V.S. 1743/1686.
trade routes via Bahatri were closed due to these disturbances. In 1702 the Narukas simultaneously revolted in the eight mahals of Hewat. The jagirdar of Shankol and Jalalpur, Sayyid Qasim, had to ask the Raja either to expel Rao Udai Singh Naruka (a servant of the Raja) from his jagirs or face a suit in the imperial court. Bahatri was surrounded by the bhoom of Narukas and Kilanote. Therefore, it became practically impossible to collect revenue from any of the parganas contiguous to it. In 1703 the Narukas held a secret conference in a fair at qasba Sancheri. In that conference the Narukas gave concrete shape to their aspirations. Their main demand was that they should be recognised as the de-jure bhomies of those parganas which were under their effective control. Following the decision of the conference Rao Udai Singh unilaterally declared himself to be a zamindar and staked his claim to the bhoom,

64. Aradaeht dt. Sewan Sudi 4, V.S. 1749/1692 and Mangsir Vadi 10, V.S. 1769/1704.
fezlane and kharech cesses. Karen Singh and Amer Singh Narukas had already become the de-facto zamindars of Jalsalpur and Bharkol respectively. Around Rathumber many parganas were under the effective control of Kishan Singh Naruka since 1692. He got firm backing from the Jats in his armed protest against the farming-out of five jagir mahals by Nawab Mukhtiar Khan to the Amber Raja.

As already stated, the Kilanot bhomics fought most of the time as the allies of the Jat and Naruka zamindars in Mewat. They held extensive zamindaris in parganas Toda Bhim, Merchilpur and Gudhala. They aimed at the further expansion of their zamindaris. In 1687, the Naruka and Kilanot bhomics together attempted to annex some villages of Bahatri.

93. Annexure-I.
The sehna (watchmen) sent by the Raja's emil to the villages of Toda Bhim to look after the crops were beaten up by the peasants at the instigation of the Kilanota. 95 The imperial faujdar was directed to expel the Kilanota from their seminderias to Toda Bhim. When evicted, some of the Kilanot bhomias trekked to Sahatri where they occupied various villages of tappe Rini without obtaining necessary prior permission of the officials. From Rini they continued their efforts to regain their lost seminderias in Toda Bhim. 96 The other branch of the dispossessed Kilanot bhomias entrenched itself in pargana Machilpur from where they wrote letters to other rebels for help. 97 This step of the Kilanots had brought them in the vortex of a larger rebellion of the seminderis in Newat. As members of the seminder-front, they could rely on the help of its other constituents. For example, when the Mughal faujdar of Hindaun mounted his military pressure on the Kilanota, Churaman Jat helped them by sending a contingent of 1500 soldiers. 98

Thus during the two decades (1680-1700) the authority of the central government had weakened considerably over a large part of the three subas. The revolts of the zamindars directly feeding on rampant misery of the peasants, became uncontrollable in many parganas. The zamindars openly dis-obeyed the authority of the Mughals and refused to give revenue to the jagirdars. Some of the zamindars evicted from their zamindees, either abandoned cultivation on their own or were forced to do so. The growing unity within the ranks of the rebel zamindars and corresponding weakening of the central authority made the situation worse. In many parganas the zamindars had amassed considerable wealth at the cost of the Mughal jagirdars.

In parganas Chateau and Shairana, bhoomis refused to hand over the collected land-revenue to the jagirdars. 99 Arrears of Rs.40,514 were lying with the Panchanot bhoomis in the pargana of Udai. 100 When Saif Khan's jagir of Punkhar was placed under khalisa, his arrears of 20,000 maunds of grain was appropriated by the bhoomis. 101

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The revolt of the Narukes, Kilanota and Panchanota were escalating. They had constructed many garhio in about 10 parganas in defiance of the authority of the imperial fazildas.

Two Naruke bhonias had collected Rs. 4 lakhs each from the jagir parganas of Mewat. The bhonias who were in the service of the Amber Raja paid more attention to their bhona than to their jagirs (sub-assignments). They somehow contrived to get these sub-assignments in the proximity of their bhona village. In due course of time they could claim their zamindari right over such villages. Even the smile of the Amber Raja advised him not to take ijara in the 16 parganas which were disturbed due to the


bhomiya' revolts. In 1687, it was reported that the Rajput bhomias were rebellious in sarkars Ranthambore, Ajmer and Alwar, and the Jat zamindars had become 'all-powerful' in the region between Agra and Delhi. Disturbances were increasing and the mansabdars, subzadars and feujdars of the area were ill-equipped to deal with the rebels. In 1689, the jagirdars were unable to force the Chauhan bhomias to part with the land revenue which the latter had collected from six parganas. The Amber Raja had taken pargana Dausa on ijara for Rs.139322. When his smils went to collect revenue from the villages, the ganungas, chaudhuris, patels and peasants refused to oblige them. The Amber Raja could get nothing from pargana Nagar as it was under the Jats.


The Amber Raja had taken the zamindari of pargana Malarna against the wishes of the traditional Jadam zamindars of the area. The Jadam bhomias retaliated by ruin agriculture of these villages.\(^\text{112}\) The bhomia disturbances remained unabated for many years in this pargana.\(^\text{113}\) Meanwhile the Jats of trans-Jamuna region and Mina and Gujer bhomias of Udaipore also stepped up their activities.\(^\text{114}\) In pargana Bayana, Panwara, Gujar and Jadams made it impossible for the jagirdars to collect land revenue.\(^\text{115}\) The peasants of Toda Bhum and abandoned their villages once pressure was mounted on the rebel bhomias of the area.\(^\text{116}\) The amils of Babatri wrote to the Raja that they did not have sufficient force to suppress the turbulent peasantry.\(^\text{117}\) A general uprising of the Jadam, Gorya and Gujar zamindars

\(^{112}\) Arzadahts dt. Chet Sudi 10 and Jeth Vadi 6, V.S. 1749/1692.

\(^{113}\) Arzadaht dt. Kati Vadi 5, V.S. 1749/1692.

\(^{114}\) Arzadahts dt. Vaisakh Vadi 11 and Mengair Vadi 2, V.S. 1749/1692.

\(^{115}\) Amber Record dt. Posh Vadi 1, V.S. 1750/1693.

\(^{116}\) Arzadaht dt. Sawan Vadi 15, V.S. 1750/1693.

\(^{117}\) Arzadaht dt. Mah Vadi 4, V.S. 1750/1693.
was reported to have taken place in 1696. These zamindars were in league with the Kilaots and through them with the zamindar-front. While the zamindars of Bayana were up in arms, the peasants refused to pay revenue. Both the zamindars and the peasants of Hindsun were also rebellious during the next year. The bhomias in the direction of Bundi, Sanganer and Niwai were also turning to rebellion. Next year more disturbances created by the bhomias of Deusa, Chatsu, Mauzabad and Niwai were reported. In pargana Tonk the Mensinghawat, Valibhandravat, Khangarot, Sultanot and Naruka bhomias declined to pay revenue to the jagirdar. The Amber Raja became reluctant to take the ijara of Chatsu, Malarna and Niwai from the imperial jagirdars due to such a prolonged and widespread bhomia unrest. Earlier he

120. Aradaasht dt. Asoj Vadi 13, V.S. 1753/1696.
had taken the ijara of many parganas assuming that he would be able to collect revenue at gun point. But the collective strength of smaller bhomias showed the limitations of his arms. The policy of eviction of rebellious bhomias from their bhome instead of intimidating them, fanned the uprisings and enlarged the area of their operations.

