INTRODUCTION

The 18th century in Indian history has particular importance as it is considered to be an end if the era which is generally identified as medieval, while it also saw evident signs of the beginning of the modern period. We all know that in these two phases of our history there were vicissitudes bordering on turmoil and turbulence. How we characterize this turbulence is not the question that it is to be taken here. What is significant in this turbulence is that among the groups of our people whose role and presence are very much pronounced were also the Marathas of Western India. From the contemporary accounts we get many insights into the history of the expansion of the Maratha political power during this period.

There are two things which are to be noted in this connection. One is that biasness of the Mughal court historians and officials in the context of their dealings with the Marathas is obvious. Their own concerns undisputably influenced their perceptions of the Marathas who successfully challenged the Mughal authority. The result is that the Mughal accounts see only negative features of the Maratha movement. European accounts that we get for the period are predominantly British who had their own political agenda to portray a history of the time in a partition hue. Their politics of the building of their own power and state influenced their perception of the period. The image we get in their accounts is one of the darkness, total chaos and disorderliness. The colonial historians refuse to see that even where there is turbulence and chaos in any period of history there could be the possibility of its resolution and subsequent stability. In other words the period promised a good deal of positive features even though it was also marred with many negative features. It is the other side of the image that we get in some of the recent historical writings which view the developments in the 18th century from the perspective of the regions. In order to

obtain a better understating and balanced vision of the time we need to study the 18th century not merely in regional terms but in pan-Indian perspective so as to have a better understanding of interconnection between regional powers in pan-Indian context. This shift in approach to regional historiography will enable us to address such questions as to how other local and regional powers viewed the activities of the Marathas and how the people of other regions perceived the Marathas and Maharashtra and vice-versa. It was during this period that politically the Marathas came into contact with almost all North Indians powers, the Mughals, Afghans, Jats, Sikhs, Rajputs and Europeans.

The process of the Maratha state formation beginning with Shahji’s establishments of a de facto independent kingdom in Karnataka, Shivaji’s establishment of a Swarajya in defiance of both Bijapur and the mighty Mughal Empire culminating in the conquest of Delhi by the Maratha Sardars of the Peshwa in 1759 and the Maratha bid for the establishment of an all-India Empire is one of the most fascinating as well as puzzling phenomenon in late medieval India history. Among the successor states of the 18th century India, the Marathas under the leadership of the Peshwas were one of the most successful and widespread powers of the period. The Maratha power expanded beyond the Deccan as they conquered Khandesh, Malwa, Bundelkhand and Gujarat from the Mughals through a series of campaigns by late 1730’s. Central India emerged as a base for further Maratha military ventures in Rajasthan, Doab and Punjab upto Attock. From their base in central India, Shinde and Holkar revived the Maratha domination in Rajasthan and North India after the third battle of Panipat in 1761.

The expansion of the Maratha power in North India under the Peshwas has received wide scholarly attention\(^1\). Yet the question arises as to how to visualize this entire phenomenon over a long period of time particularly in view of the fact that after the conquest of Malwa and Gujarat the Marathas became the sole contestant for political supremacy in North-India. What kind of break, if any, is discernable once the encounter between the Marathas and other powers located in North Indian began? From the 1750's major political realignment had started occurring and this process continued till the 1820's by which time all major indigenous regimes had been either annexed or had become subsidiary allies of the East India Company, with the exception of the Lahore kingdom. The period from 1753 to 1759's was the period during which Marathas power in North India reached its climax but at the same time this period also witnessed a kind of political isolation of the Marathas, which paved the way for the disaster at the battlefield of Panipat in 1761. Although the Marathas often talked of a Hindu-Pad-Patshahi yet they failed to win over the Rajputs and the Jats. The Marathas rather earned their hatred and indifference. How the Rajputs and Rajasthan figured in the future plans of the Marathas or did they ever visualize well-conceived Rajput policy. The nature of their intervention in Rajasthan is vastly different from the Mughals. Despite their military success against the Rajputs, the Marathas did not exercise paramount power in Rajasthan the way earlier the Mughals and later on the British did. It may be pointed out here that Shambhaji tried to convince the Rajputs to support the Maratha struggle against the Mughals. Raja Ram Singh Kachhawa of Amber wrote to Shambhaji that it is not in your interest to defy the Mughal emperor. Shambhaji wrote back that we are fighting the Mughals without any regard for the consequences to protect our religion. Our aim is to oust the Mughals from Delhi and make you the ruler of

Delhi. However, Ram Singh was not impressed\(^1\). Earlier Shivaji too failed to get the support of the Rajputs. The question arises as to what extent the indifferent attitude of the Rajputs in the past influenced the Marathas policy toward the Rajputs or is it so that they did not consider the cooperation of Rajputs worthwhile in their bid for supremacy in North India? The Maratha presence in North India also raises the question of the perception of the Marathas and their representation in non-Marathi sources, i.e. Persian, European and Rajasthani and the nature of their interaction with the societies outside Maharashtra. Did the Rajput perception of the Marathas change overtime in the context of historical situation of north India in general and of Rajasthan in particular?

