CONCLUSIONS

The Marathas became prominent in the Deccan under Shivaji's leadership and they are also credited to have successfully challenged the mighty Mughal Empire, ultimately paving the way for its collapse. Among the successor states of the 18th century India, the Marathas under the leadership of Peshwas were one of the most successful and widespread powers of the period. Maratha Power expanded beyond the Narmada River as they conquered Khandesh, Malwa and Bundelkhand from the Mughals through a series of campaigns by late 1730s. Central India emerged as a base for further Marathas military' ventures in the neighboring regions of Rajasthan as well as tracts north of Chambal and Yamuna rivers extending from Mathur-Agra belt to Allahabad. From their base in Central Indian, Shinde and Holkar raised their military power and revived Maratha domination in Rajasthan and North India after the shocking defeat in the third battle of Panipat in 1761. They re-established the Maratha authority by regaining the lost Maratha positions in several phases. The Maratha central leadership supported their campaigns against Jodhpur and Jaipur. Shinde in particular combined diplomacy and military power to overcome the resistance to the Maratha in Rajasthan. His association with the kota regent Zalim Singh Jhala helped him in strengthening his position against the rulers of Jaipur and Jodhpur.

In Rajasthan the Marathas had to deal with the powerful local elites who were militarily powerful and had strong local support. They also enjoyed the advantage of the local terrain and their safe strongholds. Whether these were the three big Rajput states of Jodhpur, Jaipur and Udaipur or the Jats of Bharatpur, all were militarily strong and they had larger territorial and political ambitions. In Rajasthan Maratha power was thinner as compared to Malwa. Here even military threats were not always effective and larger military gatherings and the support of some local elites tilted the balance in favour of the Marathas. The total domination of the Marathas over Jaipur and Jodhpur was achieved very late when Mahadji Shinde employed European mercenaries and attacked these states which had for long ignored the Maratha demand for tribute. Kota, Ajmer, Mathura and Jhansi served as the Maratha center from where they used their
network of local allies and their own forces penetrated into the territories of the Rajput rulers. Mahadji Shinde by allying with the Mughal emperor Shah Alam and acting as his protector succeeded in attaining supremacy in North India from the mid 1780 onward. In Rajasthan Maratha power was felt most strongly in the 1780s and 1790s when Mahadji Shinde decided to take military action against the Rajputs to force them to clear arrears of tribute and take possession of the areas earlier promised by rulers of Jaipur and Jodhpur. During the Lalsot campaign in 1787 and the battles of Patan and Merta in 1790 the Marathas had to face one of the mightiest combinations of Rajput forces. Jaipur and Jodhpur offered stiff resistance to the Marathas despite rivalry and disputes between neighboring Rajput states like Udaipur, Jodhpur, Jaipur, Kota and Bundi. Equally threatening was the disunity between the Rajput nobility of each of these states and important office holders in the court regarding the issue of power sharing and succession to the gaddi. They were also divided over the Maratha affairs. This weakened the position of the rulers in each of these states when facing the Marathas. Mahadji Shinde crushed the Rajput challenge by raising a European style force under the command of European mercenaries De Baigne and Perron who made great deference in the battles against the Rajputs.

Interaction between Malwa and Rajasthan began with the appointment of Sawai Jai Singh of Amber (Jaipur) as the Mughal subedar of Malwa for the periods 1713 - 17, 1729-30 and finally between 1732-1737. Economic ties between Ujjain and Jaipur also made a beginning, as Sawai Jai Singh encouraged traders and bankers from Ujjain to settle down in Jaipur. There are references to many trading families from Ujjain who had migrated to Jaipur in the Kharita records of Shinde and Holkar. Signs of trade and commerce linking markets and trading centers in Rajasthan and Maratha ruled central India during the second half of the eighteenth century are quite evident which seem to have been driven by military needs of the Marathas.

However, detailed studies of the economic linkage between these two regions have not been fully explored as yet. The Maratha presence on the border of Rajasthan caused anxiety among the Rajput rulers as to the future plans of the
Marathas for territorial expansion. Sawai. Jai Singh had no illusions regarding the seriousness of the Maratha threat to Rajasthan once they made entry into Malwa. This is evident from his unsuccessful attempts to arrest the growth of Maratha power in Malwa as the Mughal governor of the Suba, his attempt to organize Rajput resistance to effectively face their incursions in the bordering Rajput states and the need to call a conference of the Rajput rulers at Hurda in 1734 with the objective to check the Maratha advancement in Malwa so as to ensure the security of their states. In the 1750s when the Marathas had strongly entrenched themselves in Rajasthan, and in the wake of their persistent pressure upon Mewar, Jodhpur and Jaipur, again in 1752 the rulers of these states entered into correspondence and thought of pursuing an aggressive policy to check their entry into Rajasthan and to confront them at the bank of river Narmada.