With the entire Amber territories seething with bhomia revolts and peasant unrest, the Amber ruler could hardly find time and resources to keep the Jats of Sinsini under check for long. He would rather put his own house in order. As soon as he turned his attention to the revolts within his territories, the Jats again became active in the Sinsini region. It should be noted here that during the last decade of the seventeenth century the Jats of Sinsini, when driven into wilderness, had succeeded in integrating the rebel bhomias of various castes into a common struggle against the Mughal jagirdars. If the Jats of the trans-Jamuna region provided timely succour to the Jat zamindars of the Sinsini region, the Rajput bhomias of the Narot (sarkar Ranthambore) gave help to the rebel Rajput bhomias
of Nawan. Thus the centre of the zamindar-front with its base in Nawan, was flanked on both sides by various groups of zamindars from Agra to Ajmer.\textsuperscript{125} No wonder that the rebellion could not be quelled despite the increasing attention paid by emperor Aurangzeb to the problem.

At the turn of the eighteenth century the zamindars intensified their activities. Growing weakness and helplessness of the imperialists and increasing boldness and arrogance of the zamindars characterised the last seven years of Aurangzeb in our region. In the parganas of Kama, Ao and Pahari the Jats had retrieved their lost ground to a great extent. When Nawab Mukhtiar Khan came to campaign against them in 1702, the Jats were rebellious all around Agra.\textsuperscript{126} The Nawab was beleaguered by the Jats at Qasba Nagar. He was utterly ineffective against the rebels who had occupied his jagir parganas without any difficulty.

\textsuperscript{125} The rebellions that took place in the sarkars of Ranthambore and Ajmer are discussed in this chapter at pages 218-232.

\textsuperscript{126} \textit{Aradasht} dt. Falgun Vadi 4, V.S. 1759/1702.
Under these circumstances, the Nawab thought it wiser to give five parganas of his jagir on ijara to the Amber Raja for Rs. 1,80,000.\(^{127}\) As signs of Mukhtiar Khan's weakness grew, these rebel bhomics felt emboldened to become more aggressive in Mewat.\(^{128}\)

In the parganas surrounding Bahatri, bhomics revolts had assumed serious proportions.\(^{129}\) In 1704 the revolts of the bhomics had spread throughout the area between Agra and Ajmer.\(^{130}\) Shyam Singh Rajawat, feujder of Bahatri wrote in two arzdashts that "neither the bhomics nor the peasants are afraid of us. The bhomics are becoming increasingly arrogant and we do not have adequate force to deal with them firmly".\(^{131}\) The disturbances created by the bhomics continued during the next year also.\(^{132}\)

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127. Arzdasht dt. Asadh Sudi 14, V.S. 1760/1703. The parganas were: Sonkhar (under Jats, Narukas, Kilenots and Chauhans), Kuthumber (under Jats), Banawer, Mandawer and Toda Thek (under Narukas).


In Mewat the rebels got considerable strength when Dura Neo, a zamindar of the Pahat region also joined hands with them. The Amber Raja considered Dura Neo his hereditary enemy. It was this persistent hostility between Dura Neo and the Amber house that had forced Mirza Raja Jai Singh to expel the former from his zamindari only to be rehabilitated by Churaman Jat in his zamindari of Pahat. Though Churaman would have known that this was unlikely to please the Amber Raja, but he preferred a new ally in Dura Neo to the Raja’s annoyance. The zamindar-front created more disturbances in Kama and completely occupied the parganas after some time. This was a very serious setback to the Raja of Amber. He directed his faujdar, Shyam Singh Rajawat to attack the Jat front at Vinani village of Kama with 30,000 soldiers. The Raja’s army was completely routed by the combined strength of the zamindars of the front. After that the Jats and Narukes began massive

preparations for a bigger offensive against the Amber Raja. They recruited more soldiers, collected arms and accumulated immense quantity of foodgrain in the famous fort of Naujpur.  

After his ascendency to power, Bahadur Shah followed a policy of curbing the ambitions of the rulers of Amber and Jodhpur for some years. In order to mobilise the support of the rebel zamindars against the Rajput Rajas, Bahadur Shah conferred the title of naib (deputy) faujdar of Nathura on Churaman Jat. Thereafter, the faujdars of Nathura and Hindaun from one direction and Churaman and his allies from the other launched a pincer movement against the Amber Raja. The frontiers of Amber had become vulnerable to their attacks. Churaman, encouraged by the developing cracks in the defences of the Raja occupied gosha Bhusawar and made an unsuccessful attempt to reconquer the Soghar fort.  

137. Ardasht dt. Sawan Vadi 6, V.S. 1766/1709.  
140. Ardashta dt. Kati Vadi 6 and 12, V.S. 1766/1709.  
Churaman (naib-faujdar) over-ran the parganas of Kot, Kama, Khohri, Firagpura, Ghazi-ka-Thana, Bhengarh, Mungana and Alwar.\textsuperscript{142}

It may be noted here that acceptance of a title from the Mughal court by Churaman also caused some divisions in the ranks of the rebel zamindars. Though prominent Jat zamindars like Daya Ram, Girdhara and Kamalaha sided with Churaman, there were some other Jats who dissociated themselves from him.\textsuperscript{143} Other partners of the zamindar-front like Dura Nec, Ballu Sokya and the Narukas stayed with Churaman.\textsuperscript{144} Evidently Bahadur Shah had succeeded in winning over a significant section of the rebels and pitched them against the Rajput Rajas. But this policy was not pursued further.

The disturbances were escalating day by day. This forced the Amber ruler to issue a general parnama to various zamindars (including Churaman) asking them to desist from

\begin{itemize}
\item[142.] \textit{Ardashe} at. Kati Vedi 14, Mansir Sudi 6 and Men Sudi 6, V.S. 1766/1709.
\item[143.] \textit{Ardashe} at. Posh Vedi 10, V.S. 1766/1709.
\item[144.] \textit{Ardashe} at. Posh Sudi 2 and 13, V.S. 1766/1709.
\end{itemize}
the path of insubordination. But the intent of the
parwana fell flat on the zamindars as is evident from the
unfolding situation in pargana Khohri. Churaman had exten-
ded his hold of 48 villages in 1711 to 336 villages in
Khohri by 1715. The situation deteriorated further when
the zamindari of the entire pargana was transferred to the
Amber Raja in 1712. This act immediately sparked off
a massive uprising of all the traditional zamindars of
Khohri against the Raja. They naturally looked up to
Churaman to provide leadership. The zamindars embezzled
Rs.1,55,380 out of which Churaman got the lion’s share of
Rs.90,000. Churaman established his thana in the sami-
dari village (Alawera) of the Raja in pargana Ferozepur.
This provoked the Amber Raja to impose a special tax on

145. Amber Record dt. Falgun Sudi 11, V.S. 1768/1711
146. Arsatha pargana Khohri, V.S. 1768/1711 to 1722/1715.
The total number of villages in this pargana was 342.
147. Arzdaasht dt. Chet Sudi 6, V.S.1769/1712 and arsatha
pargana Khohri, V.S. 1769/1712.
148. Arzdaasht dt. Jeth Sudi 11, Jeth Vadi 3, Asadh Sudi
7 and Asoj Vadi 9, V.S. 1769/1712.
149. Arsatha pargana Khohri V.S. 1770/1713 (rabi).
150. Arsatha pargana Khohri V.S. 1771/1713 (kharif).
the Jat peasants of 21 villages as a punishment to their support to Churaman. The Jat peasants of Khohri were unambiguously on Churaman’s side. While many Jat peasants abandoned their villages and went to Thoon to join the army of Churaman, others remained in the villages to cultivate for him. 151

Elsewhere Churaman had opened many fronts to harass his adversaries. He kept on supplying arms and grain to the Narukas who had placed themselves in full command of the fort of Maujpur. 152 As the peasantry of Bayana was perpetually rebellious the Jats stepped up their activities there also. 153 Near Mehal they swooped on a caravan of 13 carts carrying valuables. When they were chased by the guards 154 Though the Jats again became very aggressive during the second decade of the eighteenth century under the leadership of Churaman, the nature of the Jat rebellion had undergone a change. In the beginning of their revolts the villagers of the nearby villages beat up the guards.