The initial phase of the Maratha advancement in Rajasthan has to be seen first in the light of the Mughal-Rajput relations in the preceding period of more than hundred years. The Mughal policy towards the Rajputs of Rajasthan was shaped by geo-political, strategic and economic consideration. Because of its environmental features, Rajasthan itself was not economically as developed as neighboring Gujarat and Malwa. Satish Chandra's study shows Mughal Rajput relations to have worked positively and in the greater interest of the Mughal Empire despite several time periods of strained relations with individual Rajput states. The Rajputs played an important role in consolidating the Empire politically. The Rajput rulers served the Mughal Empire as military and civil officers in the outlying subas and during the campaigns on the Mughal frontier including the Deccan\(^2\).

The incorporation of the Rajput chieftains into the Mughal nobility greatly enhanced their resources and power. The subsequent developments of the Rajput states in the 17\(^{th}\) and early 18\(^{th}\) century witnessed two parallel processes viz-stability and control in the watan and clan dominated territory and concurrently the increasing economic prosperity of the hitherto economically deficient Rajput clan states. The expansion of the local authority of Rajput

\(^1\) Shujauddin- Aurangzeb Alamgir Ki Kathinaiyee Aivam Nitia, P. 45
chieftains weakens the position of non Rajput zamindars and the gradual usurpation of the zamindari rights of the non Rajputs. This process was endorsed by the Mughals in the interest of the jagirdari system and to facilitate the collection of revenue. In the wake of the declining Mughal authority during the 18th century the Rajputs were left to fend for themselves. The warning Mughal imperial authority prompted the rules of Amber and Marwar to indulge in the territorial expansion of the watan area at the expense of the imperial territory. It also set in motion the revival of pre-Mughal Rajput polity marked by inter and intra-clan feuds ultimately paving the way for Maratha intervention. The Rajputs invited the Marathas to settle their internal disputes. The Maratha intervention in Rajasthan amounted to implicit recognition of the supreme power of the Marathas by the Rajputs rather than motivated by any desire on the part of the Marathas to replace the Mughals as a paramount power in Rajasthan. The initial phase of the Maratha-Rajput relations must be viewed in the context of Mughal-Maratha conflict in Malwa. Sawai Jai Singh of Amber who was appointed as the Mughal subedar of Malwa for the period 1713-17, 1729-30 and finally between 1732-37 failed to meet the Maratha challenge, and once Malwa came under the Maratha domination, it was not possible for the Rajputs to control the Peshwa’s territorial ambitions further North. The frontier for the Marathas began at the edges of Malwa Plateau in the 1730s, the North and West of it was situated Rajasthan. In 1732-33 the Maratha reached very close to Rajasthan border as they approached Dungarpur and Banswara. The prospect of Maratha advancement in Rajasthan became visible even before the rout of the Mughal forces led by Sawai Jai Singh and Khan-i-Dauran in 1735. Sawai Jai Singh had to rush back to Jaipur as the Maratha forces reached very close merely 20 miles from Jaipur. For the first time the Maratha forces penetrated areas far deeper within the territory of Jaipur state. This happened only a year after the Hurda conference (1734) called to form a combined front of major Rajput states against

1Bhatnagar V.S. Life and Times of Sawai Jai Singh, 1688-1743, Delhi, 1974; Gupta, S.P. Agrarian System of Eastern Rajasthan PP C (1650-1750) Delhi, 1986
the Marathas to check their entry in Rajasthan. The Maratha presence on Rajasthan border by now had become a political reality. In 1730s Rajasthan witnessed a limited Maratha presence that arose out of the Maratha conquest of Malwa which is evident from the Maratha attack on Bundi in 1734 on the invitation from its ruler Paratap Singh Hada and the march of Maratha army led by Holkar and Shinde to Kota, in February-March, 1738 to settle score with Durjansal Hada who dared to help Nizam: However, how Rajasthan figured in the future plans of the Maratha after the acquisition of Malwa is not clear.

The second phase of the Maratha intervention in Rajasthan needs to be seen in the context of the internal structure and functioning of the kinship based Rajput polity during this period. Struggles for succession had been a constant feature of Rajput polity. Their internal feuds led to the Mughal intervention in Rajasthan and establishment of the Mughal paramount authority over the Rajput clan states. The Mughal Emperor as a paramount power regulated succession in the Rajput ruled states which put an end to intra clan conflicts over the succession issue. In the wake of the rapidly declining Mughal authority the succession issues to the gaddi could not be regulated by the Emperor and the Rajputs turned to the Marathas for the settlement of their succession disputes.

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 which found manifestation through demand for chauth, khandani and selective territorial acquisition. There is rich historiography on how both Shinde and Holkar were enticed by rival Rajput princes to support their cause and how the inability of the Rajputs to fulfill promises that they had made to gain the Maratha help complicated relations between the two sides and
served as the pretext for continued Maratha interventions. All details of major political events involving the Marathas and the Rajputs are well documented. However, little attention has been paid so far to unearth from the existing in Rajasthani sources, the special attributes of the Marathas and expressions used for the Marathas. The question is how are the Marathas viewed in relation to local society in spheres other than political? And, do appropriate references to the Marathas, viewed in chronological order, suggest any continuity or change?

