

CHAPTER 5

MARATHA OCCUPATION OF RAJASTHAN AND RAJPUT RESISTANCE

The succession disputes in Jaipur and Jodhpur paved the way for the formal arrival of the Marathas in Rajasthan. It offered them an opportunity to expand their influence in Rajasthan much beyond the right to collect the tribute. The rival princes indulged in bribing the Maratha commanders, namely, Holkar and Sindhia, to support their cause.¹ When Raja Sawai Ishwari Singh Kachhwaha could not pay the promised amount to the Marathas, he committed suicide. His younger brother, Madho Singh ascended the Jaipur throne after promising a heavy price to the Marathas. The new ruler, his nobles and the people of Jaipur bitterly resented Jayappa Shinde's demand of one third or at least one fourth of the Jaipur territory to be handed over to the Marathas. The simmering anger of the people of Jaipur for the Marathas found expression in the killing of thousands of Marathas in the Jaipur city.² However, this act of the people further increased the financial strain on the State treasury. The massacre was followed by negotiations with the Marathas that again swelled the Maratha demand for payments. The Jaipur ruler had to agree to compensate the Marathas for the loss of men, horses and property.³

The Jaipur succession dispute had involved the Marathas for six years. Somehow this span badly damaged the good old ties that existed between Sawai Jai Singh and the Marathas.⁴ But the twin issues of tribute payment and transfer of territory as demanded by the Marathas were not fully resolved. This left a lot of scope for disputes, claims and counter claims in future. Throughout the later half of the eighteenth century, these unresolved issues gave the Marathas the pretext to intervene in the affairs of Jaipur whenever they so desired.

As per the terms of the negotiations with the Marathas, the parganas of Tonk, Toda, Raisinghpur, Malpura, Fagi and *tappa* Barwada in pargana Niwai were to be

¹ Jadunath Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. I, pp. 174-189.

² G.S. Sardesai, *New History of the Marathas*, Vol. II, Bombay, 1958, p. 251.

³ Jadunath Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. I, pp. 170, 171.

⁴ G.S. Sardesai, *New History of the Marathas*, Vol. II, p. 251.

transferred under the control of Malhar Rao Holkar. Sawai Madho Singh also promised to pay a *nazar* of rupees 10 lakhs to the Maratha king Shahu. A written undertaking was given by Malhar Rao Holkar to the Maratha king Shahu. The amount was payable in four installments over a period of next two years, i.e., 1749-50. Within this period the Maratha general was allowed to occupy the above mentioned parganas till the payment was complete.⁵ With the completion of the negotiations, Holkar started demanding the possession of the parganas that were promised. In a letter of 1749, Holkar asked Sawai Madho Singh for the payment of promised amount and control over pargana Tonk in return for the Maratha support extended against Sawai Ishwari Singh in 1748, in the battle of Bagru.⁶ Earlier Sawai Madho Singh had given to Holkar the control over Rampura an area that actually belonged to Mewar and was gifted to Madho Singh, who was the nephew of the Maharana of Udaipur.

We get valuable information from the *kharitas* about Holkar's attempts to gain steady control over areas promised by Sawai Madho Singh. The nature and degree of the Maratha control as well as the response of the Jaipur ruler and the local Rajput *bhomyas* to the presence of the Marathas in Jaipur territory are also recorded. As soon as Sawai Madho Singh occupied the Jaipur throne, Malhar Rao Holkar and his son Khande Rao Holkar tried to settle the areas claimed by them within Jaipur territory. In order to make their presence felt in the region, the first step was to appoint their representatives in the Jaipur court. This was done for regular communication to sort out the dealings between the two sides. Holkar sent Bhaiya Tulsi Ram as his *vakil* at the Jaipur court.⁷ To supervise the work of tribute payment, two more officials, Pandit Shankarji and Pandit Ganeshji were also deputed to Sawai Madho Singh's court.⁸ *Diwan* Kanhi Ram was sent by Sawai Madho Singh to Holkar as the Jaipur representative.⁹

Apart from appointing officials to the Jaipur court, Holkar thought it prudent to establish his *thanas* or outposts in the parganas which he claimed from Jaipur.

⁵ Jadunath Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. I, pp. 145.

⁶ *Indore Kharita* No. 1, *Kartik Sudi* 13, V.S. 1806/1749.

⁷ *Indore Kharita* No. 5, *Falgun Vadi* 6, V. S. 1807/1750.

⁸ *Indore Kharita* No. 9, *Falgun Vadi* 10, V.S. 1807/1750; *Indore Kharita* No. 38, *Kartik Sudi* 1, V.S. 1809/1752.

⁹ *Indore Kharita* No. 35, *Bhadon Sudi* 10, V.S. 1809/1752.

Accordingly, he appointed officials to take over the charge of these *thanas*. Therefore, in 1750, Malhar Rao Holkar he wrote to Sawai Madho Singh to transfer the control of parganas Rampura and Hinglajgarh to Pandit Govind. The official was to act as Holkar's representative in these parganas. Sawai Madho Singh was asked to issue necessary instructions to his officials, *qiledars*, *taalluqadars*, etc. about the transfer of these areas to Holkar. This was to be done to avoid any confrontation between the Maratha officials and the local officials of Jaipur.¹⁰

Thanas were established by Holkar in pargana Nenwa. He also appointed *kamavisdars* (Maratha local administrator overseeing several parganas) in Sherpur, Alanpur, Panchmahal and Malpura. But it appears that the Maratha control in these areas was weak. This becomes clear from a *kharita* of 1752, which was jointly written by Shinde and Holkar. In this *kharita* an appeal was made to Sawai Madho Singh not to encourage or extend any support to the elements opposing the Maratha revenue settlement in Sherpur and Alanpur.¹¹ Malhar Rao Holkar asked Sawai Madho Singh to hand over the parganas of Tonk, Toda, Malpura, Chhota Rampura and Sherpura to his *kamavisdar* Balaji Shyam Rao. He also wrote to him in stern language to stop disturbances in these parganas else he would face the Maratha army.¹² In 1752, Sawai Madho Singh was also informed about the undesirable behavior of the Jaipur official, Lachhiram Natani.¹³

While making arrangements for the administration of territory gained by Holkar in Rajasthan, he confronted the problem of dual control. Holkar himself wanted to set up his own administrative machinery. But the hereditary local elements who were manning the pargana revenue administrative machinery owed allegiance to the Jaipur state. In pargana Toda, Raisinghpur which was under the control of Holkar, Sawai Madho Singh replaced the existing *chaudhary* and *qanungo* without asking the Marathas. This was not liked by Holkar and he sent a letter of protest to Sawai Madho Singh asking him to revoke his order by issuing a fresh *parwana* to this effect.¹⁴

¹⁰ *Indore Kharita* No. 5, *Falgun Vadi* 9, V.S. 1807/1750.

¹¹ *Indore Kharita* No. 26, *Jeth Vadi* 7, V.S. 1809/1752.

¹² *Indore Kharita* No. 36, *Asoj Vadi* 12, V.S. 1809/1752.

¹³ *Indore Kharita* No. 36, *Asoj Vadi* 12, V.S. 1809/1752.

¹⁴ *Indore Kharita* No. 25, *Vaisakh Vadi* 12, V.S. 1809/1752.

The Jaipur ruler was frequently apprised of the problems faced by the Maratha *kamavisdars* in the areas assigned to Holkar. This gets verified from the Jaipur *diwan*, Hargobind Natani, who admitted that the *amaldar* of pargana Malpura was not paying the full amount of money to the Maratha *kamavisdar*. Holkar asked Sawai Madho Singh to instruct the concerned *mamlatdar* (collector) not to interfere in the collection of revenue.¹⁵ For supervision Khande Rao Holkar personally visited all the areas in Jaipur that were handed over to Holkar in order to sort out the problems concerning revenue collection.¹⁶ From the above description it becomes clear that the Jaipur officials were still functioning in these areas. The Maratha *kamavisdars* were sent to these areas just for receiving the amount collected by Jaipur revenue officials. It was due to this lack of effective control over the revenue collection process that created problems for the Marathas in getting the desired revenue. In Sambhar, the local Maratha revenue collector was to receive rupees 1,000 as his salary out of the revenue collection from Sambhar. On the basis of the letter written by Holkar to Sawai Madho Singh in 1754, it becomes clear that he had not been paid for the last two years despite the instructions of *diwan* Hargobind to the local officials.¹⁷ These instances reveal that the local Jaipur officials were unwilling to co-operate with the Maratha *kamavisdars*. It may be noted here that it is not clear whether they themselves were opposed to the Maratha control or they received instructions from their superiors to harass the Maratha officials. Thus, till the third battle of Panipat in January 1761, the hold of Holkar on the areas assigned to him in the parganas of Jaipur State was nominal and the Maratha officials present in these areas did not have requisite administrative authority. Moreover, resentment of local people which was dormant earlier became more vociferous.

The defeat of the Marathas at Panipat provided a much needed opportunity to the Rajputs in Rajasthan to reassert their authority in the areas that were handed over to the Marathas. For instance, Rampura was taken back by the Chandrawat Rajputs which had been under the control of Holkar. Similarly, a commander of the Kota ruler

¹⁵ *Indore Kharita* No. 44, *Sawan Sudi* 1, V.S. 1810/1753.

¹⁶ *Indore Kharita* No. 46, *Bhadon Vadi* 14, V.S. 1810/1753.

¹⁷ *Indore Kharita* No. 60, *Kartik Vadi* 9, V.S. 1811/1754.

seized the fort of Gagron and ousted the Maratha *kamavisdar* from there.¹⁸ Both, Rampura and Gagron, were the two important Maratha outposts on the bordering areas of Malwa and Rajasthan. In November 1761, Sawai Madho Singh also made efforts to take advantage of the situation and tried to capture Niwai and Keshorai Patan. But Holkar could not afford to lose these areas. Hence he quickly recaptured them by defeating Sawai Madho Singh in the battle of Mangrol.

