CHAPTER V: STATE INTERVENTION AND RURAL SOCIETY

Process of consolidation of state power in Hadauti had gained considerable momentum by the end of 17th century. The village chakh beegha had been fixed through extensive land surveys. Assessment and collection of revenue had been streamlined. A large class enjoying institutional mean of access to revenue resources had emerged. It wielded considerable influence at the village level. Also, the state had been able to gain confidence of the village society. Its natural leaders had been incorporated in the revenue assessment and collection machinery. All the classes including the peasants, artisans and menials addressed the Kota chiefs as 'raj', 'rairaj', 'anndata', 'huzur', 'dhani', etc. It clearly shows that the Kota chief was held in high esteem. The state was perceived of as upholder of 'reet- rawat' (customs) and 'mer-murjad' (tradition of does and don'ts which may bring honour or shame). It was the one who issued 'patta-parwana' (documents of right and orders) the one to whom an araz (petition) could be made and the one who could impose 'dand' (penalty). The undertakings given by ordinary people of the village were couched in the language, if it is not so 'mein raj ka gunehgar' (I shall be held culprit) or mein girah su man manava (I shall suffer the consequences)1. Such unqualified adherence to the political authority system shows that it had been able to strike very deep roots in the village society. As a result of the consolidation of state power, the state had come to regulate a wide range of relationships and intervene in day to day village affairs.

The medieval state represented those social forces which had succeeded in creating gross social and economic inequalities and a kind of acceptability of an inferior and unequal social position amongst large section of the rural society. The Hadas projected themselves as a khamp of the Chahmans

1 All this terminology is interspersed in the various araz, and likhants found in the village papers of the Kota records, many of them have been cited in the course of this chapter.
whose *Ksatriya* status had been established for long, therefore, they considered it obligatory to maintain the caste and *varna* hierarchy. It helped to create suitable political conditions for extraction and redistribution of surplus in favour of the ruling class. Thus, a highly caste biased and discriminatory system of fines and punishments imposed for violating the social norms facilitated perpetuation of a regressive system of tax and non-economic compulsions. Although, the fines and penalties for violation of social norms were imposed by the *panchas* but the *kotwali chautra* along with the local *bhomia* received a share of these fines\(^2\). The share received by the state amounted to not only accepting but also reinforcing the legitimacy of the system of unequal fines and penalties. It provided a social justification of the discriminatory use of political power.

A study of the *gharijana* (living with a woman without social sanction) and *chamchori* (rape or illicit relations with a woman) cases shows that the unequal fines and penalties for violating social norms was imposed through the *panchas* and therefore, hardly ever questioned. The punishment for exogenous crimes was higher than for endogenous crimes of the same nature\(^3\). The extent to which use of political power to maintain socially imposed norms succeeded in dominating human behavior gets reflected in the trend of most of the *gharijana* cases remaining endogenous\(^4\). In the case of *chamchori*, there were fewer crimes of this type against women of upper castes committed by lower caste men than vice versa\(^5\). In the cases of *gharijana* if a man acquired a woman through connivance of her family or by hook or crook the fine imposed was known as *bhar* and state share from *bhar*  

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\(^2\) *Toji*, s. 1752, K.B. 1/26 and *Toji Kotwali Chautra Shahar Kota*, op. cit

\(^3\) Ibid

\(^4\) *Gharijana* meant acquiring a woman with or without her consent. All the 11 cases of *gharijana* recorded in one year in *shahar* Kota were endogenous, *Toji Kotwali Chautra Shahar Kota*, op. cit

\(^5\) *Chamchori* meant extra marital relations whether forced or with consent, out of 11 such cases recorded for *shahar* Kota in a year only 5 were exogenous. In two of these cases the *thakurs* were found guilty for *Chamchori* with *balahi* and brahmin women and in two a Gujar and a Muslim was held guilty for *chamchori* with *mali* and jat women. Only in one case a luhar was held guilty for *chamchori* with a *modi* or *mahajan* woman. *Toji Kotwali Chautra Shahar Kota*, op. cit
was termed as *chauthan* meaning one fourth, but if a woman decided to leave her family to live with another man the share of *bhar* was termed *chinali*, a term based upon social rejection of a woman's behaviour and character\(^6\). In the exogenous cases of *gharijana* status of the person who acquired a woman could transform the state share of *bhar* from *chauthan* into *chinali*. The most glaring example was the case of the wife of *silawat* Danu who was a *mahindar chakar* of Kota chief Kishor Singh who had died in service and his wife was acquired by Kishor Singh on the grounds of being "a destitute and grief struck poor woman"\(^7\). When the *panchas* imposed a fine of rupees fifteen, to be paid by Kishor Singh, the state share was taken not as *chauthan* but as *chinali*, implying that the decision to be in service of Kishore Singh was that of the woman. There was hardly any case of *gharijana* in which a lower caste man acquired a woman from an upper caste or even from another lower caste. It was simply not permissible. Thus all these *gharijana* cases were either within the same caste or between the upper caste men and lower caste women. A scrutiny of the system of fines and penalties imposed for violating the social norms through the *panchas* shows that the local mechanism for perpetuating caste and gender inequalities was not only quite strong but also hardly ever questioned. It clearly shows that the system of fines and penalties was caste biased.

The picture, which emerges from the information available about marriage, one of the most important social institution, is a little different. Most of the marriages were normally within the same caste and a *lag* (levy) known as *panchgara* was realised from the artisans, menials and some of the *mahajans* living in a village while the peasants proprietors were generally exempt from this *lag*. There is no reference to any *lag* being realised from the Rajputs and Brahmains. An account of *kotwali chautra shahar* Kota of c.1695 shows that

\(^6\) Toji, op. cit

\(^7\) Kishor Singh's order, Katik sud 13, s. 1753 K.B. 1/35 stated, that "poor grief struck woman had been taken in service of Kanwarji"
the lag on marriages was realised from 1 saha, 11, mali, 11 julaha, 3 tamoli, 2 koli, 2 kasai, 2 sunar, 1 cheepa, 1 kharol, 1 taili, 3 dhobi, 1 luhar, 2 kalal, 4 lodha, 1 dhanka and 1 chamar family in c. 1695. There is no reference to any of the chief agriculturist castes, Brahmins and Rajputs paying this lag. The upper and middle order castes who were a substantial section in the kasbas appear to be exempt from it, but the reason for one saha being subjected to this lag is not clear. There is no reference to any upper caste man marrying a lower caste woman or lower caste man marrying an upper caste woman but there were two cases of inter-caste marriages amongst the lower castes for which an additional levy known as marh was realised. Meh Siha's son Nathya had married a koli girl so he had to pay 9 takas as marh besides 14 taka 25 dams as panchgara, which was the normal lag on marriages. Similarly, Champa mali's daughter was married to a koli boy. On the marriage also some amount of marh and panchgara was realised. At times the heavy penalties imposed upon those who violated the socially projected moral values became the cause of another violation. Mali Pema was found guilty of chamchori and was ordered to pay taksir (fine) which he probably could not afford easily. So a darban (guard) Nura helped him to commit a theft for which a fine of rupees 14.75, was imposed, over and above the fine for chamchori.

A discriminatory social and economic system had numbed the moral issues to an extent that an old mother who could be of no use was often handed over to the state for being a 'dakan'. Many of the daksans caught were at the evidence and initiative of their sons and husbands. In 1703 all daksans identified belonged to peasants, artisans or menial communities. The women identified as daksans through out the period were, mostly from Mali,

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8 ibid
9 Toji Kotwali Chautra Rampura, S.1827, K.B. 15/1
10 Tod had also noted this widespread phenomenon and the inhuman punishments given to women branded as dakan. He observed that "old age eccentricity are sufficient in conjunction with superstition or bad luck to fix the stigma" A A R II, op.cit, pp. 473-74
11 For instance taili Rupa accused his mother-in-law, mali Teja his mother, khati Rama his wife to be a dakan, Toji-Kotwali Chautra kasba Rampura, op.cit
12 Firohi hasil mauza Madhukargarh, s. 1760, K.B. 1/37
Taili, Kumhar or Meena families\textsuperscript{13}. Not a single dakan or daki was found amongst the upper castes. Many of these women were in fact living alone and making a living through petty jobs like stitching a ‘kath\textsuperscript{14}'. If the family on its own declared a women to be a dakan, only some taksir was likely to be imposed, which could be exempted or realised in installments, but if caught by the state, the entire household with all the small possessions was to be confiscated\textsuperscript{15}. Concentration of dakans in certain castes was perhaps due to the acceptance of declaring a woman to be a dakan as an easy solution to certain family problems. Many of these problems were a result of the general socio-economic pressures for which these families had no option but to find individual solutions.

Thus although the fines were imposed by the panchas, the state acted as a protector of customary social divisions and norms of social behaviour and even superstitions. As a result it enjoyed sufficient social support to regulate a wide range of relationships in the rural society.

It does not mean, however, that the peasants who were a major constituent of the village society had become subservient to the extent of loosing all bargaining power with the state. On many crucial issues the state addressed the “samsat karsa” along with patel and patwari, such as at the time of issuing a kasht ka patta to spell out the revenue rates or at the time of jameet of the plough units or in any other abnormal situation\textsuperscript{16}. Since, the state considered a village to be primarily an agrarian settlement, the basic unit for generation of revenue, the typical description of a village in the adhsattas was in physical terms, about village boundaries, hakat, parat and nalayak land and the karsa and kholad assamis living there\textsuperscript{17}. The peasants, artisans and menials were

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid
\textsuperscript{15} All the dakans in c, 1703 had been caught at the request of the bhalamanas (gentlemen) but most of the dakans in c. 1770 were caught and handed over by their families Firohi hasil of Kasba Rampura s .1827, op.cit
\textsuperscript{16} See, the kasht-ka-patta issued by Durjan Sal, Asadh vadi 3, s. 1793, K.B. 1/135
\textsuperscript{17} Mauza Babli ka adhsatta, s. 1784, K.B. 1/121-133
considered to be the ‘raiti’ while peasants belonging to the middle order castes were at times addressed to as bhalamanas. Perception of a village as a source of revenue had become so strong in the ruling class psyche that, the khyats even when describing the process of conquest and establishment of various Rajput principalities used phrases like ‘dharti ras padi’ (the land began yielding revenue) and ‘dharti bhog. ghati’ (ensured revenue from captured land).

A scrutiny of the tensions and conflicts pervading the 18th century village society shows that, many of these emanated from the very process of consolidation of state power. It had created contradictions at various levels. For instance, the disputes about the village boundaries, resentment against revenue rates, method of assessment and collection and the disputes between the jagirdars and dohli holders etc. Some of the disputes were of a different nature as these were within the village society, such as the dispute about pateli biswas, bapoti right on land or highhandedness of the patel and patwari. The nature of state intervention in various disputes differed according to the issue involved. It ranged from efforts to modify and re-gear the system to simply patch up or punish. Thus the nature of state intervention varied in different situations. This chapter examines the conflicts and tensions pervading the village society as well as the nature of state intervention and its impact upon the village society in 18th century. Number of disputes in which the state was also involved appears to be fewer than the disputes between individuals from the same section or between two different sections of the village society.

