

## INTRODUCTION

The Jat Kingdom of Bharatpur was established in defiance of the Mughal centre. The tensions generated by the working of the economy and the administration which impelled certain of the classes to challenge the hold of the Mughal state in the neighbourhood of Agra and Delhi, is the theme of this dissertation. Following William Irvine and J.N. Sarker, a narrative of events that preceded the formation of the Bharatpur Kingdom was given by K.R. Qanungo in 1925 in his History of the Jats. His researches merely reinforced the dominant theme in the historiography of medieval India in his day that the Jat revolt was a 'Hindu-Reaction' against Aurangzeb's policy of religious discrimination. Since then this theme has been repeated time and again in various text books and research works. W.C. Smith was the first scholar to seriously challenge this theory in his famous article, "Lower Class Uprisings in Mughal India". Following him Irfan Habib brought into light new dimensions of the Jat uprisings in his celebrated work, The Agrarian System of Mughal India. Irfan Habib's was a panoramic view derived from some of the foreign travellers' accounts and Indian chronicler's statements.

If justification were needed for a more detailed examination of the problem on which W.C. Smith and Irfan Habib had initiated research, it lies in that history studied at a regional level often induces modification of the panoramic view, even when such a view is its starting point. At a regional level, untouched dimensions of a panoramic problem can also greatly enrich our understanding.

The focal point of this thesis is, of course, the establishment of the Bharatpur Kingdom in the eighteenth century. But this has not been studied here as an event, rather as a process with ramifications reaching out to touch upon several aspects of society. An attempt has been made to put the upheavals in what came to be the region of the Bharatpur Kingdom in their socio-economic context: were these upheavals generated by catastrophic changes in the nature of the economy underneath, or were they rather a manifestation of growing pressures being exerted on an unchanging, unyielding economy? Can economic tensions alone explain major social and political developments? Where do social institutions like caste assume crucial significance? Shouldn't we also recognize the qualities of leadership displayed by human beings at various levels,

qualities that enable them to grasp an opportunity and turn it to their advantage, where others might have casually let it pass? It is all these aspects in mutual interaction which comprise for us the 'social background'.

The thesis runs into five chapters. In the first chapter the salient features of the village economy and rural class structure are discussed in order to bring into relief the relations of subordination and superordination among the different strata of the peasantry. In the second chapter systems of agricultural production have been discussed. The nature of soil, types of crops produced and means of irrigation have been examined. The movement of prices of food-grains have also been discussed. If the social distribution of resources like land and implements etc. have been left out of consideration, it is not owing to lack of concern but lack of adequate amount of data in our sources. At any rate we had intended to examine in this chapter whether the political developments of our concern had any parallel changes in the economy, and we hope that this specific question has been answered even if very tentatively. In the third chapter we discuss the question of the exact magnitude of land revenue demand and the total economic

burden on the primary agricultural producers. An effort is made to establish concretely whether there was a secular increase in the land revenue demand or else a high level plateau with occasional transgressions by the jagirdars and others which would provoke peasant resistance. Chapter IV is devoted to the study of changing position of the zamindars at every level. The flux in which the class of zamindars found itself and the consequent far reaching disturbances forms a critical link in our argument, for it has appeared to us that the growing strength of zamindars at all levels and the increasing impoverishment of the peasantry combined together to register the agrarian uprisings of our region and period. The linkage between the divergent tendencies of growing economic strength of the zamindars and the pauperized peasantry was provided by caste. The last chapter contains a detailed description of the actual locales of the uprisings. Alignment between various groups and classes - between the peasants and the zamindars and among the zamindars themselves - are also studied. The nature of the zamindar leadership and the peasant following is discussed. We conclude by drawing some inferences from our entire study.