The successor of Malhar Rao Holkar, Ahilyabai Holkar, also experienced difficulty in exercising control over the Maratha territory in Jaipur. This becomes clear from the letter that Ahilyabai wrote to Sawai Prithvi Singh of Jaipur:

“In parganas Tonk and Rampura, Pandit Raghoji has been appointed as the *kamavisdar* but the Rajput *bhomias* are resisting our attempt to settle these areas efficiently, so send instructions to all Rajput *zamindars* and allow the settlement of these parganas by our officials.”¹⁹

In 1771, Tukoji Holkar also repeatedly wrote to Prithvi Singh about the unrest created by the Rajputs in parganas Tonk and Malpura. Holkar was informed about this by his *kamavisdar*, Sadashiv Bhatt. He immediately asked the Jaipur ruler to warn the insubordinate elements.²⁰ In the same year, Tukoji again wrote to him about the ongoing disputes between his official, Sadashiv Bhatt and the Rajput *bhomias* of village Parana in pargana Tonk.²¹

The local Jaipur officials also disputed the right of Holkar to make land grants from the parganas transferred to him. One such incident was reported by him in 1777 to Sawai Prithvi Singh. This involved the village Thikariaya in pargana Toda. Tukoji granted this village in *inam* to Pandit Gobindrao *munshi*. Tukoji wrote:

“Recently we have come to know that the *amil* of Toda has deprived the Pandit of the ownership right of the village.” Holkar requested for the restoration of the village given in grant

¹⁸ Jadunath Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. II, p. 361.

¹⁹ *Indore Kharita* No. 130, *Maghishri Vadi* 1, V.S. 1827/1770.

²⁰ *Indore Kharita* No. 132, *Posh Vadi* 1, V.S. 1827/1770; *Indore Kharita* No. 137, *Chaitra Sudi* 7, V.S. 1828/1771.

²¹ *Indore Kharita* No. 144, V.S. 1828/1771.

to the said Pandit.²² In 1779, the *kamavisdars* of parganas Tonk and Rampura reported to Holkar about the disturbances created by the local elements. Tukoji Holkar asked the Jaipur ruler to stop these disturbances.²³ The following year (in 1780) Tukoji repeated the same complaint in his letter and reprimanded Sawai Pratap Singh for his inaction.²⁴ It appears that the Jaipur rulers were surreptitiously inciting the Rajput chiefs and *bhomyas* to harass the Maratha officials. It is also possible that for the local Rajput gentry, the Maratha dispensation was an unwelcome development. The Rajput rulers instead of curbing these disturbances chose to abet them.

When Mahadaji Sindhia got to know about the failure of the Holkars to tighten their grip over the Maratha possessions in Jaipur territory, he decided to intervene on their behalf. In a firm language, he told the Jaipur ruler to give up control over the areas that were given to the Holkars. Shinde declared that the interference of Jaipur in these parganas was uncalled for. He asked the Jaipur ruler to transfer the overall authority to the officials of Holkar for the sake of healthy relationship else the Raja would face trouble.²⁵ Once again, Shinde reminded Sawai Pratap Singh to remove his forces from these parganas otherwise the Maratha forces would be sent to settle the issue.²⁶

The above description makes it amply clear that the position of the Holkars in the territory gained in Jaipur was never strong. In pargana Tonk and Malpura disturbances and sporadic attacks on the Maratha outposts continued. Tukoji asked Sawai Pratap Singh to take action against the turbulent elements and restore the authority to his *mokasadar*, Govind Rao.²⁷ Throughout the 1780's and 1790's, incidences of defiance and insubordination to the Maratha officials were frequent. But the Holkars did not go beyond complaining and at times reprimanding the Jaipur ruler. It seems that the Holkars were not in a position to initiate any military action against Jaipur as they were not sure about receiving Sindhia's support in such ventures.

²² *Indore Kharita* No. 179, *Posh Sudi* 1, V.S. 1834/1777.

²³ *Indore Kharita* No. 183, *Kartik Sudi* 10, V.S. 1836/1779.

²⁴ *Indore Kharita* No. 185, *Asarh Vadi* 5, V.S. 1837/1780.

²⁵ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 75, *Sawan Sudi* 4, V.S. 1836/1779.

²⁶ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 76, *Sawan Sudi* 10, V.S. 1836/1779.

²⁷ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 189, *Asoj Sudi* 3, V.S. 1837/1780.

In pargana Tonk, there were disturbances against the Marathas. In 1796, Laxman Anant and Jagannath Ram Bahadur, the representatives of Holkar, wrote to Sawai Pratap Singh about these disturbances. They informed him about the trouble created by the *zamindars* and revenue officials in pargana Tonk and asked him to stop their activities.²⁸ To stabilize the situation in Tonk, Tukoji removed the Maratha *mamlatdar* and instead appointed Kripal Singh Sikh to handle the pargana administration.²⁹ Holkar also wrote to Sawai Pratap Singh that his officials had lost control of the village Churu and other adjacent villages.³⁰

Mahadaji Sindhia was another notable Maratha *sardar* who acquired territory in Rajasthan. In 1751, Jayappa Shinde reprimanded Sawai Madho Singh for making encroachment in Bundi and Nenwa claiming them to be Shinde's territory.³¹ In 1755, Jankoji Shinde asked Sawai Madho Singh to hand over Ajmer and twelve villages of *taalluqa* Borada to Shinde's representative Gobind Rao.³² Resistance to the presence of Maratha *kamavisdars* in outlying areas as tax collectors despite authorization from the Jaipur ruler, was reported from several places. The local Rajputs opposed the *thanadars* of Shinde who were trying to gain foothold in Jaipur territory. For instance, Shinde's officials were ousted from their outpost of Chhain by the local revenue officials. In fact, Sawai Madho Singh was sternly told by Jankoji Shinde to restore the outposts to his officials, Ragho Shankar and Bhagwantari Shankar, or face the visitation of the Maratha forces.³³ Jankoji was also interested in establishing his control over the strategically important Ranthambhor fort. In 1758, he reprimanded Sawai Madho Singh for his 'unauthorized' possession of the fort.³⁴ Gradually, Shinde started asserting his claim over some of the pockets of the Jaipur territory that were promised to him earlier. Obviously Sawai Madho Singh never fulfilled these promises. The Maratha presence was always resented by the local Rajputs. Hence Shinde's officials faced difficulty in maintaining control over the *thanas* and collecting revenue from the areas they claimed as theirs. Even as late as 1769,

²⁸ *Indore Kharita* No. 298, *Sawan Vadi* 2, V.S. 1853/1796.

²⁹ *Indore Kharita* No. 299, *Bhadon Sudi* 12, V.S. 1853/1796.

³⁰ *Indore Kharita* No. 293, *Vaisakh Vadi* 13, V.S. 1852/1795.

³¹ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 155, *Jeth Sudi* 7, V.S. 1808/1751.

³² *Gwalior Kharita* No. 162, *Falgun Sudi* 1, V.S. 1812/1755.

³³ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 173, *Falgun Sudi* 17, V.S. 1812/1755.

³⁴ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 166, *Posh Vadi* 10, V.S. 1815/1758.

Shinde's demand for the transfer of 12 villages of *taalluqa* Borada had not been met by the Jaipur ruler. Mahadaji Shinde felt constrained to warn Sawai Prithvi Singh that these villages be vacated and handed over to his agent, Pandit Gobind Rao.³⁵ Disputes between Shinde and the Jaipur State persisted even in the 1780's. For example, Shinde's representative, Pandit Balrao Govind was given two villages Chakwara and Dhimana in Jaipur territory, in lieu of his salary. Although these villages had been in Maratha possession since long, the local Rajputs managed to oust the Pandit and seized these villages. Mahadaji had to warn Sawai Pratap Singh, the Jaipur ruler :

“Both villages should be vacated and handed over to Pandit Shankarji Jagannath on behalf of Balarao as he is present there and in future you should take care that such problems do not reoccur.”³⁶

In 1781, Shinde gave the *mamlat* authority of Ajmer to his representative *Mirza* Rahim Beg and instructed Sawai Pratap Singh to give the amount of *peshkash* of *taalluqa* Borada to Rahim Beg.³⁷ Mahadaji Shinde had to interfere in the transfer of office from one officer to the other. This becomes clear from a *kharita* written by Shinde from Gwalior in 1783 to Sawai Pratap Singh about his official Pandit Shankar Rao Jagannath who had been doing official work at an unspecified place. When he died, his son Trimbak Shankar was appointed to perform the same task. At this time Shinde had to intervene to ask Sawai Pratap Singh to transfer villages assigned to the deceased Pandit Shankar Rao Jagannath to the new appointee.³⁸ Shinde also faced problems with regard to his control over pargana Sambhar. In 1784, he tried to settle this matter with Jaipur. In a letter written to Sawai Pratap Singh, Shinde clearly stated:

“Your State had given us Sambhar but till today the *amil* of Sambhar has not vacated the local *thanas* and bothers our men posted there. I have also written to you earlier and raised this matter, but no action has been taken from your side. So now ask your *amil* to handover the charge to our officials who will co-ordinate with your court and manage the pargana accordingly.”³⁹

³⁵ Gwalior Kharita No. 3, *Posh Sudi* 2, V.S. 1826/1769.

³⁶ Gwalior Kharita No. 80, *Kartik Sudi* 14, V.S. 1837/1780.

³⁷ Gwalior Kharita No. 77, *Magh Vadi* 1, V.S. 1838/1781.