However, it also remained a wishful thinking. Attempts at organizing a united front to face the Maratha threat continued in varying degree at times devoid of total commitment and sincerity as is evident from the growing apprehension among the Rathors of Jodhpur whether or not to take for granted support of the Kachhawas of Jaipur in such joint ventures. The Rajputs remained a divided house over the issue of Marathas notwithstanding attempts on part of the Jaipur and Jodhpur rulers to attract other Rajput chiefs in the formation of the anti-Maratha front. The rulers of Kota, Machheri, Karauli and the Chandrawats of Salumber in Mewar remained useful allies of the Marathas. Whenever the collective action against the Marathas was conceived as in the case of Jodhpur and Jaipur and between Mewar and Jodhpur, the mistrust among the Rajput rulers and clash of interest in other spheres such as between Jodhpur and Jaipur over the possession of Ajmer and between Mewar and Jodhpur over Godwad seriously hampered the effectiveness of the resistance as and when it was offered.

The Rajputs resorted to both passive as well as armed resistance to face the Maratha challenge, at times using both the methods simultaneously. When
the Marathas under the leadership of Jayappa Shinde were invited to Marwar to settle the succession dispute between Ram Singh and Bijay Singh, Jodhpur officials who were allied with Bijay Singh tried to entice Shinde to switch sides by flattering him that he is capable of taking over Delhi at will. However, Shinde was not impressed and he did not desert Ram Singh. Merwar Khyat admires him for having proved to be man of his words. Whenever faced with the prospect of Maratha invasion the Rajput rulers hoped to resolve the problem either through negotiations or by taking to sword or using both the methods. Both Vijay Singh of Jodhpur and Pratap Singh of Jaipur decided to try out these options before the battles of Patan and Merta.

In addition to war and diplomacy the Rajputs also tried to mobilize popular support against the Marathas by soliciting the services of Charans and Bhats who composed and sang anti-Maratha songs in the villages highlighting the sufferings caused to the people by the Marathas with a view to inciting them against the Marathas. It is worth attempting to locate these songs, which can be used to construct perceptions of the Maratha attacks as articulated by the bards. Having exhausted all these avenues, in desperation the Rajputs also consulted astrologers. Ojha Someshwar was invited to suggest divine means that could be used to put a stop to the Maratha advancement. Following Ojha's advise regular prayers" were organized, Brahmans were requested to recite Gayatri hymn, charitable offerings were made to them, and in 1790 Sat Chandi Yagya was performed in Jodhpur in the hope that it would prove effective to check any further movement of the Marathas.

