CHAPTER II

FEUDAL COMPLEX

The Post Harsha polity was highly imbued with developed feudal tendencies. The decentralisation of state system resulted in the fragmentation and thereby in the transformation of political power from the uniform monarch to numerous petty chiefs variously entitled as rais, ranas, rajaputras, mahasamantas, samantas, mahamandalesvaras, mandalesvaras, mandalikas, thakkuras etc., equal in status to the feudal barons of Europe. The ambitious designs of some of those who were powerful did not allow them to remain for long under the subordination of their respective overlords. Hence, they succeeded in establishing themselves as independent ruling authorities, taking advantage of some critical circumstances and mis-happenings in the states of their overlords. These newly established clannish monarchies were headed by the king, though maintained by an organisation of feudal chiefs, who in the hour of the weakness of the central authority could also declare themselves independent. Thus, in feudal age the political situations had always been overturned and repeated cyclically. It was against such a background that the Rajputs appeared on the scene as political and military chiefs in various parts of northern India.

1 The king was certainly the supreme head of the state and the conductor of the overall executive, judicial and military administration. To some extent, he was assisted in administrative matters; by the queens, a number of whom figure in the records of different dynasties of our period. However, none of them is possibly found entrusted with any administrative post; their involvement in administration is borne out indirectly in some of the land-grants. They are sometimes, found making land-grants with the formal permission of the King (see the Gahadawala records in EI, II, pp.187-88, Ibid., pp.117-18, Ibid., IV, p.108, Kartalai inscription of Chedi queen Rahada, EI, II, p.177, Bheraghat Inscription of Alhandadevi, (Chedi era 907), EI, II, No.2, p.11). Sometimes, they are found making land-grants conjointly with their sons or permitting them to make grant independently. (see the Gahadawala Records in JASB, LVI, pp.114-16, EI, VI, p.114, EI, II, pp.359-361). The queens were generally endowed with all the royal prerogatives (samasta-rajprakriyapeta), (EI, IX, p.47). Some had also worked unofficially as governors of bhuktis and regents. (D. Sharma, Early Chauhan Dynasties, pp.138-202). Under the Chahmanas, they were also provided the right to issue coins. (Ibid., p. 41).
with their highly exalted notions of Kshatriyahood and chivalry. The Gurjara-Pratiharas were first to emerge as independent Rajput despots from the status of the feudatory chiefs of Harsha; who once again tried to bring the whole of northern India under one political orbit. But the forces of disintegration soon engulfed the whole region when their own feudatories, the Chandellas, Chalukyas, Chahmanas, Kalachuris, Guhillas, began to rule autonomously in the territories overruled by them in capacity of feudatories. Before we pass on to discuss feudal polity, it would be appropriate to go in some details about the emergence of some of the feudal dignitaries. It appears that during the early medieval period, a large number of titles are mentioned in our inscriptions, therefore it has been attempted in this chapter to collect the data from our sources and then in the light of them to determine the position and status of these feudal lords. I have endeavored to place them in feudal hierarchy. But, the variations from region to region are such that some of the titles either appear to be synonymous or overlapping to each other. In the following pages, I have adopted a methodology to discuss the main titles of important feudal lords, who appeared as a bone of administration and their relations with other feudal lords.

The origin of the Rajputs has remained one of the vexed questions creating dispute amongst historians. There is a consensus of opinion regarding the origin of term *rajput* from Sanskrit *rajputra*, meaning literally 'a son of the king', the Prakrit forms of which are variously known as *rawat*, *rauta*, *raul* and *rawal*. The emergence of them in the form of a class constituting the ruling landed aristocracy as the village chiefs and petty landholding feudatories from the 7th century AD onwards could not be disregarded in the light of the actual evidences.
However, their establishment in the form of clans, governing their independent hierarchical operandi in the political structure of those times remains a matter of controversy and dispute.²

Though, these varied views and arguments seem to be devoid of any practicability as they do not clearly fit down in the actual evidences of the land-grants according to which the various categories of rajaputra chiefs constituting the thirty six clan groups³ belonged not to one single caste but to a variety of castes and tribes. Hence, in the light of such evidences B.D. Chattopadhyaya’s contention of mixed caste seems quite appropriate and juxtaposed.⁴ His argument that “the criteria for inclusion in the list of Rajput clans was provided by the

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² In view of Tod and Crooke, the Rajputs were descended from the Scythic people of Central Asia (Tod, Annals & Antiquities of Rajasthan, ed. Crooke, Vol.I, Ch. 2,3&6). V.A. Smith regards the origin of some of the Rajput clans from Indian stock, while those of others from the Scythic (Smith, Early History of India, 3rd ed., pp.407ff. The term rajput is easily explained by C.V. Vaidya in the sense of the ancient Kshatriya, in order to prove their descent from the race of vedic Aryans (C.V. Vaidya, Medieval Hindu India, Vol.II, Ch.I, p.5). G.H. Ojha had tried to link the two theories of the foreign and the Aryan origin by including the Kusanas, Sakas, Pahlavas etc. together with the various Aryan races such as Ailas and Ikshvakus etc., recognising them as Kshatriyas in Rajput stock (G.H. Ojha, Rajputane Ka Itihasa, Vol.1, Ajmer, 1937, p.49, ff., Madhyakalin Bhartiya Sanskriti, Allahabad, 1945, pp.43ff).

