

### CHAPTER 3

## ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE MARATHA PRESENCE IN JAIPUR AND JODHPUR STATES

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The economic repercussions of the Maratha presence in Jaipur and Jodhpur can be fully assessed on the basis of the financial strain it brought about on the exchequer of these States. The Marathas made forceful collection from the residents of towns and villages. It also led to plunder of the countryside causing extensive damage to the standing crops. The Marathas were invited to help the contenders to the throne. In return they were to receive monetary benefit along with tribute. As the Jaipur and Jodhpur rulers could not make the payment on time, it gave sufficient reason to the Marathas to justify their military intervention to forcefully collect the tribute and other dues. The Maratha incursions into the territory of Jaipur and Jodhpur was not a happy experience for the local people as it affected almost all sections of the society. The economic strain which each of these incursions brought to the economy of the State is well documented. The Maratha *sardars* were not so vigilant about plunder and atrocities committed by the invading Maratha army. Damage was done not only to the standing crops but even to property in towns and villages.

Inability of the Rajput Rajas to make these payments gave the Marathas a pretext of further military intervention to enforce collection of tribute and other dues which often resulted in the devastation of the countryside and ruination of the *raiyat*. Sometimes when the Marathas were in dire straits due to the non payment or delayed payment of salaries to their troopers, there was forceful collection of money from the local people. All this in turn resulted in the devastation of the countryside and ruination of the *raiyat*. The financial crisis of the Rajput rulers was further confounded when they found that the agricultural production was declining leading to diminished revenue collection. The growing financial crisis compelled the rulers to seek the help of the bankers for loans and resort to the practice of *ijara* of the *khalisa* parganas to raise money and as a mode of repayment of loan to the bankers.<sup>1</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup> Dilbagh Singh, *State, Landlords and Peasants*, p. 131.

Rajput rulers wrote letters of protest to the Peshwa objecting to the loot and plunder in their territory by the Maratha army. This is evident from the Peshwa's reply to Sawai Madho Singh's letter in 1758. Sawai Madho Singh expressed his annoyance at Maratha army's loot and plunder in Jaipur territory.<sup>2</sup>

The Rajput States found themselves in the midst of a vicious circle from which they could not extricate themselves. As there was always a gap between the Maratha demand and the actual payment made by the Rajputs, it is difficult to calculate the total burden of Maratha demand in terms of actual payments made to the Marathas by the Rajputs. However, it is significant that the Marathas demanded more from the State of Jaipur than Jodhpur. This variation was on account of Jaipur's resource position and paying capacity being stronger than Jodhpur. Jaipur had good revenue yielding pockets such as Shahpura, Malpura, Rampura, Tonk, Toda, etc. Since Marwar was agriculturally poor as compared to Jaipur, the Marathas never put up a stake for claiming territory, except for the control of Ajmer. It was after the battle of Merta in 1790 when Bijay Singh had to surrender Sambhar, Khairwa, Masunda and 29 villages of pargana Bhinai to Mahadaji. These were comparatively better revenue yielding areas. Later when Bijay Singh acquired the fertile territory of Godwad from the Mewar Maharana, Mahadaji Sindhia made him to pay rupees 30,000 per annum as its tribute. In the light of the information available in the sources, an attempt has been made to make an estimate of the financial obligations that the rulers of Jaipur and Jodhpur owed to the Marathas. Fortunately a *yaddashti* document entitled, '*yaddashti dikhniya ne rupaiya pahunchaya*,'<sup>3</sup> has survived and it further gives details of the Maratha demands imposed upon Jaipur from 1750 to 1765.

The Marathas decided to support the cause of Sawai Madho Singh after he promised to pay a *nazar* of rupees 10 lakhs to the Peshwa and rupees 50 lakhs as *nazrana* for the entire state of Jaipur. Sawai Madho Singh also agreed to pay rupees 10 lakhs as surity to the Marathas on behalf of Raja Ram Singh of Jodhpur as the latter had sought help from the Marathas against Bijay Singh in the Jodhpur succession dispute. The other demands imposed

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<sup>2</sup> Gwalior Kharita No. 165, *Magh Sudi*, V.S. 1815/1758.

<sup>3</sup> *Yaddashti, Yaddashti Dikhniyan nai Rupiya pahunchaya* 1755-1765 (hereafter *Yaddashti*), preserved in the Jaipur Historical Section of the Rajasthan State Archives at Bikaner.

included rupees 5 lakhs (outstanding arrears out of the previous demand) and rupees 3.50 lakhs as official expenses incurred by the Marathas while supporting the cause of Sawai Madho Singh. In all, the Jaipur *diwan* Hargobind and Prem Singh committed to pay rupees 78.50 lakhs to the Marathas. This commitment was made to Malhar Rao Holkar who visited Jaipur following the death of Maharaja Sawai Ishwari Singh. However, the Jaipur ruler could manage to pay only rupees 34,55,590.62 to the Marathas.<sup>4</sup>

In 1751, the amount due to the Marathas was calculated at rupees 75 lakhs out of which the Jaipur *diwan* Kanhi Ram paid rupees 10.43 lakhs by way of *hundis* issued by the bankers.<sup>5</sup> A sum of rupees 14 lakhs was paid to the Marathas in 1752. The entire amount was remitted through *hundis* issued by bankers Lunkaran and Lakshman Das of various amounts ranging from rupees one lakh to 9 lakhs. Out of this amount rupees 3 lakhs were sent to Malhar Rao Holkar.<sup>6</sup> In 1753, as per the agreement between the two sides the Jaipur ruler was to pay rupees 25.90 lakhs to the Marathas and it was also agreed upon that rupees 13.50 will be paid up at once. Jaipur *diwan* Hargobind Natani paid rupees 7 lakhs in cash and rupees 6.5 lakhs as compensation for the slaughter of the Marathas in Jaipur city. In October 1753 the amount of outstanding dues stood at rupees 15.25 lakhs and rupees 1.25 lakh were to be paid to Raghunath Rao, raising the amount to rupees 16.50 lakhs. Out of this amount rupees 7.35 lakhs was paid in cash, rupees 3 lakhs in *hundis* issued by the *sahukars*, and rupees 5.15 lakhs was still left due to be paid.<sup>7</sup>

In 1754, rupees 15 lakhs were paid to the Marathas in the form of four *hundis*. Out of these, three *hundis* were of rupees 4 lakhs each and one was of rupees 3 lakhs. These were issued by the bankers Balkishan and Parasram.<sup>8</sup> In 1755, Sawai Madho Singh was to pay rupees 10.85 lakhs to Jankoji Shinde as *mamlat* (in addition to the outstanding dues) as per the agreement made through Anirudh Singh Khangrot, the Jaipur representative. But the actual payment could not be more than rupees 7.55 lakhs.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> *Yaddashti*, V.S. 1807/1750, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> *Yaddashti*, V.S. 1808/1751, p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> *Yaddashti*, V.S. 1809/1752, p. 19.

<sup>7</sup> *Yaddashti*, V.S. 1810/1753, p. 6.

<sup>8</sup> *Yaddashti*, V.S. 1811/1754, p. 8.

<sup>9</sup> *Yaddashti*, V.S. 1812/1755, p. 10.