³⁸ Gwalior Kharita No. 92, *Bhadon Vadi* 9, V.S. 1840/1783.

³⁹ Gwalior Kharita No. 99, *Falgun Sudi* 11, V.S. 1841/1784.

Mahadaji also asked Sawai Pratap Singh to stop the excesses committed by his officials while collecting taxes from the traders. Once again, prior to the Lalsot campaign, Mahadaji complained to Sawai Pratap Singh and expressed his unhappiness over the discrimination being made with the Maratha officials in Sambhar.⁴⁰ The position of the Marathas in Rajasthan was substantially weakened when Mahadaji Shinde was defeated in the battle of Tunga. The interference of the local *amil* in Sambhar was so great that it irked Shinde to the extent that he conveyed to Raja Sawai Pratap Singh that he no longer wanted the Jaipur official's presence in Sambhar. In 1786, he appointed his own officials in Sambhar and informed the Jaipur ruler: "We are sending *seth* Gangaram and Rajaram from here for taking charge of the offices of *amil* and *faujdar* of Sambhar, so do consult them for official work."⁴¹

In 1791, Sawai Pratap Singh again received a letter of complaint from Mahadaji asking him to do something to stop the trouble created by the Rajput *bhomias* who were harassing the traders on account of *rahdari* collection. The following year, in 1792, Mahadaji reminded the ruler that: "Borada *thana* in Ajmer has not been vacated so far, so now handover the *thana* to Jaguji and Lakshman Rao. Otherwise I will ask them to capture the *thana*."⁴²

At least one conclusion can be drawn from the above instances that the Maratha officials appointed in Jaipur territory had to encounter the non co-operation of local Jaipur officials as well as the hostility of Rajput *bhomias*. Without the backing of the Maratha military, the Maratha revenue officials, *kamavidars* and their subordinate staff could not manage the fiscal affairs. The local officials and *zamindars* defied them. Although the presence of Maratha *thanadars*, the *kamavidars* and other officials were not allowed to function effectively. They constantly complained to the Maratha *sardars* about this helpless state of affairs. This gets verified from the *kharitas* of Shinde and Holkar, both of whom constantly raised the matter and asked the Jaipur rulers to instruct the local *bhomias* and *amils* not to create disturbances and that they should let the Maratha officials settle the areas. As there was persistent

⁴⁰ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 118, *Vaisakh Vadi* 1, V.S. 1843/1786.

⁴¹ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 119, *Magh Sudi* 5, V.S. 1843/1786.

⁴² *Gwalior Kharita* No. 80, *Kartik Sudi* 14, V.S. 1837/1780.

hostility to the presence of the Maratha *kamavidars*, they could not collect full revenue from the areas placed under their charge in the Jaipur territory. The salaries of the Maratha officials working in these parganas as well as of the troopers posted at the Maratha *thanas* had to be paid out of the revenue of the areas under Maratha possession in Jaipur territory. But insufficient collection of revenue created the problem of giving their salaries. In order to improve the collection of revenue and to cope with the situation, the Marathas resorted to the practice of *ijara* or revenue farming in some of the areas. This change in policy will become more clear from the following description. Shinde granted the *ijara* of Sambhar to the local traders because of the unabated hostility of the local Jaipur officials and *zamindars*.⁴³ But the problem could not be solved even with the help of the *ijaradars* who themselves had local roots. They also found it difficult to bring the situation under control and reported loss due to poor collection.⁴⁴

It is necessary to briefly discuss the Maratha administrative system in Malwa and then compare it with the administrative arrangement in the Jaipur parganas transferred to the Marathas. The Marathas had been claiming the *chauth* of Malwa since 1717, which were repeated in 1719 and again in 1724. The Peshwa's *vakil* at the Mughal court persistently made demands for the *chauth* as well as *sardeshmukhi* in Malwa. The 1730's witnessed the Marathas establishing contact with the *zamindars* of Malwa. By the mid 1730's, the *zamindars* especially of southern and western Malwa had paid a tribute to the Marathas for five years.⁴⁵ The Maratha desire for securing Malwa became a reality when the Mughal Emperor gave the *sanad* (grant) in July, 1741, ceding Malwa to the Marathas.

Stewart Gordon differentiates the earlier Maratha military forays in Malwa and calls the administrative arrangements made by the Peshwa (after the official grant of the *sanad*) as stabilized *khandani*. In the early forays, valuable things like horses, cloth, rugs, silver trays, were simply taken away from villages. Soon these were converted into rupees by a local money lender whereas in stabilized *khandani* specified payment

⁴³ Gwalior Kharita No. 103, *Jeth Vadi* 13, V.S. 1842/1785.

⁴⁴ Gwalior Kharita No.104, *Sawan Sudi* 6, V.S. 1843/1786.

⁴⁵ Stewart Gordon, *Marathas, Marauders*, pp. 36, 37.

was made on certain dates and in standard rupees. In the early accounts, single villages were the predominant entries while in the stabilized *khandani* accounts, the contract was with an individual, usually a big *zamindar*. For instance, in the early forays, the collector was a *rakhwalla* (a military leader), who was paid *rakhwalli*, literally meaning money paid for not devastating an area. In the stabilized *khandani* contracts, we notice a change in the terminology. The collector was now designated as *kamavisdar*, who were civilians and not the military leaders. Another important feature was that the *kamavisdars* did not have to maintain a body of troops out of the revenues of the district and therefore, they were not *saranjamdars*.⁴⁶ They maintained a small staff to do their work.

The *kamavisdar* did not administer the area. He did not assess the land, collected no taxes, heard no cases, imposed no fines, put down no rebellions and did not administer the area. He did not deal with village headmen, traders or others within the *zamindar's* jurisdiction. His function was just to ask the signatory of the contract for the stipulated amount in each season. Though stabilized *khandani* was an advance over the *rakhwala* system, due to various reasons, it proved to be unsatisfactory. Firstly, the big *zamindars* did not control all the areas of Malwa. Secondly, the Marathas were bound by a fixed, long-term contract with the big *zamindars*. Thirdly, troops were required to enforce tribute collection. To deal with these problems, the first step was to place small garrisons in some of the *zamindaris*. This was followed by more severe settlement on the *zamindar*. Once the villages covered by the contract were specified, they were liable for direct collection in case the amount was not paid. This was followed by practically carrying out the threat and finally the *kamavisdar*, with the help of troops collected revenue in the name of the *zamindar*. When the arrears accumulated for several years, the Marathas demanded full administrative control of the areas specified in the contract.

Once the Marathas had full administrative control, the Peshwa appointed a bureaucracy with specialized functions. The important among these appointees were the *faujdar* (rural police) and the *kotwal* (urban police). The new *faujgars* and *kotwals* dealt with cases concerning every aspect of life.

⁴⁶ Stewart Gordon, *Marathas, Marauders*, pp. 38, 39.

The *kamavisdar* was the revenue collector, appointed over parganas ranging from one to five and was assisted in his work by a body of clerks. The revenue administration worked on an annual cycle. A contract was signed between the Peshwa and the *kamavisdar*. The amount of the initial contract was based on the best available area statistics. Once the first installment was paid, the *kamavisdar* left for the field. He was to maintain a garrison but could not indiscriminately recruit troops. His contract specified the size of each garrison, with a salary for each type of soldier. The amount of the salary of the troops, officers and even servants was specified and fixed in the contract. Sometimes a *mujumdar*, or an auditor visited the area to examine the *kamavisdar's* books, troops and stocks of garrisons and sent the report direct to the Peshwa. To supervise the work, the *kamavisdar* personally undertook tours through his parganas, as indicated by *bhojan kharch* (dinner expenses) levied as a minor tax on many villages.⁴⁷

Needless to emphasize that the Marathas were successful in laying out an efficient administrative set up in Malwa. However, the Marathas failed to make a similar administrative arrangement in the territories that were transferred to them by the Jaipur rulers. The parganas of Tonk, Toda, Malpura, Fagi, Rampura, Nenwa, Sherpur, Alanpur, Panchmahal, Keshorai Patan and Barwada in pargana Niwai, were the areas which were transferred to the Marathas. To begin with, the Marathas appointed their *vakil* at the Jaipur court so that there could be a regular communication between the two sides. The second step was to establish *thanas* or outposts in the parganas. Accordingly, officials were appointed to take charge of these *thanas*. Thirdly, *kamavisdars* were appointed to collect revenue from these areas. As these areas had dual control, that of the Jaipur officials as well as the Marathas they always had difficulty in performing their task. Unlike Malwa, there was no effective Maratha control over these areas. The presence of Maratha *kamavisdars* and their subordinate staff appointed to collect the revenue in lieu of tribute payment is recorded. Somehow, right from the beginning the Maratha control over administration remained nominal and superficial. Even for the collection of revenue they were dependent upon the local revenue officials of Jaipur. Besides this, the Maratha officials were resisted

⁴⁷ Stewart Gordon, *Marathas, Marauders*, p. 46.

by the local elements. Perhaps the Marathas were also not keen to replace the existing administrative network by their own system. However, they desired to control the local administrative machinery. It is amply clear that the Marathas who had completely replaced the Mughal administration in Malwa were unable to accomplish the same task in Rajasthan.