Rise of Shinde and Holkar in Maratha politics under the Peshwas and their role in the expansion of Maratha power during the 18th century coincided with the ongoing processes of disintegration of the Mughal Empire. After consolidating their position in Maharashtra the Marathas under the leadership of Shahu and Peshwa Balaji Vishwanath emerged as the major power in the Deccan. Maratha control in Khardesh, Malwa and Bundelkhand was established under the leadership of the next Peshwa Bajirao who followed the policy of northward expansion of the Maratha power. Progressive weakening of the Mughal central authority and increasing factionalism among the nobles at the Mughal court contributed appreciably to the success of the Marathas in emerging as a dominant political power in the eighteenth century.

Jadunath Sarkar in his Fall of the Mughal Empire made a comprehensive survey of the receding Mughal Empire in the context of the emerging regional and local power group challenges. Expansion of the Maratha power in the North is one of the major thrust in his study of the fall of the Mughal Empire. While dealing with various regional powers and power equations between them Sarkar paid adequate attention to Maratha-Rajput relations during the first and the second half of the 18th century. G.S. Sardesai’s New History of the Marathas is

---


2 Sarkar, JN, *Fall of the Mughal Empire* op. cit
based on contemporary Marathi official records. He has given an authentic account of political events of the Peshwa period, Maratha expansion in the North under the Peshwas and the exploits of Shinde and Holkar in North India¹.

Raghubir Singh’s Malwa in Transition is a well documented study of Maratha campaigns in Malwa after Aurangzeb’s death. He also discusses the role played by Sawai Jai Singh in shaping the Mughal-Maratha relations as governor of Malwa. Jai Singh’s personal ambition to enlarge the territory of his state by conciliating Marathas facilitated the Maratha penetration into Malwa during the period 1720-1740².

Satish Chandra’s classic study provides an insight into the process of the decline of the Mughal Empire during the reigns of Aurangzeb and his weak successors in the context of its decaying politico-administrative institutions. In the absence of a strong Mughal emperor factional rivalries at the Mughal court became more and more pronounced³.

With the exception of Jaipur, Maratha relation with the major Rajput states which faced Maratha attacks are presented in the works of K.S. Gupta, G.R. Parihar and R.K. Saxena. However, these works cover political aspects of Maratha Rajput dealings. The other limitation of these studies is that they are largely Rajput centric in approach. However, there is a rich historiography on how domination of the Marathas over all the major Rajput clan states was established through demand for chauth, khandani and acquisition of selective territory within the Rajput states.

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

¹ Sardesai, G.S. New History of the Marathas op. cit
³ Chandra, Satish, Parties and Politics at Mughal Court,(1707-1740), Fourth Edition, OUP, Delhi, 2002
friends rather than heavily placed under 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. Collapse of the Mughal mansab and jagir system made the rulers of Jaipur, Jodhpur, Kota and Bundi entirely dependent upon the internal revenue resources of their respective principalities to provide employment and jagris to the clan followers. The result was an increase in the extent of territory assigned in jagir which led to corresponding decline in the revenue that accrued to the state exchequer. Sarkar and other scholars have shown how both Shinde and Holkar were enticed by the rival Rajput princes to support their cause and their inability to fulfill promises that they had made to the Marathas. However, the complexities that arose in the relationship between the two sides and the nature and back ground of the continued Maratha intervention need to be explored. What led to the growing popular exasperation and resentment against the Maratha which often found overt manifestation in widespread violence and the murder of Maratha soldiers by the local people of Jaipur? Is it so that the Marathas failed to understand sentiments of the Rajputs and local people and financial limitations of the Rajput rulers who under duress had to promise a huge sum, much beyond their means, to save themselves from the Marathas. What methods were adopted by the Rajputs to counter the pressure of Maratha demands? Or the Marathas underestimated the capabilities of Rajputs to offer serious resistance and ward off their challenge. This also raises the question of the ability of the Marathas to convert their demands upon the Rajputs into actual gains and the extent to which the Marathas succeeded in the fulfillment of their aims and objectives in Rajasthan. The nature of their control over territories that were surrendered to the Marathas in lieu of tribute payment and how the Marathas administered these territories and the degree of convergence between the existing management and the arrangements made by the Marathas. How the local elites viewed the presence of the Marathas and their response to it?

1 Sarkar, J.N. Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol.2
Holkar was given control over parganas Tonk, Rampura, Toda, Malpura, Phagi Barwara and Niwai by Madho Singh of Jaipur. Although he never contended the Maratha claim for the realization of revenue from this territory but never legitimized the Maratha presence and incited the local bhomias to resist the Marathas. Shinde’s experience in Sambhar was no better. This raises the question of actual gains of the Marathas out of their expensive military ventures in Rajasthan.