In 1757, the Marathas raised their demand to rupees 40 to 50 lakhs but finally settled for rupees 12 lakhs as *mamlat* due to Raghunath Rao.<sup>10</sup> It was through the Peshwa's *vakil*, Naro Shankar that the committed amount was paid.<sup>11</sup> In 1758, once again Sawai Madho Singh was coerced to pay rupees 36 lakhs over a period of four years. The current year's installment was enhanced by the addition of a *nazar* of rupees 3 lakhs. In 1759, the arrears due from Jaipur amounted to rupees 12 lakhs for the year 1758<sup>12</sup> and rupees 11 lakhs and 50,000 for the year 1759.<sup>13</sup> But the actual amount paid to the Marathas was rupees 4,67,500 out of which Malhar Rao Holkar received rupees 3 lakhs and 91,000 in 1758.<sup>14</sup> From the year 1759 to 1761, no payment was made.

In 1761, the Jaipur forces were convincingly defeated by Malhar Rao Holkar. Realizing that the Marathas were in total command of the situation, the Jaipur *diwan*, Kanhi Ram immediately opened negotiations with the Marathas to settle the dispute about the outstanding tribute. The Marathas were thus back in Rajasthan soon after their debacle in the battle of Panipat. The defeat of Sawai Madho Singh's forces once again established the supremacy of the Marathas in Rajasthan. Now they began pressurizing Jaipur for payment of outstanding tribute. Malhar Rao instructed Maratha representative at Kota, Lalji Gulgule to press *diwan* Kanhi Ram for immediate payment of the dues.<sup>15</sup> However, Jaipur ruler was rescued from imminent Maratha threat as the Marathas were compelled to leave Rajasthan to defend Bundelkhand from the invasion of Emperor Shah Alam and his *wazir*, Shuja-ud-daula, who had captured Kalpi and Jhansi.<sup>16</sup> Sawai Madho Singh's conflict with the Marathas at Mangrol in 1761 and the Maratha involvement in the Deccan where they were fighting with the Nizam delayed the resumption of normal communication channels between Holkar and Jaipur. However, diplomatic ties between the two sides were resumed in 1764 when Sawai Madho Singh sent his representatives, *diwan* Gur Sahai and Raj Singh Hamirdeka to Holkar's court at Indore.<sup>17</sup> This step was seen as an

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<sup>10</sup> *Kharita* from Madho Singh to Malhar Rao Holkar, *Falgun Vadi 7, V.S. 1813/1756*.

<sup>11</sup> *Yaddashti, V.S. 1814/1757, p. 13*.

<sup>12</sup> Sarkar, *A History of Jaipur*, pp. 236-38.

<sup>13</sup> *Yaddashti, V.S. 1816/1759, p. 13*.

<sup>14</sup> *Yaddashti, V.S. 1815/1758, p. 14*.

<sup>15</sup> *Holkarshahiche Itihasanche Sadhane*, Vol. I, L. No. 161.

<sup>16</sup> Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. II, pp. 304.

<sup>17</sup> *Indore Kharita* No. 83, *Jeth Sudi 10, V.S. 1821/1764*.

attempt at normalization of relations. Holkar responded by sending his representatives to the Jaipur court.

The Maratha debacle in the battle of Panipat put them in urgent need of money and they were compelled to turn to the Jaipur ruler, demanding tribute which Sawai Madho Singh had stopped paying in the last few years, taking advantage of Ahmad Shah Abdali's presence in North India. Mahadaji and Kedarji Shinde wrote to Sawai Madho Singh, "we have no money even to take care of our daily requirements." They asked Sawai Madho Singh to pay rupees twelve lakhs of tribute without delay and hand the amount over to their representative *seth* Dhaneshwar and Parsuram. Both, Kedarji Shinde and Mahadaji Shinde were dealing with Jaipur. Initially they sent *kharitas* written jointly by them and later on both started addressing Sawai Madho Singh individually. It created the impression that there was a rift between the two over the question of leadership.<sup>18</sup> Taking advantage of the tension between Kedarji and Mahadaji Shinde, Sawai Madho Singh did not take their demand seriously.

The family of Shinde faced tough times for two years following the battle of Panipat. The Rajputs were challenging their authority and stopped payment of tribute, the only possible source of income for the Marathas at this critical juncture. Frequent reminders to Sawai Madho Singh for the payment of outstanding amount of tribute did not yield the desired result. Payments were not only much meagre than the demand but also irregular. Sawai Madho Singh resorted to paying little amount, made empty promises to pay the rest later. Unable to mobilize liquid money, the Shindes even tried to press Sawai Madho Singh to meet the day to day requirement of Maratha officials posted in Jaipur territory.<sup>19</sup> As there was acute shortage of cash in hand at Ujjain, Kedarji Shinde asked Sawai Madho Singh for immediate payment of the current installment of tribute.<sup>20</sup> By now Mahadaji Shinde was fed up with these delaying tactics of Sawai Madho Singh as he was badly hurt by non-payment of dues. In 1762, Kedarji and Mahadaji compelled Sawai Madho Singh to pay rupees

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<sup>18</sup> *Gwalior Kharita*, Nos. 178, 185, 187, 191, 194, addressed jointly by Kedarji and Mahadaji Shinde; *Gwalior Kharita* Nos. 179, 183, 189, 192 from Kedarji Shinde; *Gwalior Kharita* Nos. 184, 186, 190 from Mahadaji Shinde.

<sup>19</sup> *Gwalior Kharita*, No. 180, Undated.

<sup>20</sup> *Gwalior Kharita*, No. 183, *Jeth Sudi* 1, V.S. 1820/1763.

3,76,070<sup>21</sup> and in 1764 Malhar Rao Holkar extracted rupees 7,10,375. The amount was paid in the form of *hundis* which were issued by the bankers Kewal Ram, Surat Ram, Paras Ram and Balkishen.<sup>22</sup> From 1763 onwards, Mahadaji Shinde started adopting tough posture towards Jaipur which is evident from the offensive language of the *kharitas* that he addressed to Sawai Madho Singh. In July 1763, Mahadaji reprimanded Sawai Madho Singh for his failure to pay the installment in time. The wording of the letter clearly indicates Shinde's desperation for getting money as soon as possible. He wrote :

“Your dues for the *mamlat* are pending since long, you have failed to pay installments on due date, this is unfair, upon receiving this letter, send all money.”<sup>23</sup>

From 1765 onwards situation began to improve with the Shindes, as they recovered from the shock of Panipat. They now gained enough confidence to look beyond their holdings in Malwa. They began to follow their affairs in Rajasthan with a fresh vigour. However, in his *kharitas* even now Shinde expressed keenness to develop healthy relations with Jaipur.<sup>24</sup> In the month of March 1765, Shinde displayed the show of strength at Ujjain by way of heavy concentration of the combined army of the Shindes. Mahadaji Shinde proceeded to Kota and from there he dispatched a strong contingent consisting of about ten thousand Maratha soldiers to realize tribute from Marwar and Mewar.<sup>25</sup> In 1766, Mahadaji Shinde was able to gain control of all pockets of area that were under the control of Shindes before the battle of Panipat. He was involved in settling these areas and making fresh appointments to replace the old officials.<sup>26</sup> In order to improve the Maratha position in Rajasthan in view of the death of Malhar Rao Holkar, Shinde in his *kharita* tried to impress upon Sawai Madho Singh that Malhar Rao's grandson, Mal Rao Holkar and the Shindes are united.<sup>27</sup> By 1767, Mahadaji Shinde was able to raise a fresh contingent which gave him

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<sup>21</sup> *Yaddashti*, V.S. 1819/1762, p. 15.