In Marwar, the Marathas never put up a stake for claiming territory as it was agriculturally poor as compared to Jaipur, Kota and Bundi. Their sole interest was to gain control of Ajmer from Jodhpur ruler, as it was strategically located. Their presence in Jodhpur was by and large confined to the collection of tribute regularly. The sole exception was the demand for the surrender of Ajmer to the Marathas. After the battle of Merta (September 1790) the treaty of Merta was concluded between Bijay Singh and Mahadaji Shinde. As per the terms of the treaty, Bijay Singh had to surrender Sambhar, Khairwa, Masuda and 29 villages of pargana Bhinai to Mahadaji. Bijay Singh was made to promise that his men would not interfere in the management of the above areas or create difficulties for the Maratha tax collectors. Besides these territories, there are also instances of the assignments of villages in Marwar territory to the Maratha officials. Shinde demanded from Bijay Singh the assignment of village Bharonda to his commander Jadhavrao in 1775. In 1782, he demanded village Ganga, in pargana Parbatsar to Krishanrao Gangadhar. In both the cases the common instruction given by Mahadaji Shinde to Bijay Singh was to ensure that his appointees were not to be troubled by Jodhpur officials.⁴⁸ This specific instruction to Bijay Singh indicates that Mahadaji was anticipating hostility from the Jodhpur officials. But the unhelpful attitude of the Jodhpur ruler and his local officers did not change towards the Marathas even upto the 1790's.

In 1791, Mahadaji Shinde sent a *kharita* to Bijay Singh in which he instructed the latter to stop the interference of the *amaldar* and jagirdar of Nawar in village Kakrauli of pargana Sambhar. He also mentioned that Sargoth and Kuchaman be handed over to the Maratha officials.⁴⁹ The battle of Merta had established almost

⁴⁸ *Gwalior-Jodhpur Kharita, Magh Vadi 14, V.S. 1832/1775; Gwalior-Jodhpur Kharita, Vaisakh Sudi 5, V.S. 1840/1783.*

⁴⁹ *Gwalior-Jodhpur Kharita, Asoj Sudi 14, V.S. 1848/1791.*

complete domination of Mahadaji Shinde over Jodhpur, yet there was hardly any change in the situation. The local officials and the *bhomias* were unwilling to surrender to the Marathas and hence their resistance also persisted. The hostility of the *bhomias* was evident even as late as 1806. Daulat Rao Shinde, the successor of Mahadaji Shinde, informed Bhim Singh, the new ruler of Jodhpur that the Marathas had lost control over Makrana five years ago. He asked Bhim Singh to persuade the *bhomias* to transfer the control of the area to the Marathas.⁵⁰

Forms of Resistance to the Marathas

In the later half of the eighteenth century, the Maratha activities were largely confined to South-eastern and South-western (less arid parts of Marwar) Rajasthan. Maratha actions in these areas of Rajasthan were guided by the fact that most of the better revenue yielding pockets were concentrated in this part. Such areas included Jaipur, Bharatpur, Alwar (Machheri), Karauli, Ajmer, Shahpura, Malpura, Rampura, Tonk, Toda Raisinghpur, Sambhar, Kota, Bundi, Mewar etc. The areas where Maratha-Rajput conflict was more pronounced were, Jaipur, Bharatpur, Jodhpur. These areas attracted the attention of the Marathas till the end of the eighteenth century. The additional importance of these areas was their strategic location. The frontiers of the three major Rajput States of Marwar, Mewar and Jaipur converged here. Perhaps this explains the long term involvement of the Marathas in these parts of Rajasthan despite stiff resistance at several places. The Maratha presence in Rajasthan was largely motivated by their desire to extract regular tribute from the Rajput rulers. Secondly, they were also interested in occupying and controlling fertile and strategically important centres like Kota, Ajmer, Tonk, Rampura and Malpura. Sambhar was much sought after because of the commercial value of its salt trade.

After the collapse of the Mughal empire, both Jaipur and Jodhpur had emerged as bigger and powerful States in Rajasthan. Though the Marathas had established themselves as real successor of the declining empire in large parts of India, they faced stiff opposition to their presence in Rajasthan. The Marathas experienced great

⁵⁰ *Gwalior-Jodhpur Kharita, Posh Sudi 2, V.S. 1853/1796.*

difficulty in controlling and administering the several pockets gained in the Rajput States. The powerful Rajput *thikanedars* and *bhomias* who dominated the villages spearheaded unabated resistance against the Marathas. Moreover, the Rajput States of Rajasthan as compared to the smaller Rajput principalities of Malwa and Bundelkhand were far more resourceful and strategically positioned to face the Maratha aggression. Moreover, the Rajput rulers of Rajasthan had greater experience in running the local administration as compared to the *zamindars* of Malwa. The Rajput States of Jaipur and Jodhpur were in the forefront of the struggle against Maratha occupation in Rajasthan.

The premier status enjoyed by the Sisodia house of Mewar had gone into near oblivion with the death of Rana Raj Singh in 1680. From the beginning of the eighteenth century onwards, the struggle for political primacy among the Rajputs was largely between the Kachhwahas of Amber/Jaipur and the Rathors of Jodhpur. A considerable expansion of the territories and economic resources of Amber/Jaipur took place during the reign of Sawai Jai Singh (1700-1743).⁵¹ The pre-eminent position enjoyed by the Rathors in the Mughal court was on the decline after the death of Maharaja Jaswant Singh. However, successive Rathor rulers of Jodhpur managed to keep their political power intact even after the death of Maharaja Ajit Singh. Therefore, the eighteenth century witnessed an acute rivalry between the Kachhwahas and the Rathors punctuated with occasional bonhomie.

The Rajasthani sources vividly depict the forms of resistance adopted by the Rajputs against the Marathas. The *kharitas* written by the Shindes and Holkars to the Rajput rulers also provide an insight into the manner in which the Rajputs addressed the Maratha menace. The varied ways through which the Rajputs resisted the Marathas ranged from diplomacy to passive as well as armed struggle. For a clear understanding of the Rajput resistance to the Marathas, we would discuss the forms of struggle under three heads. First there was popular resistance initiated by the local people on their own and occasionally instigated by their rulers. Active resistance sponsored by the State in the form of military action constituted the second form of resistance. The third form was

⁵¹ Jadunath Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. I, p. 130.

passive or subtle resistance by the State in the form of non-payment, short-payment, delayed payment and haggling over payment and transfer of territory. The State also offered passive resistance in the form of *yajna*, donation etc. and by use of diplomacy and forging of connections with Maratha officials.

Popular Resistance

The first instance of popular resistance to the Marathas was reported from the Rajput State of Marwar. In 1742, the people of Marwar resisted the Maratha attempt to realize tribute. The Peshwa then dispatched Malhar Rao Holkar and Ranoji Shinde to Marwar. He instructed them to collect the tribute amount due from the Jodhpur ruler, Abhay Singh right from the end of the battle fought at Merta in 1736. Despite this, the Marathas found it difficult to realize tribute from Abhay Singh. Having failed to collect direct from the ruler, they tried to realize tribute from the people of the parganas of Sojat, Raipur and Jaitaran. In protest, the people deserted their villages to avoid payment to the Marathas. They were able to collect a measly amount of rupees 100-200 per day. Abhay Singh was ultimately successful in evading the payment from the treasury.⁵²

The Jaipur rulers also resisted the Maratha demand of tribute and military expenses which kept accumulating. From the pockets of territories in the Jaipur State, though notionally transferred to the Marathas, demand for revenue was resented not only by the Jaipur ruler but also by the local Rajputs. The latter continued to create disturbances and give trouble to the Maratha officials present in their locality. Sometimes efforts were made by the Raja to secretly encourage the people to murder the Marathas. The murder of large number of Marathas in the Jaipur city during the reign of Sawai Madho Singh is a notable example in this regard.

After Sawai Iswari Singh's death on 14 December, 1750, Madho Singh was invited to come quickly and occupy the vacant throne. The Jaipur ministers, Hargovind and Vidyadhar visited Malhar Rao Holkar and entreated him hard to spare the State. It was only after four days of discussion that they agreed to pay a heavy ransom for the

⁵² G.R. Parihar, *Marwar and the Marathas*, p. 57.

kingdom and capital that Malhar Rao Holkar recalled his soldiers posted at various places and set himself to realize the money. Later, Malhar Rao himself conducted Sawai Madho Singh to the palace. When Jayappa Sindhia arrived on 6th January, 1751, he put up new demands:

“The question of ransom (*khandani*) had been settled before, but now a new demand was made that one-third or at least one-fourth of the territory of Jaipur should be made over to the Marathas by a written deed. This demand alienated the Raja and the Rajputs.”⁵³

Sawai Madho Singh felt enraged by these new demands. Besides this, he became emboldened to resist the Marathas as he got the support of his chiefs especially the Shekhawats who had gathered round the new king. In a changed policy he tried to extricate himself from the Marathas. Sawai Madho Singh made many attempts to poison the Maratha *sardars* and their soldiers. However, the Marathas did not fall pray to Madho Singh’s deadly plans. Due to Jayappa and Umed Singh Hada’s efforts the plan to kill Marathas could not be executed. The noxious food was then buried in the ground. Sawai Madho Singh did not give up his efforts. Next he planned to physically annihilate important Maratha leaders.⁵⁴

Sawai Madho Singh ultimately succeeded in his plans on the 10th January, 1751. On that day approximately four thousand Marathas had entered the city of Jaipur. Suddenly, at noon, a riot broke out and the inhabitants of Jaipur attacked the unsuspecting Marathas. Nearly fifteen hundred Marathas were slain and a thousand wounded inside Jaipur. Only a few managed to save themselves from carnage.⁵⁵ The news of Maratha slaughter spread outside the capital. The Rajputs rose in the villages and killed the couriers of the Marathas wherever they could catch them, so that the roads were closed.⁵⁶ Disturbances in the territories of Nenwa and Bundi were also reported. At these places they joined hands with a local *zamindar*, Kishen Singh Hada. Holkar threatened the Jaipur ruler of serious consequences if the local Rajputs

⁵³ Jadunath Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. I, p. 168, 169.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

⁵⁵ *Selections from Peshwa’s Daftar*, ed., G.S. Sardesai, Vol. XXVII, *Balajirao Peshwa and Events in the North (1741-61)*, Supplementary, Government Central Press, Mumbai, 1932, Nos. 64, 65.