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18 The complaint against a woman being branded as ‘dakan’ (witch) was made by the sons of the ‘bhalamanas’, Potgari, Chait vadi 10, s. 1760, K.B. 1/37, for use of raiti see the kashat-ka-patta, mauza Barod, s. 1729 which refers to ‘raiti bato’ as opposed to ‘raj bato’, K.B. 1/1 and Durjan Sal to hawalgir of pargana Baran, Sawan vadi 1, s. 1784 K.B. 1/121-133
19 Khyat I, op. cit, pp. 84,88
20 For an explanation of these right see the chapter, “The village Society: Structure and Stratification” of the thesis.
The disputes in which the state was also involved by and large revolved around classification of village land, revenue rates and method of assessment and collection. It seems that notion of village boundaries expressed as *kankar* had appeared much earlier than the land surveys and fixation of village *chak beeghas*\(^1\). *Kankar* was a kind of natural boundary identified by a tree or a *nullah* (natural drain) or a hill etc. whereas, the *chak beeghas* were the measured surface of a village. The criterion actually adopted for fixing the village *chak beeghas* is not clearly mentioned in the documents. The only thing, which can be clearly established, is that there was plenty of undivided zone between adjacent villages even after fixation of the village *chak beeghas*. Each time a village was measured afresh the *hal-mapya* (recently measured) *beeghas* were found to be more than the *kadim-chak beeghas*\(^2\). It suggests that the criterion for fixing the *chak beeghas* was the area actually occupied and used by the village population. In such a situation if the area considered to be within the *kankar* of a village was given for cultivation to peasants of another village it could result into claims and counter claims. In one of such disputes peasants of *mauza* Mandawra forcibly reoccupied the land which was being cultivated by the peasants of *mauza* ever since the *amal* of one Kirat Singh Hada. They stood up to defend this act saying that the land under dispute was situated within the *kankar* of their village. Thus the traditional claims about kankar could occasionally cause tension between the adjacent villages. In this case *mauza* Mandawara was in *khalsa* the local chief while *mauza* was in *jagir* of Kirat Singh Hada\(^3\). Therefore, the dispute between the peasants of *mauza* Mandawara and *jagirdar* of *mauza* could not be resolved at the local level and it became necessary for the state to intervene. It however does not mean that redistribution of land between villages was not possible or always met with resistance. There are several instances of new villages being settled in the *'mal'* of longstanding villages

\(^1\) The term *kankar* and the popular understanding about it comes out in several folk songs, see, Thakur Jaswant Singh, ed. *Rajasthan ke Rajwadi Geet*, II, Jaipur 1990 p. 19

\(^2\) Khate Bighori Jamdari ke mention this difference as well as the *adhsatta* of *mauza* Mundana and *mauza* Babli, op. cit

\(^3\) Likhant of patel patwani of *mauza* Mehrana, Sawan sudi 7, s. 1756, K.B. 1/40
without any resistance. The pateli between of such villages were granted to the colonisers, who were not necessarily local peasants.

An important issue between state and village society was the revenue rates. Although, the peasants held the state in high esteem but the kasht ka pattas issued from time to time refer to the request made by the karsa to spell out or clarify the revenue rates. In kasba Awa, it was because of such requests that the state conceded sherkhani jama for maize\(^24\). Similarly, in mauza Tal of pargana Suket when the peasants began to refrain from cultivating crops like maize, cotton and kasumbo because of the zabti rates being too high, the state decided to reduce it\(^25\). In pargana Mangrol the peasants had sent a request for kateta revenue rate per beegha either in cash or kind. The state found kateta (a fixed revenue rate per beegha) in cash unacceptable but agreed to kateta in kind\(^26\). Thus it seems that the revenue rates were a matter of much negotiation and bargain between the two sides although, the peasants never questioned the right of the state to finally decide about the revenue rate and method of assessment and collection. Another point, which at least once became the cause of resentment, was the classification of the cultivatable area. The peasants of mauza felt that the land considered to be the village gorva had been extended. Since, the rate of revenue on gorva land was higher than kheda they wanted it to be re-measured. The state conceded this demand but warned the peasants, that the re-measurement was to be final and no further request were to be entertained\(^27\). Thus on the one hand state wanted to maximise the area considered to be the gorva, on the other the peasants wanted to minimise it. Some times, an increase in the revenue rates arbitrarily could also create tensions. For instance the mali cultivators complained against the rate of jama being realised for their irrigated crops to

\(^{24}\) Arjan Singh to hawalgir kasba Awa and the patels and patwaris, Chait sudi 10, s. 1778, K.B. 1/127

\(^{25}\) Umed Singh to patel patwari and karsa of mauza Tal, Jeth sudi 8, s. 1852 Toji parwana, K.B. 21/1

\(^{26}\) Umed Singh to hawalgir of pargana Mangrol, Asadh sudi 12, s. 1851, Toji Parwana, K.B. 1/21

\(^{27}\) Kasht-ka-patta mauza Raroti, Asadh vadi 6, s. 1776, K.B. 1/85
have been enhanced in that year. It was ordered to be reduced to the old level. However, it remains ambiguous as to why the rate had been enhanced and was it only a decision taken at the local level. Such tension and the efforts made by the state to ease them out show clearly that whenever the peasants were in a bargaining position the state generally did not try to impose any decision in such matters. A good deal of intervention was more or less and effort to accommodate. In some cases there was flight or migration due to high rate of bighori or some of the birads, being realised which the peasants were not ready to pay. Here also the state afterwards tried to call the peasants back by assuring them and by giving some relief, at least for two or three years.

Sometimes, the peasants of a village taking up cultivation in another village as pahi could also create problems. Firstly, because the state felt it was the responsibility of the village karsa to cultivate the village land. Secondly, when the peasants of one village began cultivating as pahi in another village the land already under their ploughs often remained unploughed. Therefore, pahi cultivation was allowed only in abnormal circumstances. However, the peasants were often quite keen on pahi cultivation in order to take advantage of the material incentives involved in it. However, the undertakings given by the peasants and patels not to take up pahi cultivation suggest that the peasants had to accept the decision of the state on this issue. In some cases the state not only disallowed the pahis from another village but even ordered the village karsa to cultivate that land. Similarly, the state strictly prohibited the peasants from cultivating dohli land instead of extending

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28 Kisan Dass to hawalgir of pargana Mangrol, Chait sudi 12, s. 1775 K.B. 1/85
29 Durjan Sal to hawalgir of pargana Sangod, Jeth vadi 9, s. 1783 K.B. 1/118 refers to such a situation in kasba Sangod and Lachipura
30 Durjan Sal to hawalgir of Digodh, Phagun sudi 3, s. 1786, to patel patwari and par gaon ka pahi, Sawan vadi 1, s. 1786, K.B. 1/125
31 Durjan Sal to hawalgir of pargana Sangod, op. cit
32 Likhant of patel Godha of mauza kiroyda, Asadh vadi 9, s. 1783, K.B. 1/118, vouching for not to cultivate as a pahi.
33 Umed Singh to patel patwari and karsa of mauza Tal op. cit
cultivation to the village beed\textsuperscript{34}. Thus the state was not willing to accommodate the peasants on this issue and was not prepared to allow them to take advantage of the material incentives attached with \textit{pahi} or \textit{dohli} land cultivation at its cost. It can be inferred from whatever limited information is available, that the firm but accommodative attitude of the state sorted out such tensions. In general respect for the state policy and decisions appear to have been deeply internalised by the peasantry due to the fear of coercive power of the state.

The tensions within the village society were sometimes within a particular section while on others between two different sections of the village society. For instance, disputes about land were generally within the \textit{karsa} but the disputes about \textit{dohli} land were between the \textit{dohli} holder and the \textit{jagirdar} or \textit{karsa}. Some of the disputes were between the \textit{karsa} and the patel patwari, while others were between the \textit{karsa} and the artisans and menials. On many occasions when a dispute could not be resolved at the village level, the matter was reported to the state and looking at the magnitude of the problem, if necessary, the state decided to intervene. In 18\textsuperscript{th} century such intervention appears to have become almost a routine affair, greatly eroding the autonomy of the village society.

Land being the chief agrarian resource often became a cause of dispute amongst the peasants. A section of the cultivators held \textit{‘bapoti’} a hereditary claim on the land under their ploughs\textsuperscript{35}. They could give this land in \textit{batai} to another cultivator but at the same time the state could also reallocate the land which was lying \textit{‘parat’} for two or three years\textsuperscript{36}. In case of desertion also the

\textsuperscript{34} \textit{Likhant} of the patel contained in the \textit{adhsatta} of mauza Babli, op. cit

\textsuperscript{35} \textit{Likhant} of \textit{mali} kishna, Asadh vadi 2, s. 1766, \textit{Toji}, K.B. 1/61 used the term \textit{‘bapoti’} in connection with the land which he had given to patel Girdhar to cultivate.

\textsuperscript{36} Patet Heera’s fields of 70 beeghas was allotted to \textit{taili} Rama on this ground, Durjan Sal’s orders, Asadh vadi 4, s. 1788, K.B. 1/129
state could ask any one else to cultivate the land\textsuperscript{37}. Such land could even be mortgagee\textsuperscript{38}. It implies that the bapoti claim on land could not be used to cause a loss of revenue to the state. Thus claims of the peasants and state were of an over riding and over lapping nature. Many a time, the original cultivator questioned and objected to the new arrangement made by the state on the land, which had been under his ploughs but had been reallocated due to lying parcat. Such objections had to be kept in mind at the time of making any new arrangement to get the land cultivated. For instance, in case of a reallocation in mauza Godelyahedi, it was stated specifically that, if the original cultivator was to return and object, he was to be given some other piece but not the same piece of land\textsuperscript{39}. In a case of transfer due to mortgage, it was pronounced that unless all the fiscal claims against the land were settled, the peasant could not ask for the land to be given back\textsuperscript{40}. The practice of giving the bapoti land in batai could also lead to disputes between the two parties, if it was not returned back to the original cultivator whenever he demanded\textsuperscript{41}. In order to avoid such disputes deals and transactions in land could be formalised by the state. Such practice was known as kandi. It implied procuring a written order from the state for the concerned land, by paying rupee one per beegha. In some cases the state could reduce the rate charged for kandi\textsuperscript{42}. The need of state intervention in the land disputes and the practice of kandi made state the ultimate authority to regulate and to arbitrate in the disputes connected with land.