<sup>22</sup> *Yaddashti*, V.S. 1821/1764, p. 17.

<sup>23</sup> *Gwalior Kharita*, No. 183, *Bhadon Sudi 9*, V.S./1763.

<sup>24</sup> *Gwalior Kharita*, No. 185, *Kartik Vadi 4*, V.S. 1822/1765.

<sup>25</sup> K.S.Gupta, *Mewar and the Maratha Relations*, p. 85.

<sup>26</sup> *Gwalior Kharita*, No. 186, *Jeth Sudi 5*, V.S. 1823/1766.

<sup>27</sup> *Gwalior Kharita*, No. 187, *Sawan Vadi 9*, V.S. 1823/1766.

confidence to put pressure on all those Rajput rulers who defaulted in paying tribute.<sup>28</sup> In 1768 Mahadaji's position further strengthened as he was now in total command of the house of Shinde. From Poona he dispatched Jaswant Rao Bable with a contingent of troops towards Jaipur to collect arrears of tribute. He wrote a terse letter to Sawai Madho Singh stating, "ask your officer to deposit the arrears with Jaswant Rao Bable. I will also be reaching Jaipur side soon."

In 1769, the Jaipur Raja had to pay rupees 10,000 as the *mamlat* of Borada, out of which it was decided that villages worth rupees 8,000 would be given for which a *sanad* was to be issued from the *diwan*'s office and rupees 2,000 were to be given in cash which was to be drawn from the treasury. It was given to Borada's Dudha Pandit, who was serving Pandit Govind Rao.<sup>29</sup>

Mahadaji Shinde now entered into regular exchange of *kharitas* with the Jaipur ruler which among other things also reveals that now he was paying greater attention to the Maratha interests in Jaipur. Going beyond the Maratha concerns for the realization of tribute and territorial possessions, he became more demanding on Jaipur. We find Mahadaj Shinde asking Sawai Prithvi Singh to ensure safe passage of Shinde's men travelling from Jaipur to Ujjain by providing them with armed escort, protection for his own men living and holding property in Jaipur and traders from Ujjain who had shops in Jaipur. In one of the *kharitas* sent to Sawai Prithvi Singh in 1770 Shinde was addressed as *subedar* Madhav Raoji Shinde which indicates his superior position in the Maratha political set up.<sup>30</sup>

There was growing exchange of information between the two rulers as we find Sawai Prithvi Singh being kept informed about all important events involving Shinde. For example, he wrote to Sawai Prithvi Singh about his role in bringing Emperor Shah Alam back to Delhi from his exile in eastern India to occupy the throne of Delhi.<sup>31</sup> In 1774, Shinde appointed his *vakil* at the Delhi court. Again he shared this information with Sawai Prithvi Singh that a *vakil* from Ujjain had been sent at the court of the

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<sup>28</sup> *Gwalior Kharita*, No. 190, *Magh Vadi* 9, V.S. 1824/1767.

<sup>29</sup> *Dastur Komwar Dikhni*, Vol. IX, p. 124.

<sup>30</sup> *Gwalior Kharita*, No. 10, *Falgun Sudi* 11, V.S. 1827/1770.

<sup>31</sup> *Gwalior Kharita*, No. 22, *Posh Sudi* 11, V.S. 1828/1771.

Mughal emperor.<sup>32</sup> The return of Shah Alam to Delhi to reoccupy his lost position with the help of Mahadaji Shinde clearly demonstrated that the Maratha leader had fully recovered from the shock of Panipat and he symbolized the revival of Maratha power in North India. Mahadaji Shinde requested Sawai Prithvi Singh to send a Jaipur contingent to be in attendance upon the emperor. Sawai Prithvi Singh readily agreed.<sup>33</sup> However, the bonhomie between the two through mutual acts of co-operation did not last long due to Sawai Prithvi Singh's inability to satisfy the Marathas with regard to the payment of tribute. The Peshwa Madhav Rao reminded Sawai Prithvi Singh about the accumulating arrears and demanded that the installment due must be paid forthwith to Bapuji Vaman.<sup>34</sup>

Soon he sent another reminder to Sawai Prithvi Singh asking him to pay current dues of tribute to Apaji Narain.<sup>35</sup> The Jaipur ruler tried to settle the issue of long standing arrears of tribute through the Peshwa's *vakil* who was in Jaipur. The Peshwa again complained that no payment had been received so far and asked Sawai Prithvi Singh to send money through the Maratha *vakil*.<sup>36</sup> Sawai Prithvi Singh promised to comply with the Peshwa's demands. However, some amount was paid to the Marathas when they invaded Jaipur and laid waste the countryside. Five lakh rupees were paid when the Maratha commander Ramchandra Ganesh attacked and devastated Jaipur territory. Only rupees one lakh could be realized from Jaipur when again Mahadaji's forces invaded Jaipur territory and demanded much more.<sup>37</sup> Visaji Krishna was also given a *hundi* of rupees 1.5 lakhs and presents worth rupees 50,000.<sup>38</sup> Sawai Prithvi Singh complained to Peshwa Narain Rao about the predatory activities of the Maratha commanders. Further he complained that he was unable to pay the dues of tribute due to the ruination of standing crops by the Marathas.<sup>39</sup> He requested the Peshwa to check these activities of his commanders.

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<sup>32</sup> *Gwalior Kharita*, No. 25, *Magh Sudi* 14, V.S. 1829/1772.

<sup>33</sup> *Kharita* from Prithvi Singh to Mahadaji Shinde, Draft No. 149, *Falgun Sudi* 2, V.S. 1828/1771.

<sup>34</sup> *Kharita* from Peshwa Madhav Rao to Prithvi Singh, *Jeth Sudi* 4, V.S. 1827/1770.

<sup>35</sup> *Kharita* from Prithvi Singh to Mahadaji Shinde, *Kartik Vadi* 13, V.S. 1827/1770.

<sup>36</sup> *Kharita* from Peshwa Madhav Rao to Prithvi Singh, *Maghishri Vadi* 7, V.S. 1828/1771.

<sup>37</sup> *Kharita* from *bohra* Khushali Ram to Peshwa Narain Rao, Draft No. 189, *Asarh Vadi* 5, V.S. 1830/1773.

<sup>38</sup> *Kharita* from Prithvi Singh to Peshwa Narain Rao, Draft No. 189, *Asarh Vadi* 5, V.S. 1830/1773.

<sup>39</sup> *Kharitas* from *bohra* Khushali Ram to Peshwa Narain Rao, *Vaisakh Vadi* 4, V.S. 1830/1773.