This study is based on original village level revenue records of our period. As most of the parganas of the region were under the jagir or ijara of the Amber rulers at various intervals under the Mughal Empire, these records have been catalogued and preserved in the Jaipur Historical Section of the Rajasthan State Archives at Bikaner. These records are called arsathas, aradsaths, chithis, dastur al-amals, yaddashtis, vskil reports, Amber Records, Takhmina, Taqsim Bahsala, Dastur Komwar and Kuwazana kalan and khurd. These records are available roughly from the middle of the seventeenth century onwards. As most of these records pertain to those parganas which were held by the Amber rulers in jagir or otherwise, they suffer from one serious limitation: They do not give us such information about the parganas effectively held by other imperial jagirdars under their jagirs. Extensive jagirs were held by other imperial jagirdars in the area of disturbances. But records pertaining to villages in their jagirs have not survived. Nevertheless the records left by the Amber rulers help us to establish some broad trends in the agrarian history of the region. These trends possibly reflect the general conditions of the entire country-side.

Of these village level revenue records, the arsathas are of prime importance in terms of supplying information about crucial aspects of the economy of the region. The arsathas provide comprehensive information about the total income and expenditure of the pargana of their origin. Basic data like the total number of villages under sub-assignments and the Amber ruler's khalias are written in the arsathas. The arsathas give the estimated income, arrears, returns and expenditure incurred under different heads in the pargana. The area under the sabti and batai jinsi crops for the entire pargana and also separately for each village is given in the arsathas. The amount of mal and the names and magnitude of numerous other cesses are also entered in the arsathas. The income section of the arsathas has mostly been used in this study. The section showing expenditure of the pargana is quite useful for determining the claims of the holders of superior rights in the rural society.

Though the arsathas provide rich information, this record suffers from certain serious drawbacks, the primary one being that we do not find arsathas for all the parganas and for all the years. Arsathas for certain years might not

have been written at all. Then some of them are missing while quite some of them have become moth-eaten. Despite these gaps, the arsathas are still a mine of information for constructing agrarian history of the region.

The Hindi arsdashts were written by the amils, faujders and other officials of the Amber state, posted in various parganas. These arsdashts are addressed to the Raja of Amber in the form of applications. As each one of the arsdashts contains the prevailing political, social and economic conditions, these are of enormous importance. These arsdashts also carry the Raja's directives to his officials for their implementation. The events of the revolts have been very widely covered by the arsdashts. Therefore, the arsdashts are reliable documents for information on the political developments that were taking place at the pargana level.

The chithis were written by the Diwan of the Jaipur State to its officials, particularly the amils and faujders. Each chithi contains the substance of a complaint received by the Diwan and his instructions thereon. These complaints were lodged by the aggrieved persons of a qasba or a village. The chithis throw considerable light on the day-to-day

conflicts and emerging social tensions as well as the customary practices operating at the village level. The structure of rural society can be re-constructed on the basis of information supplied by the chithis. We find a large number of chithis pertaining to the areas of our study but most of them belong to the eighteenth century. For the seventeenth century, only a negligible number of chithis are available.

Dastur al-amals are schedules of revenue rates. We come across many such dastur al-amals for various parganas of our region. In each dastur-al-amal the percentage of the shares of the government and the cultivators have been mentioned separately. The amount of other cesses and sabti rates have also been stated in some of the dastur al-amals. The dastur al-amals are particularly helpful in establishing the differential rates of revenue on various sections of the cultivators. In the absence of these dasturs it would not have been possible to work out the magnitude of economic burden on the peasants. The dastur al-amals were prepared by the local revenue officials keeping in conformity with the rules laid down by the central authority.



The yaddashtis were a kind of memoranda or documents of remembrance. These yaddashtis were written by the revenue officials like chaughuri, qanungo, patel, and patwari. These yaddashtis give rich information about the land - cultivated and uncultivated - livestock and bullocks owned by peasants of a village or a pargana. The availability of agricultural implements and other assets with various categories of the cultivators can be known from the yaddashtis. Unfortunately, such information for our parganas is extremely meagre. Though not many yaddashtis are available for parganas of our region, whatever is there, has been used in this study.

The Amber Records contain those letters which were written by the officials to the Diwan of the Jaipur state. In these documents we get enormous information about the day-to-day functioning of the administration at the level of a pargana. The economic and political dimensions of the local administration are a running theme of most of the letters of Amber Records. These documents are as important as the aradashtis for our study. Both these categories of documents also serve as some kind of corroborative evidence for information derived from one-another.

The fact that such multi-faceted evidence at the ground level is fortunately available for the problem we have studied in this work is perhaps itself an adequate justification for the attempt, with all its numerous shortcomings.