At times, dohli, which was given for religious and charitable purpose by the state also, became a cause of conflict between the different sections of the

\textsuperscript{37} Patel Seoram’s land was given to Bohra Udai Ram and Pandit Jabna Nath because he had left the village, Durjan Sal’s order to patel patwari of mauza Godelya hedi Asadh vadi 4, s.1788, K.B. 1/129

\textsuperscript{38} Bheem Singh’s order to hawalgir of Kethun to transfer the land of three halas to Pandit Mahu which had been mortgaged which him, jeth vadi 10, s. 1765, K.B. 1/61

\textsuperscript{39} Durjan Sal to patel patwari of mauza Godelya hedi, op. cit

\textsuperscript{40} Bheem singh’s order to hawalgir of Kethun, op. cit

\textsuperscript{41} The dispute between Mali Kishna and patel Girdhar in mauza Mundana, s. 1766, K.B. 1/61;

\textsuperscript{42} Dharti ki-kandi, Toji, s. 1780, K.B. 1/108
village, although the state reserved the right to allocate it to new cultivators incase of the karsa being unable to bring it under their ploughs. Thus the rights of state and peasants were of an overlapping nature. Never the less, the peasants, resented such expansion and complained against the Patel and patwari for conniving with the dohli holders. Since the complaint was made collectively and not individually, it can be assumed that the encroachment was either on beed or on long standing parat. Unfortunately the view taken by state in such cases remains ambiguous. It has been noticed for other regions that the tendency of the madad- l- mash holders in this period was to develop their grants into full-fledged zamindaris. It is true that, looking at the overall attitude of the state towards the dohli holders, there was little possibility of any strong action being taken against them. However, there is not much evidence in the documents of Kota state to test it. In case of any khainchal or harassment by the jagirdar, hawalgir or Patel, patwari or karsa, the state tried to protect the cause of the dohli holder. However, in the later half of 18th century the state itself had begun realising dohli birad from such grantees due to a growing need for money but several dohli holders could manage to get exemptions. Those who could not get exemptions tried to resist the imposition of dohli birad on the plea of poor yield etc but the state took a strong view of the evasive tactics on this account and insisted on payment.

Another, major source of tension were the pateli rights, which had come to be looked upon as a source of profit and had become a status symbol because of the power and position enjoyed by a patel. Inspite of the caste network and genealogical ties amongst the patels as well as between a Patel and karsa which helped the state to maintain production and revenue flow, individual ego's and interests could lead to serious rivalries. For instance, there was

50 Durjan Sal to hawalgir of pargana Kujod, Magh sudi 9, s. 1780, K.B. 1/108, Arjan Singh's order to hawalgir of pargana Baran, Magh vadi 5, s. 1778, K.B. 1/96
51 Arjan Singh’s order to hawalgir of pargana Baran, Asadh sudi 10, s. 1778, K.B. 1/96
52 Bheem Singh’s order to Dhaibhai Beejram, Jeth vadi 14, s. 1771, K.B. 1/276 (Kota) stated in the case of Purohit Chaju and Raju’s son, “if the earlier birads had been realised it should be realised even now, if not he should be exempted”
some dispute between the two patels of *mauza* Mundla which, the patels of *mauza* Babli tried to settle. The state ordered them to keep away from this dispute because another Patel Cheetar was objecting to any such interference by them because he was the one who had brought these two patels to *mauza* Mundla. Therefore, the patels, of *mauza* Babli had to furnish an undertaking not to interfere in this matter and a fine of rupees 500 was imposed upon them as *gunehgar*⁵⁴. The original dispute, the effort of mediation and the objection to mediation by another Patel clearly show that serious rivalries and clash of ego's existed amongst the patels. Such rivalries tended to weaken the traditional mechanism to settle disputes at the local level and often made it necessary for the state to intervene in individual and local disputes.

A major reason for growing rivalries was the fragmentation of pateli *biswas*. It had reached such a level by early 18th century, that in *mauza* Soti of *pargana* Digodh the pateli *biswas* already being shared by four claimants had to be further fragmented to divide five *biswas* between seven claimants in c. 1709⁵⁵. Therefore, to check the growing rivalries for pateli *biswas* due to operation of the law of inheritance governing pateli, an order was issued to the *hawalgir* of *pargana* Barod and *pargana* Mangrol in c. 1719, spelling out the state policy on this issue⁵⁶. It was decided, henceforth, to appoint just one Patel in a small village and two patels in a big village or a *kasba*. Moreover, it was laid down that the 'chakri' of Patel should be entrusted to a 'bhalamanas' (gentleman) who would be 'useful to the darbar' as well as "able to keep the rait happy." The customary claims of a Patel were also redefined. A Patel who was chosen for chakri was to get a hundred *beeghas* of land per one thousand *beeghas* of cultivated land in the concerned village. But the gharu halas allowed to a Patel on this land was to be strictly in proportion to his original

⁵² Likhant of dohli-holders of Kathun, Megh sudi 15, s. 1789, K.B. 1/127
⁵⁴ Likhant of Patel Lalu and Kalu, Asadh sudi 7, s. 1783, adhsatta of mauza Babli, op. cit
⁵⁶ Bheem Singh's order to hawalgir of pargana Digodh, Jeth sudi 13, K.B. 1/64
⁵⁶ Kishan Das's order to hawalgir of pargana Mangrol, Chait sudi 13 and hawalgir of pargana Barod, Baisakh vadi 13, s. 1775, K.B. 1/84
pateli biswas. These ghru halas were to be assessed at a confessional revenue rate but the degree of concession for the ghru halas was to be in accordance with the nature of concessions enjoyed by the Patel previously. Thus the state decided to extend recognition to only one or at best two person as patel instead of an unlimited number of such claimants. An individual's competence was added to the criterion for being appointed a patel, which was governed by the law of inheritance. However, what remains ambiguous is the extent to which this order could have been actually put into practice.

Another cause for growing rivalries was that many other castes besides the chief agrarian castes like Dhakar, Meena, Jat etc. had also taken up cultivation, like the malis or Brahamins and some of them had also acquired pateli rights. Whether these rights had been acquired through colonization or purchase can not be always ascertained. In some of the long-standing villages persons belonging to different castes shared pateli. For instance, the malis of mauza Mundana were able to prevail upon the state to have their own pate\textsuperscript{57}. This created pateli pattis of patels belonging to different castes within the same village. At times, there were serious disputes about the pateli biswas held by the patels belonging to different castes and the land in their respective pateli pattis. In mauza Pachail where Brahamin and Meena patels had been sharing the twenty pateli biswas equally, it came to light, that the actual pateli biswas of Brahamins were only six and a half, while they had been cheating the Meenas all along by claiming the pateli hasil of ten biswas. The Meenas who were holding just ten biswas were actually entitled to thirteen and a half.\textsuperscript{58} Since the dispute could not be settled at the village level, the matter was reported to the state. The state in order to maintain the status quo conferred the disputed three and a half biswas upon the Brahamins by accepting a peshkash of rupee 901. Thus an act of usurpation on the part of the Brahamins was legitimised and the mortgagee papers pertaining to the

\textsuperscript{57} Bheem Singh to patel patwari of mauza Mundana, Aghan sudi 7, s. 1766, K.B. 1/61
\textsuperscript{58} Durjan Sal's order to hawalgir of pargana Baran, Asadh vadi amavasya, s. 1783, K.B. 1/118
disputed biswas were ordered to be destroyed\textsuperscript{59}. The disputes and tensions about pateli biswas and the caste based rivalries to acquire pateli right, undermined the inner cohesion of the village society and also alienated the core group of cultivators from rest of the village population. As a result, efforts to resolve disputes at the local level, often witnessed resistance and state intervention was sought by contending parties in their favour.

Another set of tensions within the rural society was related to corrupt practices and transgression of authority or highhandedness of the village officials. The dispute between peasants and the Patel patwari combine of mauza Babli revolved around such issues. It seems that there had been some sort of an inquiry in the village affairs in c. 1726 due to the complaints made against each other by the karsa and the Patel patwari of the village\textsuperscript{60}. Patwari Satu admitted that he had raised rupee one per hala for malba without any written order from the state, stolen grain from the field of bohra in collusion with the patel, which was in sanjha cultivation of that bohra and patel. He had allowed the dohli landholders to cultivate more land than actually sanctioned by the state, and he was pocketing an annual amount for this malpractice by the dohli holders. Further he had cheated the state by allowing a thakur to take away 200 mani of grains without paying the state share by preparing false khasra papers\textsuperscript{61}. Since, the patel and patwari and the himayatis were acting in collusion, the state found it difficult to punish the Patel and patwari alone. Therefore, the dispute was termed 'clash of egos' (ahankar) and both the patel, patwari and karsa were made to give undertakings to live peacefully\textsuperscript{62}. One of the peasants Chaju who was a man of some standing in the village. He had played an important role in highlighting the corruption of patel and patwari. Therefore, he was also made to give an undertaking that he would stay in the village according to 'karsa dav' (as a peasant) and would not put forward any 'dawa dhaka' (to push a claim) against the patel. It implied that he

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid
\textsuperscript{60} Arzi of patwari, Asadh sudi 1, s. 1783, K.B. 1/118
\textsuperscript{61} Likhan and Hakikat of patwari Sahu from Kudi, pargana Aton, s. 1760, K.B. 1/37
\textsuperscript{62} Likhan of patel patwari and raiti of mauza babli, Asadh vadi 8, s. 1783, K.B. 1/118
would behave like a karsa and would not try to pressurize the patels in any way. The patels also gave an undertaking about Chaju that they would not discriminate against Chaju and would not try to settle scores with him in any way.

It can be inferred from this dispute that one of the major contradictions, which had developed in the village society, was between the peasants and the patel, patwari and himayati combine, because the later were able to manipulate the system to their advantage. It also shows that a section within the peasants was able to see through their methods of cheating. Although, most of the charges against them were of causing loss to the state, except of realising and misusing the malba (village fund), yet, the peasants decided to make comprehensive case against them, while the patel and patwari complained against the conduct of these peasants. Obviously the intention of some of the peasants like Chaju was to expose the Patel patwari so that they could be removed while that of Patel and patwari was to discredit Chaju and get him punished in order to save themselves. The state, however, termed the dispute as that of 'ahankar' (clash of egos) inspite of the confessions made by the patwari. The state adopted a conciliatory approach and closed the matter by taking undertakings from both the sides. Perhaps the state did not want to alienate the himayati patel patwari combine as they were its mainstay in the village society or the state understood the real reason behind the complaint to be mutual jealousies and rivalries rather than resentment against village level corruption. Patel Daula, Uda and Janda complained in c. 1727 about the paltry hasil of pateli because the chakars enjoying land grants in the village hardly paid any thing to him as pateli and the dohli land holders gave only handful of grains like alms (hath uchayo de che). Besides, their halas was assessed at karsa dav and no concessions were being extended as neg and kansari. They urged the state to restore the 'reet' (custom)65. Significantly, the undermining of patel's customary claim was being done not by the karsa, but

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63 Likhant of Chaju, Asadh vadi 7, s. 1783, K.B. 1/118
64 Likhant of patel Lalu and Kalu, Asadh vadi 7, s. 1783 K.B. 1/118
by the *himayatis*. The patels looked up to the state as upholder of the customary norm, and, therefore, appealed for restoration of their *dastur*. In case of a mortgage of pateli *biswa*, the *hasil* of pateli, or, at times, even the *biswa* were transferred to the mortgagee. Lad Khan had acquired pateli rights in *mauza* Jaloda in this manner, because patel Fakira had failed to pay the debt against his pateli *biswa* in time. The state instructed the *hawalgir* to recognise Lad Khan as one of the patels and to take him in confidence in all the village matters. Since, Lad Khan was holding only a fraction of Fakira's pateli *biswa* it was decided to rotate the concessions enjoyed by patel Fakira to accommodate his claim as patel. In later half of 18th century, the pateli rights of several villages came to be given in *mukata* to the local merchants and *thakurs*. Thus on the one hand the patel had become the chief instrument of the *himayatis* to promote their interests but on the other hand, the customary claims of the patels were also getting eroded.