⁵⁶ Jadunath Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. I, pp. 170.

were not prevented from opposing the Maratha presence in their area.⁵⁷ The situation was quite grave as Holkar's officials were facing resistance from the local Rajputs all around in their possession within Jaipur. Holkar asked Sawai Madho Singh to intervene and stop all acts of disturbances and opposition to the Marathas in Tonk, Toda, Malpura, Chhota Rampura and Sherpur.⁵⁸ This is indicative of the growing anti-Maratha sentiments that provoked turbulences in various localities.

Mina Opposition to Marathas

In the discussion it has been noted that the Marathas were able to gain support from certain sections of the elites and other functionaries in Rajasthan. But they could not avoid being troubled and harassed at the hands of certain local communities, particularly the Minas who often looted the convoys carrying supplies to the Maratha camp. The Minas are a sturdy group of people found mostly in North-east and South-east Rajasthan. They are found in large numbers mainly in Jaipur, Alwar, Bharatpur, Sawai Madhopur, Tonk, Kota and the Bundi districts.⁵⁹ The plundering activities of the Minas during the Tunga campaign always rankled in the minds of the Marathas. On 7th July 1787, it was reported from Mahadaji's camp that the Minas carried off camels and ponies that were on the way to the Maratha camp. Near Toda, the Minas looted fruits being sent to the Maratha camp. From another location, it was reported that the Minas had plundered several carts of grain belonging to the Marathas. In one such raid, the Minas successfully carried off 150 oxen loaded with grain from the rear of the caravan heading for Shinde's camp.

Rajput Rulers Defensive Alliances

The Marathas entered Rajasthan for the first time in 1734, on the invitation of Pratap Singh Hada of Bundi. This was the first Maratha interference in the internal matters of any Rajput State. Soon the Rajput rulers realized the need of a well defined policy if the Maratha advance in Rajasthan was to be checked. Consequently, Sawai Jai Singh

⁵⁷ *Indore Kharita* No. 14, *Jeth Sudi* 13, V.S. 1808/1751.

⁵⁸ *Indore Kharita* No. 36, *Asoj Vadi* 12, V.S. 1809/1752.

⁵⁹ M.L. Sharma, *Rajasthan*, Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, New Delhi, 1971, p.15.

convened a conference of the Rajput rulers at Hurda in July, 1734. It was presided over by Maharana Jagat Singh of Mewar and was attended by the rulers of Jaipur, Jodhpur, Kota, Bikaner, Bundi, Karauli and Kishangarh. They all agreed to form a united front against the Marathas under the leadership of Maharana Jagat Singh. But the unity exhibited at Hurda could not be executed on account of the conflicting interests of different Rajput rulers. Though the Hurda conference was a failure, it succeeded in at least making the Rajput rulers realize the seriousness of the Maratha threat. It also brought home the lesson that the Maratha menace ought to be tackled collectively and not in isolation. The idea of collective resistance to the Marathas in Rajasthan was experimented with varying degree of success during the second half of the eighteenth century.

Armed Opposition to Marathas

Once the Marathas had made a formal entry in Rajasthan, they became involved in the succession disputes between the competitors for the throne of Jaipur and Jodhpur. This divided the Rajputs into pro and anti-Maratha camps. Bakht Singh, who was fighting his nephew Ram Singh to secure the *gaddi* of Jodhpur, took the initiative to form another front of the Rajput rulers to drive the Marathas out of Rajasthan.⁶⁰ Jaipur and Shahpura responded favourably. Bikaner was already supporting the cause of Bakht Singh and therefore, readily agreed to join the front. In 1751, Gaj Singh of Bikaner sent a *kharita* to Sawai Madho Singh informing him about his preparations to join Bakht Singh soon. He further wrote that in case the Marathas do not withdraw they should militarily drive them out of Rajasthan.⁶¹ When the news of Malhar Rao Holkar's march towards North India reached Gaj Singh, he wrote to Bakht Singh to devise a plan to prevent Holkar from proceeding further.⁶² Bakht Singh also proposed to Sawai Madho Singh to divide Malwa between the two after driving the Marathas beyond the river Narbada.⁶³ Unfortunately the plan could not materialize due to the death of Bakht Singh in September, 1752. The Marathas interpreted Bakht Singh's

⁶⁰ *Hingane Daftar*, Vol. I, p. 59.

⁶¹ *Bikaner-Jaipur Kharita, Asarh Sudi 8, V.S. 1808/1751.*

⁶² *Bikaner-Jaipur Kharita, Asarh Vadi 4, V.S. 1809/1752.*

⁶³ *Marwar Khyat*, Vol. II, p. 521.

plan to forge a united front of the Rathors, the Kachhwahas, the Jats of Bharatpur and the Mughal *wazir*, as the combined move of Jaipur and Jodhpur to finish the Maratha domination in North India.⁶⁴

Bijay Singh, the successor of Bakht Singh, carried forward his father's anti-Maratha policy. Throughout the late half of the eighteenth century, he continuously resisted the Maratha domination. Several attempts were made by him to form a coalition against the Marathas. He sent his representative to Delhi and through him offered rupees five lakhs to the Emperor and requested him to join the Rajput army. Jaipur and Bikaner had already decided to make a common cause with Jodhpur.⁶⁵ Bijay Singh did not hesitate to seek Ahmad Shah Abdali's help if the Marathas could be thrown out of Marwar.⁶⁶

In the meanwhile, the Peshwa received the report that Bijay Singh was hobnobbing with Abdali.⁶⁷ In November 1759, Govind Rao Ballal informed the Maratha commander, Sadashiv Rao Bhau that Bijay Singh intends to join Abdali with a view to overthrow the Maratha domination in North India.⁶⁸ In a letter dated, 29th December 1759, Abdali wrote to Sawai Madho Singh acknowledging his '*Ariza*' wherein the Raja had written to the Afghan king that the latter's letters to Raja Bijay Singh had been duly forwarded to him. Abdali wrote that he had sent another letter to Bijay Singh asking him to unite with Sawai Madho Singh.⁶⁹ Another letter mentions about Abdali trying to effect a union with the Rohilla forces. He had also invited other potentates – the Jats, the Rajputs under Sawai Madho Singh and Shuja, to fight under his flag against the Marathas. It also mentions that though the Rajputs were afraid to open hostilities with the Marathas, they could not ignore the powerful Abdali and opened negotiations with him.⁷⁰ To avert such an unfolding situation, the

⁶⁴ *Selections from Peshwa's Daftar*, ed., G.S. Sardesai, Vol. XXI, *Balaji Bajirao : Uttarhind (1741-61)*, Government Central Press, Mumbai, 1932, No. 50.

⁶⁵ *S.P.D.*, Vol. XXVII, No. 119.

⁶⁶ G.R. Parihar, *Marwar and the Marathas*, p. 86.

⁶⁷ *S.P.D.*, Vol.21, No. 101.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. 21, No. 126.

⁶⁹ Syed Hasan Askari, Durrani-Rajput Negotiations, 1759-61, *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 9th Session, 1945, p. 264.

⁷⁰ *S.P.D.*, Vol. XXI, No. 187.

Marathas contacted Bijay Singh for help.⁷¹ Bijay Singh promised to help both but he remained neutral in the third battle of Panipat. In a letter dated, 10th March, 1760, Raja Keshav Rao reports to the Peshwa about these developments in North India.

The hatred towards the Marathas had accumulated so much so that in the wake of Abdali's expected attack, Sawai Madho Singh attempted to poison the Maratha *vakil*, Govindrao Tamaji, a Brahmin by caste. This has been highlighted in a letter dated 29th September 1755 written by Bapuji Mahadev Hingane and Damodar Mahadev Gosavi.⁷² The Rajputs were in constant touch with Abdali even after the third battle of Panipat. *Dastur komwar – dikhni* also mentions about the visit of Gulraj Khatri, an agent of Abdali, to Jaipur. He came from Lahore in 1762, with a *farman* for Sawai Madho Singh. Unfortunately the contents of the *farman* are not available. Sawai Madho Singh gave him rupees 2,700 to cover the cost of travel and hospitality.⁷³ Abdali was keen to use the Rajputs against the Marathas. It gets reflected from Gaj Singh's *kharita* to Sawai Madho Singh in which he acknowledged receiving monetary help sent through Yakub Ali Khan, by Shah Abdali and Nawab Ali Khan, the *wazir* of Qandhar.⁷⁴ It becomes evident yet again that there was continuous interaction between the Afghan ruler and Rajputs through a letter written by Gaj Singh in 1773 to Sawai Madho Singh. In this letter he mentions about the visit of the agent of Taimur Shah and requested Sawai Madho Singh to arrange for his safe passage up to Delhi.⁷⁵

Many Rajput rulers wanted the Marathas to help them in their succession disputes. However, the Marathas were ready to help on suitable payment. When the Marathas put pressure for excessive payments, the Rajputs tended to resist them unitedly. This time the initiative was taken by the Hadas of Kota who contemplated to form a united front for Jaipur, Jodhpur and Mewar against the Marathas. Guman Singh, the ruler of Kota arranged a meeting of Rana Ari Singh and Bijay Singh at Nathdwara.⁷⁶

⁷¹ Letter from Bijay Singh to Anand Rao, *Asarh Sudi* 9, V.S. 1816/ Jan. 1760, *Arzi Bahi* No. 4, Jodhpur Records.

⁷² *Hingane Daftar*, No. 169.

⁷³ *Dastur Komwar Dikhni*, VOL. IX, *Bhadwa Sudi* 5, V.S. 1819/1762.