³ Almost all the contemporary texts provided the number of Rajput clans as thirty-six. The whole list is provided by Rajtarangini, Prithvirajraso, Kumarapalacharita, Varnaratanakar and by an ancient work from a Jain temple in Marwar. (B.N.S. Yadav, Society & Culture in Northern India in the Twelfth Century pp.36-37). Tod had studied the clan names of the above sources and prepared his own list removing some vernacular errors. The corrected list prepared by him includes the following clans – Ikshvaka, (Kakustha or Surya), Anwai (Indu, Soma or Chandra), Grahilot or Gohilot, Yadu, Tular, Rathor, Kshwaha or Kachwaha, Pramara, Chahan or Chauhan, Calukya or Solanki, Parihara, Cawara, Tak (Tak or Takshak), Jat or Geta, Han or Hun, Kathi, Bala, Jhala, Jethwa or Kamari, Gohil, Sarweya, Silar, Dabho, Gaur, Doda, or Dor, Gaharwal, Bargujar, Sengar, Sikarwal, Bais, Dahia, Johya, Mohil, Nikumbha, Rajpali and Dahima. Extra-Hul and Daharya (Tod, Annals and Antiquities, Vol.I).

However, the comparison of the above list with those of original reveals that Tod had also included the Tribal groups of foreign origin and even those Rajput clans which had originated quite later as sub-clans. The general names in the above list could be easily avoided from the point of view of our study, while the clan names, Guhilots, Kacchawaha, Paramara, Chahan or Chauhan, Calukya, Parihara or Pratihara, Gahadawala, Chandellas form a subject of specific study during early medieval period. The origin of Rathor clan, though somewhat later remains a spectrum for the analogy of change in the feudal structure and political system in India.

contemporary status of a clan at least in early stages of the crystallization of Rajput power does not emphasize the role of caste”. D.D. Kosambi seems to have directed towards the second stage while propounding his view of “feudalism from above and feudalism from below”. Dashrath Sharma had tried to generalize the whole matter while seeking a reasonable argument for all the Rajput clan holders in the social atmosphere.

Whatever the actual origin of these Rajput clans might have been, the transformation of the usage of the term from the ‘real son of the king’ to the petty landholding chiefs remains an established fact. These landholding chiefs could be the actual sons of some kings, nobles, sons of the nobles, the feudal chiefs or officials holding administrative posts.

Rajputra:

Passing to the textual evidences with regard to the connotation of term rajputra one should first cite the use of the term Arthasastra of Kautilya in its literal sense. In Harshacharita (7th century) the same term appears to have been used in the sense of a noble or landowning chief. In Kadambari also the term is used for the persons of noble descent, who were appointed by the king as local rulers. Hence in the capacity of local rulers they might have naturally governed a large portion of land under them and thus played an active role in political and administrative system of the state. In Rajtarangini, it is used in the sense of a mere landowner,

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5 Ibid., pp.61-62.
6 D.D. Kosambi, An Introduction to the Study of Indian History, Ch. 9&10.
8 Arthasastra, Kangle I, text, p.7.
8 V.S. Agarwal, Harshacharita Ek Sanskritik Adhyayana, p.93, also see fn.1.
9 “कृषिके विद्याधर नीलिन्द निपुणस्यनिरन्तरिक्षितं: प्रवृत्तिवीर्यं सत्यमु: सह समयं: प्रमेहमथिसि सुखर्षितिसप्तमाः।”


Here rajputra is meant ‘son of a noble’.
acclaiming the birth from the thirty-six clans of the Rajputs.\textsuperscript{10} The reference of thirty six clans clearly denotes that by the time of the 12th century these clans had already came into existence. \textit{Aparajitprachha} of Bhatta Bhuvanadeva, a work of the twelfth century, which describes the composition of a typical feudal order refers to \textit{rajputras} as constituting a fairly large section of petty chiefs holding estates, each one of them holding one or more villages.\textsuperscript{11} Besides, holding the estates as feudatory chiefs, the territories were also conferred upon the \textit{rajputras} as governors or proprietors. \textit{Tilakmanjari} of Dhanapala refers to them as recipients not only of villages but of \textit{bhuktis} and \textit{nagaras} also from the royal princes in accordance with their own merit.\textsuperscript{12} The efficiency and the trustworthiness of these \textit{rajputras} as governors of these territories is reflected from the sentiments of the royal princes feeling themselves free from anxiety after making such a distribution or allotment.\textsuperscript{13} \textit{Samaraicchakaha}, too, states about the similar evidence of the distribution of \textit{gramas} (villages) \textit{akaras} (mines), and \textit{mandabas} (towns) among the \textit{rajputras}.\textsuperscript{14} \textit{Kharataragacchabrihadgurvavali} of Jinasena Suri mentions to \textit{rajputras} as upholders of several Janapadas, towns and villages.\textsuperscript{15} In \textit{Prabandhacintamani} of Merutunga one Bhuyaraj, a king of Kanyakubja is referred to have become a recluse after appointing a Paramara \textit{rajputra} as governor of his territories.\textsuperscript{16} The literary evidence is also confirmed by inscriptional records. An instance may be quoted from \textit{Larlai Stone Inscription}, (VS 1233) in which the two Chahmana \textit{rajputras}, Abhayapala and Lakhanapala are referred as proprietors of certain landed