Such jealousies and rivalries existed not only between those who enjoyed the superior rights in the rural society and had command of the agrarian resources but also between them and the weaker sections of the village society. For instance, there were repeated complaints about evasion of the *dastur* of patel patwari *chaudhary* and *kanungo*. It seems that claims of *chaudhary* and *kanungo* were under pressure is various ways. Non payment of the *dastur* to which they were entitled, forcibly occupying the land of their *patti*, and full revenue to be realised from the land under their ploughs. The

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65 *Likhant* of patels of *mauza* Patuda, Phagun sudi 4, s. 1784, K.B. 1/121-133
66 Durjan Sal to *hawalgir* of *pargana* Barod, Chait sudi 1, s. 1784, K.B. 1/121-133
67 Ummed Singh to *hawalgir* of *pargana* Madhukargarh, *mukata* of pateli of the two villages in the *jagirdar* Dalel Singh, Chait sudi 8, s. 1831, K.B. 1: similarly, pateli *dastur* of *mauza* Gudalo was in *mukata* of Misar Kesorai in *pargana* Ghati, Durjan Sal to *hawalgir* of *pargana* Ghati, Sawan vadi 1, s. 1780, K.B. 1/1; *mukata* of pateli and patwar in Chechat was with a thakur Chain Singh Saga twat, Durjan Sal to the *tahalwa* of Chain Singh, Asadh vadi 7, s. 1805, K.B. 1/135
68 Several order instruct the *hawalgir*, patel patwari and the jagirdars to pay the *dastur* as always see, Umed Singh to topdars, patel and patwari of 84 villages of *pargana* Palaitha, Katik sudi 4, s. 1845, K.B. 3/3
69 Durjan Sal to *hawalgir* of *pargana* Baran, Sawan sudi 1, s. 1784, K.B. 1/119
70 Arjan Singh’s order Katik sudi 11, s. 1777, K.B. 1/85
reasons for such premiers on the claims of chaudhary and kanungo have been examined further on in details. The customary claim of patwari had also became a subject of dispute for various reasons. The ‘dastur’ of a patwari consisted of a share in the malba (common fund of the village) ghugari which was realised at the rate of three seers of grains per assami, tahwari (realised on festivals) and in some cases a pair of shoes ever year. In 18th century the state or the local jagirdar was appointing many of the patwaris on the basis of a quarar, for a fixed monthly or annual payment. For instance, in c. 1718 the patwari of mauza Bangu was getting rupee one per month, while in c. 1703 in mauza Kiradya, a patwari was getting rupees 2.50 per month. The peasants felt that a patwari appointed on the basis of a qarar had no claim to dastur. Since, the patwaris were paying huge sums of money as peshkash to get the appointment they were keen to claim the dastur as well as the fixed payment. When patwari Sahu, who had paid rupees 150 to the local jagirdar to get the appointment, claimed dastur, it was described as innovation by the patel. At times, there was keen bidding to secure the appointment. Saha Sunder was ready to pay rupees 75 to be appointment patwari of mauza Mandawara, but another contender, saha Sada Ram agreed to pay rupees 115 and secured the office of patwari. This kind of bidding was clearly related to the income prospects attached to the office of patwari, over had above the amount stipulated in the qarar. The corruption and high handedness of patwari is brought out by several complaints. In mauza Neeloda, the patel and peasants furnished the details of the money pockets by the patwari from various cesses, and reported about his high handedness. He tried to create problem at the time of lata, although could not do much in the presence of the local thakur. As soon as the lata was over and the thakur had left, he forcibly realised twenty two manis of grains from the peasants, seven manis from the halis, and fifteen manis from the state share to be sold.

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71 Hakikat patwari Sahu ki, patwari Sahu had been appointed at an annual quarar of rupees 45 but was realising the dastur also, K.B. 1/37
72 Bheem Singh’s order, Jeth sudi 6, s. 1775, K.B. 1/80
73 Hakikat patwari Sahu ki, op. cit.
74 Durjan Sal’s order, Posh vadi 9, s. 1784, K.B. 1/119
to top it all, he refused to show the village accounts to the patel. Similarly, the patwari of mauza Gailana pocketed the amount realised as muda from the peasants who were found guilty of concealment of crops. In mauza Rajpura the patwari in collusion with the patel realised money from the peasants to allow them to cultivate the beed and kholi land of the village. Some of the patwaris were accused of giving money from the malba to some of the powerful persons in the village so the state instructed the patwaris not to do so. At times the raiyat asserted its claims to remove an incompetent patwari and even appoint a new one in his place, subject to confirmation by the state for its own reasons. In c. 1751 the patel of mauza Pohit was instructed not to allow any one to work in place of the patwari removed thus by the raiyat or else he was to be punished suitably.

A new practice of giving the office of patwari in mukata development in the later half of 18th century. The tahalwa of Raja Kirat Singh took the office of patwari of mauza Saneeja Bawri in mukata. He was to pay rupees nine per year to the state in three installments. In c. 1751 the patwari of mauza Napaheda complained that, although, he was paying rupees six per year for the mukata of patwara but there was no hasil in the village, therefore, he was not willing to continue. The state reduced the amount to rupees five per year asking him to continue, which he did. A patwari who took the mukata of patwara lived on the dastur patwari collected from the village. Whether these collections were confined to the customary share of the patwari or could be fixed by the patwari himself remains ambiguous. The mukata of office of patwari strengthened the state control on village fund. A patwari at the time of mukata furnished an undertaking not to give a penny to the hawalgir, karkuns.

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75 Likhant of mauza Neeloda's patel and samsat karsa, Sawan sudi 1, s. 1784, K.B. 1/119
76 Bheem Singh's order, Baisakh vadi 15, s. 1766 K.B. 1/64
77 Likhant, Asadh sudi 15, s. 1797, K.B. 1/135
78 Likhant of Saha Miyaram, patwari of kasba Awa, Phagun vadi 12, s. 1789, K.B. 1/127
79 Durjan Sal to patel Nathu of Pohlai Buzurg, Bhadva sudi 2, s. 1808, K.B. 1/135
80 Kabulait of the tahalwa, Sawan vadi 1, s. 1807, K.B. 1/135
81 Likhant of Sahu Nanagram, Baisakh vadi 14, s, 1808 K.B. 1/135
and to the patel and to report immediately and big amount received and not to spend any thing without prior permission of the state\textsuperscript{82}.

With the weakening of the Mughal administrative machinery, \textit{chaudhary} and \textit{kanungo} also began to be questioned. There were repeated instructions by the state to the \textit{hawalgirs} of various \textit{parganas} to help to maintain their \textit{dastur}\textsuperscript{83} and not to allow any body to occupy their land under concessional rate of assessment\textsuperscript{84}. The \textit{topdar}, patel and patwari of 84 villages in \textit{pargana} Palaiitha had to be instructed to include \textit{chaudhary} and \textit{kanungo} during the process of assessment and collection of revenue and to maintain their share\textsuperscript{85}. Similarly in \textit{pargana} Baran the \textit{tahalwas} of the \textit{jagirdars} and the patels and patwaris of thirty-three villages were instructed to maintain the \textit{dastur} of \textit{chaudhary} and \textit{kanungo} as usual\textsuperscript{86}. It seems that the land and \textit{dastur} of these two officials was being usurped by the \textit{jagirdars}. The \textit{taqsim} of \textit{pargana} Ramgarh of c.1755 when recording the \textit{jama} of various villages mentioned that " lot of bungling goes on in the imperial office" and that " there was no \textit{chaudhary} or \textit{kanungo} in the \textit{pargana}"\textsuperscript{87}. So with the weakening of the imperial administration the claims of \textit{chaudhary} and \textit{kanungo} were being pocketed by the \textit{jagirdars}. It was for this reason that not only the patels and patwaris but even the \textit{tahalwas} of \textit{jagirdars} had to be sent instructions. The Kota chiefs were even realising \textit{peshkash} from \textit{chaudhari}es and \textit{kanungo}es for maintaining their share. In c. 1727 rupees 2500 were fixed as \textit{peshkash} from \textit{chaudhary} and \textit{kanungo} of \textit{pargana} Baran\textsuperscript{88}.

\textsuperscript{82} Likhnat of Saha Miyaram, op. cit.
\textsuperscript{83} Durjan Sal to hawalgir of \textit{pargana} Madhukargarh, Asadh vadi 7, s. 1779, K.B. 1/135, about the \textit{dastur} of Souji Caudhary.
\textsuperscript{84} Durjan Sal to hawalgir of kasba Kujod, about the land in \textit{kanungohi patti}, Baisakh vadi Amavasya, s. 1808
\textsuperscript{85} Umed Singh to \textit{topdar} and patel patwari of 84 villages of \textit{pargana} Baran, Katiksudi 4, s. 1845, K.B. 3/3
\textsuperscript{86} Umed Singh to \textit{tahalwas} of \textit{jagirdars} of 36 villages and patel patwari of \textit{pargana} Baran, Katik vadi 4, s. 184, K.B. 3/ not to avoid paying the \textit{dastur} of Charudhary and \textit{kanungo}
\textsuperscript{87} Taqsim of \textit{pargana} Rangarh, s. 1812, K.B. 6/1
\textsuperscript{88} Durjan Sal to hawalgir of \textit{pargana} Baran, Bhadva vadi 11, s. 1784, K.B. 1/121
Dispute with sehna and aheetha appointed by state to look after the standing crop and state share of grain were also growing. One of the pandits in kasba Awa was ordered to leave the village for being tough to a sehna\textsuperscript{89}. One of the aheethas sent by the state was not even provided food by the villagers during his stay in the village to get the state share of grains transported to the royal stores\textsuperscript{90}. Another aheetha fought with Miyan Taju who was a man of the 'darbar' for which he could be set free only after producing the zamanat\textsuperscript{91}. The petty village servant balahi also found it difficult to realise his share at times, where as, the state-demanded peshkash even from him. In mauza Mukandgarh the balahi was denied his 12.5 dams per beegha by the state officials\textsuperscript{92}, while the balahi of mauza Chechat was accused of demanding more than his customary lawazma form the raiti\textsuperscript{93}.

The artisans and menials living in a village were bracketed together in the revenue records and described as kholad (a hut). The term kholad applied to those assamis who were supposed to pay the cess known as kholdi payable in recognition of their right to live in the village\textsuperscript{94}. This cess was levied on all those assamis who were not primarily cultivators but provided different types of services to the village. Thus the customary division in village society was recognised by the state and had been linked to the payment of some cesses. It was this linkage between the customary division and the cesses, which brought about significant change as well as generated new conflicts in the village society. These cesses had begun to be realised not only from the artisans and menials but even from those peasants who had been reduced to the status of halwa or hali i.e. the ploughman. Similarly if any of the artisans or menials began cultivating a sizeable piece of land on his own, besides, the small strip provided by the village for subsistence, he was to be exempted from payment of these cesses.