Nature of Source Material

The primary source tapped for this study are largely in the form of correspondence in Rajasthani and Marathi between the Rajput and Maratha rulers, between the Rajputs rulers, letters and dispatches from the Maratha officials and representatives posted in Rajasthan and reports of the vakils of the Maratha rulers posted at the courts of the Rajput rulers. A large mass of archival records written both in Persian and Rajasthani scripts are preserved at the Rajasthan state Archives, Bikaner. The most important series of these records pertain to the 17th and the 18th centuries and the richest of this collection are Jaipur records which contain extremely rich historical information of varied nature. The significance of Jaipur records lies in the fact that they are useful not only for constituting local and regional histories, but also have a bearing on other regions such a Malwa, Deccan and Punjab. The Jaipur records commence from the later part of Akbar’s reign and the series go on till the end of the 18th century. However, the richness of the Jaipur records both in terms of variety and volume is visible from the middle of the 17th century and the collection is more voluminous for the 18th century. The Jaipur records are classified into several categories, many of which furnish valuable information on the Marathas and Rajputs in varying context over time. The eighteenth century records shed considerable light on the activities of Marathas in Rajasthan and their dealing with the Rajputs chieftains. The Jaipur records are subdivided into several sections according to the nature of records. However, from the point of view of Rajput-Marathas relations, documents housed in historical section of the Jaipur records are of immense value. Many of these documents cover the entire span of
the eighteenth century. The following categories of Jaipur records have been consulted:

1. **Farmans** (Persians)
2. **Akhbarat** (Persian)
3. **Vakil Reports**
4. **Kharitas**
5. **Arzdasths**
6. **Khatut Ahalkaran**
7. **Dastur Komvar**
8. **Chithis**
9. **Arshatta**
10. **Yaddashti**

A brief description of these documents and the nature of information contained therein are given below:

1. **Farmans**: Farmans were issued by the Mughal Emperors to the subordinate authorities i.e. the chieftains, zamindars, mansabdars and jagirdars. Aurangzeb's farmans to Mirza Raja Jaisingh contain several details about Mirza Raja's dealings with Shivaji, his Deccan campaign and the Emperor's specific instructions to Jaisingh regarding the Marathas affairs.

2. **Akhbarat**: The Mughal Emperors made elaborate arrangement for gathering detailed information from each and every corner of the Mughal Empire. For this purpose the news writers designated as Wakianavis, Wakianigars and Akhbarnavis were appointed in each pargana. Their primary function was to collect and furnish local information on daily basis to the imperial headquarters. These were then compiled and placed before the Emperor for his information and obtain his instruction regarding follow up actions. All these news dispatches termed **akhbarat-i-darbar-i-maulla** were infact a record of
the activities at the court as well as information received from any part of the Empire including political events. These information were then sent to the Rajput rulers serving under the Mughals by their respective representatives who were stationed at the Mughal court. The akhbarats provide information on Shivaji’s activities in the Deccan and his relations with the Mughals. For example it was reported that Shivaji Dakhani wrote to Namdar Khan that the mobilization of such a huge Mughal army against him is totally disproportionate to his offence against the Mughals. I am willing to serve the Emperor with a contingent of 4000 sawar. I shall feel fortunate to receive the award of mansab but am willing to serve even without the grant of a mansab.

3. Vakil Reports: All the Rajput nobles of the Mughals used to appoint their representative or Vakil at the Mughal court. The Vakil represented his mentor to the Mughal Emperor on a variety of issues concerning his career and interests. These vakils followed the Emperor wherever he went and the proceedings of his court. These proceedings were recorded by officials appointed for the purpose by the Emperor and the edited version of these recorded proceedings was made public. The vakil used to report to his master the relevant part of these preceding regularly that might have interested his master. At times additional information was added in these reports which also included the own interpretation of the vakil of any event reported to the Emperor. These reports covering the period 1681-1715 are crucial for it was during this period Aurangzeb came down to the Deccan. As such these reports have many references to the activities of the Marathas under Shambhaji, Rajaram and other Maratha leaders such as Nemaji in the Deccan and his exploits in the Deccan and Malwa. For example the Vakil informs the Amber Raja that Shambhaji is preceding towards Ahmadabad; situation in Deccan is getting from bad to worse; Shambhaji is trying to muster up his army. He also reported that despite the end of the Deccan war Shambhaji is yet to be subdued. He conveyed the happy news of Shambhaji arrest and requested the Raja to congratulate the Emperor on his success. He reported seize of Pratapgarh fort, Rajaram’s escape to Karnataka; defeat
of the Mughal force during the seize of Panhala and the Emperors intention to march from Bahrampur to conquer Pratapgarh fort. There is also reportage on the arzdasht of Rajaram's vakil to the Emperor seeking pardon for his fault and requesting for the grant of some forts to him. He informed Amber Raja that Rohilla Khan has obtained an undertaking from the zamindars of Pratapgarh that they would execute Rajaram. The vakil also sent a report giving details of property captured from Shambhaji; decline in the revenue proceeds of the Deccan due to the Maratha rebellion. The vakil reports also furnish details about the Maratha advancement in Malwa; contents of Mughal Prince's nishan which he sent for Shahu and Shivaji II through Jadhav Pandit. He also informed the Amber Raja that there is a proposal for the posting of Ajit Singh and Sawai Jai Singh in the Deccan; Chhatrasal Bundela's letter to the Amir Ul Umara informing that Marathas are crossing the river Narmada was also reportd to Swai Jai Singh. On the whole vakils reports contain valuable information pertaining to the Marathas for the period 1681 to 1715.