151. Areatha pargana Khohri V.S. 1773/1716 (kharif), and Chithi dt. Mah Sudi 3, V.S. 1773/1716.
152. Aradashit dt. Sawan Vadi 1, V.S. 1771/1714.
(1680s) the Jat zamindars, like others, mainly expressed their hostility by refusing to pay revenue to the jagirdars. The empire saw the sign clearly and expeditions were sent against the rebels to force them to pay revenue. But after the death of Aurangzeb the rebellion was becoming more of a plundering nature. The area between Delhi and Agra was particularly affected by their plundering raids. \textsuperscript{155} The Meos in general and the Brahmans of Jetmai in particular helped the Jats to plunder these areas. \textsuperscript{156} Churaman's nephews Bhika and Jait Singh occupied many villages of pargana Sahar and Hodal respectively and claimed the zamindari right over there. \textsuperscript{157} A climax was reached when the Jats and Narukas again occupied \\textit{qasba} Rini of Bahatri and plundered it. \textsuperscript{158}

After the death of Aurangzeb the growing political instability reached a high pitch. The contribution of the uprisings led by the zamindars in various parts of the

\textsuperscript{155} Ashin Des Gupta, "Trade and Politics in eighteenth century India", \textit{op. cit.}, p.189.

\textsuperscript{156} Arzdasht \textit{dt.} Sawan Sudi 3 and 5, V.S. 1775/1718.

\textsuperscript{157} Arzdasht \textit{dt.} Sawan Sudi 1, V.S. 1775/1718.

\textsuperscript{158} Daftar Nawazna Khurd, Toji No.4, Pargana Bahatri, V.S. 1775/1718.
country in weakening the central authority can not be
gainsaid. In hastening this process the role of the rebel
Jat zamindars of the region under study was really substan-
tial. Aurangzeb treated the Jats as rebels whom he
would not allow to be clothed with the briefest scrap of
legitimacy. He called them 'wolfs' and 'badzat'(of lowly
origin).

To get the Jat revolt crushed was his dominant
passion or obsession for some time, as is evident from the
vakil reports written from the imperial court. Out of the
context that ensued the term 'Jat-Power' (Jat aher dagre
chha) was coined by the clerks of the Empire to underline
the threat posed by the Jat rebellion.

The Jat rebellion under the leadership of Churaman
acquired legitimacy when Aurangzeb's successors, in their
quest to 'use' him against their rivals, offered berth to
him in the imperial bureaucracy.

159. Vakil Report from Meeo Rai to Bishen Singh dt. 13
Rajab, 31st Regnal year of Aurangzeb. I am extremely
grateful to Professor Harbans Mukhia for translating
this document from Persian into English for my use.

160. Aradashta dt. Vaisakha Vadi 14, Jeth Sudi 8 and
Mangir Vadi 2, V.S. 1744/1687.

161. Churaman received a mansab of 1500/500 from Bahadur
Shah, the title of Rander Khan from Farukh Siyar and
'Thakur' from Muhammad Shah.
the imperial mood by participating in its campaigns against the Rajput states of Amber and Jodhpur,¹⁶² and the Sikhs of Panjab.¹⁶³

Churaman also participated in various battles fought among the contestants for imperial throne after the death of Aurangzeb.¹⁶⁴ His role in these battles was seldom of a decisive nature but these occasions enabled him to acquire a lot of political clout in the eyes of nobles who were now emerging as king-makers. Through his token presence and penchant for loot the loser, Churaman had also earned the enmity of many nobles. If Khan-i-Dauran and Sayyid brothers became his patrons in the imperial court, Chhabila Ram Nagar and Sawai Jai Singh became his enemies.¹⁶⁵

The circumstances in which the last campaign against Churaman was ordered throw some light on his ambitions and the limitations imposed on him by the mercurial nature of

¹⁶⁴. He was present in all the battles: Lahore, Jaju, Khajua, Samugherh etc.
politics of the eighteenth century in Northern India. Like most of his contemporaries Churaman was an ambitious zamindar. Though he had a clear idea of his social base, he did not have any knowledge of the territorial limits of that base. His zamindari was limited but the area of his military operations was very vast. He had brought many parganas under his de facto control but without any territorial compactness and cohesiveness. The actual area under his permanent control was scattered and dispersed in many sarkars.166 Because of the uncertain and undefined nature of his hold over many parganas, he could hardly have desisted from interfering with the jagirs of other nobles.167 These nobles always mounted pressure on the emperor to take him to task.

It will not be out of place to state here that along with Churaman, many other Jat zamindars also benefitted from the crisis in the empire. In regions where armed rebellions were subsiding, the system of farming - out of khalisa and

166. See Annexure-II.

167. The revenue arrears shown in the arcsheets of various parganas clearly establish this 'charge' against Churaman.
Jagir lands had become more and more common. The Jat zamindars of Hathras, Mursan, Govardhan, Sonkh, Soghar etc. readily grabbed such opportunities. After the death of Churaman, Badan Singh continued this trend as a matter of policy. This enormously added to the power of the Jat zamindars who later succeeded in establishing a state at Bharatpur.

Though Churaman had been made an official custodian of the road between Agra and Delhi in 1709 and a principal watchdog of the highway from Delhi to the banks of river Chambal, normalcy could not be restored in the region of the Jat rebellion. Churaman could not have been unaware that these reconciliatory gestures on the part of the Mughal emperors were born of necessity rather than of change of attitude; as such these would endure merely so long as he had the strength to stand on his own feet. Accordingly, he occupied many more parganas, interfered

169. Khohri, Ferozepur, Kama etc.
with the jagirdars,\textsuperscript{170} levied rahdari (transit-tolls)\textsuperscript{171} and constructed a fort at Thoon\textsuperscript{172} which he made into the headquarters of his operations. These moves of Churesman naturally annoyed the emperor when complaints reached him. In September 1715, Farukh Siyar directed Jai Singh to march against the Jats.\textsuperscript{173} This was the time when Farukh Siyar and Jai Singh were moving towards a combination against the Seyyids, a situation bound to help the Jats, who were ever watchful of dissensions at the Mughal court.

In November 1716, Jai Singh invested the fort of Thoon with a large army. The Jats put up a fierce resistance. Geographical location of Thoon also helped the Jats. There existed an impenetrable jungle belt on the outskirts of Thoon. Moreover, in the summer the Thoon area became a cauldron of heat and dust and in the monsoon a swamp. Jai Singh had to pass through the swamplike forests in order to

\textsuperscript{170} See fn. 167.
\textsuperscript{172} U.N. Sharma, \textit{A New History of the Jats}, pp. 244-48.
\textsuperscript{173} Ibid.
lay his hands on Churaman. Despite his best efforts, Jai Singh could not force the Jats to surrender so long as Churaman was alive. Meanwhile Sayyid Abdullah Khan mounted his pressure on the emperor to withdraw the campaign against the Jats and enter into an agreement with them. The Sayyids would thereby not only earn the Jats' gratitude, but also highlight Jai Singh's failure to handle a situation. Thus was Churaman bailed out of his ungainly circumstances.

If the issue of the Jats accentuated dissensions at the court, within the camp of the Jats also two factions emerged. The surrender of Thoon to the imperialists was the bone of contention between these two groups. Those siding with Churaman and his sons Mohkam Singh and Zul Karan were Sardar Khem Karan Sogharia, Vijay Rai Gedasis, Faujdar Fateh Singh of Chhatterpur, Thakur Tule Ram and Kesa Jat, one of the commanders of the fort. Badan Singh was supported by Faujdar Anup Singh, Raja Ram's son Fateh Singh, the Thakurs.