\textsuperscript{89} Likhant Pandit Teela, Jeth sudi 7, s. 1789, K.B. 1/126
\textsuperscript{90} Likhant of Daulat Ram Lal Chand, Phagun vadi 11, s. 1784, K.B. 1/121
\textsuperscript{91} Likhant of sasri Soji, Daya Ram Naik and Aeetha Har ram, Posh vadi 9, s. 1808
\textsuperscript{92} Likhant of Balahi Dewa, Aghan vadi 12, s. 1791, K.B. 1/130
\textsuperscript{93} Duljan Sal to mauza Chechat's balahi, Phagun sudi 1, s. 1787, K.B. 1/124
\textsuperscript{94} Adhsatta mauza Babli, op. cit
The growing state intervention in the rural society is also visible in the manner in which the disputes between the different sections of the village were resolved. The mechanism of arbitration indicates the growing inability of the village organisation to resolve such disputes and often these had to be referred to the state for resolution, arbitration and adjudication. The disputes between kholads and the agriculturist section of the village society were of various types. Dhobi Janda complained that though his son was living with him but his name had been entered separately for payment of kholi. Deva who was the patel of khatis in mauza Rampura had given his land in batai to a peasant but was not getting anything from the land while what ever birads the state levied on the village were realised from his according to his pateli biswas. When he appealed to darbar, though his land was procured back to him but not without paying a peshkash rupee twenty-one. So even when an artisan or menial acquired some land the attitude of the peasants towards him remained the same. The small strip of land, which they received for subsistence, was also taken away from them in batai. In mauza Mundana where mali Kisana had to wage a real battle to get his two fields to fourteen beeghas back from patel Girdhar, had four beeghas of luhar Keso, seven beeghas of khati Pala, forty beeghas of chamara Balu and Mana, twenty beeghas of khati Isar, eleven beeghas of julaha Kheeva being cultivated by either a bohra or a Brahmin of that village. Not only the attitude of the himayatis and karsa but at times the attitude of even the state was such that it became difficult for them to carry on cultivation.

Although, it was a general practice to give land to artisans and menials in lieu of chakri as well as for promoting cultivation of a particular crop to some of them like neelgard and tailis. Nevertheless, as far as agricultural activity in general was concerned the attitude was not always favourable. In mauza Babli taili Natha, Geego and Kala were cultivating one plough unit of land, and

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95 Likhant of Dhobi Janda, Asoj vadi 5, s. 1784, K.B. 1/121
96 Likhant of Khati Dewa, Asadh sudi 6, s. 1808, K.B. 1/135
ware made to pay *agotri* (advance) realised per plough unit of land under *zabti* assessment by the Patel which the state eventually exempted. However, they were made to pay *kholdi*. The significance of the order lied not in the exemption but in the insistence to treat them as *kholad*. Although, the amount which they paid as *agotri* was rupees three and the *kholdi* payable by three *assamis* was also rupees three, (at the rate of rupee one per *assami*) but the state upheld the principle that a *kholad* (being not only different but even inferior) could not be treated on par with the *karsa*. The *kholad* were discouraged from full time agricultural activity in many other subtle ways. In *mauza* Batavada a *khadi* who was cultivating one plough unit of land decided to cultivate some *kholi* and *beed* land. It was discovered that, he had cheated the state at the time of *lata*, by showing the produce of *kholi* and *beed*, which was adjacent to his *samhi* field. He was ordered to cultivate one additional plough unit from next season as a punishment, without leaving the land already under his plough uncultivated. To compel him to cultivate more than two plough units with his limited capital and labour resources was actually an attempt to discourage him from cultivation itself. It was impossible for a person of his status to cultivate even one plough unit on his own. In the same village *luhar* Rupa who wished to cultivate one plough unit of land pleaded to be exempted from *kholdi* and *lawazma*. He had to give an undertaking that, if he would cultivate only a few *biswas* then *kholdi* would realised from his as usual. Such an undertaking was furnished and required only in view of the difficulty, which a non-peasant had to face in taking up cultivation as a full time economic activity. As a result the artisans and menials remained to be the most oppressed section of the village society.

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97 *Jamabandi mauza* Mundana, s. 1766, K.B. 1/61
98 *Adhsatta mauza* Babli, op. cit, *Likhant of the tailis*, Asoj vadi 5, s. 1784
99 *Likhant of patels of mauza* Batavada, and of khati Dhanna, Mgh sudi 2, s. 1836, K.B. 1/62
100 Ibid
101 *Likhant of Luhar Rupa*, Posh sudi 15, s. 1836, K.B. 1/62
Reaction of peasants, artisans and menials to an unequal distribution of economic resources, power and position can be understood by taking into account not only the big dramatic uprisings or movements but also by exploring the day to day resistance within or outside the process of production in various forms. It has been argued that the forms of resistance vary according to the conditions and constraints under which they are generated. Accordingly, a very comprehensive although somewhat elastic definition of resistance has been developed which assumes that resistance begins from the point where compliance ends. Consequently, almost every act and even thought of a member of a subordinate class which is not that compliance can be interpreted as an act of resistance even if it is clothed in the language of conformity. Accepting the broad definition, I have tried to find out the various forms of resistance adopted by different sections of society and individuals in the process of coming to grips with the reality of their existence at that point of time.

A study of the forms of resistance adopted by the ordinary peasants, artisans and menials shows that their primary objective was to create better conditions to live within the Hada state. Sending petitions to state collectively or individually always remained the first choice. Most of the petitions were sent through the recognised leaders like the village patel and patwari, but some times the state could be approached even directly, when the issue concerned only a particular section and not the village or kasba in general. Most of the individual petitions were sent for redressal of personal grievances. The petitions revolved around revenue matters, conduct of local officials or jagirdar, or the general economic plight and concessions and remissions.

\[102\] H. Mukhia thinks that these features of historical change have been relegated to secondary significance and only the dramatic uprisings have been taken note of, see his "Peasant Production and Medieval Indian Society", Perspectives on Medieval India, New Delhi, 1994, pp. 152-164

\[103\] See, James Scott, Weapons of the Weak, Delhi, 1990
These petitions were intended to build up pressure on the state for taking action. For instance, the peasants of a village reported the name of the artisans and menials who inspite of living in the village were abstaining and their strips of land were lying parat\(^{104}\). Obviously, some of the artisans and menials had decided for some reason not to cooperate with the peasants. Since, it was the peasants and the patel who were held responsible for maintaining cultivation, the peasants decided to report the matter to the state. In normal circumstances the state expected the village patel and patwari to furnish the names of artisans and menials living in the village to realise the cesses kholdi and jamdari from them. Therefore, at the time of jameet all such name were entered in the village records along with an undertaking that the name have been entered correctly and no name have been hidden or suppressed\(^{105}\). Any local unity between the peasants, artisans and menials on this count could harm the state in two ways. It could result in loss of the cesses to be realised from them. It would give a valid excuse to the peasants for not cultivating the entire land due to lack of the labour supplied by the menials. As a result when the artisans and menials decided not to work for the village, the peasants reported the matter to the state. The underlying expectation was that the state would provide the necessary political support to peasants to compel the artisans and menials to render service to the village as usual. If the state for any reason failed to solve their problem, they would have a valid excuse for not cultivating the entire land or would be free to deal with the artisans and menials in a befitting manner. Similarly, in another petition some of the peasants complained against the patel and patwari for realising rupees ten on each plough unit in the name of various birads, over and above the assessed revenue. As a result they were unable to cultivate their land which had been lying parat and therefore, had been allocated to

\(^{104}\) Likhant of patel patwari mauza Dhapa (undated) s. 1788, K.B. 1/126

\(^{105}\) Adhsatta, mauza Babli and mauza Budana contains such undertakings by the patel and patwari, s. 1784, K.B. 1/121-133
some one else for being cultivated. They requested to be relieved of the services of the patel patwari and tahsildar and to be allowed to deposit the revenue directly to any place specified by the state. So, to resist the highhandedness of the patel, patwari and tahsildar they approached the state. They expressed a lack of confidence only in the intermediaries and expected that, the state would intervene in their favour. Thus, sending petitions remained to be the safest method to resist against the village hierarchy because through a petition they could demonstrate, their loyalty as subjects, as well as hope to get some relief from the state.

Some times sending a petition was not enough and it was necessary to resist on the spot, which could even assume a violent form. In one of the disputes between the patels and karsa some of the Dhakar peasants were killed by a patel. The details of the dispute, however, are not known except that the patel was made to pay a fine later on. Some times, on the spot resistance could be in the form of gatya as a last resort. It implied that an aggrieved person kept sitting at the door of the house of the offender to demand redressal. This form of resistance was generally used by the lower castes against members of the upper castes to pressurize them for justice. The reason to resort to gatya could be extreme despair due to violation of the customary norms followed by the upper castes in dealing with the member of the lower caste. The chamars of mauza had resorted to gatya against patel although the specific reason for resorting to this extreme form of protest has not been recorded. The patel felt so helpless against gatya that out of shame he committed suicide. The state held the entire village as well as the chamars responsible for this episode and imposed a penalty upon both the chamars and the rest of the village. It can be inferred from this episode that even the lowest sections could adopt open and direct forms of resistance against violation of customary norms by the village hierarchy.

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106 Petition sent by some Dhakar peasants of mauza Badoli, (undated) s. 1840, K.B 3/3
107 Toji Kotwali Chautra shahar Kota, K.B. 1/19, considering the consequences of such violence, the state imposed a fine of rupees 22 on the patel
108 P. Barod ki Firohi, op.cit.
The complaints of the villagers were not only against the village hierarchy but at time also against the state policy. One such major issue was realisation of various birads repeatedly. A tahsildar who was sent to pargana Barsana in c.1780, recommended postponement of realisation of bhalmansi birad\textsuperscript{109}. Conveying the feelings of raiti he wrote that they were not ready to pay and were adopting defying tactics. The amount to be realised had been assigned in tankhwa to bohra Kisan Ram. In fact one installment had already been realised against this birad, but the amount collected did not correspond to the outstanding amount of the bohra. Therefore, fresh orders had been issued to raise another installment of the same birad. As a result, the peasants decided not to pay the same birad twice. Thus when ever the raiti had a legitimate ground to resist it resorted to defiance and evasion. In the same pargana when ghara birad was realised (in the absence of any such legitimate excuse) the raiti, instead of refusing directly adopted time gaining tactics. The tahsildar reported, that inspite of the raiti feeling annoyed and burdened was paying gradually but, only when given some concessions\textsuperscript{110}. While some were furnishing written undertakings to pay it after a few days, others were bringing chithis of bohras encashable after ten or fifteen days. However, if no concession was offered they were not prepared to pay even a penny. Obviously the raiti was not in a position to pay and felt over burdened because of recurring birads but instead of defying openly they were pleading to gain time because they did not have a valid excuse like realising the same birad twice. The reasons for not resisting openly emanated from the general perception of nature of state and authority. The right of the state to realise various birads over and above the normal revenue demand had become established. Legitimization of the right to realise birads even if it was found to be burdensome compelled them to adopt only time gaining tactics.