4. Kharita: These are letters exchanged between the rulers of different Rajput states. Correspondence between Jaipur rulers and the Maratha chiefs also form part of the Kharitas. The Kharitas sent by the Peshwa, Shinde and Holker to Jaipur rulers are available for the larger part of the 18th century. They are very comprehensive and contain specific messages from the Marathas to the Jaipur rulers about their relation and dealings. They also furnish information on social and economic ties between the Jaipur rulers and the Marathas. Manifestation of hostility between the Rajputs and Marathas is quite evident from the Kharitas. However, the Kharitas also reveal the desire of Maratha sardars to seek military support from the Rajputs rulers in their campaign in the Deccan to install Ghazi-Ud-Din Khan as the Nizam of Hyderabad. Mahadaji Shinde expressed solidarity with Madho Singh against the Jats of Bharatpur. Holker wrote to Prithvi Singh that since long time Najib, Jaipur and the house of Holker were united. Mahadaji Shinde also sought military help of Jaipur in 1783 against Mohammad Beg Hamdani.
In 1770’s numerous Kharitas of invitation were dispatched to the Jaipur rulers and his family on occasion of marriage and other social functions in the Holker family. Holker dispatched horses, elephants and other gifts to Jaipur ruler at the time of his crowning ceremony. Clothes were sent on the occasion of the marriage in Jaipur royal family too. There are references to the presence of men from the Maratha ruled areas at various places in Rajasthan, movement of soldiers, traders, officials in revenue administration and pilgrims who frequented Pushkar. Mahadji Shinde in his Kharita wrote to Pratap Singh to arrange Pushkar fair as per the past practice and ask all traders to attend the fair. All these aspects of Maratha presence in Rajasthan can be highlighted from the Kharitas.

The other aspects of Rajput Maratha relations covered in the Kharitas concern the payment of tribute to be paid to the Marathas and the nature of the Marathas control over the territories that were handed over them as per the agreement. Peshawa’s Vakil in 1765 wrote to Madho Singh this court moves very slowly and protracts business. Khande Rao Holker wrote to Jaipur Diwan asking him to issue only valid hundis in future. The Kharitas regularly raise the issue of tribute payment with the successor Rajput rulers. Territorial disputes over the transfer of parganas Tonk, Toda, Malpura, Fogi and Niwai. Ahilayabai wrote in 1770 that in parganas Tonk and Rampura Rajput bhomias are harassing the Maratha Kamvisdars. Mahadji Shinde wrote to Pratap Singh your state has been given us pargana Sambhar but till today amil of the area has not vacated local thanas and trouble over men posted there. On the basis of the Kharitas and other documents it is possible to highlight as to how the Marathas were seen in relation to local society, particularly in social and cultural spheres.

5. Arzdasht: Arzdasht are the letters written by the officials of the Jaipur rulers to their superiors. These letters cover a variety of political, administrative and economic matters. These documents are available for the period 1658-1720. From the year 1702 onwards a good number of arzdashts refer to the Maratha activities in the Deccan and Malwa. They also furnish details about
the actual working of the Mughal administration in Malwa before the Maratha control; the laxity of officials which enabled the Marathas to make inroads into Malwa and attempts of the Mughal officials to block the entry of the Marathas. In one of the arzdashts Chhatrasal Bundela informs the Amber Raja that he has received order from the emperor to march against the Marathas. He suggested that combined forces of Amber, Marwar and the Bundelas could prevent the Marathas from crossing over the river Naramada.

6. **Khatut Ahalkaran**: These are letters written by one officials of the Jaipur state to another. Some of these letters give an account of the Maratha activities. For example Deep Singh’s letter to Bakshi Hem Raj giving an account of his visit to Raja Sahu and Hem Raj’s letter to Jaswant Singh giving details of negotiation between Shinde and Holker on the one side and Jaswant Singh on the other.

7. **Dastur Komvar**: These records constitute an important category of primary source material and give varied information on social, cultural, economic and political aspects of Maratha-Jaipur relation. A major part of these records cover the 18th century. These documents record the dastur or protocol observed in respect of many Marathas dignitaries including Radhabai, the mother of Peshwa, Jadu Rai Prabhu, Raghunath Rao Malhar Rao Holkar, Mahadji Shinde, Tukoji Holkar, Dhondo Pandit and many other Marathas dignitaries and officials. The entries being dated are helpful in determining the chronology of certain political events and social relations between the Jaipur rulers and their distinguished Maratha contemporaries.

8. **Chithis**: An important category of documents termed chithis are available in the Diwan-Huzuri section of Jaipur records. These are letters written by the Diwans of Jaipur rulers to the amils and faujdars of the parganas under the control of Jaipur Raja. The chithis cover the entire 18th century. These chithis depict prevailing socio-economic conditions at the grassroot level and the actual working of the administrative institutions. Many of the chithis contain petitions from different sections of the rural society. The chithis pertaining to
the later half of the 18th century refer to the Maratha inroads and their implications for the state as well as the rural society. These chithis also contain specific instruction of the state to the local officials how to deal with the circumstances arising out of the Maratha intervention in their respective jurisdiction.

9. **Arhsattas**: Arshattas are the paragana revenue records which offer valuable information on crop production, structure of taxation and revenue proceeds from the parganas and villages under the jurisdiction of Jaipur rulers. Arshattas also contain information regarding the impact of Maratha inroads on crop production and revenue paying capacity of the villages where standing crops were destroyed. Arshattas for several parganas and villages record entries such as hasil mamur (no revenue realization), ziarat hui nahi (crops are ruined) as a result of Dikhnia ra Vaheda (disturbance caused by Marathas) and Dikhnia ri paimali me aaya (area affected by the Maratha in roads) and so on.