\textsuperscript{10} \textit{Rajtarangini}, tr, M.A. Stein, Bk.VII, p.297 (V.360) & 393, (VV.1617-18).
\textsuperscript{11} \textit{Aparajitprachha}, p.196, V.34.
\textsuperscript{12} \textit{Tilakmanjari}, p.103.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{14} \textit{Samaraicchakaha} quoted in S.R. Sharma, \textit{Society & Culture in Rajasthan}, p.67.
\textsuperscript{15} \textit{Kharataragacchabrihadgurvavali}, ed. S.J.G., p.85.
\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Prabandhacintamani}, S.J.G. No.1, p.11.
estates. The mode of reference appears to denote that the rajputras were merely governing the place rather than holding it as an enjoyable property. Instances are not rare when rajputras received land-grants in remuneration of certain services either military or administrative, which he was bound to perform under all conditions. Military function was certainly the foremost duty of these rajputras in the capacity of both an administrator and a soldier. Their appearance as mercenary soldiers is proved as early as the 7th century AD from the reference in Bakshali Manuscript in north-west frontier province. and subsequently from Chachnamah in Sindh in the 8th century AD. In all bardic traditions of our period, the Rajputs are always depicted as horsemen. The equestrian ideals of the Rajput dynasties are also clearly reflected in the bull and horsemen type of their coinages. It may not be again ignored that the Pratiharas, one of the clansmen of the Rajput dynasties of early medieval period felt pride to bear the title of hayapati, 'the lord of horses'. The military character of the rajputras also became apparent from the documents of Lekhapaddhati (a collection of the models of documents from Gujarat and Western Marwar region) and from the military grants provided by inscriptive evidences. The assignment of land to rajputras as feudatory chief on conditions to perform military and other services to the overlord is a foremost prospect to confirm their status in Gujarat according to Lekhapaddhati. Regarding the military obligation, one of the charters of a ranaka (ranakapattala) in the above mentioned text provides us the details that a rajaputra applies to a

17 EI, XI, p.49f.
19 Chahnamah, op.cit., also see Irfan Habib, “Peasant in Indian History,” PIHC., 43rd Session, 1982, p.23.
   Such types of coins were issued by the Gahadawala ruler Madanapala after his victory over the Kalachuris, (Roma Niyogi, The Gahadawalas, p.75).
21 Khajuraho Inscription of Dhanga, dated VS 1011, EI, pp.129&134, V.43.
ranaka for a fief and when, he is granted a village, he is required not only to maintain law and order within it and collect revenues according to the old just practices but also to furnish hundred foot-soldiers and twenty cavalrymen for the service of his ranaka overlord at his headquarter. The fact that he was not allowed to make gift of uncultivated land to temples and Brahmans indicates his right over the land granted to him, which he could sub-infeudate to others. Sometimes, the rajaputras were also provided cash endowment for the supply of military soldiers in the service of the overlord. In some such cases, the rules for the providence of military service were so strict that the amount was required to be given after seeing the number of horses and infantrymen and not on faith. In addition to the military service rendered to his immediate overlord ranaka, the rajaputras were also asked to pay the revenue in both cash and kind on the land assigned to him for cultivation. The revenue was received by him from cultivators in return for providing protection to them from wrongdoers, thieves and rebels by safeguarding the roads within the boundary of the estate maintained by him. The amount of the revenue was strictly to be paid within the specified time limit. If the rajputras failed to do so it was not to be paid without a fixed amount of interest imposed as late payment. None of the literary or inscripational sources, however, provides the evidences of such a contractual obligation on the part of rajputra.

22 Lekhapaddhati, p.7.
23 Ibid, pp.9-10.
24 Ibid., p.13.
25 Ibid.
26 Ibid., pp.9-10
27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
The position of the *rajaputas* was though, distinct under the Gahadawalas and the Chahmanas as the title was usually applied to the actual sons of the reigning kings. They exercised special powers in administration acting as governors of estates assigned to them by the reigning kings. Under Gahadawalas, they were provided a special privilege of using their own seals with the separate insignia, differentiating them from the Gahadawala royal seal. On account of their keen interest in the affairs of administration some of them were endowed with all the royal prerogatives and were given the charge of all the royal and administrative activities. They could also grant lands and villages with the consent of the reigning king.

Under Chahmanas, the instances are there of the *rajaputas* and *maharajaputas* serving as governors. The Chahmana king Gajasimha appointed his son *maharajaputra* Chamundaraja as governor of Mandavyapura in AD 1170. Similarly, king Kelhana appointed his son Vikramasimha to the same post in AD 1180. Again, the governorship of Mandavyapura was assigned by Kelhana to his another son Sotala in AD 1185. The Chahmana princes were also given fiefs (*seja*) for their personal enjoyment. However, these fiefs were not regarded as their personal property.

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29 Roma Niyogi, op.cit., p.145-146.

30 *Maharajaputra* Govindachandra, son of Madanapala is known to have a powerful influence in the administration. He was empowered to act in all matters like the king himself and was entrusted with the title *samastarajaprakriyopeta* (*Royal Asiatic Society Grant* VS 1225, *IA*, XV, pp.7-13, *EI*, XIII, p.217). He is also credited with all the victories during his father’s reign. *The Rahan grant of Madanpala* credited him with the victories over the Gauda elephants and Hammir during his own reign (*IA*, XVIII, pp.14-19). The high status of Govindachandra as *maharajaputra* is further indicated by the fact that he had the right to announce the grant of a feudatory *ranaka* (*IA*, XIV, pp.101-104).


32 *JASB*, XII, p.104.