175. Satish Chandra, Parties and Politics, p. 125.
of Gaeroo and Malana, and chiefs from other communities. Most of the adherents of the former faction belonged to the generation of Jat rebels. The latter group was nurturing aristocratic aspirations. The Jats met in a meeting at village Mundhela where a decision against the total surrender of the fort was taken. 177 It is true that a small force sent by the Sayyids was allowed entry inside the fort but it was more a token gesture on the part of the Jats. 178

The abrupt termination of this campaign lowered the prestige of Jai Singh and enhanced that of the Jats, if we go by the contents of an arzdasht. 179 Jai Singh's helplessness and Churaman's ability to pull strings in the imperial court became evident. Once relieved from immediate military pressure, Churaman was back to his old game of loot. When the Sayyids lost out at the court, Churaman was quick to abandon them. After that most of the moves of the

177. Arzdasht dt. Mangsir Vadi 9, V.S. 1775/1718.
179. Ibid.
Jats were of a nature that was bound to incur the wrath of the imperialists. In April 1722, Jai Singh was again asked to lead an army against the Jats. Jai Singh marched against them with enormous preparations and freedom of organisation. Churesan's death and the ensuing conflict between Mohkam Singh and his cousin Baden Singh enabled Jai Singh to score an easy victory over the Jats. Though Baden Singh succeeded to the leadership of the Jats and inherited the zamindari of Churesan, he always played second fiddle to the Amber Raja. Two factors seem to have played significant role in determining such a policy on the part of Baden Singh. First, Jai Singh after having restored peace in the Amber territories, streamlined the administration. Hence the Jats could not expect any help from the Rajput bhomas of eastern Rajasthan. Secondly, during the last few years of Churesan, the Jat rebellion

180. Flundering the royal camp in the battle of Hasanpur, instigation to the Bundelas against the subadar of Allahabad; harassment of Saadat Khan Khan when he marched against Ajit Singh of Jodhpur and murder of Milkanth Nagar by Mohkam Singh were some of these actions.


182. V.S. Bhatnagar, Life and Times of Sawai Jai Singh, 1688-1743, Delhi, 1974.
had begun to subside if not peter out. That is why Churaman had begun to look for support within the Mughal court. Baden Singh, instead chose to be a feudatory of Jai Singh and consolidate his gains with his support. Under his leadership the Jat house of Bharatpur gained in power. The phase of rebellion was over and that of proper administration began.

Though complete normalcy at the village level could never be achieved, Baden Singh's acceptance of the status of a feudatory largely ensured peaceful behaviour on the part of the unruly Jat zamindars. As a successor of Churaman, he inherited his zamindaris and other claims over a large tract lying between Agra and Alwar. Though Churaman had conquered many parganas, his hold over them was seldom legalized. But Baden Singh got the stamp of legality. In this task, he was encouraged by Jai Singh.

Baden Singh had become the taallugadar of many villages in various parganas. In order to extend his influence he got many villages under ijara through his agents and jagirs for his sons and relatives in many parganas. The picture in the following parganas is illustrative of this trend.
In Akbarabad (Agra) Baden Singh was the taallugadar of 25 villages with an assessed revenue of Rs. 26,358 in 1731. In 1735, the number of villages under his taalluga or ijara was 61 with an income of Rs. 80,193. In pargana Jafarnagar, the agent of Rao Baden Singh got an ijara of Rs. 30,000. In pargana Bhusawar he had 85 villages under his taalluga. Similarly in pargana Sonkhar his taalluga comprised 21 villages. Baden Singh also contracted ijara of many villages in Bhusawar through his agent Bhupati Mahajan.

In pargana Khohri Pratap Singh a/o Baden Singh was assigned jagirs worth Rs. 18,000 in 17 villages. Baden Singh himself got 3 villages on istimarari ijara for

183. Arsetha pargana Akbarabad, V.S. 1783/1731.
184. Arsetha pargana Akbarabad, V.S. 1792/1735.
185.
186. Arsetha pargana Bhusawar etc., V.S. 1783/1726.
188. Arsetha pargana Bhusawar etc., V.S. 1791/1734.
Rs. 291. In pargena Hindaun many Jats mostly belonging to the chaudhuri, zamindari and patel families had been given ijara of many villages. In this pargana the disturbances created by the Jats were also on the increase at the same time. This could be a way of pressurising the authorities to grant more and more ijaras to them. In pargana Pahari Badan Singh had his taalluqa over 5 villages. Besides these villages he got villages on ijara for Rs.6,383.

From this discussion it is evident that Badan Singh had spread his wings from Akbarabad - Jasernagar to Khohri and Pahari, though none of these parganas were entirely under his control. The nature of his claims over these villages was varied though his share was restricted. If he was a taalluqadar in some villages, in others he claimed

190. Arsatha pargana Khohri, V.S. 1783/1726.
192. Ibid.
194. Arsatha pargana Pahari, V.S. 1788/1731.
*ijara* and the jagir rights. He had already firmly based himself on the zamindari of Churaman. In *modus-operandi* Churaman and Baden Singh seem to have differed in two ways. Churaman always believed in conquering the peripheral parganas in order to protect the core parganas of his zamindari. The range of his military operations clearly establishes this point. Baden Singh, on the other hand, was keen to extend his influence in the peripheral parganas through contracting *ijara* or assignments. Secondly, Churaman's hold on the peripheral parganas was more extensive but less stable, while Baden Singh's hold in these parganas was very narrow, albeit stable. For this reason Churaman was always vulnerable even in his core parganas. Baden Singh felt safer in the core areas. Therefore, the latter could provide some kind of administration in the region which always remained tumultuous earlier. It was time to establish a state with its capital at Bharatpur, under conditions partly created by Baden Singh for which Churaman had already cleared the way.
REVOLTS OF RAJPUTS AND OTHERS

The linkages between the revolts of the Jats in Braj and Mewat with those of the Rajputs have already been noted above. The Rajput bhomia of Haroti (sarkar Ranthambore) also revolted. The main leaders of the revolts were maintaining links with the rebel bhomias of Mewat. The period of these revolts not only coincided with that of the Jat rebellion but they became inter-dependent for many years to come. Relations were mediated through the Neruka bhomias of the Mewat region. The bone of contention between the rebels and the sarkar (administration) of the Amber Raja and other imperial jagirdars was the zamindari right. The degree of participation in these revolts varied from clan to clan as will be seen shortly. Besides the Kachhwahas, there were others like Chauhans, Panwars, Jadams, Meos, Ahirs and Gujars who revolted. The speciality of the revolts in the Haroti region was that these were spearheaded largely by bhomias belonging to various septs of the Kachhwaha clan.


Barring the Chauhans, bhomias belonging to other Rajput clans revolted as their junior partners. The Kachhwa clan had been branched off into various sets, viz., Rajawats, Kilanots, Narukas, Vahibhedavats, Hamirdekas and Sultanots.\textsuperscript{197} A study of the revolts of the Rajput and other zamindars is essential for understanding the milieu in which the Bharatpur state was born. In the absence of these revolts and without their aid, perhaps the Jat uprising could be crushed with less effort and cost. It is also true that without the timely help of the Jats, some of these zamindars would not have revolted and others could not sustain their rebellion for long. In other words their revolts fed on each other. The appointment of various rulers of Amber to lead campaigns against the Jats becomes more intelligible in the context of the nature of this emerging tension within the clan of the Kachhwa and the Jats meddling with that process. Though it is possible that bhomias of most of the clans were in revolt at a particular juncture, absolute unity among them could never be forged. All of them revolted independently and under their own clan leaders.\textsuperscript{198}

\textsuperscript{197} There were about 16 septs of the Kachhwa clan according to James Tod's \textit{Annals and Antiquity}, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 353.