10. **Yaddashti**: Yaddashti or memoranda are the official recordings of various census data, crop production, agrarian settlement, migration, details concerning revenue demands and payments, jagir assignments, ijara grants and so on. Yaddashti of actual payments made to the Marathas by the Jaipur ruler, overtime was also prepared in the eighteenth century. This yaddashti offers valuable information regarding the burden of Maratha demand for tribute and the extent to which the Jaipur rulers were able to meet it.

The kharitas exchanged between the rulers of Rajasthan also offer valuable information on Maratha- Rajput relations and how the activities of the Marathas were viewed by the Rajput chieftains. The following Kharitas have been consulted.

1. Jaipur- Jodhpur Kharita
2. Jaipur- Bikaner Kharita
3. Jaipur- Karauli Kharita
Jodhpur Record: the most important for Maratha-Rajput relations are Kharitas in por-folio, Hakkiat-Bahi, Hath Bahi, Khas-Rukka bahi, Dholian-Ka-Kothar records, Bastas and letters of Abhay Singh to Bhandari Amar Singh.

Kharitas in Portfolios: they are 31 in number addressed to the rulers and administrators of Jodhpur by the rulers, chiefs and administrators of different states, both of Rajasthan and outside. A letter from Malhar Rao Holkar to Bijay Singh dated 12th day of the bright-half of Asvins vs. 1809 preserved in portfolio No. 2 B. file No. 1 informs that Holkar had accepted the accession of Bijay Singh on the throne of Marwar, an interesting change in the policy of Holkar, who by family relations should have put forward the case of Ram Singh. The fact that Mahadji Sindia gave the responsibility of safeguarding his interests in Marwar to Bijay Singh is revealed in a letter written by Mahadji on 2nd day of the dark-half of Ashadha vs 1828 (portfolio No. 6 letter No. 13). Letters from Ambaji Ingle on 6th day of bright-half of Karitika vs 1856 refer to the receipt of valuable jewels and Rs. 8000/- sent with the letter by Abhay Raj (portfolio No. 2B, file No. 2 letter No. 2 and 6).

Hakkikat Bahis: they record the daily routine of the rulers of Jodhpur, their movement and places of visit. They also furnish the information regarding the visit of political personalities, including the Maratha dignitaries, who waited on the Maharajas. The Bahis begin from the Vikrama Samvat 1821 and each Bahi cover a period from five to ten years of the ruler’s region. Hakkikat Bahi No. 9 furnishes information regarding the stay of Holkar’s family at Jodhpur from 1805 to 1809 (PP. 2-4, 22, and 37). Jama Kharch bahi no. 44 contains a record of the details of payments of the tribute, arrears of the tribute and war indemnity to Shinde as agreed by the ruler of Jodhpur at Sambhar in 1790.

As the archival sources on Rajput Maratha relations are voluminous, the method of examination or reexamination of the sources itself should involve some consideration of the sources in a particular context. Any reappraisal of available historical writing or generalization essentially means reading the same type of source material with a measure of mistrust and/or make use of the
source which has not been used or inadequate used in the past. What emerges from a careful survey of these records is that the activities of the Marathas must be seen in a wider context to comprehend historical implication of an event or development in a particular area even though it had no direct relevance to other areas. Aurangzeb’s relations with the house of Amber from 1667 onwards are largely influenced by the Maratha factor in the Deccan. Similarly Rajasthani documents pertaining to Sawai Jai Singh’s Malwa Governorship of Malwa are important for a better understanding of subsequent historical development that concerns the Maratha state formation in central India. The expansion of Maratha power in Malwa not be seen in isolation from Rajasthan as it opened the gates for Maratha entry into Rajasthan which greatly influenced interstate relations in Rajasthan. The Rajasthani documents also throw light on the perception of the Marathas and the nature of their interaction with the societies outside Maharashtra.

**Non Archival Sources (Rajasthani)**

Among the non-archival sources, Khyats written in Rajasthani language are the most important source of information. In Rajasthani the term ‘Khyat’ is a synonym of ‘history’. The khyat literature is available in abundance in the form of manuscript, only a fraction of the voluminous Khyat collection has been published so far. The most important and widely known Khyat is Muhta Nainsi Ri Khyat, written by Muhta Nainsi who was the Diwan of Maharaja Jaswant Singh of Jodhpur. Nainsi’s Khyat covers a span of 600 years and depicts the rule and rulers of Rajput clans belonging to Rajasthan, Gujarat and Central India. In his description of the Sisodias, Nainsi states that Shahji Bhonsle was the descendant of Sisodia chief of Mewar Rana Khetsi. One of the son’s of Khetsi, Chacha was born out of a carpenter caste woman (khatin). Chacha’s descendant later on migrated to the Deccan and Nainsi traces Shahji Bhonsle’s descent to this branch of the Sisodias.

Nainsi held the office of Diwan from 1654 to 1666 and died in 1670. In 1660 he also visited Aurangabad by Jaswant Singh and remained as a prisoner till his
death. He wrote his Khyats before visiting Aurangabad. Hence it is very unlikely that the link between the Bhonsle and Sisodias as suggested by him is based on any information that he might have derived during his stay at Aurangabad.