Overt manifestation of hostility between the two sides, however, did not blur the possibility of military co-operation between the Marathas and their major adversaries the rulers of Jaipur and Jodhpur. The Maratha sardars tried several times to seek military support from Jaipur and Jodhpur in their campaigns against other powers. In 1752 Malhar Rao and Jayappa Shinde requested Madho Singh for military help as desired by the Peshwa in support of the Maratha campaign in the Deccan to install Ghazi-ud-din Khan as the Nizam of Hyderabad. The Marathas and Madho Singh also cooperated with each other
against the Jats of Bharatpur. Mahadji Shinde expressed solidarity with the Rajputs against the Jats of Bharatpur. Madho Singh favourably responded to Holkar's request for military support against the Jats. Holkar also endorsed the solidarity shown by Prithvi Singh of Jaipur to Najib Khan. Mahadji also sought military cooperation of Jaipur in 1783 against Mohammad Beg Hamdani. Despite these friendly overtures the Jaipur rulers were reluctant to get involved in the Maratha campaigns either in the north or south right from the beginning till the 1780s. Also in the battle of Panipat in 1761 the Rajputs followed the policy of wait and watch. A Rathor contingent under the leadership of Jeev Raj was dispatched by Bijay Singh of Jodhpur to join the Marathas in the battle but the Rathors simply watched the situation from a safe distance. Resentment of the Rajputs proved costly to the Marathas as they could not manage to get the support of Jaipur. Even after the battle of Panipat the Rajputs of Jaipur and Jodhpur were reluctant to get involved in the military ventures of the Marathas. In 1781 when Mahadji Shinde was confronting the English, he requested Jodhpur for help. Kripa Ram Joshi the vakil of Jodhpur strongly pleaded for a favourable response to Shinde arguing that we can en-cash this gesture in future. Reluctantly Bijay Singh agreed to send a hundi of Rs. 100,000 but refuse to render any effective armed help. Antagonism between the Rajputs and the Marathas in political sphere, however, did not blur diplomatic ties and social relations. Glimpses of goodwill and cooperation are visible and social and economic spheres. Numerous kharitas of invitation were sent to Jaipur rulers on occasions of marriage and other social functions in the Holkar family. On the occasion of the crowning ceremony of Madho Singh, Prithvi Singh and Pratap Singh the Peshwa, Shinde and Holkar dispatched horses, elephants and other gifts to Jaipur along with their representatives. Clothes were sent on the occasion of the marriage in Jaipur royal family too. Also the Maratha sardars, commanders and officials visiting the Jaipur court were given ceremonial welcome according to their status. These 50 years of Maratha domination in Rajasthan also witnessed presence of men from the Maratha ruled area at various Maratha centers of power in Rajasthan as soldiers, traders, officials in revenue.
administrative set up and pilgrims who frequented Shri Pohkarji (Pushkar). Mahadji Shinde took keen interest in promoting the Pushkar fair and urged the Jaipur ruler Pratap Singh to organize it properly every year and ask all traders to attend the fair and inform them about it. A large number of the Marathas who travelled from the Deccan to various places in North India passed through Jaipur. Why Rajasthan which was not so rich in resource like Malwa became the target of the Marathas? The Marathas made a formal entry into Rajasthan when they were invited and made party to the succession dispute for Jaipur throne between Ishwari Singh and Madho Singh after the death of Sawai Jai Singh in 1743. The Maratha involvement in Jodhpur also started on similar note after the death of Abhay Singh in 1749 as his son Ram Singh and Brother Bakht Singh were involved in a dispute over succession and Ram Singh decided to seek the Maratha intervention. The Maratha’s participation in the succession disputes of Jaipur and Jodhpur was the beginning of the long term domination of the Marathas over all the major Rajput clan states through demand for chauth, khandani and selective territorial acquisition. Unlike central India in Rajasthan Rajput rulers had well established state structure and revenue administration modeled on the Mughal Pattern over large territories. Here the Marathas did not put military pressure on the rulers for direct territorial annexation. Nor did they try to alter the existing structure of polity and revenue administration in the Rajput principalities. They were rather interested in extracting a share out of the income of the Rajput states by way of the demand of tribute or Khandani. Even in the pockets of territory handed over to the Marathas no attempt was made to lay a detailed revenue administrative network. They were simply interested in collecting the revenue from the areas placed under their charge. This was much easier method then laying a detailed revenue administration in a hostile territory. Inside Jaipur and Jodhpur territory whatever areas the Marathas had brought under their possession remained disturbed throughout the period of their occupation. Rampura, Tonk, Toda, Malpura, Sambhar, Ajmer and other territories were hotly contested due to the hostility of the local officials and Rajput bhomjars who resisted the Marathas control.
From a tactical point of view, the Maratha entry into Rajasthan could have been a first major step towards preparing the ground for control of Agra, Delhi and the Punjab area. In that case, the Rajput chieftains needed to be made friends rather than alienated and placed under heavy financial strain in the name of tribute etc. Unlike Malwa, Gujarat and Doab, Rajasthan was a deficit area, and many of the rulers had depended largely on the lucrative jagirs held as Mughal, mansabdars. The Mughal service also enabled them to offer gainful employment to their kins and clan men. Both Shinde and Holkar were enticed by the rival Rajput princes to support their cause in the succession disputes and their inability to fulfill promises that they had made to the Marathas complicated relations between the two sides which led to continued Maratha intervention. The growing exasperation and resentment of the Rajputs at the incessant demands of the Marathas found overt manifestation in the murder of about 5000 Marathas at Jaipur by the local people and followers of Madho Singh in 1751. The Marathas failed to understand the financial limitations and sentiments of the Rajputs who under duress had to promise a huge sum, much beyond their means, to save themselves from the Marathas. In order to counter the pressure of Maratha demands the Rajputs often bought time by making negotiations longer, paying only a fraction of the sum promised. Quite often the hundis sent to the Maratha sardars were not honored. Khande Rao wrote to Jaipur Diwan asking him to issue only valid hundis in further or wrote letters of protest to the Rajput rulers to Madho Singh to against delay in the payment of outstanding dues. There was always a huge gap between, demanded payment of outstanding dues and payment made in actual practice. The Rajputs made vague promise to pay rest of the amount in installments over next several years. Mahandji Shinde's kharita to Sawai Pratap Singh reminded him of outstanding dues of Rs. 63 lakhs to the Peshwa. He was warned to pay immediately otherwise he will have to face the Maratha army and there will be destruction of his country. It is quite evident from the khartias that despite constant pressure from the Marathas the successive Rajput rulers evaded the payment of outstanding dues to the Marathas.
Territorial disputes also persisted throughout the latter half of the 18th century as the Rajputs were reluctant to part with the territories promised to the Marathas for the collection of revenue in lieu of tribute without overtly defying the Marathas. Holkar family was to get control over Tonk, Toda, Malpura, Fagi, Barwara and Niwai from Madho Singh of Jaipur. Although he did not contest the Maratha claim but incited the local zamindars and revenue officials to resist the Maratha control. In pargana Tonk and Rampura Rajput bhomias never allowed any space to the Maratha Kamvsidars to settle the areas. Repeated pleas to the Jaipur rulers to restrain the bhomias and instruct them to cooperate could not change the attitude of the Rajput rulers and the bhomias. They never approved the presence of the Maratha officials in the villages and the resistance of the bhomias continued despite Holkar’s and Shinde’s repeated protest against the hostile attitude of the local elements. Shinde had to grant Sambhar in ijara to the traders due to persistent local resistance. In the face of these tactics of the Rajputs, the Marathas on many occasions could do nothing more than issuing veiled threat to the Rajput rulers. This raises the question of real material gains of the Marathas out of their military ventures in Rajasthan.