\textsuperscript{198} Only the Narukas and Kilanots acted in union. A section of the Rajawats and Khangerots had also united against the rebels for a short while.
In terms of intensity, spread and duration the revolts of the Naruka bhomias were next only to those of the Jats. The peak of their uprising also coincided with that of the period of the Jat uprising. 199 While Rao Hathi Singh led the Naruka bhomias in the Meewat revolts, in Malpura they were led by Fateh Singh and Partap Singh. 200 Their common enemies were the Amber Raja and the bhomias allied to him. The dispute over the zamindari of Malpura was said to be at the root of the Narukas' hostility towards the Raja. The Narukas' revolt created disorder in 15 parganas of Meewat and severely dislocated normal life in 14 parganas around Malpura. 201 In Malpura Pratap Singh was opposed by the Khangarot and the Rajawat bhomias (allied to the Raja) and supported by the Mera and the Panwar bhomias. 202 In 1684, the Narukas gained a major victory over their enemies by physically liquidating

199. See Annexure-I.


Gaj Singh Rajawat - a prominent noble of the Raja and hardliner against Pratap Singh Naruka. This victory resulted in a meteoric rise in Pratap Singh’s fortune. He attacked the Solankis of Tonk, the Nathawats of Nasanpur and threatened other zamindars of Valhetta, Sarsomp and Tonk. The parganas of Sherpur and Bhagotgarh became depopulated and the inhabitants of another 10 parganas dispersed pell-mell. The plundering activities of the Naruka and Mara bhomias created a frightening spectacle for a long time. Pratap Singh coerced the chandhuris of pargana Tonk to transfer the zamindari of their pargana from the Solanki bhomias to him. He occupied all the bhom villages of the Khangarots in Malpura. Both Pratap Singh and Fateh Singh became the unchallenged masters of Toda Raisinghpur, Tonk and Malpura. Similarly, Vijay Ram and Uda Singh


204. Ardashts dt. Mangeir Sudi 6, V.S. 1743/1686; Shadwa Vadi 13, V.S. 1743/1686 and Kati Sudi 4, V.S. 1744/1687.

205. Ardasht dt. Posh Sudi 6, V.S. 1743/1686. These parganas were: Tonk, Malpura, Toda Raisinghpur, Nezabad, Narainpur, Bhagotgarh, Sherpur, Sarsomp, Sahar, Soli etc.

became masters of Bahatiri and its neighbourhood. The amils of the Raja feared a cut in the monetary claims of the Raja's jagirs in Udai, Toda Shim, Gijgarh and Nager. The problem was further compounded because the Raja had to spend nearly 2 crores of dams in looking after the 6 jagir parganas of Nawab Khan-i-Jahan Bahadur. The Narukas opened three fronts to elude the imperial forces. When chased in Tonk and Malpura, they moved to Bahatiri. From Bahatiri, they moved towards Fagi, Niwai, Nausabad, Malpura and Chatsu etc. At this crucial stage some disturbing ripples developed in the relations between Durjen Singh Hara and Pratap Singh Naruka. Taking advantage of this rift the Amber Raja immediately sent an army to punish Pratap Singh. But the Naruka leader shrewdly adopted a conciliatory attitude towards Sayyid Qutab, feujdar of Malpura and succeeded in buying his neutrality for the time being. Meanwhile Fateh Singh and Durjen Singh Hara had turned hostile to the Mughals and attacked Nawab Mukhtiar Khan at


Tonk. It seems that in the Malpura region the formation of a relatively durable zamindar-front could not be realised. That is why Pratap Singh and his allies took divergent courses when faced with the Mughals. Out of this struggle Pratap Singh emerged as one of the most towering bhomias in the region. The Amber Raja was hardly expected to view this development with approval. Therefore, military operations against him were intensified. 209

The Chauhan bhomias revolted in two different regions. In Rajasthan their rebellion was spread over six parganas i.e. Salawad, Gijgarh, Kuwawa, Saner, Lalsot and Malerna. 210 They successfully disrupted the normal functioning of these parganas for almost two decades. The issue on which the traditional relations between the Mughal jagirdars and the Chauhan bhomias broke down was the zamindari right. In 1675, some Chauhan bhomias were expelled from pargana Salawad and their zamindari was transferred to the Raja of Amber. 211

209. Arzdashts dt. Falgun Vadi 2, V.S. 1743/1686. Prominent Rajput zamindars like Ratna Singh Shekhawat and Sanwal Singh Rajawat were directed to fight Pratap Singh Naruka. See arzdasht dt. Posh Sudi 6, V.S. 1743/1686.

210. See Annexure-I.

211. Arzdashts dt. Falgun Sudi 10, V.S. 1733/1676; Mah Vadi 7, V.S. 1732/1675; Asadh Vadi 8, V.S. 1749/1694; Chet Vadi 13, V.S. 1740/1683; Sawan Vadi 7, V.S. 1745/1688; Mah Sudi 12, V.S. 1746/1689 and Sawan Sudi 9, V.S. 1743/1686.
The Chauhan bhomias of Gijgarh, Kuwawa, Saner and Lalsot, expressing solidarity with the Chauhans of Salawad, violently reacted to the transfer of their samindari.\(^{212}\) Even the Chauhan bhomias of Liwali and Malarna rebelled in support of the expelled bhomias of Salawad.\(^{213}\) In order to regain their lost samindari the expelled Chauhans organised a protracted decade-long fight (1676-1686) from Hindaun where they had meanwhile settled. Under the pressure of the Chauhan bhomias the peasants started abandoning their villages.\(^{214}\) The transfer of samindari to the Roja added to the burden of the peasants as they had to pay certain additional taxes.\(^{215}\) In 1684, it was realised by the revenue officials of Salawad that without the cooperation of the Chauhan bhomias it was impossible to repopulate the parganas of Salawad and Saner.\(^{216}\)

\(^{212}\) Aradasht dt. Sawan Sudi 10, V.S. 1733/1676.

\(^{213}\) Aradasht dt. Jeth Vadi 14, V.S. 1740/1683.

\(^{214}\) Aradashts dt. Chet Vadi 9, V.S. 1746/1689; Chet Sudi and Sawan Sudi 9, V.S. 1743/1686 and Bhadwa Vadi 13, V.S. 1743/1686 and Amber Record dt. Chet Vadi 13, V.S. 1741/1684.

\(^{215}\) Dilbagh Singh, "Local and Land Revenue Administration", \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 74-95.

\(^{216}\) Aradashts dt. Falgun Sudi 7, V.S. 1744/1687; Sawan Vadi 7, V.S. 1745/1688 and Asoj Sudi 7, V.S. 1743/1686.
The Chauhan bhomias' answer to the transfer of their bhom was outright mis-appropriation of the land revenue of villages brought under the Raja's zamindari.

Hence when the Chauhan bhomias expressed their desire in 1686, through Rawat Karan of Behror and Khetsi Nandwan to resettle they were immediately allowed to do so. It may be mentioned here that the Raja was unable to punish the rebels because their cause was taken up by other Chauhan bhomias. Secondly, no military action could be undertaken against the expelled bhomias because they found asylum in a different suba. The subadar of Agra and the faujdar of Hindaun did not brook outside interference with their jurisdiction.

The other centre of the Chauhan bhomias revolt was pargana Kol where Amar Singh Chauhan of tappa Khair was the leading light of this clan. The seriousness of his rebellion is evident from the fact that Nawab Shaiste Khan per-


sonally had to lead an army against him in 1693. | Besides Amar Singh, 13 other zamindars were rebellious in this pargana. While the Chauhans of the Salawad region revolted in defence of their ancestral zamindari, the Chauhan bhomias of Kol did not face any such menace. The Amber Raja was keen to take all these parganas which were contiguous to his watan. The imperial jagirdars being unable to collect revenue themselves from these parganas were also inclined to 'oblige' the Raja. But the Chauhan bhomias, like many other bhomias of the region, protested against such a move. It seems that by then most of the smaller bhomias had come to believe, and justly, that farming out was a sure prelude to the suppression of their zamindari rights. But the Chauhans bhomias of Kol, taking advantage of the general disorder created by the Jats stopped payment of the land revenue to the jagirdars. They did not face the threat of dispossessed of their zamindari. While the Chauhans

of Salawad were an aggrieved party those of Kol were pursuing an ambitious policy of aggrandisement.