\textsuperscript{109} Narsingh Das to Zalim Singh, Magh sudi 7, s. 1837, K.B 7/1
\textsuperscript{110} Ibid
Some times the villagers even adopted pressure tactics against the state. For instance, in mauza Digodh the state was not able to realise Rs. 377.50 against dhuandehl, although the reasons for non-payment have not been mentioned. The local officials recommended to wave off this amount and informed the higher authorities that the weavers were saying that if they were not exempted from this imposition, they would not allow any one else also to get the exemption\textsuperscript{111}. It shows that asking to be treated on par with others could also acquire a new meaning when used as a form of resistance. In some cases the peasants tried to resist the heavy state demand by leaving part of their land parat, although it harmed their interests as well. It was a silent mode of protest because either, the state suffered a loss of revenue or tried to reallocate the land to some one, in order to maintain the production cycle and revenue flow. Often the peasants questioned the new arrangement. The peasants demanded that not only the land be given back to them for cultivation but also demanded a reduction in the ever increasing state demand by way of imposing new birad etc\textsuperscript{112}. Thus it got transformed into an open form of resistance. The peasants who were not in a position to leave their fields parat chose another method. They asked the state to set up a sarkari hawala on their land and offered to work as halis for a fixed share\textsuperscript{113}. Thus the resistance against heavy state demand could be in several forms and at times leading to the disruption of the production cycle itself.

To ensure survival an easy individual method was cheating the system by taking advantage of the complexities of the system of assessment for various categories of land and variety of crops. The patels often tried to get their karsa dav land assessed as pateli dav in order to pay less\textsuperscript{114}. At times, it worked, but at times, it was caught and subjected to penalty. Even the poorest of the

\textsuperscript{111} Saha Bihari and others to Chaudhary Hargovind, Jeth vadi 11, s. 1771, Jama Mahusuli mauza Digodh., K.B. 1/276, Kota
\textsuperscript{112} Araz of Dhakar peasants of mauza Badoli, op. cit
\textsuperscript{113} Likhant patel patwari, karsa of mauza Khabula, Jeth sudi 3, s. 1852, Toji Parwana, K.B. 21/1
\textsuperscript{114} Likhant of patel Khambha, Aghan sudi 8, s. 1766, K.B. 1/66 and of patel Rupa, Jeth sudi 13, s. 1762, K.B. 1/61
poor in the village took such an individual risk of paying a heavy penalty if caught. In c. 1765 the chamars of mauza Dungarjya fought amongst themselves and disclosed the pilferage of chana (gram) from mal by one of the chamars, which was recovered. For stealing just one seer of chana, chamar Champa had to pay rupees eleven as penalty. Some of the peasants tried to sell grains from the field itself before lata. Dhakar Sanga and Para who had sold wheat from their fields had to pay rupees four each as penalty. At times, to take advantage of the variation in rate for different crops, instead of the actual crops sown in the field, a crop on which revenue rate was comparatively lower, was shown as sown with the connivance of the patel and patwari. Another individual solution to which the peasants resorted to was stealing the state's share of grains. In c. 1714 a takid (warning) had to be sent to patel, sasri and aheetha for their failure in checking pilferage of grains in mauza Avali Buzurg. The peasants also tried to take advantage of the time, which the state share of grains required to be transported to ganj or store. In kasba Kujod when the state share of grains was transported from the ganj to the local fort for storage, it was found to be short. It had been pilfered on the way. Thus cheating the state in various ways was common. Tod had also observed that 'the means peasants adopted to perplex and cheat the state in lata were varied, at the time of the reaping they left something for the gleaners' then 'tithe for the khoorpi', then during thrashing, 'though they muzzle the ox who treads on the corn, they do not their own mouths, or those of their family'. If not convertible into coin, and was stored up, 'the rats are sure to get into the pits'. Inspite of the sahna (village watchman) 'all is insufficient to check the system of pillage'. Thus it was asserted that 'one fourth of the crop' or even 'a third' was frequently

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115 *Firohi hasil* of mauza Dungarjya, Jeth sudi 6, s. 1762, K.B. 1-61
116 *Firohi hasil* of mauza Digodh, s. 1762, D.B. 1/61
117 *Likhant* of patel patwari M.Borina Magh vadi 2 s. 1784 K.B. 1/21-133; note of patel patwari M.Rajpura Asadh sudi 15. S. 1798, K.B. 1/135
118 *Roznamcha Phagun ki tapni ka*, s. 1771, K.B 1/276 (Kota)
119 Ibid
made away before the government share could be fixed\textsuperscript{120}. Tod’s observation obviously suffered from exaggeration as he called it ‘pillage’. However, the evidence of pilferage in state records of 18\textsuperscript{th} century suggests that it was not baseless.

Selling the village’s trees was another source for making some quick money. In \textit{mauza} Mundala patel Dama sold the Khejra tree of his field, without the permission in c. 1709\textsuperscript{121}. \textit{Mali} Ganga Ram quietly sold the Keekar tree of a state garden in c. 1695\textsuperscript{122}. Some tried to catch fish, like \textit{dhobi} (washermen) Mahaulya. Since, it was his job to be on the bank of the river, he could do it without being noticed\textsuperscript{123}. Not only the state but even the villagers had to suffer it at times. One of the \textit{malis} sold vegetables from the fields of others\textsuperscript{124}. Sukhya and Sulya of \textit{mauza} Tekhra lifted cattle from village and sold it\textsuperscript{125}. The state tried to deal with individual methods of cheating the system and causing a loss of revenue for making life easier by imposing heavy penalties. In the case of cheating the state the penalty could be much higher for a patel as compared to an ordinary peasants or menial. The underlying assumption being that to maintain the channel of surplus extraction a strong hold was necessary on the local administrative machinery. However, in offences committed against on individual a discriminatory system was adopted. A Brahmin could be treated lightly than a low caste person. However if he treated the \textit{sahnas} roughly, he was shown no consideration. A Gujargaud Pandit was ordered to leave the village for being harsh to the \textit{sahna}\textsuperscript{126}.

In certain situations, migration was also used as a form of resistance, although it was always a last resort. In many cases, peasants, artisans and

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{120} \textit{A A R II}, op. Cit p. 434
  \item \textsuperscript{121} \textit{Firohi hasil}, s. 1766, K.B 1/66; \textit{Likhant of patel Deva of mauza} Gandhipali, Asadh vadi 7, s. 1767, K.B. 1/67
  \item \textsuperscript{122} \textit{Toji kotwali chautra shahar} Kota, s. 1752, K.B. 1/19
  \item \textsuperscript{123} \textit{Toji kotwali chautra shahar} Rampura, s. 1827 K.B. 15
  \item \textsuperscript{124} \textit{Toji shahar} Kota, op. cit
  \item \textsuperscript{125} Ibid
\end{itemize}
menials threatened to migrate but agreed to stay back if their grievance was removed. A peasant Beniram decided to migrate because he had been subjected to *khainchal* of *baithi-begar* inspite of being exempt from it. The *nais* of various villages of *pargana* Baran threatened to migrate due to *khanichal* of various types. However, in both these cases, no actual migration took place upon reassurance against such *khainchal*. A scrutiny of actual migrations (as a form of protest) shows that these were of different types and for different reasons. In some cases the state was informed in advance about the migration, especially when the person was convinced about genuineness of his reason for migration. For instance, a *patel* of *mauza* Sanija Bawri had migrated away because the *hasil* of pateli in that village was too low in comparison to the amount payable as *peshkash* for pateli. Obviously he had resorted to migration only when all other efforts to convince the state to reduce the *peshkash* must have failed. However, he was soon called back on the assurance of reduction in he amount of *peshkash*. Such migrations were generally to a nearby village. There are no references of collective migration against any form of harassment. Another type of migrations were those which were to an unknown destination in order to avoid open confrontation and these were generally in the form of flight. Such migrations were resorted to, generally to avoid payment of *‘dand’* for committing some offence against state or village society. For instance, Dhakar peasants found guilty of concealment of his crops was caught and ordered to pay rupees 20 as *muda*, but he fled away from the village. As a punishment, the amount of *muda* was to be realised from the village. The village itself was in distress and therefore, not in a position to pay, but the amount of penalty was neither reduced nor set aside. *A parwana* that was sent to a *bohra* to give *khai beej* loans to the peasants of this village shows that, the state

126 *Likhant of Pandit Teela, Jeth sudi 7, s. 1789, K.B. 1/127 : A Sahna was posted in the village to guard the standing crops in order to ensure that peasants did not cheat the state by stealing the grains before *lata*.
127 *Durjan Sal to hawalgar of Digodh, Asadh vadi 7, s. 1787, K.B 1/124
128 *Umed Singh to Nais of kasba Baran, Chait vadi 4, s. 1846 K.B 3/3
129 *Durjan Sal to patel of mauza Sanija Bawri, Asadh sudi 9, s. 1808, K.B. 1/135*
extended help to the village but made it pay the full amount of penalty. It can be inferred from this case that, it was a situation of distress, which, compelled one of the peasants to resort to concealment of crops, and unable to pay penalty for it, he took to flight. Thus individual solutions to common problems were not unknown. Many of the patels also resorted to flight to find individual solutions. For instance, patel of mauza Gugalhedi fled away to avoid paying the “dand” imposed upon him. Although, the cause of the dand has not been mentioned in the documents. His zamins (guarantors) were asked to produce him. Therefore, he surrendered some of his moveable possession through them in order to settle the ‘dand’. Obviously he had managed to reach a place where the orders of Kota chiefs were not directly enforceable. Similarly, patel Bachu of mauza Kurahad fled away for fear of ‘dand’ in such haste that most of his assets were left behind and these were ordered to be confiscated. The villagers were instructed not to conceal his assets or to give him shelter in any way. Thus, if the migration was caused by any excess on part of state or local officials, process of reconciliation and resettlement was initiated, to avoid escalation of the situation any further and to retain the confidence of the raiti. However, if the migration was in the form of flight to escape punishment for violation of customary norms or for cheating the state, it was treated severely to prevent it from becoming a general trend.

Another well known practice amongst the peasants and artisans was to sell their women and children. It was related to various situations of distress. The remorse of a peasant on hearing the clouds roar became proverbial, as he had been forced to sell his wife only a little while ago for a handful of

130 Bheem Singh to hawalgir of mauza Digodh and patel Lakha, Asadh vedi 10, s. 1771, K.B 1/276 (Kota)
131 Likhant of patel Pura of mauza Gugalhedi, Asadh sudi 4, s. 1761 K.B. 1/47
132 Likhant of patel, patwari of mauza Kurahad, Aghan vadi 5, s. 1766, K.B. 1/66
133 Toji Kotwali Chautra Shahar Kota, op.cit recorded the sale of several women and children. A Dhakar peasant sold his wife for rupees 2.25, a tamoli sold his two daughter for rupees 2.25, a mali sold his daughter for rupees 2, a Gujar sold his daughter for rupee 1, another Gujar sold his daughter for rupees 2nd even a Muslim sold his daughter to another muslim for just half a rupee.
grains, due to failure of rains\textsuperscript{134}. It was considered to be perfectly normal and legitimate to resort to such sale. The state realised a cess known as \textit{chuthan} on all such sales\textsuperscript{135}. The documentary evidence about sale of women and children shows that almost all of them were either, from artisans or poor peasant families. There are no references to sale of women or children of menial communities like \textit{chamars}. It was the socio-economic obligation the menials to render \textit{begar} to the village population and state, for which they received a handful of grains to remain alive. They were the reserve labour force of the village. As a result, even though they lived in worst conditions they could not resort to sale of their women and children.