33 Ibid., X, p.209.

34 *JASB*, XIV, p.104.
personal property, as sometimes the central government exercised its power of assigning revenues out of these fiefs. The right of alienating land out of their fiefs was not usually extended to these Chahmana rajputras. But, often, they appear to have the right of assigning small portion of the income as a gift for charitable purpose without the king’s permission. Thus, the Chahmana prince Kirtipala, who was provided a fief of twelve villages, is known to have granted an yearly sum of two drammas from each of the twelve villages to the Jina Mahavira at Naddulai. Perhaps, the extent of the fiefs of these rajputras depended either on the merit of the prince or on the circumstances. Sometimes, the number of villages were assigned as fief, as was the case with the Chahmana prince Kirtipala, who enjoyed twelve villages as fief, while, sometimes only a single village was conferred as a fief to two princes as was the case with rajputras Lakhanapala and Abhayapala who had both enjoyed one village as fief in AD 1177.

Sometimes, the rajputras under the Chahmanas also gave their approval to judicial orders regarding their own estate. Thus, an edict specifying the scale of punishment for brahmans, priests, ministers and others, which was issued by king Allhanadeva, had the approval of maharajputra Kelhana and Gajasimha. They were also provided with the military generals and probably other such officials for safeguarding their own estates.

Among the scions of royal family, apart from the sons of the reigning kings, who held significant position in the Chahmana and Gahadawala states respectively, mention may be made

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36 EI, IX, p.68.
37 Ibid.
38 EI, XI, p.50.
39 EI, XI, pp.43-46.
40 JASB, XII, pp.102-3.
to *rajaputra* Jojalla, the maternal uncle of Nadol king Samarsimha and *maharajaputra* Vatsaraja of Singara family. In one of the Chahmana inscriptions, Jojalla is referred as *rajyacintaka* i.e. supervising or pondering over the problems of the administration.\(^{41}\) Similarly, in *Kamauli Copper Plate Inscription*, Vatsaraja is referred as a significant feudatory chief of the Gahadawala ruler Govindachandra, having the exclusive right of donating the village to his own feudatory *thakkura* chief Dalhusarman.\(^{42}\) Another *rajaputra* Sallakshanapala, a scion of the royal family is known to hold the important post of *mahamantrin* under Vigraharaja of Chahmana dynasty.\(^{43}\) Instances are not rare when the scions of royal family went to join the services of the ruling kings of the dynasties other than the Gahadawala and the Chahamanas.\(^{44}\) In the light of such evidences, the assumption of *rajaputras* as the progeny of the kings and chieftains and the continued use of title even in the subservience of other kings, who were served by them after losing their own estates does not seem inappropriate.\(^{45}\) The *rajaputras* and *maharajaputras* had acquired an important position in the political organisation of the Kalachuris. The *Kahla plate* of Sodhdeva Kalachuri, which offers a striking similarity to Gahadawala grants refers to *maharājīni* and *maharajaputra* in the same manner as the *rajan*, *rajīni* and *yuvaraj* are mentioned at the

\(^{41}\) *EI*, XI, p.45.

\(^{42}\) *EI*, IV, pp.130-133.

\(^{43}\) Dashrath Sharma, *Early Chauhan Dynasties*, p.198.

\(^{44}\) According to a story recorded by Forbes, Prince Jugdev, son of Udayaditya, the ruler of Malwa, went in the service of Solankee King Sidhraj Jaysingh after leaving his father's estate owing to a family dispute. After a long discourse between Sidhraj and Jugdev, the former agreed to pay him a cash salary of sixty thousand crowns a month. Soon, after testing the fidelity of Jugdev the amount of salary was increased to a hundred thousand crowns everyday (*Rasmala*, I, p.140,145). *Chaturvimsatiprabandh* also refers to the story of the three *rajaputras*, the sons of the king of Jabalpur, who came to offer their services to Virdhavala Baghela. But on demanding a high amount of salary Virdhaval a disdained them. Then, they joined Bhimasimha, the king of sea coast town of Bhadresvara (identical in all probability to Bhima Chalukya) with whom Virdhavala had already declared a war. Bhima is said to have gained victory in this battle with Virdhavala owing to valourous fighting spirit of these three Rajputs (*Kathavate’s Introduction to the 1st Edition of Kirtikaumudi*).

beginning of the list of royal officials, who are to be informed about the grants. The clear evidences regarding the origin of these rajaputras like those of Gahadawalas and Chahmanas are not available but there can be no doubt of them descending from the families of royal personages and the chiefs.

Rautas:

Under the Chandellas, the rautas are found more frequent mention than the rajaputras to whom the lands were granted for their services. Though, the charters of lands may not clearly suggest the conditions of their services but from the general nature of them, most of the Chandella service tenures seem to be of military nature. The preponderance of a military element can also be inferred from the mention of as many as twenty one skandhavars (military and administrative camps) in the Chandella territory.

The military service by them is also confirmed by some other references. The Latakamelaka of Sankhadhara (12th century) reveals that a rautaraja called Sangramavisara enjoyed a gramapatta for military service. The Charkhari Plate of Viravarman also records the grant of a village in the battle of Sondhi. That there was also a system of granting pension (mṛtyuktavṛtti) to heirs of rautas killed in battle is confirmed from the Garra plates (VS 1261/AD 1205-06) which record grants of lands to rauta Samanta, son of rauta Pape who was killed at Kakadadaha in a battle with the turushkas. Some of the landgrants to the rajaputras or rautas though, do not clarify the conditions of the services, seem to be of a nature of honorarium.