The revolts by the Rajawat bhomias were relatively limited in their scale and scope. The main target of their attacks was fellow zamindars of the neighbouring villages. Sometimes the Rajawats outrightly attacked and occupied others' zamindari villages. In order to create panic they would harass the patels and the peasants of the neighbouring zamindaris. In 1694, it was noted that all the Rajawat bhomias of Chatsu were contumacious. Sangram Singh Rajawat, a teallugadar of 32 villages drove away the old inhabitants of some villages and put his own men there. Many villages of Chatsu remained depopulated for a long time due to the terror of the Rajawat bhomias. Kushal Singh, who was


225. Ibid.


228. Ibid.
a bhomia of pargana Boli, was the most refractory among the Rajawats. He constantly meddled with the functioning of four parganas viz., Malarna, Jhilei (jagir of the Raja) Niwai and Chatru (samindari of the Raja). 229 After having embezzled the entire hasil of these four parganas he audaciously sent a share of 1/4th to Abdullah Khan, then subadar of Ajmer. 230 A similar policy was being pursued by the Khangarot, Panchanot, Solanki and Jedem bhomias. 231 Frightening away the neighbouring samindars and unauthorised annexation of their bhoom was a common feature of their activities. In this process the patels and the peasants of the rival samindaris had to suffer considerably. 232 To collect land revenue from these bhomias was practically


231. Amber Record dt. Asad Sudi 13, V.S. 1740/1683.

impossible. Their plundering activities frightened the peasants and the traders alike. If any jagirdar wished to farm-out his jagir to the Amber Raja these bhomias thwarted such a move by raising the banner of revolt. They even started occupying the raiyati villages and imposed their zaminderi rights over them.

The Rajput bhomias of Chatsu were notorious for making various kinds of extortions from the patels and the peasants. In order to deal with the rebel bhomias the Amber Raja adopted a policy of carrot and stick. He tried to appease them by increasing the size of their respective tealluqs.


237. Likhteng dt. Vaisakh Sudi 12, V.S. 1769/1712 of Raja Raj Singh Kilanot, a tealluqadar of 34-1/2 villages with a total revenue of Rs. 17,000.
amil of Salawad vainly intervened with the Raja against the increase in the tazulqua villages. The amil felt that the policy of appeasement would not mitigate the inflated ambition of the bhomias; on the contrary it was fanning disorder in the parganas of the zaminderi, jagirdari and the ijara of the Raja. In 1664, the bhomias became too presumptuous to accept the amil of the jagirders in 16 parganas. The Rajput bhomias to whom villages had been sub-assigned by the Raja kept collecting revenue from such villages but remained stuck to their bhom villages. They outrightly refused to fulfill the obligations attached to their sub-assignments. About 15 parganas around Sonkher and the entire neighbourhood of Bahatri were in the grip of the bhomia revolts in 1684.


239. Arzdaasht dt. Asoj Sudi 15, V.S. 1741/1684. These parganas were: Punkher, Sherkol, Valhetta, Khilohra, Hasenpur, Manjpur, Nagar, Pindayan, Sonkher, Banawar, Mandawar, Bhusawar, Toda Shim, Abhaneri and Bhangerh.

240. Amber Record dt. Mangair Vadi 10, V.S. 1766/1709. These parganas were: Hindaun, Sambhar, Tonk, Chattu, Khohri, Lalsot, Malerna, Udaï and Salawad.

241. Arzdaasht dt. Jeth Sudi 10, V.S. 1742/1685 and Asadh Vadi 5, V.S. 1742/1685. These parganas were; Gudha, Behror, Salawad, Chhawa, Saner, Gijgerh, Bahatri, Niwai, Lalsot, Dausa, Pagi, Malerna, Bhairana, Udaï and Nagar.
and Fanchandot bhomies were busy constructing garhies in 10 parganes in defiance of the order of the Amber Raja. 242 Pari pessa bhomies from Ahansari to Khangarh raised the banner of revolt. 243 In 1693, the zamindars and the peasants of Kol refused to pay the land revenue. 244 The Sanganer-Sundi route was rendered unsafe due to the plundering activities of the bhomies in 1695. 245 At the same time bhomies were turbulent all around Nivei. 246 The ranks of the rebel bhomies were swelling day by day. The villages of Nivei, Dauna, Chetau and Musabat were honeycombed with such elements. 247 In 1698, the pargana officials expressed the view that without deploying a substantial force the Kachhwaha bhomies-Mansinghswat, Valibhadrawat, Khangerot,

242. Aradasht dt. Bhadwa Vadi 5, V.S. 1742/1695. These parganas were: Bhadwa, Handawa, Naharkoh, Punkher, Toda Bhir, Sherkol, Usarni, Sonkher, Kuthubsher and Hasanpur. On the other hand the Malpura route was closed due to the conflict between the Khangarot and Naruka bhomies. See aradasht dt. Kati Budi 13, V.S. 1742/1695.


Sultanots and Narukas - of pargana Tonk could not be re-subsjugated. 248

Theft with the active connivance or at the behest of the bhomias, forcible occupation of villages, looting of traders and harassment of peasants by the bhomias became the order of the day. 249 This was a period of generalised disobedience by the bhomias and the peasants. The feujdar of Mathura was utterly helpless in overpowering the rebels. Sensing the imminent failure of his combing operations against the rebels he thought it prudent to farm out all the five parganas of his jagir to the Raja. 250 The bhomias living in the direction of Nagore were also turning to agitation. 251 A veritable saturnalia of disorder created by the bhomias in all the parganas seems to have taken place. All the trade routes became insecure. Officials posted in the parganas felt that the escalation of the bhomia revolts

was a direct spin-off of the victory of the Jats over the imperialist armies. The zamindars in 25 parganas refused to pay the land revenue to their respective jagirdars. It seems that the zamindars succeeded in collecting only a part of the revenue from the peasants. The collection of land revenue was at its nadir in about 11 parganas from 1683 to 1723. And such revenue as was collected remained stuck in the fingers of the bhomias themselves, for embezzlement of land revenue had become by and large the norm.

No wonder that under such conditions the monetary claim of various jagirdars became overdue at different places. These arrears were pending with the zamindars of the respective villages. Sometimes the amount running in arrears was startling. In one pargana a sum of Rs. 40,513-13 was pending as


253. Arzdashts dt. Asoj Sudi 15, V.S. 1741/1684 and Jeth Sudi 10, V.S. 1742/1685. The parganas were: Malarna, Jhilai, Chatsu, Kol, Rewasa, Kasli, Sonkhar, Kuthumbhar, Boli, Banswer etc.

arrears in 1683.\textsuperscript{255} In 1694, the total assessed amount of
revenue in pargana Kol was Rs. 409916-15 out of which Rs.241609-9
were shown pending in arrears with various zamindars in the
subsequent year.\textsuperscript{256} The imperial mansabdars who had their
jagirs in Dausa, Nauzabad and Chatsu refused to renew the
ijdara of their jagirs in 1697 because their past dues had
not been paid.\textsuperscript{257} Possibly, the ijaradar himself was in no
position to collect the money from these parganas. In 1703,
when the agent of the Raja asked Nawab Mukhtiar Khan to
grant the ijara of five parganas of his jagir to the Raja,
the Nawab agreed to do so on condition that the Raja, should
first collect the arrears of Rs.1,80,000 from these parganas
in order to get them in ijara for the future.\textsuperscript{258} It is,
of course, significant that all the parganas of the Nawab's
jagir were anyway under the effective occupation of the Jat

\textsuperscript{255} Arzdasht dt. Asadh Sudi 13, V.S. 1740/1683.
\textsuperscript{256} Arzdasht dt. Chet Sudi 7, V.S. 1751/1694 and
Asadh Vadi 2, V.S. 1752/1695.
\textsuperscript{257} Arzdasht dt. Asoj Sudi 8, V.S. 1754/1697.
\textsuperscript{258} Arzdasht dt. Asadh Sudi 14, V.S. 1760/1703.
and Naruka bhomies at that time. Revenue arrears against 58 villages of Tonk have been shown in 1709. In 1713, Churaman and his allies embezzled Rs.90,600 in pargana Khohri Rena.