Nainsi’s information is based on the several genealogical accounts of the Sisodias. Tod who also used bardic accounts for writing his Annals of Mewar refers to the migration of Sujan Singh son of Rana Ajai Singh to the Deccan and Shahji was eleventh in the line of succession. There is some factual discrepancy between these two narratives; however, the major fact that the Bhonsle’s were originally Sisodia Rajputs is common in both accounts.

One of the major sources of information on Rajput Maratha relations during the latter half of the 18th century with special reference to Marwar (Jodhpur State) is Marwar Ri Khyat written by Joshi Tilok Chand who compiled it in 1814. His account is based on authentic records pertaining to the reigns Maharaja Bakht Singh, Ram Singh and Vijay Singh that were made available to him by Maharaja Man Singh in 1803. The period covered by the Khyat writer is 1749 to 1813, which coincides with the peak period of the Maratha presence in Rajasthan in a big way. This Khyat offers valuable information on the Maratha inroads in the context of inter and intra-clan relations among the Rajputs as also in the light of political development elsewhere. The Khyat also furnishes useful information about the form of resistance to Marathas and the impact of the Maratha presence on the economy of Marwar. The Khyat provides an insight into the perception of the Marathas in Rajasthan.

Marathi Source.

Marathi correspondence dealing with the Peshwa, Holker and Shinde cover the entire period of the study. As the period progresses these correspondence not only become more voluminous but are also richer in context. In addition to offering detail account of the military movements of the Marathas in various areas they also contain details of administrative arrangements made in the newly conquered areas, outstanding arrears of demand imposed on the Rajput rulers and so on. Holker’s official correspondences were compiled by V.V.
Thakur and it is entitled as Holkarsahica itihasacin sadhanen. Part of Shinde’s official records has been printed under the little Shindesahica Itihasachi Sadhanen.

The selection from the Peshwa Daftar series compiled by G. S. Sarderai is another important source for the activities of the Maratha sardars under the Peshwas. These records were selected from the vast mass of Marathi records written in modi script preserved at Peshwa Daftar, Pune and published in several volumes.

Maratha vakil Krishnaji Janganath’s newsletter dispatched to the Peshwa and Nana Phadnis from Jodhpur cover the period 1785 to 1794. This vakil of the Peshwa posted at Jodhpur court reported all major events in the courts of all important Rajput rulers which concern the Marathas and their fortune in Rajasthan. This important source was compiled by D. B. Parasnis and published in Itihas Sangraha in 1915.

Translation of Persian akhbarats and correspondence by Sir Jadunath Sarkar for the period after 1761 also provide useful information on Maratha campaigns against the rulers of Rajasthan.

While Marathi sources of the period by and large focus more on political developments, it is Rajasthani sources that reveal the true nature of the Maratha domination in Rajasthan.

Maratha penetration in Rajasthan has a rich historiography. James Tod’s treatment of Rajput-Maratha relation is highly biased in favor of Rajputs which is obvious from his comment that the ‘Marathas drained the very life-blood wherever the scent of spoilt attracted them. J.N. Sarkar’s Fall of The Mughal Empire in four volumes is highly informative and comprehensive. He covers all major political events involving the Marathas and Rajput states. Subsequent historical writings on Rajput-Maratha relations during the eighteenth century have been largely Rajput centric in approach. Except for Jaipur, Maratha relations with the major Rajput states which witnessed Maratha inroads are presented in the works of G. R. Parihar, K. S. Gupta, R. P. Shastri and M. L.
Sharma, R. K. Sharma examine Maratha relation with the Rajput states of Jaipur, Marwar, Kota and Bundi during the period 1761-1818.

The present work is divided into five chapters. Each chapter covers a particular aspect or stage in Maratha presence in Rajasthan that emerges from the analysis of primary and secondary sources. The focus is largely on the Maratha presence in Jaipur and Marwar.

First chapter: Rise of Maratha power in the 18th century and regional reality not only traces the expansion of Maratha power in terms of military gains but also map geographical and other forces that played a crucial role in establishing Maratha domination in Rajasthan. The expansion of Maratha power in central, western and north India was unique in the sense that in past no power based in the Deccan had achieved so much success in territorial expansion as the Marathas did in the 18th century. How they managed to gain access to interiors of Rajasthan will be probed in this chapter.

Second chapter deals with the local ruling elites in Rajasthan that were brought under the Maratha control. The Maratha-Rajput relation and the nature of Maratha intervention need to be seen in the context of the structure and functioning of kingship base of Rajput polity. This particular aspect of the 18th century state formation of major Rajput clan states has been examined both in terms of inter and intra-clan network of relationship. The working of the Rajput polity in the 18th century will be examined in the backdrop of the political incorporation of the Rajput clan states into the Mughal Empire. The structural changes in the clan polity as a result of the Mughal intervention and the nature of Mughal paramount authority in Rajasthan. All the limitations posed by the Mughal paramount authority vanished on its own as the Mughal power declined rapidly. The 18th century witnessed the revival of some basic features of pre-Mughal Rajput polity marked by growing tussle between the ruler and members of the clan lineage on the one hand and long drawn-out disputes over the succession to the gaddi on the other. Naturally as being the most powerful successor state of the 18th century the Marathas were looked upon as the most valuable ally by the
rival groups. Smaller Rajput chieftains of Rajasthan allied with the Marathas in their own interest. Kota regent Jalim Singh Jhala's association with Mahadji Shinde helped both sides in strengthening control over the Kota and Mewar region. The threat to Kota from the ambitious and more powerful Jaipur was neutralized by befriending Shinde. The varied response of the Rajput ruler to the Maratha presence in Rajasthan and the areas of co-operation and conflict are the other aspects that are highlighted in this chapter.