46 Roma Niyogi, op.cit., p.147, fn.2.
48 B.N.S. Yadav, Society & Culture in Northern India during the 12th century, p.143.
49 El, XX, p.133.
50 El, XVI, pp.272-77.
A record from Nadol belonging to rajaputra Kirtipala (VS 1218/AD 1161) states that the two Chahmana rajaputras (sons of the reigning king), rajakula Alhanadeva and kumara Kalhanadeva granted twelve villages appertaining to Nadulai to rajaputra Kirtipala. There are evidences of numerous grants to mahapurohita Praharajsarman, son of Jagusarman in Gahadawala kingdom, who at one place is honorably referred as rauta. The nature of grants does not reveal that a large number of villages were granted to him on various religious occasions as remuneration except one in which he is described specifically as rauta. Kamauli plate inscription dated VS1190 / AD1133) records the gift of a village Umbari to rauta Jatesarman, son of rauta Talhe and grandson of thakkura Uhila. The donee in this case was a Brahmana. Several Gahadawala grants issued from Varanasi and preserved in Asiatic Society of Bengal record the donation of six villages to rauta Rajyadharvarman of Kshatriya caste. The Gahadawala ruler Jayachandra is also known to have granted four villages to rauta Ravidhara in VS 1233/AD 1177. An inscription of the Chandella king Parmardin refers to a grant of one pada of land to three rautas namely, Somaraja, Maharaja and Vatsaraja, the sons of senapati Vatsaraja. The Rewa Inscription of maharanaka Kumarapala, a Chandella king ruling subordinately to king Trailokyavarman (VS 1297/AD 1239) makes reference to the grant of the village Rehi to six Brahmana rautas.
A study of these grants reveals some important facts regarding the position of *rautas*, the foremost of them was that the *rautas* were not only acting as sub-feudatories but also were under the direct service of the state, the ruler of which assigned land to them. Secondly, the donees of most of these grants are Brahmans and the purpose gleaned from the nature and the mannerism of the subject matter seems spiritual rather than obligatory. However, the title of the *rautas* attached to them reflects their feudal or official status. It appears that the variations in size of the land and in the number of villages caused to the merit and achievements of the *rautas* which had created an impressive attire of them in the ruler’s mind and hence resulted in the grants of lands to them even in that condition when achievement or contribution of them in any sphere is not known. The spirituality as the purpose of assignment expressed in the grants might had been intended to bring about a feeling of solidarity and satisfaction among the various *rautas* and *rajaputras* and thus to prevent a feeling of revolt against the state.

The *rautas, maharajaputras, rajaputras* took great care to the construction and maintenance of religious and public places in their own capacities.\(^{59}\)

The above discussion assures that the person with the title of *rajaputra* had a great importance in the political, religious, economic and social spheres, though it may have its regional variations. Sometimes, it may appear that *rajputras* were performing the function of *rauta*. But our evidences suggest that both of them were ranked lower then *ranaka* in feudal

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\(^{59}\) See the *Kalinjar Rock Inscription* (VS 1188/AD 1131) of the reign of Chandella king Madanavarman which refers to *maharajaputra* Selaita and *maharajaputra* Sri Vacha and *rauta* Sri Udanah for setting up image of Siva. The three of them are mentioned in the direct service of Madanavarman. (*JASB*, 1948, XVII, part I, pp.321-22, *ASR*, XXI, pp.34-35, (*EI*, IV,p.154). Also see the *Ajaigarh Rock Inscriptions* of the reign of Madanavarman and Parmardi of VS 1208/AD 1151, VS 1247/AD 1187 respectively for the construction of *chautras* (public platforms) by *rautas* inside the Jayapura fort. (*ASR*, Vol, XXI, p.49 & 50 plates, XII, A & C). Another inscription in the same place dated in VS 1227/AD 1171 records the building of a *baoli* (step well) on the road during a famine for the use of all people in the same fort by a certain *rauta* Vira of Kshatriya caste. The inscription, though, does not refer the name of any ruler. (*ASR*, XXI, pp.49-50, *EI*, V, Appendix, p.23, No.157 and fn.1).
hierarchy. One may, however, raise question if rajputra were the sons of the king how they may be ranked lower to ranaka. The only solution appears to me is that whenever the rajputras appear to be the sons of the reigning king, their position was supreme in their territories but may be deemed as equal or inferior to the ranakas in other regions. One thing is sure that all of them (ranakas, rajputras and rautas) were receiving the grants directly from the king and thereafter the process of sub-infeudation begins.

Ranakas:

Ranakas were another category of vassal chiefs connected with land. They were delegated a prominent place in the political organisation of the Chalukyas, Chandellas, Chahmanas, and Gahadawalas. Like the other feudatory title holders of our age, they were not confined to any specific caste group and commanded a considerable area of land granted to them as fiefs. In feudal hierarchy, their ranks were certainly a step higher than the other chiefs. In most cases, they were directly subordinated to the king and practiced sub-infeudation by creating a group of their own feudatories. The higher status of them under Somavansi rulers of Orissa becomes clear from their inclusion in the list of the persons of royal household as next to the royal queen or pattamahisi and followed by rajputra (rajni-ranaka-rajputra-rajavallabh-adin). The epithet upajivijana applied to them under Bhanjas in Orissa further indicates that they lived on the bounties given to them by the king.