It may be suggested that in the Rajasthani sources there are two images of the Marathas, one as the invaders and other as the sole contestant for political supremacy. It is also interesting to note that despite antagonistic relationship between the Rajputs and the Maratha the Rajasthani sources offer more or less an objective account of the Maratha success in Rajasthan, their military superiority over the Rajputs and how they manifested their power vis-a-vis the Rajput rulers. In the context of 1750s the undisputed ascendancy of the Marathas and their growing strength are explicitly admitted.

The undercurrents of resentment against the Marathas are also evident from measures adopted by the Rajput states prohibiting any social interaction with the Marathas. In one such recorded instance of the year 1761 Pema Ahir, a resident of qusba Tonk was punished by the state for marrying his sister to Pancham Dikhni.
The anguish of a section among the Rajput elites, the high degree of their antipathy towards the Maratha power and dominance in Rajasthan is quite evident and its overt manifestation can be visualized from Bijay Singh's reaction when he came to know about the Maratha control over Delhi in 1789. Bijay Singh made it known to the Jaipur ruler about his intention of inviting Afghan ruler Taimur Shah and destroying Maratha power as none of the Muslim powers in north India is capable of defeating the Marathas. According to Bijay Singh Taimur Shah was dead against the Marathas. He wrote to the Afghan ruler that the Marathas were not only the enemy of Muslims but also of the Rajputs, and both Jaipur and Jodhpur would support the Afghan rulers' campaign against the Marathas. This highly surcharged outburst against the Marathas is a testimony to conflicting and inconsistent perceptions of the Marathas as they are seen as enemies of the Rajputs and at the same time their invincible position in contemporary politics is given due recognition.

Antipathi of the Rajputs towards the Marathas persisted long after the overthrow of the Maratha power and dominance in Rajasthan which is evident from the manner in which the ruler of Bikaner justified his stand to help the British East India Company in the uprising of 1857. He argued that the British were the savior of Rajputs from the reckless onslaught of the Marathas and now it is our moral responsibility to repay the old debt. It may be noted that Bikaner never witnessed any Maratha incursion despite the hostility of the Bikaner rulers towards the Marathas and their active military support to Jaipur and Jodhpur against the Marathas.