SOCIAL BASE OF THE REVOLTS

That these revolts were led by the zamindars is very clear from our discussion so far. The upswing in the political activities of the zamindars forced some of the traders and money-lenders to lend support to the zamindars. But it was purely temporary and more out of helplessness than any class rivalry with the Mughal ruling class. The heavy drain of agricultural produce to the towns, necessitated as much by the urban character of the Mughal ruling class as by the concentric spread-out of its members throughout the empire, stimulated banking and commercial activities in medieval India. Though this view attributes far too much of social

260. Arashta pargana Khohri Rena (rabi), V.S. 1770/1713.
and economic dynamism to the initiative of the ruling class, it is generally accepted by economic historians of medieval India. The permanent dependence of the traders and creditors on the smooth functioning of this system, therefore, can not be gainsaid. Inversely, the whole system depended for its smooth functioning on the small and big money-lender and money-changer. Though the revolts created tensions in the traditional relations between the trading and money-lending community and the Mughal ruling class, the world of business never posed a challenge to its benefactors. Instead the traders initially financed all the activities of the jagirdars to curb the power of the rebel zamindars. Such an act of the traders and money-lenders inevitably infuriated the zamindars who began to blockade the crucial trade-routes and resorted to various means to fleece the traders. On the other hand, successive victories of some of the zamindars over the campaigners forced a section of traders to shift their allegiance from the jagirdars to the zamindars. A chronological description of the nature of relations between the jagirdars and the traders on the one hand and zamindars and traders on the other would help to understand the causes and nature of such shifts.
The bohras and sarrafs had entered into an agreement with the Amber rulers for mutual benefit. Therefore, when Pratap Singh Naruka revolted, the sarrafs of Malpura promptly offered to finance the campaigns organised against him. These campaigns failed rather miserably. The money-lenders of the region then realised that it was not possible to carry on their business in the Malpura region. Therefore, they declared their allegiance to Pratap Singh and refused to issue hundis to the agents of the Raja.

261. The terms of the agreement were that the bohras would lend money to the Raja at the flat rate of interest which was Rs. 0.75 per cent per month. The market rate ranged between 1.50 and 2.50 per cent. In return the bohras were assured of safety and the freedom to carry on their business in these parganas. As per this agreement the bohras regularly issued hundis to the Amber rulers to meet their various expenses. These hundis could be encashed in most cities of India. The bohras were assigned villages wherefrom they could realise the money thus advanced. They had only to pay the customary cesses on their trade transactions. This business was disrupted when the rebel zamindars began to extort excessive mahdari from the traders.


263. Ardashts dt. Mah Sudi 3, V.S. 1743/1686 and Posh Vadi 7, V.S. 1743/1686; Posh Sudi 5, V.S. 1746/1689 and Sawan Sudi 4, V.S. 1749/1692.
The subsequent escalation of the zaminder revolts resulted in the closure of all important trade routes. The sarrafs of Manoharpur gave up their shops and sought asylum with the Chundawat bhomias of Rampura. An important trader of Bahatri entered into a clandestine deal with the Jats in order to continue grain trade at Hodal which had been occupied by the Jats. The traders of gaaba Sanganer went on a 22 days strike against the high-handedness of the local officials. The smiles reported from various parganas that there was dearth of bohras. They felt that the flight of bohras was due to the terror of the zamindars. Their flight had caused a virtual money-famine in the parganas. The smiles suggested the exemption of raddari to bring back the

266. Amber Record dt. Falgun Sudi 14, V.S. 1744/1687.
traders while the bhomias demanded unauthorised rahdari from them.  

Under such circumstances grain-merchants from outside stopped coming to these parganas. The pressure of verar (an extra levy) forced the bohras to migrate elsewhere. Meanwhile traders had come to terms with Churaman Jat and his allies and diverted their trade towards Agra, Delhi and Thoon. Churaman made fortunes out of this shift in the traders attitude. Indirectly, it strengthened his power of resistance whenever he was besieged in the garhias (fortresses). The diversion of trade to the Jat country alarmed the Amber Raja who issued quick instructions to his officials to assure safety and exemption of rahdari to the traders.

274. Ibid.
Thus even though the trading community was unwilling to help the rebel zamindars for reasons stated earlier, the success of revolts did force some of them to come to terms with the rebels. This indirectly helped the rebels and weakened the position of the jagirdars. Timely sale of grain collected by the rebels from the jagirs of others was of crucial importance. This could be ensured by the merchants only. The medieval Indian trader was as interested in profit and could not care less about where it originated as is his counterpart today. Hence he could not be a reliable social base for the zamindars. For such a base they had to look elsewhere.

To analyse the social base of such impressive revolts of the zamindars, it is essential to examine the extent of peasant support to these revolts. The extent of cleavages that had formed in the relationships between the jagirdars and zamindars and the zamindars and the peasants caused by the sharpening of latent contradictions varied from region to region. Our evidence shows that the social base of the rebel zamindars among the peasantry had regional variations though in general the revolts enumerated earlier were very intensive and massive in scale almost everywhere.
In the zortalab (rebellious) parganas of three sarkara, namely, Agre, Sahar and Kol (Aligarh), the zamindars enjoyed the explicit support of the well-to-do (khudkashta) and middle (gaveti-palti) peasants. Frequent imprisonment of 'defaulting' patels and other well-to-do peasants abundantly illustrates this point. A few instances are quoted here merely to bring this point into relief.

In 1693, Budh Singh faujdar arrested about 27 persons from village Shergarh of Bayana. One of them was a patel and others were peasants. They were alleged to be supporters of Panwar zamindars. In pargana Kuthumber peasants of 22 villages were actively supporting the Jat zamindars. An alliance between the Jat zamindars and Jat peasants is borne out by a document containing names of peasants who were imprisoned in the course of campaigns against the rebels. Of the total number of imprisoned peasants, the size of holdings of 9 ranged between 5 and 10 bighas each;
owned land upto 15 bighas each and only one person was
the owner of 47 bighas of land. Clearly the rebel Jat
zamindars enjoyed support from a wide ranging section of
peasants of their caste.

Pargana Kuthumber was the cradle of the uprising of
the Jat zamindars and peasants; the latter willingly and
openly sided with rebel zamindars. It clearly establishes
that the Jat zamindars derived their strength mainly from
the Jat peasants. Not that the peasants belonging to many
other wide ranging castes were hostile to them. Perhaps
they were following zamindars of their respective castes.

In pargana Ao also the Jat zamindars were supported
by the peasants. Most of their supporters were either Meos
or Jats. When Thakur Hari Singh attacked Sinsini (Ao),
he had to face the hostility of about 14 villages surrounding

278. Ibid.

279. The Ahir peasants of pargana Rinsi revolted along
with their own caste's bhomias. In village Bhorka
the Gujar and Meo peasants followed the bhomias of
their respective caste in a similar rebellion.
See Amber Record dt. Asadh Sudi 4, V.S. 1722/1665.

280. Arsattha pargana Ao, V.S. 1751/1694.
Similarly, 6 out of the eight persons arrested from the villages of pargana Bhusawar were Jat peasants while the remaining two were patele of the same caste. In Bhusawar many Jat patele had got ijara in about 12 villages. At the time of revenue collection they became rebellious and cast their lot with the Jat zamindars.

Patele of many villages of Kama were imprisoned because of their alleged collaboration with the Jat zamindars. In 1693, it was felt by the revenue officials that the revolts of the Jats of tappa Lagasma (Kol) could not be suppressed because the villagers were collaborating with the turbulent zamindars. The peasants of 7 out of 27 villages of pargana Khohri fled to Thoom/Nagar and joined hands with the Jat zamindars in 1716.