60 The term ranaka appears to have derived from the Sanskrit term rajyanyaka meaning literally, of royal descent. Rajanaka, the correct form of this term, which is identical as ranaka evidently figure in the inscriptions of Chamba state ranging from the 10th to 12th centuries, in the sense of feudal chiefs (B.N.S. Yadav, op.cit., p.150). In Kashmir, the term rajanaka is known from Rajtarangini of Kalhana as a title of high honour adopted by ministers and officials of feudal rank (Rajtarangini, tr. Stein, BK. VI, p.244, V.177, also see fn., and BK. IV, V.489n.)

61 EI, III, Katak Copper Plate Grant of the third year of Mahabhavagupta II, No.47, p. 357, Plate II, VV.33-4. The rajvallabhas, who ranked next to the rajputras were royal favourites, who were usually rewarded with the grant of villages by the king (R.S. Sharma, op.cit.,p.230).

62 EI, XVIII, p.298, No.29, Antigam Plates of Yasabhajadeva, II, VV.17-18, also see EI, III, No.47, V.V.28-42.
The similar status of ranakas is revealed in the Rajput dynasties of northern India. In the records of the Chalukyas, Chandellas, Chahmanas and Gahadawalas, etc they are mentioned in direct service of the kings receiving landgrants from them as remunerations. The Gahadawala kings retained a strict control over them as long as they remained powerful. Such an effective control did not allow these ranakas to sub-infeudate land without the permission of the reigning monarch. Thus, a ranaka named Lavanapravaha acting on behalf of his father Mandanapala could become able to make a gift of land out of the village granted to him only with the permission of the yuvaraj Govindachandra, who was apparently acting on behalf of his father. Another grant of the same ranaka was announced by maharajaputra, Govindachandra and written with the consent of mahattaka Gangeya, an official of the state. Lekhapaddhati refers at various places that in Gujarat, ranakas received landgrants from the kings and sub-infeuded them to rajputras. But, here in the case of sub-infeudation, the consent of the king is not referred. The king’s permission was also probably not necessary in cases of sub-infeudation by ranakas to their subordinate ranakas or rautas under the Chandellas. Some of the ranakas were provided such an important position in the family of the Chahmanas that they are referred as the

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63 IA, XVIII, pp.18-19, R.S. Sharma, op.cit., p.141-42.

Kharataragacchapattavali refers to ranakas as the feudatory chiefs of Prithviraja Chahmana (B.N.S. Yadav, op.cit, p.150). Ranaka Samantasimha is stated as the direct subordinate of Visaladeva Chalukya (IA, Vol.VI, pp.210-13, DHNI, II, p.1034) and Virdhavala, a direct feudatory of Bhima II is stated by name as Ranah (IA, Vol.XI, pp.208-10, DHNI, II, p.1187, 1035-36. See also, fn.5 on pp.1035-36, G.H. Ojha, History of Rajaputana, Ajmer, II, p.461. Similarly, the maharanaka of Kakredika is known as a feudatory of the Kalachuri rulers Jayasimha and Vijaisimha, according to the Rewa grants of AD 1175 & 1195 (IA, XVII, pp.224-30).


65 Lekhapaddhati, pp. 2 & 7.

66 A Chandella mortgaged landgrant records the mortgaging of field by a ranaka to two other ranakas in consideration of a loan of 2250 drammas. The field granted was certainly given to that ranaka by his overlord but the charter nowhere refers about the latter’s consent to such a grant (JASB, XIX, 1850, pp.454-56, Cf. R.S. Sharma, p.138.
'enlighter of the dynasty or clan' (Chahmankulpradeep). Some of the ranaka chiefs were having an independent attitude as if they were following the suzerainty of his overlord. They took no care to mention the names of their overlords, while making a grant or executing a record of something significant in their estates. Thus, the Belkhara Pillar Inscription of ranaka Vijayakarna, a feudatory of Gahadawala king Harishchandra (VS 1253/AD 1197), recording the erection of the pillar by a private individual refers to the kingdom of the aforesaid ranaka, in which the pillar was set up (ranakasrivijayakarna rajye) but makes no mention of the reigning monarch Harishchandra, being dated in the year of the victorious kingdom of Kanyakubja. The Kalavan plates of Yasovarman (11th century) inform us that ranaka Amma of the Ganga family, a petty chief holding 84 villages subordinated to Yasovarman, who in turn was a vassal of Bhoja Paramara granted certain pieces of land of Mahishabaddhika in the holy tirtha of Kalakesvara without taking cognition of his overlord. In these cases, the weak position of the overlord seems to have been the only reason of such carelessness on the part of the feudatory chiefs. The sub-feudatories of the status of ranaka Amma were not powerful enough to defy the authority of their overlords. Instead of it, they were compelled by their powerful overlords to take their permission at the time of issuing charters. The sub-feudatory rana Sankarsimha had to take the permission of mahamandalesvara Vapanadeva, when he wanted to alienate even three ploughs

67 Kharataragacchabrihadvavali, p.86.
69 EI, XIX, p.72.
70 The editor of the grant has rightly conjectured that at the time of the engraving of the record, the political condition of the kingdom of Kannauj was extremely uncertain owing to the Muslim invasion. The fiefs of Bhagwat and Bhivli situated between the Ganga and the Karmanasa were conferred upon Mohd. Bakhtiyar only one year earlier c. AD 1196. Under these disturbing circumstances, the negligence of the authority of king by the feudatory does not seem uncommon. Hence, the avoidance of a direct reference to the overlord of the kingdom of Kanyakubja in the inscription is matter of appreciation on the part of ranaka (JASB, I-II, pp.763-65).
of land to meet the expenses of the temple.\textsuperscript{71} It seems likely that the \textit{Kalvan Plates} have been issued during the last days of the reign of feudatory chief Yasovarman, when he was unable to hold a strict check over his sub-feudatories. The tendency of the \textit{ranakas} and other feudatory chiefs to become independent can not be denied in the hour of the political unstability and weakness of the strength of the central state. It is evident from \textit{Pabandhacintamani} that the Solanki king Sidhraj Jayasimha had to send an armed force against an Aheer \textit{rana} named Nowghun, who declared himself independent.\textsuperscript{72}