The issue of pending tribute was raised by Holkar in his lengthy letter to Sawai Madho Singh in October 1764. This letter contains details of Holkar's demand for outstanding dues since 1761 which also included expenditure incurred on the upkeep of Ranthambhor fort.<sup>40</sup> Between 1762 and 1764, the Marathas kept on reminding Sawai Madho Singh for payment of tribute. When Holkar realized that the payment was not forthcoming he proceeded towards Rajasthan to force Sawai Madho Singh to pay up. Holkar encamped at Chatsu and demanded clearance of dues. Failing to get any response from Sawai Madho Singh, he proceeded to Jobner and began to plunder. Sawai Madho Singh was advised by his nobles to save the State from devastation by agreeing to pay. Sawai Madho Singh deputed his representatives to settle the issue of dues. Holkar demanded rupees thirty-five lakhs, the demand also included expenditure incurred on the upkeep of the fort of Ranthambhor. Out of this rupees ten lakhs were to be paid within the year in four installments. First installment of rupees four lakhs was to be paid in cash immediately and the rest of the amount was to be paid within six months. Rupees twenty-five lakhs was to be paid between 1765 and 1771 in annual installments of rupees four lakhs twenty-five thousand in the first four years and four lakhs each in 1770 and 1771. Sawai Madho Singh also agreed to surrender parganas Tonk and Rampura to Holkar. A jagir worth rupees one lakh was bestowed upon Mal Rao, grandson of Malhar Rao Holkar, by Sawai Madho Singh. Holkar left Jaipur after concluding this agreement.<sup>41</sup>

The above agreement saved the Kachhwaha State from being ravaged by the Marathas. Sawai Madho Singh satisfied Holkar by immediately paying up rupees 400,001. However, he was not at all serious about paying the rest of the amount. But the surrender of Tonk and Rampura to the Marathas reduced the territory of Jaipur State which had financial implications for the State as well. It also gave the Marathas a strong base in the middle of Rajasthan to put pressure on the Rajputs and carry on military operations as and when required. By subduing the powerful Kachhwaha State all alone, not only established Holkar's supremacy in Rajasthan, but also provided him financial resources to sort out his internal problems.

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<sup>40</sup> *Indore Kharita* No. 85, *Posh Vadi* 10, V.S. 1821/1764.

<sup>41</sup> *Indore Kharita*, No. 87, *Magh Sudi* 10, V.S. 1821/1764.

In the following year, in 1765, Sawai Madho Singh paid rupees 1,09,670 to Kedarji Shinde. In 1765, Sawai Madho Singh paid the current installment of rupees 5 lakhs to Holkar and promised to issue *hundis* of the *sahukars* for the payment of the balance.<sup>42</sup> Mal Rao Holkar passed away within nine months of the death of Malhar Rao Holkar (1766). Sawai Madho Singh also died in 1768. Both states were now headed by new rulers in 1767-68. After Sawai Madho Singh's death his son, Sawai Prithvi Singh ascended the *gaddi* of Jaipur. Due to successive deaths in Holkar family, Ahilya Bai assumed the charge of the Holkar affairs.<sup>43</sup> Tukoji Holkar, who was now commander of the Holkar army wrote six letters to Sawai Prithvi Singh within a span of eight months. All these were written in 1768 which contained messages of goodwill and also indicated that there was a temporary break in diplomatic ties on both sides and that now the Holkar's look forward to a new beginning of relationship.<sup>44</sup>

The Peshwa, Madhav Rao sent a turban to Sawai Prithvi Singh as a mark of recognition of his legitimate authority and the new ruler of Jaipur. The Peshwa expressed his desire to maintain cordial relations with Jaipur. Sawai Prithvi Singh promptly reciprocated the friendly gestures of the Peshwa. An examination of the letters sent by the Maratha leaders to Sawai Prithvi Singh reveal that now the posture was less hostile and there were hardly any open or veiled threats as was the case in the earlier times. These letters were more in the nature of reminders and protests for non-payment or delayed payment of dues. There were also protests against Jaipur Raja's inaction in curbing disturbances caused by the Rajputs in the parganas held by Holkar in Jaipur territory. In 1767, Tukoji Holkar wrote to Sawai Prithvi Singh that the Holkars disapprove of Jaipur State's control over parganas Tonk and Rampura which were handed over to them by Sawai Madho Singh. He asked Sawai Prithvi Singh to instruct his officials to co-operate and restore these parganas to their local agent Pandit Sadashiv Gopal and be allowed to settle the revenue of the above mentioned parganas. Tukoji Holkar maintained regular communication with Sawai Prithvi Singh

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<sup>42</sup> *Yaddashti*, V.S. 1822/1765, p. 15.

<sup>43</sup> *Indore Kharita*, No. 101, *Chaitra Sudi* 10, V.S. 1824/1767.

<sup>44</sup> *Indore Kharita*, No. 110, *Posh Sudi* 14, V.S. 1825/1768 ; *Indore Kharita*, No. 111, *Falgun Vadi* 12, V.S. 1825/1768 ; *Indore Kharita*, No. 112, *Chaitra Sudi* 1, V.S. 1826/1769 ; *Indore Kharita*, No. 113, *Vaisakh Vadi* 13, V.S. 1826/1769 ; *Indore Kharita*, No. 114, *Jeth Sudi* 7, V.S. 1826/1769 ; *Indore Kharita*, No. 115, *Sawan Sudi* 1, V.S. 1826/1769.

to safeguard the territorial possessions of the Holkars in the Jaipur State as he put forward Indore's claim over pargana Tonk and Rampura.<sup>45</sup> Tukoji Holkar's involvement in the external affairs of the house of Holkar continued till 1770. In his letter of 1769 to Sawai Prithvi Singh, Tukoji Holkar wrote that since long time Najib, Jaipur State and the house of Holkar were united. In this letter he endorsed the solidarity shown by Jaipur State with Najib Khan.<sup>46</sup> It appears from Indore *kharitas* that from the beginning of 1770, Ahilya Bai Holkar herself started taking interest in the external affairs of the house of Holkar. She herself entered into negotiation with Prithvi Singh protesting against the behaviour of the Rajput *bhomias* in the villages of Jaipur parganas that were under the control of Holkar's officers. The *kharita* read :

“In pargana Tonk and Rampura our *kamavisdar* Pandit Rangoji has not been able to settle the affairs of these *parganas* because of the resistance of the *bhomias*. So I write that instruct all the *bhomias* to behave and allow our officers to carry on the work of settlement.”<sup>47</sup>

In 1779, the Jaipur ruler Sawai Pratap Singh paid rupees 2 lakhs and promised a further sum of rupees 20 lakhs in installments, out of which only 7.5 lakhs were paid in 1781. In 1784, the Jaipur ruler promised to pay rupees 21 lakhs but paid only rupees 3 lakhs in 1785. In 1786, the outstanding amount of tribute and other dues was calculated at rupees 63 lakhs. Sawai Pratap Singh agreed to pay rupees 11 lakhs immediately, rupees 10 lakhs were to be paid in six months time and rupees 20 lakhs were to be adjusted by transfer of some territory of Jaipur to the Marathas. The remaining 22 lakhs were to be covered by assignments on the revenues of the *thikanas* of the Jaipur chiefs and jagirs. The first installment of rupees 11 lakhs was paid and the Maratha officers were deputed to collect the second installment of rupees 10 lakhs and assigned revenue of rupees 22 lakhs on *thikanas* and jagirs. However, no further payment was made to the Marathas. In 1790, Mahadaji defeated the combined forces of Jaipur and Jodhpur. The Jaipur ruler agreed to pay rupees 17 lakhs but expressed his inability to pay the entire amount. After victory at Patan and Merta over Jaipur and Jodhpur, Mahadaji Shinde halted at several places collecting money from local chieftains

<sup>45</sup> *Indore Kharita*, No. 105, A and B, *Magishri Sudi*, V.S. 1824/1767.