⁷⁴ *Bikaner-Jaipur Kharita*, *Asoj Vadi* 8, V.S. 1823/1766.

⁷⁵ *Bikaner-Jaipur Kharita*, *Falgun Vadi* 13, V.S. 1830/1773.

⁷⁶ R.K. Saxena, *Maratha Relations with the Major States of Rajputana*, p. 51.

The meeting between these three rulers took place in November 1766, but nothing came out of this meeting as the Jaipur Raja abstained and the Mewar Rana also showed reluctance to join the front. Maharao Guman Singh was now left with no other choice except to profess allegiance to the Marathas.

The Rajputs were quite anxious about the recent developments in the politics of North India. They were particularly concerned about the return of the Mughal emperor Shah Alam with the help of Mahadaji Shinde. This is evident from the Bikaner ruler Gaj Singh's letter to Sawai Pratap Singh of Jaipur in 1785. We also get to know through the letter about the eagerness of the Rajput rulers to work out a common strategy in consultation with their leading Rajput *Thakurs*. He requested that all the Rajputs should be consulted and requested to assemble to consider proposals to eliminate Maratha domination from North India.⁷⁷ The years 1788 and 1790 saw great efforts made by Bijay Singh to oust Shinde not only from Rajasthan but also from North India. He entered into negotiations with all possible allies. His first move was to write to the Peshwa through Tukoji Holkar, to remove Mahadaji Shinde from the charge of the Maratha affairs in North India.⁷⁸ Prior to the battle of Merta in September, 1790 Bijay Singh even ventured to entice Shinde's commander, De Boigne for defection to the Rajput side but he was unsuccessful.⁷⁹ The greatest setback to the Maratha interests particularly in Rajasthan and generally in North India was the death of the prominent Maratha leaders. Mahadaji Sindhia's death in 1794 was an irretrievable loss. The death of Ahilyabai Holkar was another setback for the Marathas.

The Jaipur and Jodhpur rulers resorted to non-payment of tribute, short-payment and delayed payment as a form of resistance against the Marathas. Sometimes it led to further enhancement of the amount to be paid. For instance Sawai Madho Singh troubled the Marathas in a discreet way without overtly defying their authority. He removed the *chaudhary* and the *qanungo* from pargana Toda which was under

⁷⁷ *Bikaner-Jaipur Kharita, Chaitra Vadi 8, V.S. 1842/1785.*

⁷⁸ Letter from Bijay Singh to Tukoji Holkar, *Posh Vadi 14, V.S. 1844/ Jan. 1788, Arzi Bahi No. 4, Jodhpur Records.*

⁷⁹ Herbert Compton, *A Particular Account of the Military Adventures of Hindustan*, London, T. Fisher Unwin, 1892, p. 55.

Holkar's control. In this way, he brought the work of the revenue administration to a standstill.⁸⁰ Perhaps at the instructions of Sawai Madho Singh, the *amil* of pargana Malpura was not paying the entire amount of revenue collection to Holkar's *kamavisdars*.⁸¹ Resistance to the Maratha authority in the areas handed over to Holkars was unabated in the subsequent years. Despite pressure from Holkar throughout the years 1756 and 1757, there was no positive response from Sawai Madho Singh. Besides this, the rivalry between Shinde and Holkar also turned advantageous to the Jaipur Raja. Raghunath Rao, the Peshwa's brother told Sawai Madho Singh that he could rule over Jaipur in alliance with *subedarji* (Malhar Rao Holkar) and *Patil Sahib* (Mahadaji Shinde).⁸²

The debacle at Panipat emboldened the Rajputs to oppose the Maratha presence at various places in Jaipur territory. In one of his letters to Sawai Madho Singh, Kedarji Shinde specifically instructed the Jaipur Raja not to send any troops to Shahpura. The chief of Shahpura was troubling the Maratha revenue collectors with Sawai Madho Singh's consent. Maratha collector in Shahpura, Jayaji Bohite informed Sawai Madho Singh about the mischief of the Shahpura ruler.⁸³ Shinde's *vakil* at Jaipur *darbar* persuaded Sawai Madho Singh to withdraw support to Shahpura enabling Jayaji Mohite to regain his position in Shahpura as the Maratha *mamlatdar*.⁸⁴

Despite repeated Maratha warnings, the resistance from the Jaipur ruler as well as the local elements continued in one form or the other. All this frustrated the Marathas, as their repeated attempts to consolidate their hold on the territory within the Rajput States did not yield the desired results. It was on account of this continued defiance and resistance to the presence of the Marathas that Mahadaji Shinde decided to take up the issue with the Jaipur ruler, Sawai Pratap Singh, in 1782. Shinde registered his protest against the hostile posture of local *zamindars*.⁸⁵ Once again Shinde wrote to Sawai Pratap Singh in 1784, asking him to control the people of Jaipur. They troubled

⁸⁰ *Indore Kharita* No. 25, *Vaisakh Vadi* 12, *V.S.* 1809/1752.

⁸¹ *Indore Kharita* No. 44, *Sawan Vadi* 1, *V.S.* 1810/1753.

⁸² *Indore Kharita* No. 53, *Jeth Vadi* 11, *V.S.* 1811/1754.

⁸³ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 179, *Chaitra Sudi* 8, *V.S.* 1820/1763.

⁸⁴ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 180, Undated.

⁸⁵ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 79, *Sawan Vadi* 14, *V.S.* 1839/1782.

his representative, Balarao, who was staying in the Jaipur city. Pargana Sambhar was given to Shinde by the Jaipur ruler. When his officials tried to establish their own administrative set up in Sambhar, they faced resistance from the local Jaipur officials and *zamindars*.⁸⁶ His officers continued to face resistance from the *bhomias* which is evident from Shinde's *kharita* to Sawai Pratap Singh.⁸⁷ Thus, the Maratha attempts to undermine the authority and control of Jaipur in the matter of tax collection were only partially successful.

The **payment of tribute and war expenses** to the Marathas was another issue on which the Maratha attempts were contested by the Rajputs. It cannot be denied that the Marathas participated in the succession disputes of Jaipur and Jodhpur for fiscal considerations. But when the Rajputs were unable to pay the promised amount, they were pressurized by the Marathas. The Peshwa asked his *vakil*, to demand the promised amount from Sawai Ishwari Singh of Jaipur. But Sawai Ishwari Singh could not arrange the demanded money. When the Peshwa deputed both Shinde and Holkar to collect the promised amount from the Jaipur ruler, he committed suicide because he could not meet the Maratha demands. After Sawai Ishwari Singh, it was Sawai Madho Singh's turn to meet the Maratha demands. The issue of tribute payment remained inconclusive partly due to the feeling among the Rajputs that the demand was unreasonable and beyond their means. Though, the issue of tribute payment was sorted out several times by both the sides, the Rajputs did not keep their promises. All this provided an excuse for continued Maratha intervention in the affairs of the Rajput States. With the help of the *kharitas* addressed by Shinde and Holkar, we get an insight into the complicated nature of the issues and means adopted by the Jaipur ruler to **evade the payment** of ever growing Maratha demands for money.

Both Shinde and Holkar needed a continuous supply of finances for their military advances in the North. Therefore, soon after the accession of Sawai Madho Singh to the *gaddi* of Jaipur, they started demanding tribute on a regular basis. As per the terms of the agreement between Sawai Madho Singh and the Marathas, the Jaipur ruler was committed to pay a *nazar* of rupees 10 lakhs to the Maratha king. It was agreed that the payment would be made in four installments in a span of six years, from 1744 to

⁸⁶ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 99, *Falgun Vadi* 11, V.S. 1841/1784.

⁸⁷ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 42, *Posh Sudi* 5, V.S. 1848/1791.

1750. When the people of Jaipur attacked the Marathas in 1751, Sawai Madho Singh agreed to pay compensation for the loss of men and materials.⁸⁸ Despite all these promises, Holkar did not get any payment. Sawai Madho Singh was reminded by Khande Rao Holkar about the non-payment due in mid-1752.⁸⁹ Malhar Rao Holkar also wrote to the Jaipur ruler about the non-payment of promised amount. As the Peshwa was in dire need of cash, Sawai Madho Singh had to arrange for the money.⁹⁰ In 1753, Sawai Madho Singh was immensely pressurized by Holkar to make the due payment.⁹¹ The language of the *kharitas* make it very clear that Holkar was very desperate to receive the payment. He also openly expressed his displeasure about Sawai Madho Singh's indifferent attitude.⁹²

Sawai Madho Singh avoided the Maratha demands by following **covert methods of resistance**. These included non payment, delayed payment and underpayment of tribute to the Marathas. One such instance is when Jaipur *diwan* Hargobind instead of sending rupees 50,000 dispatched only rupees 40,000. Khande Rao Holkar protested to Sawai Madho Singh against these tactics of Jaipur.⁹³ To avoid payment and buy time, the other method adopted by Jaipur was by issuing invalid *hundis* which could not be honoured. This will be clear from the following account. In 1753, a *hundi* was sent by Jaipur to be exchanged with cash at Aurangabad. But it was not honoured by the local *sahukar*. In a similar way, *hundis* dispatched for the Peshwa could not be encashed. A *hundi* issued in the name of an Aurangabad based *sahukar* for payment of rupees three lakhs was not entertained by the *sahukar* as the amount had not reached him.⁹⁴ Khande Rao Holkar warned the Jaipur *diwan* Hargobind to issue valid *hundis* in future⁹⁵.

⁸⁸ *Indore Kharita* No. 3, V.S. 1809/ 1749.

⁸⁹ *Indore Kharita* No. 32, *Asarh Sudi* 10, V.S. 1809/1752.

⁹⁰ *Indore Kharita* No. 38, *Kartik Sudi*, V.S. 1809/1752.