Doing military service to his overlord was one of the chief obligations of a \textit{ranaka}. \textit{Lekhapaddhati} records the case of a \textit{rana} who is instructed by \textit{dandanayaka} of a king to make his presence at the royal army camp along with his horses, foot soldiers, war elephants, various kinds of armours and other ammunitions in times of need of military assistance.\textsuperscript{73} In another document of \textit{samvat} 1533, a \textit{ranaka} is called upon to provide for the service of the king, 400 soldiers, 100 riding horses and 100 carriage horses.\textsuperscript{74} Non-fulfillment of such obligations sometimes led to the confiscation of the estates held by these \textit{ranakas}.\textsuperscript{75}

\textit{Ranakas} were good administrators. They took all care of the inhabitants of the estates ruled by them.\textsuperscript{76} The maintenance of the building of religious institutions was well attended by

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{71} \textit{IA}, X, p.156 (Vapanadeva was a feudatory of Jayasimha).
\item \textsuperscript{72} \textit{Rasmala}, Vol.I, pp.150-151.
\item \textsuperscript{73} \textit{Lekhapaddhati}, p.2.
\item \textsuperscript{74} Ibid., p.8
\item \textsuperscript{75} Ibid., p.24.
\item \textsuperscript{76} \textit{Kharataragacchhabrihadgurvavali}, p.82 (Here, a \textit{ranaka} is referred as "नानानातःराजानामाला"); i.e. sustainer of several towns and villages).
\end{itemize}
them as they considered it a means of attaining spiritual merit.\textsuperscript{77} They were also affluent enough to make donations to temples and deities.\textsuperscript{78}

Besides, serving as feudatory chiefs, ranakas had also acted in various official capacities. In the epigraphic records of our period, they are referred as the in-charge of royal seal,\textsuperscript{79} the ministers of state\textsuperscript{80} and the incharge of forts.\textsuperscript{81} A few of them were known for their artistic handiwork and were appointed by the king for performing such works in the royal state.\textsuperscript{82} Some were appointed to look after the sanghas etc. by the state.\textsuperscript{83} The information collected from various inscriptions suggests that most probably the ranaka stood at the top of feudal hierarchy after king and queen in some regions. He had assumed the title of maharaja during the tenure of weak king and granted land straight away to small ranakas and others. Further, it is also borne out from the evidence that he maintained huge contingent to carry out his orders. Sometimes,

\textsuperscript{77} Kadi Grant of VS 1287/AD1030, issued under the rule of Bhimadeva Chalukya refers to one rana Anaka thakkura Lunapasaka (The Prakrit form Lanapasaya or Lunapasaja is regarded identical with Sanskrit Lavanaprasada (\textit{IA}, XVIII, p.346, \textit{DHNI}, II, pp.999, fn.5, p.1011, fn.7) as the builder of the two temples of Analesvara and Salakhanesvara (\textit{IA}, VI, pp.201-203) His son rana Virama is again said to have built the temples of Viramesvara in Ghusadi and Sumalesvara (\textit{Kadi grant}, VS 1295/AD 1238, \textit{IA}, VI, pp.205-206). He is also known to have built an almshouse (satragraha) in the Maulatalapada territory in Anahillapataka) (\textit{IA}, Vol.VI, pp.208-210)

\textsuperscript{78} See Dohad inscription of ranaka Sankarsha (\textit{IA}, X, 159) and Kalvan Plate of ranaka Amma (\textit{EI}, XIX, p.72).


\textsuperscript{80} Ranaka Sri Chachigadeva and ranaka Lavnyaprasada were the ministers under Chalukyas of Gujarat (\textit{IA}, XI, p.338). \textit{Ranaka} Maladeva is also known as mahamatyay from the \textit{Veraval grant of Arjunadeva} (\textit{IA}, XI, pp.241-45, \textit{Prakrit and Sanskrit Inscription}, Bhavanagar, pp.224-27).

\textsuperscript{81} R.S. Sharma traced the existence of a fortress of Vataparvataka in Bhagalpur district belonging to the Palas. This fortress, according to him was under the charge of a ranaka since his seal is found at this place (R.S. Sharma, p.238-39).


\textsuperscript{83} \textit{Prabandhkosh}, text, p.132.
they are also found indulged in the cases of mortgaging and money lending.\textsuperscript{84} However, the instances are not totally missing while some of the ranakas held the position of a sub-vassals. Hence, one ranaka Sankarasimha was a subordinate of king Vapanadeva, who in turn was a feudatory of the Chalukya king Jayasimha in AD 1146.\textsuperscript{85} Similarly, Yasovarman, who was a feudatory of the Paramara king Bhojadeva, has his own sub-feudatory chief ranaka Amma.\textsuperscript{86} Those, who were in the direct infeudation of the king ruled in their own territories exercising the powers more or less similar to the king. They exercised not only the right to wage wars but also to enter into treaties with sovereigns of other states. An actual form of such treaty entered into by mahanandalesvara ranaka Lavanaprasada with maharajadhiraja Simhadeva of Devagiri of Yadava family in AD 1232 is referred in Lekhapaddhati. According to the terms of the treaty, high contracting parties agreed to confine up to their own estates, not to attack the territory of each other and that in case of being attacked by a powerful invader both of them should jointly oppose the enemy. The last contract of the treaty was the denial of the right of destination to another rajputra chief, who might flee into the territory of the other party with any valuable article. In such case, there was an agreement to reinstate the valuables in the possession of that