<sup>46</sup> *Indore Kharita*, No. 121, *Asoj Sudi*, 10, V.S. 1826/1769.

<sup>47</sup> *Indore Kharita*, No. 130, *Magishri Vadi*, V.S. 1827/1770.

and villagers. Several instances of Mahadaji collecting money from local Rajput chiefs are mentioned in the Persian Newsletters. One of the letter on p. 45 reads:

“In every march of Mahadaji Sindhia, Ambaji and Deshmukh with the *fauj* and guns used to go ahead and collect 2 or 3 lakhs from villages and *garhis* of Shekhawati and bring away grain and cattle and hostages for contributions.”<sup>48</sup>

Even as late as 1790's, the Maratha expeditions in Jaipur continued to realize the promised amount. In 1800, Sawai Pratap Singh purchased peace with the Marathas by agreeing to pay rupees. 6 lakhs within one month and rupees 3 lakhs after six months. Throughout the second half of the eighteenth century, the Jaipur rulers had to face the Maratha menace and claims for huge monetary payment. The Maratha incursions were not only a strain on the state exchequers, they had a devastating impact on the *raiyat*, jagirdars and the *bhomias* of the Jaipur state as well. In this context, the *chitthis* and Amber records furnish invaluable information. These can be used not only to catalogue the Maratha incursions chronologically but also to bring out the significance in terms of economic hardships they caused to the rural economy of the region.

The *raiyat* of the parganas of Gaji-ka-Thana, Chatsu, Nenwa and many other unspecified parganas belonging to Jaipur territory witnessed reckless plunder by the Maratha army. The Jaipur ruler was constantly informed by the *amils* of the affected parganas that the standing crops were ruined and that the *raiyat* of these areas fled from the villages.<sup>49</sup> In 1751, the *raiyat* of pargana Chatsu helplessly bore the brunt of the Maratha plunder.<sup>50</sup> Similarly in 1753, the *amils* of pargana Sawai Jaipur and Chatsu reported plundering of the villages by the Maratha bands resulting in severe damage to the cultivation. The prospects of revenue collection in the coming season became dim. Economic hardship became more severe when the ruler was informed that the *raiyat* was unable to resume cultivation due to lack of resources.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> See Sarkar, *Sindhia As Regent of Delhi*, pp. 45-58.

<sup>49</sup> *Chithi to the amil Pargana Gaji ka Thana, V.S. 1807/1750; Amber Records, letter dated, Chaitra Vadi 8, V.S. 1807/1750.*

<sup>50</sup> *Chithi to the amil Pargana Chatsu, Vaisakh Sudi, V.S. 1808/1751, Jeth Vadi 4, V.S. 1808/1751.*

<sup>51</sup> *Chithi to the amil pargana Chatsu Falgun Vadi, V.S. 1810/1753; Pargana Sawai Jaipur, Magh Sudi 6, Chaitra Vadi 8, V.S. 1810/1753.*

Every successive year brought more economic hardships to the *raiyat*. In 1754, the Marathas plundered the parganas of Sambhar, Naraina, Fagi, Narnaul, Pragpura, Bairath, Khatu, Malarna and Lalsot. The plunder was brought to the notice of the Jaipur ruler by the concerned *amils*. They expressed inability to collect revenue from the *raiyat*. The *amils* were instructed to enforce surrender of one month's salary by all the jagirdars and the other state officials. Similarly, the *chaudhris* and *qanungos* were asked to pay their customary perquisites for one year so that money could be raised to pay to the Marathas. The state realized *malba* from the *raiyat* of all the *khalisa* villages. Lalsot, one of the best revenue yielding pargana, was the worst affected since the *raiyat* of the pargana had to give up cultivation for lack of material support.<sup>52</sup>

Highly moved by the plight of the *raiyat*, in a letter written in the year 1756 to Malhar Rao Holkar, Sawai Madho Singh expressed his deep anguish and protested against the loot and burning of the villages of parganas Rampura, Malarna, Niwai, Lalsot, Chatsu, Fagi etc. The letter was intended to bring to the notice of Malhar Rao Holkar that the Maratha ravages had incurred a loss of rupees 11 lakhs to the Jaipur state as this was the expected revenue yield from these parganas. The jagir villages were also utterly ruined which caused considerable suffering to the jagirdars.<sup>53</sup> The situation became so alarming that in 1757 it was reported that the *raiyat* of the parganas Chatsu, Niwai, Fagi etc. was indigent and villages were getting depopulated on account of these parganas being ruined by the Marathas.<sup>54</sup>

Constant Maratha ravages and plunder was bound to take its toll on the productivity of crops and fertility of the agricultural land. By 1758, there prevailed constant famine conditions that diminished the resources of the *raiyat*. Their plight was further aggravated by the state when the *raiyat* was overburdened by the additional taxes which were levied on them to augment the revenue. To escape from all these woes the *raiyat* deserted their villages. Many villages became depopulated due to persistent famine condition and widespread damage to cultivation done by the Maratha army. The *raiyat* migrated to Malwa for survival and to escape plunder by the Marathas. The efforts of the

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<sup>52</sup> *Amber records*, Letter *Sawan Sudi*, V.S. 1811/1754, *Chithi*, *Asoj Vadi* 3, V.S. 1811/1754; *Chithi* to the *amil* pargana Lalsot, *Sawan Vadi* 14, V.S. 1811/1754.

<sup>53</sup> *Kharita* from Madho Singh to Malhar Rao Holkar, *Falgun Vadi* 7, V.S. 1813/1756.

<sup>54</sup> *Chithi Asoj Sudi*, V.S. 1814/1757, *Chithi* to the *amil* pargana Chatsu, *Asoj Vadi* 2, V.S. 1814/1757.

revenue officials to calm the fears of the *raiyat* and to console them to resettle in the abandoned villages proved futile. The Maratha menace was so great that the *raiyat* refused to return to their villages.<sup>55</sup> The sources inform us that in the year 1759, Maratha inroads devastated the parganas of Chatsu, Tonk, Fagi, Toda Raisinghpur, Pragpura, Lalsot, Niwai, Mauzabad, Naraina and Sawai Jaipur. The devastation ranged from plundering villages, burning and damaging standing crops. Even the cattle and agricultural implements were not spared. The Jaipur administration expressed its anger by strictly prohibiting the purchase of looted property from the Marathas and declared it a punishable offence.<sup>56</sup>