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281. Ibid.
282. Arsath abol, Bhusawar, V.S. 1751/1694.
283. Arsath abol, Bhusawar, V.S. 1773/1716.
284. Arsath abol, Kama, V.S. 1722/1665.
286. Arsath abol, Khohri, V.S. 1773/1716.
The next year when about 23 carts carrying valuables were attacked by the Jats near Palwal, the guards could not chase the Jats because the latter enjoyed the active support of the peasants of nearby villages. 287 It was perhaps this persisting solidarity between the Jat zamindars and the Jat peasants that provoked the Amber Raja to take the unprecedented step of imposing a special tax exclusively on the Jat peasants of 21 villages in pargana Khohri as a punishment for their support to Churaman Jat. 288 The general impression gathered from the documents relating to Kol is that the peasants were hostile to the revenue officials and were cooperating with the rebels. 289 Similarly, the turbulent zamindars of Bayana and Secundra could not be weeded out of the villages because of the peasants' support to them. 290

The second region where massive revolts occurred was the chakla of Mewat in the Alwar sarkar. Here the Khansadahs

of Mewat, the Meos and the Chauhans and Bargujars had more zaminderis around 1600 than the zaminds of the intermediate castes. In this region the uprisings were led by the Narukas, Jat, Kilanots and some Neo zaminds. The most remarkable feature of the Mewat revolts was the formation of a united zaminder-front which seems to have enjoyed at best an uncertain support of the peasantry. The zaminder-front was formed in a very complex political situation. The Narukas and the Kilanots, who had negligible zaminderis, suddenly started the expansion of their zaminderis by bringing new villages under their control. At the same time, the Amber Raja wished to expand his watan by bringing the parganas of Mewat under his control. The Jats also moved into Mewat with their own ambitions. Thus the Narukas and the Kilanots were sandwiched between the expanding Amber watan and the equally ambitious Jat zamindars. The peasantry of this region was largely composed of heterogeneous


castes, like the Jats, Ahirs, Gujars, Minas and Neos. Together they constituted the majority. The peasantry had economic grievances against the Raja who was acting as the watchdog of the jagirdar's interests in Mewat. The same peasantry also had caste affinity with some of the rebel zamindars of the Braj and Mewat regions. This combination should have ensured durable peasant support to zamindars. The peasants instead of coming out openly in support of the Narukas adopted a particularly pragmatic attitude towards them. Whenever the Narukas established their thanas in the region, the peasants came and paid land revenue to them. But when the Raja re-established his thanas the peasants accepted his claims, though usually with reluctance. Occasionally the Narukas succeeded in persuading the peasants not to pay cesses like bhent, bhom etc. to the Raja's agents. It was perhaps this ambivalence on the part of the peasants that persuaded the rebel bhomias to refrain from harassing

293. Dilbagh Singh, "Local and Land Revenue Administration", pp. 58-60; and hasil-firshi column of the sarathbas of various parganas.


the peasantry of the Mewat region, lest it be pushed into the enemy's ranks.

In the third region of the zamindar revolts, i.e., Ajmer and Ranthambore sarkars, there existed open hostility between the zamindars and the peasants. Peasants were the special targets of their plundering activities. The activities of Pratap Singh Naruka and others in the Malpura and Chatsu regions were a constant source of terror for the peasants. Refusal to pass on the collected revenue, burning down of villages of rival zamindars and waylaying of traders, were some of the other common features of revolts in this region. A picture of terror-stricken peasantry on the run inevitably emerges from the documents pertaining to the parganas of these two sarkars. It is possible that the lack of caste affinity was responsible for this hiatus between the rebel zamindars and the peasants. Almost all the zamindars of this region were Rajput by caste,

while the peasantry belonged to miscellaneous intermediate castes. Hence there was no traditional social linkage between the zamindars and the peasants. On the other hand, the peasantry, including the Rajput peasants, also compensated itself by wresting more and more concessions from the Amber Raja in this critical situation.

In this region the zamindars of a particular caste, however, acted in concert whenever any of their segments was attacked. Thus, when the Chauhan bhomias were expelled from their villages in pargana Salawad, the Chauhan bhomias of other parganas revolted to express their solidarity with them. Indeed, the Chauhans were subsequently rehabilitated only because their seven bhom villages remained deserted due to the activities of other Chauhan bhomias. It was the solidarity action of the other Chauhans that paved the way for the expelled Chauhan bhomias to return home.

297. For the caste of the zamindars see Annexure -I and the Ain-i-Akbari, Vol.II (tr.), p.279. For the caste of the peasants see arsatha of the respective parganas for various years. The caste of the peasants can be worked out from the hasil-firki column of the Siwai-jamabandi given in the arsadhas.

296. See ins. 210-218.
Besides the zamindars' uprisings, peasant rebellions took place in all these regions with varying intensity. Our evidence suggests that large-scale peasant rebellions took place in Bayana, Nagar, Sahar, Khohri Rana and Kol. In 1693 and 1704 it was reported that zamindars and peasants were rebellious everywhere. However, the more the Jat zamindars moved away from the Agra-Kol-Khohri complex, the further their mass support tended to shrink. Although the ferocity of the zamindars' revolts was more or less equal in all regions, the degree of peasant participation in these revolts was regionally variant, though none of these regions had a docile peasantry. Whenever the zamindars and the peasants acted in unison, the revolts could be sustained for long and they had far-reaching political and social consequences. In areas where such a unity could not be forged the zaminder revolts were short-lived. Clearly, such unity was achieved through the interaction of a complex of economic, caste and political factors and wherever it had been achieved, such unity essentially

worked to the advantage of the zamindars, who were particularly adroit in appealing to the sentiment of caste-affinity. This is clearly borne out by the fact that Churaman and his handiwork - the united zaminder front - had a definite social base among peasants of their own castes compared to the other contemporary zamindars.

Yet, the role of caste in this scenario need not be over-rated. The widespread disturbances in our region were set in the background of a resurgence of zamindari power on the one hand, and rapid impoverishment of the peasantry on the other. Although caste affinity often formed a bridge between these two restive sectors of rural society, their uprisings did not always coincide with each other; nor did they adopt similar forms of protest. Indeed there are three distinct patterns of relationship between the zamindars and the peasants in three sub-regions of the area under study, quite apart from the distinctive forms of struggle of each caste. While the zamindars lost no time in taking to arms, the peasants' protest would pass through certain stages, all the while directed primarily against the rising level of exploitation by almost every one in a position to lay his hands upon their produce. The first step the peasants
took against any intrusion into their subsistence was to lodge a complaint with the higher authorities; the second was the threat to migrate; the third was the refusal to pay revenue; the fourth was actual migration; and finally, resort to arms. It is only after passing through all these stages that the peasant rebellion merged with the zamindars' in the Agra-Kol-Kohri region. On the other hand, in the Mewat region the peasant unrest did not merge with the zaminder revolts, but stopped one stage short of it. If the peasantry of the Mewat region did not become cannon-fodder for the zamindars, it did not cooperate with the administration's efforts to curb the turbulent zamindars either. Face-to-face with a situation where the zamindars and the imperial authorities were equally balanced in making their presence felt in this region, the peasants adopted the policy of splendid pragmatism and remained neutral between the two.

In the Ajmer-Ranthambore region, the peasant unrest proceeded simultaneously with the zaminder revolts; however, the action of the two did not coincide fully. The zamindars of this region relied mainly on their personal armed power
rather than on any kind of support from the peasantry. Indeed, it is the plundering activities of the zamindars in this region that became the chief cause of the peasants' misery and consequently their restiveness.

It seems therefore that even though the apparent simultaneity of the peasants' and the zamindars' disturbances is quite seductive, the inter-connections between the two do require a more detailed analysis in each such region which was the locale of rural disturbances. Clearly, the reality is far too complex to fit into a neat pattern.

However, even as the Mughal power was waning, it is the zamindars who were exerting themselves at every level to inherit the empire they had done so much to destroy. The helpless peasantry had little reason to be grateful to the zamindars, who in turn did not take long to forget the caste bond between them and their lower class brethren once their zamindaris had been consolidated on a new footing.