⁹¹ *Indore Kharita* No. 38, *Vaisakh Sudi* 2, V.S. 1810/1753.

Indore Kharita No. 43, *Sawan Vadi* 12, V.S. 1810/1753.

Indore Kharita No. 49, *Posh Vadi* 5, V.S. 1810/1753.

⁹² *Indore Kharita* No. 43, *Sawan Vadi* 12, V.S. 1810/1753.

⁹³ *Indore Kharita* No. 47, *Bhadon Vadi* 14, V.S. 1810/1753.

⁹⁴ *Indore Kharita* No. 46, *Bhadon Vadi* 14, V.S. 1810/1753.

⁹⁵ *Indore Kharita* No. 48, *Sawan Vadi* 14, V.S. 1810/1753.

The Marathas did not hide their annoyance over the casualness of Jaipur regarding payment. They kept on pressurizing Sawai Madho Singh for the payment of tribute. In 1754, Holkar asked Sawai Madho Singh to send the money fast.⁹⁶ He also reported the failure of the Jaipur officials to pay the salary to the Maratha officials in Jaipur territory as per the agreement.⁹⁷ But Sawai Madho Singh knew how to gain time by entering into prolonged negotiations albeit paying only a paltry sum of the promised amount. Reacting to these tactics of Jaipur, the Peshwa's *vakil* commented in 1765:

“At Malhar’s instance we are treating the Jaipur Raja with every tenderness and consideration, but Mahadaji Sindhia has been dunning [pressurizing] him for arrears....This court moves very slowly and protracts business.”⁹⁸

But no payment was made even in the years 1756 and 1757 despite constant pressure from Holkar. The evasive attitude of the Jaipur Raja compelled the Marathas to act tough. In fact, in 1756, they reminded Sawai Madho Singh that he owed the throne of Jaipur to the Maratha support. He was reprimanded for the delayed payment. In 1757, Raghunath Rao wrote to Sawai Madho Singh from Shahjahanabad about his failure to pay the installment money for the month of *Kartik*, as per the promise.⁹⁹ Throughout the 1750's the Jaipur ruler evaded payment of tribute and the Marathas could do no more than sending reminders and stern warnings.

In fact, Malhar Rao Holkar, in his letter of 1764 mentioned the details of the pending dues since 1761.¹⁰⁰ Rupees 35 lakhs were to be paid in seven annual installments, out of which rupees 10 lakhs were to be paid immediately. Four lakh rupees were demanded in cash by Holkar and the rest in three equal installments, in the coming three months. The entire amount was to be paid between 1765 and 1771.¹⁰¹ Tukoji also reported to Sawai Prithvi Singh about the harassment caused to his

⁹⁶ *Indore Kharita* No. 53, *Jeth Vadi* 11, V.S. 1811/1754.

⁹⁷ *Indore Kharita* No. 60, *Kartik Vadi* 9, V.S. 1811/1754.

⁹⁸ Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. II, p. 305.

⁹⁹ *Indore Kharita* No.72, *Kartik Sudi* 10, V.S. 1814/1757.

¹⁰⁰ *Indore Kharita* No. 87, *Magh Sudi* 8, V.S. 1821/1764.

¹⁰¹ *Indore Kharita* No. 87, *Magh Sudi* 8, V.S. 1821/1764.

representative, Pandit Gobind Rao Munshi in village Thikariya of *pargana* Toda. The said village was given to the Pandit in *inam*. Tukoji wrote:

“Recently we have come to know that the *amil* of Toda has taken over the ownership of the said village from Pandit Gobind Rao.”

Sawai Prithvi Singh was requested to restore the village to the *inam* holder.¹⁰² Holkar’s *kamavisdars* in pargana Tonk and Rampura continued to report disturbances. Tukoji was compelled to write again and again to Jaipur ruler to take appropriate action.¹⁰³ It appears that Holkar’s officials were not able to effectively control their possessions in Jaipur territory on their own. Instances of growing confrontation and resistance to their presence became more frequent with the passage of time. Tukoji Holkar wrote repeatedly to the Jaipur Raja to curb disturbances caused by local Rajputs. In 1780, Tukoji Holkar reprimanded Sawai Pratap Singh, the new ruler of Jaipur for his inaction to control disturbances in pargana Tonk.¹⁰⁴ The weakening position of Holkars in Jaipur led to Mahadaji Shinde’s intervention on their behalf. He advised the Jaipur ruler to give up hope to regain control over the areas claimed by Holkar. Mahadaji even used veiled threats in his letter to Jaipur ruler if he did not respond positively. He asked the Jaipur Raja to vacate Tonk and Rampura in order to restore cordial relationship failing which he should be ready to face severe consequences.¹⁰⁵

However, Holkar’s officials in pargana Tonk, Rampura, Toda and Malpura continued to face the hostility of local Rajputs. Even Mahadaji’s threats could not produce the desired results. Tukoji kept on reminding Sawai Pratap Singh to take action against his Rajputs and restore control to his revenue official Gobind Rao.¹⁰⁶ Repeated instances of resistance and defiance to Holkar’s officials in 1780s indicate that his authority in Jaipur was becoming lax. The Holkars in their *kharitas* to Sawai Pratap Singh continued to reprimand him but did not go beyond that. They did not resort to military action against the Jaipur ruler. In the 1790s, Holkar’s position in Rajasthan

¹⁰² *Indore Kharita* No. 179, *Posh Sudi* 1, V.S. 1834/1777.

¹⁰³ *Indore Kharita* No. 183, *Kartik Sudi* 10, V.S. 1836/1779.

¹⁰⁴ *Indore Kharita* No. 185, *Asarh Vadi* 5, V.S. 1837/1780.

¹⁰⁵ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 75, *Sawan Sudi* 4, V.S. 1836/1779.

¹⁰⁶ *Indore Kharita* No. 186, *Asoj Sudi* 3, V.S. 1837/1780.

was further undermined due to widespread resistance against the Maratha presence in the territories of the Rajput rulers. Thus, from the reign of Sawai Madho Singh to that of Sawai Pratap Singh there was a regular confrontation between the Jaipur rulers and Holkar regarding the issue of tribute. But Holkar could not realize much on account of the Jaipur rulers evasive tactics.

From 1751 onwards, Shinde also followed the issue of tribute payment with Jaipur. Jayappa Shinde's attitude towards Sawai Madho Singh was comparatively soft than Holkar. Although there was a large scale massacre of the Marathas in Jaipur and Shinde's troops suffered immensely, he remained soft to Sawai Madho Singh as the ruler had agreed to pay the tribute as per schedule and the compensation amount also for the damages caused to the Maratha men and money.¹⁰⁷ Even Shinde could not extract more than unfulfilled promises of getting *hundis* for the payment of tribute and other dues from Sawai Madho Singh.¹⁰⁸ After Jayappa's death, his son and successor, Jankoji Shinde turned his attention towards Jaipur after concluding negotiations with Marwar, in 1755. Sawai Madho Singh was asked to make an immediate payment of tribute.¹⁰⁹ At this time the Marathas were facing a cash crunch. Therefore, the Peshwa exerted immense pressure on all his *sardars* for arranging the finances. This forced Jankoji in 1758 to adopt a tough stand towards Jaipur. He wrote to Sawai Madho Singh about his pressing need for money. Sawai Madho Singh was asked to pay three lakh rupees out of the tribute amount immediately.¹¹⁰ To collect this amount, he sent his troops in order to pressurize Sawai Madho Singh to raise this amount from the *sahukars*.¹¹¹ Shinde told Sawai Madho Singh to hand over the amount to the Maratha *vakil*, Naro Kashi present in Jaipur. Naro Kashi would then send *hundis* prepared by the *sahukars* and deliver them to Shinde's camp.¹¹² In 1759 he gave similar

¹⁰⁷ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 156, *Kartik Sudi* 13, *V.S.* 1808/1751.

Gwalior Kharita No. 157, *V.S.* 1809/1752.

¹⁰⁸ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 157, *V.S.* 1809/1752.

¹⁰⁹ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 160, *Sawan Sudi* 2, *V.S.* 1812/1755; *Gwalior Kharita* No. 163, *Vaisakh Vadi* 14, *V.S.* 1813/1756.

¹¹⁰ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 169, *Posh Sudi* 11, *V.S.* 1815/1758.

¹¹¹ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 172, *Posh Vadi* 10, *V.S.* 1815/1758.

¹¹² *Gwalior Kharita* No. 171, *Magh Sudi* 10, *V.S.* 1815/1758.

instructions to Sadashiv Bhat, who was present in Jaipur at that time.¹¹³ But Sawai Madho Singh ignored all these demands of payments.

The Maratha defeat in the battle of Panipat was coupled with their financial difficulties. The tribute from Jaipur was also due for a long time. It was against this background that Kedarji and Mahadaji Shinde asked Sawai Madho Singh to release twelve lakh rupees of the tribute. This amount was to be handed over to their representatives *seth* Dhaneshwar and Parshuram. The Marathas did not have money even to meet their day to day needs.¹¹⁴ Between 1761 to 1763 many letters were sent to Sawai Madho Singh from Shinde demanding money. Sawai Madho Singh probably sent some amount around this time, promising to pay the rest later. This is confirmed from Shinde's *kharita* sent to Sawai Madho Singh in which the former acknowledged the receipt of only one installment.¹¹⁵ Kedarji also required money at Ujjain, hence he asked the Jaipur ruler for an immediate payment of the current installment of tribute.¹¹⁶ But Sawai Madho Singh did not give up his delaying tactics. In mid 1763, he reprimanded Sawai Madho Singh for not sending the due installment of the tribute in time. In 1767, Mahadaji dispatched a Maratha contingent under Jaswant Rao Bable to collect arrears of tribute amount. He wrote to Sawai Madho Singh: "deposit the arrears with the above mentioned officer. I will also be reaching that side soon." Mahadaji Shinde's resolve to put pressure on Sawai Madho Singh who often defaulted in making timely payment is evident from his *kharita*.¹¹⁷ Shinde was continuously bothered by the subtle resistance of the Jaipur ruler to the Maratha demand for payment that continued over the years. Sawai Madho Singh's successor, Sawai Prithvi Singh also followed the tactics of his father. Promises made to Shinde were seldom honoured. Shinde's strong letters were sometimes also followed by his representatives visiting the Jaipur court to collect money. The Jaipur ruler had promised to hand over rupees four lakhs to Pandit Gobind Rao but did not honour his words. Therefore, in 1773, Shinde sent Jodhraj and Amarchand Devdas to collect this amount. Sawai Prithvi Singh's successor, Sawai Pratap Singh also followed delaying

¹¹³ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 174, *Chaitra Sudi* 11, V.S. 1816/1759.