The situation remained grim and deplorable in the successive year also. Almost all the parganas witnessed decline in cultivation. Depopulation of villages was reported from all over the Jaipur territory. Not only agriculture but trade also suffered due to the Maratha menace.<sup>57</sup> From 1762 to 1765, although there was a moderate presence of the Marathas in Jaipur territory, yet it adversely affected the *raiyat* of the parganas of Mauzabad, Dausa, Gijgarh, Bahatri and Chatsu. Plunder and ruination of the villages along with the capturing of the cattle by the Marathas were reported to the authorities of the Jaipur State.<sup>58</sup> The years 1760's and 1770's went down in history registering depopulation of villages and decline in agriculture.<sup>59</sup> In 1777, the Marathas plundered the villages of pargana Niwai and ruined the crops. The harm done to the economy of the pargana can be gauged from the drastic decline in the revenue of the pargana that had fallen from rupees 2.66 lakhs to rupees 19 thousand.<sup>60</sup> The situation remained grim and was more or less same in succeeding decades, details of which are given in

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<sup>55</sup> *Chithi* to the *amils* of all the Jaipur parganas, *Asoj Sudi* 12, V.S. 1815/1758; *Asoj Sudi* 13, V.S. 1815/1758 *Chithi* to the *amil* pargana Mauzabad, *Bhadon Vadi* 6, V.S. 1815/1758, *Chithi* to the *amil* pargana Lalsot, *Asarh Vadi* 14, V.S. 1815/1758 and *Magh Sudi* 12, V.S. 1815/1758, *Chithi* to the *amil* pargana Narnaul *Posh Sudi* 11, V.S. 1815/1758.

<sup>56</sup> *Chithi*, *Chaitra Sudi* 12, V.S. 1816/1759, *Chithi*, to the *amil* pargana Chatsu, *Chaitra Sudi* 7, V.S. 1816/1759 and *Jeth Vadi* 5, V.S. 1816/1759.

<sup>57</sup> *Chithi* to the *amils* of all the Jaipur parganas, *Asarh Vadi*, V.S. 1817/1760; *Chithi* to the *amil* pargana Bahatri, *Asarh Sudi* 15, V.S. 1817/1760, *Chithi* to the *amil* pargana Mauzabad, *Kati Vadi* 6, V.S. 1817/1760.

<sup>58</sup> *Chithi* to the *amil* pargana Mauzabad, *Sawan Sudi* 9, V.S. 1819/1762; Amber Records, letter *Vaisakh Sudi* 12, V.S. 1819/1762.

<sup>59</sup> *Chithi*, *Sawan Sudi* 11, V.S. 1820/1763; *Chithi*, to the *amil* pargana Chatsu, *Asarh Vadi*, V.S. 1820/1763 and *Asarh Vadi* 3, V.S. 1821/1764, *Chithi* to the *amil* pargana Niwai, *Chaitra Vadi* 7, V.S. 1822/1765; *Chithi*, *Asarh Vadi* 3, V.S. 1826/1769.

<sup>60</sup> Amber records, letter dated *Asoj Sudi* 15, V.S. 1834/1777.

Sarkar's *History of Jaipur*.<sup>61</sup> In 1791, in many unspecified parganas cultivation suffered as the villagers were plundered by the Maratha army sent by Holkar. Starvation of the *raiyat* was reported to the higher authorities by the local revenue officials.<sup>62</sup>

With the help of a *chitthi* document we get a vivid depiction of the economic impact of the Maratha raids and their cumulative effects on almost all sections of the rural society. In a letter addressed to the *amils* of parganas Sawai Jaipur, Khohri, Gaji ka Thana, Naraina, Niwai, Narnaul, Qasba Sawai Jaipur, Gaori, Chatsu, Tonk, Toda Raisinghpur, Toda Bhim, Dausa, Paonta, Pinayan, Pahari, Pragpur, Fagi, Bairath, Bahatri, Malarna, Mauzabad, Malpura, Ramgarh, Lalsot, Sherpur, Udai and Wazirpur,<sup>63</sup> the *diwan* of the Jaipur State lamented the depopulation of villages belonging to *khalisa* and jagir and miserable condition of the *raiyat*, *bohras* and other inhabitants on account of the Maratha depredations. There was an official acknowledgement of progressive decline in the *jama* as well as the increasing inability of the state to realize revenue. The same document further highlights the miserable condition of the jagirdars who lament their inability to receive any *hasil* and hence their failure to render any kind of service to the state. The state instructed the *amils* to avail of the help of the jagirdars and make efforts to rehabilitate as many jagir villages as possible. The remaining villages were to be rehabilitated with the endeavour of the *raiyat* and the *bohras* and cultivation was to be resumed with the financial support of the *bohras* wherever it could be made available. In such cases, where the *bohras* were not available to make investments in agricultural production, the state extended a helping hand and proposed the advancement of *tagai* (agricultural loan) to the *raiyat*.

The precedent set by Jaipur rulers was followed by the Jodhpur rulers also who invited Maratha help to settle their domestic feud. In 1748, Abhay Singh had to seek Maratha help in checking his brother, Bakht Singh's ambitious designs. Abhay Singh solicited Malhar Rao Holkar's help and offered to pay rupees. 11,000 per day as *fauj*

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<sup>61</sup> Jadunath Sarkar, *A History of Jaipur*, pp. 270-313.

<sup>62</sup> Amber records, letters *Asarh Sudi* 6, V.S. 1848/1791.

<sup>63</sup> *Chithi Asarh Vadi*, V.S. 1817/1760.

*kharch*.<sup>64</sup> Abhay Singh was succeeded to the Jodhpur throne by his son Ram Singh. However, Ram Singh's succession was challenged by his uncle, Bakht Singh. Under these circumstances Ram Singh deputed his representative Pandit Jagannath to negotiate the price of securing Maratha help either from Holkar or Shinde in 1751. He offered to pay expenses for a contingent of 10 to 12,000 and agreed to pay two months expenses in advance. Bakht Singh made a counter offer of rupees two lakhs to Malhar Rao Holkar in order to neutralize him.

The seeking of frequent Maratha help and their involvement in the internal affairs proved costly to Jodhpur. The Marathas soon imposed the obligation of paying regular tribute and other dues. In 1756, Bakht Singh accepted the Maratha demand for the regular payment of tribute at the rate of rupees 1.50 lakh per annum.<sup>65</sup> Sometime later when Bijay Singh acquired Godwad, he agreed to pay rupees 30,000 per annum as its tribute. This amount was to be paid only to Shinde.<sup>66</sup> Bijay Singh made every effort not to delay the payment of tribute. The Gwalior *khariṭa* of 1769 from Mahadaji Shinde to Bijay Singh confirmed the receipt of *mamlat* from Jodhpur up to 1768 and henceforth the same amount, i.e., rupees 1.50 lakhs was to be paid to Shinde as tribute.<sup>67</sup> In 1770, Mahadaji Shinde once again acknowledged the receipt of *mamlat* amount for Jodhpur and Godwad.<sup>68</sup> But sometimes the payment got delayed due to certain reasons. This becomes evident from Pandit Balarao's letter of 1774.<sup>69</sup> Similarly only half the amount of *mamlat* for the period 1772 to 1776 for Jodhpur and 1773 to 1777 for Godwad could be paid. The balance amount was to be paid later on.<sup>70</sup> Here we will discuss the amount paid to Mahadaji Shinde for the period 1778 to 1782 in regular installments. The amount payable for the above mentioned five years was rupees 9 lakhs at the rate of rupees 1.80 lakhs per year. Out of this amount the immediate remission was rupees 2 lakhs.<sup>71</sup> The remaining amount was paid partly in cash and partly in kind, rupees 6 lakhs was paid in cash and rupees 1 lakh in kind. The first installment was divided into two, the

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<sup>64</sup> *Rathora ri Khyat*, Vol. II, p. 483.