The major focus of the third chapter is Maratha penetration in Rajasthan. Maratha inroads and response of the Rajput rulers to Shinde is and Holkar's attempts to control economic resources of the region led to numerous armed conflicts. This chapter throws light on the circumstances which paved the way for Maratha intervention in the internal affairs of the Rajputs. 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. This was an opportunity for the Marathas to expand their influence in Rajasthan as the Rajput states were badly divided. Marathas were already active in the Kota region by this time. Domestic feuds among the Rajput chief for which they sought the arbitration of Maraths gave some legitimacy to their presence in Rajasthan as they were supported by a section of the local elites. Maratha involvement in Jodhpur also started on a similar note after the death of Abhay Singh in 1749 as his son Ram Singh invited Marathas to support his candidature. Maratha participation in the succession dispute of Jaipur and Jodhpur was the beginning of long-term domination of the Maratha over all the major Rajput clan states through demands for tribute and selective territorial acquisitions. The chapter reveals how both Shinde and Holkar were enticed by rival Rajput princes to support their cause and their inability to fulfill promises made to the Maratha sardars complicated relations between the two sides and served as the pretext for continued Maratha intervention. Other aspects covered in the chapter are how are the Marathas perceived and represented in the Rajasthani sources and what expressions are used for the
Marathas? How the Marathas raids are recorded and what was the nature of Maratha intervention?

Attention has been paid in the fourth chapter to show how the Maratha were seen in relation to Rajput dominated local society and diplomatic, social and cultural dealings between the two sides. The Maratha Sardars appointed Kamvisdar, moksadars and other officials to make arrangements for revenue collection from the parganas and villages of Rajasthan under their control. After his defeat in 1755, Bijay Singh of Jodhpur agreed to partition Marwar territory with his uncle Ram Singh who had sought the Maratha support. Out of Ram Singh's share i.e. Parganas Maroth, Parbastar, Merta, Sojat and Jalor the Marathas were to receive revenue of half of the territory. The Marathas appointed their own officials for the collection of land revenue and sair taxes. Similarly Maratha officials were also sent to Sambhar, Tonk, Malpura, Newai, Rampura etc. How their presence in the countryside dominated by Rajput bhomias was perceived is explored in this chapter. There is substantial evidence of trade between the Maratha ruled areas and Rajasthan and the nature of communication channel between the Marathas and Rajputs. How people from the both sides were interacting with each other is indicated in this chapter. The 50 years of Maratha domination in Rajasthan witnessed presence of men from the Maratha ruled territories at various centers of Maratha power in Rajasthan as vakils and representatives of the Maratha rulers at the court of Rajput rulers, soldiers, traders and religious dignitaries, officials in local revenue administration and pilgrims who frequented Pushkar. Mahadji took keen interest in the Pushkar fair and invited traders to participate in this annual fair.

Final chapter looks at the forms of resistance of the Rajputs to the Maratha onslaught. The Rajputs resorted to both passive as well as armed resistance to face the Maratha challenges, at times using both the methods simultaneously. When Marathas under the leadership of Jayappa Shinde invited Marwar to settle the succession dispute between Ram Singh and Bijay Singh, Jodhpur officials who were supporting the cause of Bijay Singh tried to entice Shinde to switch side by flattering him that he is capable of taking over Delhi at
will. However, Shinde was not impressed and did not desert Ram Singh. Whenever, faced with prospect of Maratha invasion the Rajput rulers hoped to resolve the problem either through negotiations or by taking to sword or by using both the methods. Bijay Singh of Jodhpur and Pratap Singh of Jaipur decided to try out both these options before the battle of Patan in 1789.

The Rajputs were confronted with two persistent problems in addition to facing the occasional Maratha attacks. One concerns the payments of tribute and other relates to allowing effective control of the Marathas over the territories to be hand-over as part of the agreement. In order to counter the pressure and to mitigate the burden of Maratha demands Rajputs often bought time by making negotiations longer, paying only in part the sum promised. Regularity with which Kharitas raise the issue of tribute payment with the successive Rajput rulers confirms the fact that despite constant from the Marathas the Rajputs by and large successfully thwarted the Maratha attempt in converting demand for payment. The Rajputs also resorted to overtly defying the Marathas. Although they did not contest the Maratha claim but incited the local zamindars and revenue officials to resist the Maratha control. 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. How the Marathas responded to these tactics of the Rajputs and what were the real materials gains of the Marathas out of their military ventures in Rajasthan are the other aspects which are explored in this chapter. The anguish of the Rajputs, high degree of their antipathy towards the Maratha power and dominance in Rajasthan, it manifestation as contained in Rajasthan sources also form part of this chapter.