¹¹⁴ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 242, *Jeth Vadi* 14, V.S. 1819/1762.

¹¹⁵ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 179, *Chaitra Sudi* 8, V.S. 1820/1763.

¹¹⁶ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 183, *Jeth Sudi* 1, V.S. 1820/1763.

¹¹⁷ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 190, *Magh Vadi* 9, V.S. 1824/1767.

tactics in matters of payments to the Marathas. The anguish of Mahadaji Shinde eventually culminated in the Tunga campaign. Shinde decided to punish the ruler for his repeated failure to pay the arrears of tribute despite repeated reminders and warnings. In 1793, Shinde again reminded Sawai Pratap Singh about the payments to be made. He wrote:

“Pay to Ganpatrao the amount due for the month of *Jeth* and pay as per schedule agreed upon in future.”¹¹⁸

The *kharitas* are an ample proof that the Maratha claims were resisted overtly or covertly by all the successive Jaipur rulers from Sawai Madho Singh to Sawai Pratap Singh. From the Maratha side polite requests for sending the agreed amount were followed by stern warnings and open threats. But the Jaipur ruler’s response was always lukewarm. The Marathas even appointed their own officials at the Jaipur court for the specific purpose of collecting the dues. That policy also failed miserably. The occasional visits of the Maratha representatives to force the Jaipur ruler to pay did not produce the desired results. The *kharitas* clearly depict the frustration of the Marathas over non payment of money. In 1751, Malhar Rao Holkar wrote to Sawai Madho Singh:

“Your State had agreed to pay *khandani* dues, now ask your officials to send *hundi* for the amount.”¹¹⁹

In 1753, he wrote to Sawai Madho Singh: “my representatives, Ganesh Pandit and Shankar Pandit have informed that you have not made payment of tribute which is not good.” He warned Sawai Madho Singh to arrange for the payment for the sake of good relations.¹²⁰

In 1757, Raghunath Rao wrote to Sawai Madho Singh:

“Installment for the month of *Kartik* has not reached, this is not correct, send money fast.....that will be better for you.”¹²¹

¹¹⁸ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 58, *Asarh Vadi* 13, V.S. 1850/1793.

¹¹⁹ *Indore Kharita* No. 20, *Bhadon Sudi* 1, V.S. 1808/1751.

¹²⁰ *Indore Kharita* No. 37, *Kartik Sudi* 1, V.S. 1809/1752.

¹²¹ *Indore Kharita* No. 72, *Kartik Sudi* 10, V.S. 1814/1757.

As Sawai Pratap Singh owed sixty three lakh rupees to the Peshwa, a threatening letter was written to him. He was warned not to delay in this matter. The Marathas threatened to ruin Jaipur territories in case the Rajput Raja failed to meet the tribute demand.¹²²

Shinde also shared the same experience as Holkar regarding the non payment of dues from Jaipur. This is evident from Shinde's *kharitas* sent from 1752 onwards. For instance, he wrote to Sawai Madho Singh in 1762 about the pending dues amounting to rupees 45 lakhs. In the following year again there was a complaint from Shinde that he did not receive the current installment. Two months later a reminder was sent to clear all pending dues.¹²³ In 1766, two *kharitas* were written by Mahadaji Shinde raising the issue of non payment of arrears. Moreover, he sent his forces to recover the same.¹²⁴ Similarly, in 1770, Peshwa Madhav Rao sent Aapaji Narayan to collect one lakh nine thousand rupees. He also warned Jaipur of dire consequences in case of delay.¹²⁵ Incidentally, the Peshwa's person was taken a hostage by the Jaipur ruler. In 1771, Mahadaji again asked for the remittance of all dues without any delay.¹²⁶ Similar reminders were dispatched in 1775 and 1776. After a long interval Mahadaji again raised the issue of payment in 1784 and asked for immediate payment to his representative, Ratanlal.¹²⁷ It becomes evident that the Maratha authority and administration in the territory that they obtained from the Jaipur State was neither systematic nor effective. This was quite unlike their efficient revenue administration in Malwa.

Resistance from Marwar was more overt than covert as Bijay Singh tried hard to offer organized and armed resistance to the Marathas. Marwar also offered a passive form of resistance to the Marathas. The source from which it emanated was not Bijay Singh, the ruler of Jodhpur, but from his officials and nobles. They used the services of *Charans* and *Bhats* for this purpose. According to *Marwar ri Khyat*, they were asked to visit the Marwar villages and articulate in their anti-Maratha songs the

¹²² *Indore Kharita* No. 99, *Aghan Vadi* 8, V.S. 1815/1758.

¹²³ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 161, *Jeth Sudi* 5, V.S. 1812/1755.

¹²⁴ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 190, *Magh Vadi* 6, V.S. 1824/1767.

¹²⁵ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 139, *Jeth Sudi* 4, V.S. 1827/1770.

¹²⁶ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 136, *Bhadon Vadi* 2, V.S. 1828/1771.

¹²⁷ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 101, *Magh Sudi* 9, V.S. 1841/1784.

sufferings and humiliation of the people of Marwar caused due to the Maratha inroads. The thought that lay behind this was to create popular resentment and unrest against the Marathas.¹²⁸ In the battle of Merta when the Jodhpur forces were defeated by the Marathas, the high ranking officers of Bijay Singh even had recourse to divine intervention to halt further Maratha advancement and success against Jodhpur. These officers were Sawai Singh Champawat, Khichi Gordhan and Singhvi Gyanmal. They asked Someshwar Ojha to suggest some device which could lead upto some divine intervention to help Marwar to get rid of the Maratha menace and effectively stop the Maratha progress:

“Champawat Sawai Singhji, Khichi Gordhanji, Singhvi Gyanmalji, Ojha Someshwarji nai puchhiyo koi iso upaya jap jaap karo tin su Dikhni agha nai vadhe. Tad Somesarji kaiyo Shri hajur su dara nai to Sat Chandi kara to agha nai vadhai.”

Someshwar Ojha recommended the performance of the ritual of *Satchandi Yagya* (sacrifice) to invoke Goddess Durga. But he was unwilling to undertake it due to Bijay Singh's fear. The Ojha felt that it would be the most effective weapon against the Marathas. He said that if this *yagya* was performed they would be able to stop the Marathas from advancing further. But as the nobles and officers had made up their mind to perform the *yagya*, they decided not to inform Bijay Singh as they were apprehensive that he would dissuade them from performing the *yagya*. But they were careful to take his favourite, Gulab Rai *Paswan* into confidence, as a safeguard to handle the situation. Under the direction of Someshwar Ojha, the *Satchandi yagya* was performed in 1790 as per the procedure. The *yagya* lasted for full one month. When it got concluded, Brahmins were invited for feast. They were given lavish presentations that consisted of clothes, utensils, cash and one gold coin each was offered to all the four Brahmin participants.¹²⁹ Interestingly, after the battle of Merta, Bijay Singh did not offer any resistance to the Maratha domination. Nor did he join any anti-Maratha venture initiated by Jaipur. A close scrutiny of the *kharitas* shows that Marwar did not trouble the Marathas with regard to its obligation of tribute

¹²⁸ *Marwar Ri Khyat*, p.42.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.99.

payment after 1790. The Marathas did not experience much problem as the payment was more or less regular. Bijay Singh, at times was unable to pay in cash, therefore, he paid in the form of valuable articles such as jewellery, camels, elephants, oxen etc. The flow of payment got disrupted only in exceptional circumstances, particularly in times of severe famine conditions. The Marathas, understood the problem of Marwar arising out of such a situation. They also expressed their concern and made necessary adjustment in the payable amount and the time frame within which the revised amount of *peshkash* was to be paid.¹³⁰

In conclusion it can be stated that the Marathas were unable to establish even a modicum of administration in the parganas and villages ceded to them by different rulers of Rajasthan. Even the official machinery created by the Marathas in occupied territories to collect revenue directly was not effective. In other words, the process of slow conquest did not take place in Rajasthan unlike in Malwa. The Rajput rulers, chiefs (*thikanedars*), *zamindars* and people continued to resist the Marathas in various ways. It seems the Marathas were unable to comprehend the complexities involved in the social, local politics of Rajasthan. Hence, their failure to repeat their performance in Rajasthan, what they had achieved in Malwa. As the Marathas did not have the legal authority to administer the occupied territories in Rajasthan, they had to face dispersed resistance in the localities. This reality had dawned on different Maratha *sardars*. That is why they concentrated on extorting tribute money from a centralized source, namely, the Rajput kings. Needless to reiterate that the threatening postures of the Marathas were matched by the evasive tactics adopted by successive rulers of Jaipur.

¹³⁰ *Indore-Jodhpur Kharita* No. 44, *Vaisakh Sudi* 15, *V.S.* 1841/1784.