<sup>65</sup> Gwalior-Jodhpur *Kharita*, *Asarh Vadi 14*, V.S. 1813/1756.

<sup>66</sup> Gwalior-Jodhpur *Kharita*, *Chaitra Vadi 5*, V.S. 1829/1772.

<sup>67</sup> Gwalior-Jodhpur *Kharita*, *Jeth Sudi 5*, V.S. 1826/1769.

<sup>68</sup> Gwalior-Jodhpur *Kharita*, *Chaitra Vadi 5*, V.S. 1827/1770.

<sup>69</sup> Gwalior-Jodhpur *Kharita*, *Falgun Vadi 5*, V.S. 1831/1774.

<sup>70</sup> Gwalior-Jodhpur *Kharita*, *Magh Vadi 5*, V.S. 1838/1781.

<sup>71</sup> Gwalior-Jodhpur *Kharita*, *Vaisakh Sudi 13*, V.S. 1841/1784.

first part was paid in July, 1784, and the second in February, 1785. 197 camels were sent in lieu of rupees 1 lakh. However, the entire payment could be made only by 1786. From the *mamlat* dues for the next three years amounting to rupees 5.40 lakhs, only rupees 1.50 lakhs could be paid.<sup>72</sup> In 1790, the total outstanding amount that included *mamlat*, *fauj kharch*, *nazrana*, *darbar kharch*, etc., stood at rupees 6 lakhs.<sup>73</sup> But the payment remained pending due to persistent famine conditions. Bijay Singh was allowed to make the payment partly in the form of bullocks and camels. These were to be supplied in the Deccan. From this lot, Poona demanded the supply of three hundred best quality camels exclusively for the use of the Peshwa.<sup>74</sup> The payment of the remaining amount due up to 1790 was made in the form of the supply of elephants, oxen and camels. Their supply was arranged by the Jodhpur official Bhandari Manroop.<sup>75</sup>

The Jodhpur ruler had to suffer severe repercussions of the battle of Patan. The monetary obligations imposed upon Bijay Singh by Mahadaji Shinde after the battle were too burdensome. Bijay Singh was coerced into paying rupees 60 lakhs as war expenses. This was in addition to the usual payment of the annual tribute out of which only rupees 11.63 lakhs were remitted to Mahadaji Shinde during 1790-1791 in the forms of cash, *hundis* and kind. Since there were not enough resources to meet the demand, in 1792, Bijay Singh handed over the parganas of Merta, Didwana and Nawa to Mahadaji Shinde to adjust the payment due to him. There was always a discrepancy between the demand claimed by the Marathas and the actual payments made albeit in installments. Even the amount that was actually paid proved to be an unbearable burden on the financial resources of the state.

Due to lack of detailed information, it is difficult to make an estimate of the financial loss caused to the state by way of Maratha plunder, forced collection, devastation of land and destruction of crops and fodder. As there was no escape from meeting the Maratha demands, Bijay Singh levied extra taxes on the *raiyat* and the jagirdars and paved the way for discontentment among both the sections. At times the merchants

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<sup>72</sup> Gwalior-Jodhpur *Kharita*, *Ashadh Sudi 1*, V.S. 1843/1786.

<sup>73</sup> Gwalior-Jodhpur *Kharita*, *Posh Sudi 1*, V.S. 1847/1790.

<sup>74</sup> Gwalior-Jodhpur *Kharita*, *Bhadon Sudi 12*, V.S. 1848/1791.

<sup>75</sup> Gwalior-Jodhpur *Kharita*, *Posh Sudi 13*, V.S. 1848/1791.

had to lend money to the State. In return they sought favourable terms and conditions to promote their business interests. But the *sahukars* were vigilant of the risks involved in such collaboration and adopted safeguards to maintain their reputation in the market. A leading merchant house, which issued a *hundi* of two lakhs on Ujjain, to pay the Marathas on behalf of the State took several *hundis* of small amounts from the other local merchants as deposits to back up his own *hundi* in the books.<sup>76</sup> During the period between 1755 and 1759, financial crisis of the Jodhpur state was so acute that it became difficult to arrange money for routine expenditure. The situation was so deplorable that the Maharaja could not afford oil everyday for lighting lamps in the evening for holding his *darbar*. His personal attendant, Narsingh Das Bhandari was instructed to make his appearance before the ruler and salute him thereby indicating that the supply of oil had been arranged and the court could be held. There was a secret understanding between the ruler and his attendant that the latter would not show up in the event of non availability of oil for the lighting. The acuteness of the financial strain can be gauged from the fact that the Maharaja had to leave his fort palace residence and shift to a smaller palace in the valley.<sup>77</sup>

The local people suffered great hardships due to the depredations of the Maratha army. Standing crops were damaged by the invading army. In addition to forceful collection of money, property was plundered in towns and villages. All this was reflective of the Maratha's desperate need for money. Contemporary sources testify to the widespread desolation of the countryside, acute poverty of the *raiyyat* due to the Maratha presence and the growing inability of the Rajput rulers to provide relief or arrange resources for agrarian restoration. The unprecedented growth of revenue farming in the States of Jaipur and Jodhpur during the second half of the eighteenth century is also attributed to the growing pressure of the Marathas for the payment of tribute. The undercurrent of resentment against the Marathas is evident from measures adopted by the Rajput states prohibiting the *raiyyat* all round to buy any property moveable or unmoveable acquired by the Marathas by way of plunder. The ever growing Maratha demands for tribute and war indemnity caused acute economic

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<sup>76</sup> Madhu Tandon Sethia, *Rajput Polity: Warriors, Peasants and Merchants (1700-1800)*, Rawat Publications, Jaipur and New Delhi, 2003, pp. 272, 273.

<sup>77</sup> *Marwar ri Khyat*, pp. 41 and 48.

hardships to Rajput rulers and they became desperate. This is evident from the anguish and the growing antipathy towards the Marathas among the Rajput elites.

### **Rajput Perceptions of the Marathas**

In the Mughal official records the Marathas have been termed as *Ashqiya*, i.e., ‘Robbers’.<sup>78</sup> There was another term used for the Maratha leaders in Mughal official documents. They were called *nasardaran*, i.e., pseudo-chiefs.<sup>79</sup> Bhimsen, while writing his memoirs in 1700 addressed the Marathas as ‘malefactors.’ However, the Marathas have been perceived differently in the Rajasthani sources. Since the Maratha dominance in Rajasthan was resisted by the Rajput Rajas, one is curious to know about the terms used for them commonly. The question arises whether appropriate references to the Marathas, if viewed in chronological order suggest any change or continuity. The use or non-use of particular words may also be indicative of attitudes. When one wades through different genre of Rajasthani sources, i.e., *Khyats* as well as archival records, the terms used for the Marathas are derived from the place of their origin. They are mentioned as *Dakhanis* or natives of Deccan. No other common terms, not even the term Maratha, which is indicative of their ethnicity has been used.