The most visible and violent forms of resistance were adopted primarily, by Meenas and Bheels whose position in the region had suffered as a result of consolidation of Hada polity. Inspite of some efforts made by the Hada polity to assimilate and pacify them, the two could never be completely reconciled to the Hada rule. However, the forms of resistance adopted by them varied because of the difference in their economic interests and mode of subsistence. Establishment of Hada rule in 14\textsuperscript{th} century by subjugating Meenas of Bundi and Bheels of Kota had lead to colonisation of new areas and spread of agriculture. It spear headed appearance of many new peasant communities such as Dhakar, Kirad, Keer, Thori, Jat and a shift towards agriculture by Gujar and Ahir pastoralist in the region. The Hada polity was able to provide political protection to the peasants who had the means to clear forests and required skill to develop new agricultural settlements. The process appears to be a fairly long one and went on even up to early 18\textsuperscript{th} century. Therefore, assertion of the right of Hadas to rule, intricately related to the process of spread of agricultural mode of resource utilization in the region had three broad implications. Firstly, it facilitated emergence of a large class of peasant proprietors and patels involved in agricultural production as well as a class of \textit{himayatis} through the process of redistribution of agricultural surplus. Secondly, it lead to marginalisation of the \textit{bhumia} claims of the Meenas who

\textsuperscript{134} K.L Sahal, \textit{Rajasthan Kahavaten}, p. 14
had started shifting to agriculture prior to the Hada conquest of the region. Thirdly, it posed a serious threat to the tribal mode of resource use due to extensive deforestation in the process of agricultural expansion.

The Meenas had started shifting towards agricultural mode of resource use much before the Hada conquest. Therefore, they considered themselves to be the *bhumi*as and had begun to claim the *ksatriya* status by 14th century. Subjugation of Meena polity by the Hadas graphically described by Nainsi as "*bhumia sara kut maria*", wiped out their so called claim to *ksatriya* status and marginalised their position in the region. This paved the way for new agricultural settlement in the areas dominated by the Meenas. It does not mean that Meenas lost their hold on land completely. They continued to live in the region as peasant proprietors and were in a dominant position in scores of village of *pargana* Baran and to a lesser extent in *pargana* Nandgaon. Their representatives enjoyed pateli right and played an important role in the process of colonisation and expansion of area under cultivation. Inspite of these efforts to conciliate the Meenas, they could never be completely pacified by the Hadas.

The British administrators noted that the Meenas were "expert plunderers" and dacoity was their "pleasure and past time." Tod on his journey from Bundi to Jehazpur, has observed about the Meenas of Khairad that, they were "for ages terror of the country" and "had studded the plains with cenotaphs of Haras fallen in defending their goods and chattels against their inroads." He felt that, these conflicts with Meenas were an assertion of the axiom that " the right in the soil belongs to him who first cleared and tilled the land."

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135 *Toji Kotwali Chautra Shahar* Kota, op.cit
136 See the chapters, The Hada Principality of the thesis for a detailed discussion
137 Nainsi, *Khyaat* I, p. 100
138 Bheem Singh to patel of *mauza* Barohalya for conferring pateli 10 *biswas* on Tara meena of Sadhalya *gobra*, Jeth vadi 9, s. 1766, K.B 1/61; *Khate-pargana* Barsanaa *ka Agor ke hawala* ka K.B. 3 contain many orders for conferring pateli on meenas.
139 *I G O I*, pp. 288-89 and 372
140 *A A R II*, pp. 539-40
141 Ibid
Rajput conquerors "claimed and received tribute but if he tried to enforce more he was brought to his senses by various mode of self defense, incendiaries, or abandonment of the lands in a body"\textsuperscript{142}. Though, this observation was bout the Meenas of Khairad but such methods of resistance were far more wide spread a century ago. Even those who lived within Hadauti as peasant proprietors and patels tried to question the process of marginalisation by challenging the Hada supremacy in various ways.

Kheeva Meena of mauza Soti in pargana Digodh, was notorious for his regular network of lifting cattle from adjacent villages to be sold in the villages situated in the basin of river Parwan\textsuperscript{143}. Raja Salim Singh, a powerful thakur of the area shielded his activity, and he had succeeded in gaining considerable assets and position in his own village. The support of a local thakur combined with the caste and genealogical ties had entrenched him to the extent of ignoring the parwana sent by the Kota ruler warning him against theft. As a result, some of the local Hada jagirdars and Kotwal of the pargana planned an operation against Kheeva Meena, in which he was killed and his assets were seized. The report which was sent by the kotwal shows that the village sympathy was clearly with Kheeva, although, outwardly they expressed regrets. Therefore, the local officials recommended that a pagh (turban) should be sent for his brother along with a ‘dilasa ka parwana’ for him and the villagers so that he could take up the task of jameet in Kheev’s place. It was necessary to conciliate Kheeva’s family and relatives. Kheeva’s killers also deterred from arresting Kheeva’s mother inspite of her raising an alarm to rally help for Kheeva at the time of attack. The attack on Kheeva had taken place in the middle of night just before dawn, but no one from the village dared to come out to help him, except one of Kheeva’s brother-in-law perhaps, because they could foresee the futility of such an effort. However, they made no secret of their relations with Kheeva nor pretended to disown him. Many of them even claimed the goods confiscated from Kheeva’s house on the pretext

\textsuperscript{142} Ibid
of having lent them to Kheeva. Since, there was no way to ascertain the truth, the officials sought orders from above. Laying claims genuine or motivated on the seized assets of Kheeva by the villagers was also a form of resistance, as it amounted to harassing the killers of Kheeva. They wanted to take advantage of a situation in which they could gain petty items without paying for them, for example the malis of the village demanded two kudals and one phavra (agricultural implements) a Meena demanded his cattle, his brother demanded one of the cotts, and an iron drum. Thus, not only the Meenas of Khairad but even of Kota were involved in dacoity and plunder in 18th century. This involvement was not just as 'pleasure and past time', because Kheeva's episode shows that he had succeeded in developing a regular network for carrying out theft and dacoity, taking advantage of the contradictions between the local thakurs, as well as by rallying local support. It was an effort to develop some kind of local authority and power by gaining resources through theft and dacoity. However the Meenas could never go beyond 'banditry' (unlike the Bheels who rose in a danga) because of their stakes in the agrarian economy. They could not think of survival without agriculture and settled village life. Acceptance of the broad framework of Hada polity by the majority was in order to maintain hold on the fertile land under their ploughs, and to retain the institutional means of access to agrarian resources in the form of pateli and bhom, inspite of dormant political ambitions. As a result the restlessness of a Meena's mind, at times posed a threat to the peace and order of an entire village. Meena Rewa of mauza Neewali was declared to be an 'oot' (vagabound) and his possessions were seized which consisted of a cot, a cow, some food grains and khurpa and dantli etc. It implied that the fellow had become a threat not only to the family and village also to the authorities, although he had not committed any offence, which was

143 The report sent by Pandit Binayag Ram and Kotwal Akhram to Khawas Sri Ramji and Chaudhary Hargovind, Phagun vadi 9, s. 1782, K.B 1/115
144 The political ambition of Meenas was reflected in their love for 'Pol' (a massive entrance gate) and horse which were considered to be symbols of power and prestige.

145 Pargana Barod ka Chautra ki Firohi, s. 1760-62, K.B 1/37
punishable. Therefore, to discredit him and to check the people from paying any attention to what he said or did was declared to be an 'oot' which amounted to be branded as irresponsible and worthless. Thus, the Meenas of whom a majority was peasant proprietors and some of the even held pateli rights did not adopt any open or collective form of resistance against the state.

The Bheels inhabited the hill range from Kota to Manoharthana in Hadauti, although, the actual extent of Bheel area was far more beginning from the hills of Mewar to the hills spread upto Narmada. They lived in scattered settlements known as pal. A Bheel considered himself to be the lord of a large area, which included the jungle around his small field, and the tekri (high ground) where he had his hut. Several such areas occupied by Bheel households combined to make a 'phala' and several such phalas combined to make a village known as 'pal'. Each 'phala' had a hereditary headman known as phalvi, while he headman of each 'pal' was known as Gameti147. Thus a Bheel village had a different physiorgraphy. Instead of being a small cluster it was quite a spread out settlement. This difference was mainly due to the difference in the mode of resource utilisation between the Bheels and other peasants.

Even as late as 19th century the main forms of agriculture which majority of the Bheels practiced was 'walar' or 'walra'148. Some of the Bheels had taken up to full time cultivation in the low lands by 18th century. Walar consisted of "cutting down a patch of forest and burning the trees on ground in order to clear room for field which is mannered by ashes. After an year or two the soil is exhausted and another felling takes place"149. They grew small crops for subsistence through walar field but depended largely on jungle produce for a living. The contrast between the Bheels and other peasants is embodied in a

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147 G O I, p. 43
148 Ibid
149 Interview, D.C Meena
popular saying that, when a Bheel walks his eyes are fixed at a hill while a patel walks with his eyes upon the land under his feet.\textsuperscript{150}

This mode of resources use was severely affected in process of development of settled agriculture on the fringes of Bheels dominated areas. The bloodshed accompanying this process is testified by the several commemoration stones of the Hada warriors who died fighting against the original inhabitants of the region, between 14\textsuperscript{th} to 17\textsuperscript{th} centuries, in the villages adjacent to the hill range dominated by the Bheels. These stones are still held in reverence by the village population suggesting that it was through such encounters that the land could be cleared of forests and used for agriculture. The Kota fort itself is situated at a sight, which was associated with the slaughter of Kotea Bheel. One of the main peasant communities who settled down in the Bheel dominated areas was Dhakars. A branch of Dhakars is still known as Malwa Dhakars, suggesting that they had migrated from Malwa towards these new areas.\textsuperscript{151} Dhakar cultivators who were be found not only in Hadauti but also in Mewar were akin to the Meenas according to Shyamal das.\textsuperscript{152} So these Dhakar peasants could have been those Meena groups who took up cultivation between 14\textsuperscript{th} to 17\textsuperscript{th} centuries on the land snatched from the Bheels. Significantly, the Meenas thought consider themselves to be superior to the Dhakars.\textsuperscript{153}

Even after the repression which followed the onslaught against Kotea Bheel in 14\textsuperscript{th} century, the Bheels of Khatakheri (Manohar thana) had rallied in c. 1660 under the leadership of Chakrsen Bheel who was hounded by Bhagwant Singh and the Bheel fortress of Ekelgarh was captured, though, Chakrsen managed to escape.\textsuperscript{154} Yet, the Bheels could not be completely subjugated. The areas where the Bheels continued to resist were Chechat, Awa, Suket,

\textsuperscript{150} Unsurveyed Memorial Stones of mauza Rawtha,District Kota.
\textsuperscript{151} Interview, D.C Meena
\textsuperscript{152} Veer Vinod I, op. cit
\textsuperscript{153} Interview, D.C Meena
\textsuperscript{154} Khyat I, op. Cit p. 103, A A R II, op. Cit p. 411 R.S Mathur, Relations of Hadas with Mughal Emperors 1568-1720, Delhi 1986
Kanwas, Ralaita, Bakaini and Durra. Barely after two decades, the Bheels were reported to be looting and even murdering the traders passing through Mancharpura ravines\textsuperscript{155}. By c. 1727 dacoities by Bheels were reported not only from jungles but even from villages of pargana Awa. They dared to reach up to the gorva of some villages\textsuperscript{156}. Some of the Bheels who were caught by the local Rajput jagirdars were made to give an undertaking against 'chori-chagan'\textsuperscript{157}. The political overtones behind such acts come out clearly from this undertaking. The Bheels referred to Hadauti as an alien political entity as they vouched not to harm Hadauti or to nurture any will against it. They further stated that they would expect 'dad' (justice) only if they rendered 'chakari' (service) and in lieu of this service even if they were given handful of floor like alms, they would receive it with both hands stretched out. They would be content to live on 'jhuthi dal' from 'tabela' (left over of horse feed from a stable) that, too if they serve the 'loga' (people). They would consider the 'Maharao' (chief of Kota) to be the lord of their family and it would be up to him who is their 'data' (the one who gives) to feed or to strave them. The undertaking ended with 'Long live the greatness of Maharao'\textsuperscript{158}. The political overtones of Bheel resistance emerge clearly in this petition. First that they had neither, been able to accept Hadauti as a state, nor did they consider themselves to be the subjects with any kind of defined social status. The very tone of this undertaking was different from the petitions sent by various sections of the population which contained an appeal for justice against something which was considered to be a deviation or violation of the prevailing norms. There was always an underlying expectation that the state would uphold these norms and claims and would not to allow the situation to drift. Where as in the under taking given by the Bheels the tone was that of the people who had been vanquished and who had no claim to put forward or any expectation to be nurtured. The language was that of acceptance of any

\textsuperscript{155} Likhant of Cheepa Kisna's wife and son, Chait sudi 3, s. 1755, K.B 1/30
\textsuperscript{156} Likhant of Bhai Nawal Singh, Baisakh sudi 4, s. 1784, of Raja Hari Singh, Baisakh Vadi 7, S. 1784. K.B. 1/121-133
\textsuperscript{157} Likhant of Rawat Ajbo, Bapa and Gaga Bheel, Baisakh Vadi 14, s. 1784, K.B. 1/121-133
\textsuperscript{158} Ibid
thing and every thing. Whether it was drafted for them by the officials or was their own statement it could not have been heart felt. It was a show they had decided to put up in order to survive a situation in which they had been caught. The whole ethos was to deceive the enemy, to gain time and to wait for an appropriate moment for challenging the enemy once again. The different stages of Bheel resistance also confirm that the Bheels had decided not to succumb. In late 17th century they looted only on the thick hilly forest routes, in early 18th century they dared to reach up to the villages of Hadauti but in the later half of 18th century the rose up in what was described as a ‘danga’ (riot), in the records159.

The Hadas had tried to win over the Bheels by giving them land for cultivation in lieu of chakri of protecting ‘rahabat’ and khed-bahar160 (roads and halting points and village exteriors). A person rendering such chakri was known as sasri161. As a privilege, the wells sunk by Bheels on their fields were also granted to them,162 but the Bheels could never be appeased. Their customary right to collect chauki-ki-kaudi (a customary realisation from the travelers passing through the Bheel areas) had also been up held. Yet, at times they disallowed any traveler in the Durra (pass), even if a parwana to this effect had been issued by the Kota chief163. It was a common practice for a Bheel not to pay the cesses or levies, to indulge in thefts,164 to give up chakri and to disappear in the forest165. Some of them who disappeared after living as agriculturist for a while, incited trouble in the villages which they had deserted. Some migrated towards a non-Hada territory, like Khinchiwada to trouble the

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159 Zalim Sing to Paswan Kesho Rai, Bhadva sudi 15, s. 1847, K.B. 1/68
160 Umed Singh to Bheel Jassa, Sawan sudi 15, s. 1845, K.B. 3/2
161 Umed Singh to patel patwari of kasba Digodh, Bhadva sudi 15, s. 1845, K.B. 3; Bheels were often appointed as sasri, see, Durjan Sal to hawalghir of pargana Ghati, Jeth sudi 12, s. 1799, K.B 1/135
162 Umed Singh’s order to patel patwari kasba Digodh, op. cit
163 Umed Singh to hawalghir of Bakaini ka tela ka, Asadh sudi 9, s. 1846, K.B. 3/2
164 Umed Singh to Bheel Cheetarya, Phagun vadi 7, s. 1845 K.B 3/2
165 Umed Singh to Rav Nadya Ram, Jeth sudi 5, s. 1845, it warned him to disappear in Jhamra forest valley when called for service in fayfata, K.B. 3/1
village of Hada territory. The climax of Bheel resistance was the 'danga' in late 18th century. In c. 1790, the Bheels were up in arms against the Hadas at Ralaita. This danga coincided with the policy of expansion of area under cultivation pursued vigoursly by Zalim Singh.

Resistance of the Bheels against the Hada state was directed against its policy of agricultural expansion which deprived them of their natural habitat and mode of survival. It compelled them to resort to theft as a mode of subsistence on many occasions. However, disallowing travelers in the Durra, and the attacks on the security points were clearly a manifestation of their hostility to the Hada state. They were not resisting the heavy state demand or an oppressive state official but the very claim of the Hadas to rule over them. The state took a strong view of both the thefts committed by the Bheels as well as their repeated armed uprising against the Hada rule. To check the thefts the thakurs were asked to take strong steps to catch the Bheel and to hand over them to the village authorities. The undertaking given by thakurs to this effect were couched in language of physical assault of 'breaking hands, legs and neck, of the Bheels. To suppress the Bheels resistance fifty gunmen troops were posted at several places, with instruction to call more if required from near by security points. Thus the Bheels succeeded in combining their every day resistance with open struggle against the Hadas on several occasions.

Thus the disputes and tensions engulfing the rural society were multifarious as well as multi-angular. Some originated from the long-standing contradictions between the different modes of resource utilization while the others were between the karsa and the artisans and menials and between the himayatis and the karsa. Significantly, in 18th century many of the tensions

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166 Umed Singh to Cholya Bheel's son, Sawan vadi 6, s. 1846, K.B. 3/2; Araz pargana Suket ki s. 1840, K.B 3/1, stated that Bheel Sama had 200 beeghas of Land as sasri but pays not even a kaudi and incites thefts.
167 Zalim Singh to Paswan Keso Rai, op. Cit.
168 Likhant of Bhai Nawal Singh and Raja Hari Singh, op.cit
were not only between the various sections but also within the different sections of the rural society. Most glaring were the growing conflicts amongst the himayatis, who were the beneficiaries of the existing system and who in order to enhance their share and position, were trying to encroach upon each other’s share. The dispute between the *jagirdar* and the *dohli* holders, or between the *jagirdar* and *chaudhary* and *kanungo* were of this nature. Such conflicts rocked the local authority structure from within. The state tried to check such encroachments on each other’s share and to retain the balance. The disputes about land undermined the inner cohesion of *karsa*, as a community. Increasing rivalry over pateli rights and infighting amongst the patels weakened the local mechanism for taking decisions and solving disputes as it divided the *karsa*. The highhandedness and corruption alienated the patels from the *karsa*. Thus the inequalities fostered by the state policies created and fanned rivalries. Not only the long existing contradictions got sharpened but new jealousies and rivalries were also growing. For instance, even the lowest ranking section of the rural society, the *chamars* had rivalries and serious disputes about the right to collect skins of dead animals in different areas.169

The village society failed to evolve any mechanism to check the corruption, highhandedness and transgression of authority at the village level. The collective decision making by the *karsa* got confined to *jameet* of the plough units and bargaining about the revenue rates. Role of the *panchas* also remained limited to imposing norms of social behavior in the village. Even when the *panchas* who were considered to be the community and village representatives intervened in the disputes about land or administrative matters, they could not afford to ignore interests of the state.170 Most of the

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169 Durjan Sal to three *chamars* of *kasba* Awa, they had the *mukata* for collecting dead animal skins for rupees 35 in s. 180, K.B. 108; In *kasba* Rampura the *bola* *chamars* had a dispute about collecting the skins in which the state intervened to divide the area between the two groups, Umed singh to all the *bola* *chamars*, Posh vadi 14, s. 1841, K.B. 3/2

170 For instance in *mauza* Batavada, The *panchas* were involved in the decision to punish the *khadi* who had tried to cheat the state by getting his *kholi* field assessed as *beeda*, likhant of patel and *khadi* Dhanna, op. cit
time final decision was left to the state as it had come to be accepted as 'dhani' (owner). Success of the state in upholding an unequal distribution of economic resources and social discrimination had been greatly facilitated by the institution of panchas, enjoying customary authority for imposing fines and penalties in cases of violation of social norms. Usurpation of this autochthonous institution by the state paved the way for perpetuation of an essentially discriminatory social system. The state policy to deal with the tension and conflicts pervading the rural society was dual. Whenever, the state interest was affected directly, it adopted a strong policy of crushing the opposition and imposing severe punishments but if these tensions and conflicts affected only an individual's interest, it adopted a policy of patching up, seeking undertakings, issuing warnings, reprimanding the offenders or inflicting mild punishments. The nature of intervention in the routine affairs was directed either, towards perpetuation of the old institutional practices or, resorting to mukata of pateli and patwari dastur. Increasing use of mukata of pateli and patwari dastur had become a source of generating income. Gradually, the state alone had come to be looked upon as the sole authority which could set right the highhandedness and corruption of even the community representatives. The state was accepted as 'dhani', although, very often the two contending parties tried to influence the decision making process by offers of nazrana and peshkash. Thus at some level there was a realisation that the state could be manipulated either way even if in principle it was supposed to uphold the tradition and custom. The state found itself increasingly answerable for safeguarding the interests and monitoring the

171 several popular proverbs reflect the loss of faith in the panchas and their usurpation by the powerful, for instance chyar danga chaudhary paanch danga panch, Ji ke ghar mein che dang wo panch gine na dhanch or
dol jisa panchol or
Pancha aur masalchi dou ulti reet, Aur dikhave channo aap andhere beech. or
Paanch panch chata patwari khulla kes churave nari, Phirto girto datan krare jan ke paap mein keera mare
Kanodia, op. cit, pp. 201, 255, 301
Sahal, op. cit p. 240
activities of the various sections of the village society. Yet, the state could never completely wipe out the divergent and conflicting value systems which, continued to survive. Several such heroes and symbols who represented a different value system, continued to be revered and eulogised.