In late medieval Rajasthani sources, we find similar attitude towards the Muslims who irrespective of their varying ethnic origins are simply addressed as Turks. In the case of the Marathas, even a more detailed reference to their contextual occurrences does not make difference, the sole exception being the use of suffix Pandit in respect of the Maharashtra Brahmans and prefix Sindhia, Holkar, Pawar, Bable, Ingle, Jadhav and so on to differentiate them from the Brahmans, in each and every context, be it the military campaigns, visits to the court of the Rajput Rajas or their interaction with the local society.

In the bordering State of Mewar, the apprehension about the Maratha designs becomes evident from Maharana Jagat Singh’s letter to Bihari Das. This letter was written in the context of Peshwa Bajirao’s visit to Udaipur. If we look at the content of the letter, it says:

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<sup>78</sup> Irfan Habib, *Agrarian System of Mughal Empire*, p. 404.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 401.

“Bajirao has come and he will derive reputation from having compelled a contribution from me, besides his demand for land. He has commenced with my country and will take twenty times more from me than from other Rajas. Malhar came last year but this was nothing. Bajirao is coming this year, and he is more powerful. But if God hears me, he will have no land,”

and that if a meeting was to take place at all, it was to be arranged beyond Dewalia.<sup>80</sup> Earlier too, a section among the Rajputs had perceived the Marathas as being capable of creating great disturbance and representing the elements of anarchy and ruin of entire land. Though Sawai Jai Singh had friendly relations with the Marathas, even he called them thieves (*chor*) when he came to know about their repeated intrusions into southern Mewar. In a letter written by Kesho Ram, Sawai Jai Singh’s agent in Ujjain, the former used the term *ghanims* (plunderer/enemy) for the Maratha army.<sup>81</sup>

In *dastur komwar – dikhni*, the Marathas have been addressed as *ghanims* only once. In 1734, Raja Aayamal was sent from Bundi along with the ‘*ghanims*’ to Ujjain.<sup>82</sup> It comes as a surprise that except for this sole reference, upto 1793, in the Rajasthani sources, the term *ghanim* for the Marathas is not found. Even in periods of acute tension and hostility between the two sides, the Marathas are referred to as *Dikhanis*. This is evident from the *dastur komwar*, *chitthi* records and *Marwar ri Khyat*. Throughout the period of this study, these sources refer to the Marathas as *Dikhanis*. When Mahadaji Shinde arrived at Tunga in 1787 to fight with the Jaipur and Jodhpur rulers, his arrival is announced in a polite language.<sup>83</sup> In the *chitthi* and *arzdast* documents the arrival of the Marathas has been recorded as, “*Dikhniyan ka ghana vahada chhe*,” (There is great uproar and/or fear of the *Dakhanis*). When Maratha Khanu visited Marwar, it created panic for some days, “*so Khanu ko kai din to baido raiyo*.”<sup>84</sup> It comes to our notice that in the *chitthi* documents of Jaipur, the term *ghanim* is used for the Pindaris of Amir Khan who invaded Jaipur territory while serving under the Marathas.

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<sup>80</sup> Letter from Maharana Jagat Singh II to Pancholi Biharidas dated September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1734.

<sup>81</sup> V.S. Bhatnagar, *Life and Times of Sawai Jai Singh*, p. 202.

<sup>82</sup> *Dastur Komwar Dikhni*, VOL. X, *Chait Sudi 7*, V.S. 1793/1736.

<sup>83</sup> *Dastur Komwar Dikhni*, Vol. IX, pp. 677-682.

<sup>84</sup> *Marwar ri Khyat*, p. 59.

Interestingly, in the second half of the eighteenth century, the Mughal perception of the Marathas changed in the context of the then prevailing situation of North India. While Persian accounts of the first half of the eighteenth century contented themselves with straight narration of events pertaining to Maratha inroads, most writers in the second half tried to give their accounts a new perspective and vision. It seems that with the appointment of Mahadaji Sindhia as *wakil-i mutlaq* by Mughal Emperor Shah Alam, the prolonged Mughal-Maratha enmity got mitigated. It also marked the beginning of a new era of reconciliation and adjustment between two former adversaries, changing the political scenario of the Delhi court. Efforts were made to work out a system based on mutual co-operation to cope with the growing challenge of British hegemony over North India by establishing peace and order in fairly large areas around Delhi. These trends and tendencies were reflected in the literature that developed in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. The chroniclers from North India avoided derogatory remarks previously used to explain the Maratha military thrusts and to portray the character of their generals. Now they politely referred to them as Maratha leaders (*sardaran-i Maratha*) or leaders from the Deccan (*sardaran-i Janub*).<sup>85</sup>

It is also interesting to note that despite antagonistic relationship between the Rajputs and the Marathas, the Rajasthani documents offer more or less a dispassionate perception of the Maratha success in Rajasthan, their military superiority over the Rajputs and how they manifested their power vis-à-vis the Rajput rulers. In the context of the 1760s the *Khyat* admits undisputed ascendancy of the Marathas in Rajasthan, “*Dikhniyan ro` moto partap huvo*,”<sup>86</sup> and their growing strength, “*Raj to samvat 1817 su hi jaman mathe aayo pin samvat 1820 su to arudh huvo*”<sup>87</sup> and again in 1788 when the Marathas were again asserting themselves, “*Dikhniyan ro jor ditho*.”<sup>88</sup> There is just one instance during the 1780s when the Rajputs boasted about their success against the Marathas and plight of Shinde in the battle of Tunga. It is recorded as Shinde’s

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<sup>85</sup> Z.U. Malik, “Persian Historiography of Marathas in the Second half of Eighteenth Century,” *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 52<sup>nd</sup> Session, New Delhi 1991-92.

<sup>86</sup> *Marwar ri Khyat*, it reads, p. 56.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91.

flight from the field and that he was running away.<sup>89</sup> There is hardly any attempt to undermine the exploits of the Marathas, the despair and sadness among the Rajput Rajas over the prospects of loss of face, territory and parting with huge sums of money to buy peace with the Marathas. The inability of the rulers to pay up the promised sum and acceptance on their part of the humiliating condition that made them place leading personalities of the state under custody of the Marathas as some kind of insurance for payment of the outstanding dues – all these are stated as a matter-of-factly developments.

It may be stated here that Mahadaji Sindhia and Malhar Rao Holkar, being directly involved in the political disputes in Rajasthan, were more demanding of money from the rival Rajputs. For money's sake they frequently changed side and backed up any individual who promised to pay more money. They quickly abandoned the contender for the throne supported by them earlier. On the other hand, being remotely concerned with political developments in Rajasthan they followed a policy of splendid caution. The Peshwa demanded money from the Rajput Rajas only in case of dire need and not out of greed. However, one is curious that the Rajas of Jaipur and Jodhpur, despite experiencing economic hardships due to the incessant Maratha demands, never used offensive language for them. In the next chapter we analyze evidence depicting softness in the Maratha-Rajput relations.

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<sup>89</sup> *Dastur Komwar Dikhni*, Vol. IX, p. 681; *Rathora ri Khyat*, Vol. III, p. 615, “*Patel naas gayo.*”