\textsuperscript{84} The grant of the village in the form of mortgage (vitta bandha) to a ranaka was made by a Jaina teacher, son of the royal preceptor (rajaguru) in consideration of probably a huge amount of money under Trailokyavarman in 1212. The revenue derived from this land granted to him was the only source of income to the aforesaid ranaka (El, XXV, I, II, 10-14). A similar deed compared to this mortgaged land grant is found on a special sized brick in Jaunpur in 1217 in which a ranaka is found mortgaging his field to two other ranakas in consideration of a loan of 2250 drammas (JASB, XIX (1850), 454-6, Cf R.S. Sharma, p.138). In such cases, the rights of the mortgaging remained confined to the collection of taxes or enjoyment of the field till the date of the clearing off the debts (El, XXV, I, 1-19). But the mortgaged land certainly passed under the control of the mortgagee in case the debtor failed to pay off his dues (R.S. Sharma, p.139).

\textsuperscript{85} \textit{IA}, X, 159.

\textsuperscript{86} \textit{EI}, XIX, 73-7.
The contracting of such a treaty settled by Lavanaprasada indicates the possession of a high degree of independence by him. His position was certainly higher than all other chiefs of the state and that he governed the kingdom of his master, Bhima II in the strength of the trust committed to him, becomes clear from the fact that at the time of making land gifts, he employed the form ordinarily used by tributary princes.

The powerful feudatory ranaka chiefs had also signified their important position by assuming some important composite and high sounding titles. Thus, ranaka Madanapala, who was practically an independent chief in Sena kingdom, styled himself as maharaja mahasamanta to denote his powerful position. Similarly, Lavanaprasada himself felt pride by assuming the specific title sarvesvara, the lord of all through the favour of his master. Besides this, he is also known with his usual title as mahamandalesvara ranaka. Ranaka Madanapala, who was practically an independent chief in the Sena kingdom styled himself as maharaja mahasamanta to denote his powerful position. Such composite titles were also frankly assumed by other ranaka chiefs. Though, all of them without discrimination had the right to make the collection

87 Lekhappadhati, p.51.
88 Kathavate’s Introduction to the Ist edition of Kirtikaumudi, p.50 ff.
89 B.P. Mazumdar, op.cit., p.28.
91 The title passed on continuously to his next three generations i.e., his son Virdhavala, grandson Samantasimha and great grandson Visaladeva (IA, VI, pp.210-13, Prakrit and Sanskrit Inscriptions, Bhavanagar, pp.214-218, DHNI, II, pp.1032-33, 1034-35).

If the identification of Lavanyaprasad with Lunapasaka is correct, he should also be regarded to play the functions of a thakkura (rana Anaka thakkura Lunapasaka – Kadi grant, VS 1287/AD 1030 (IA, VI, pp.201-203).

92 B.P. Mazumdar, op.cit., p.22.
93 One such ranaka chief in the Sapadalaksha kingdom was Tiluka, who had his additional title as mahamandalesvara (D. Sharma, Early Chauhan Dynasties, p.201).
of all types of taxes from the inhabitants of the estates ruled by them, to impose the conditions of payment of land revenue on the peasants and to have his own share out of the amount collected. Sometimes they could also exempt any specific tax using their own power without having permission of the reigning monarch. As the lord of the large territorial areas they needed to hold their own administrative organisation apart from that of the state.

Thakkuras:

Another class of feudal dignitaries during our age was constituted of thakkuras. The usage of this term came in to prevalence around the 9th century AD or somewhat later to it; however, it came to denote a class of ruling landed aristocracy by the 12th and the 13th centuries. The thakkura title holders, henceforward began to manage the chiefdom and proprietorship of land practicing warfare and knight-errantry. Being aligned with such a dignified and gallant group, it then came to be used as an honorific title among the highborn aristocrats of the society, belonging not only to the Kshatriya caste group but also to the Brahman, Kshatriya, Kayastha dignitaries in general.

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94 Lekhapaddhati, p.18. ff.
95 Lekhapaddhati, p.18. ff.
96 The Nadol Inscription of VS 1200/AD 1143 refers that Bhamana, a Karnata ranaka exempted the pramadakula or dancing girls of the temple of Usapattana from paying dasabandha, probably “a kind of tax equal to one-tenth of their income” (DHNI, Vol.II, 1113).
97 The appointment of a mahadandanayaka by one maharanaka Srimandalikdev in his own estate is referred in Lekhapaddhati (p.2).
98 A study of land-grants of our period reveals that the number of land-grants in different cases to Brahmana thakkuras was much higher than the Kshatriya and Kayastha thakkuras. It appears that the Kayastha thakkuras scarcely received any land-grant from the state. (See Kamauli copper plate inscription of Vatsaraj (EI, XVIII, pp.20), Bangawan pl. of Govindachandra (EI, V. p.1171), The charter of Vijayachandra Gahadawala (EI, XXXV pp.209f), Rewa grant of the reign of Kalachuri king, Jayasimhadeva (IA, XVII, pp.224-27), Rewa copper pl. of Hariraja (VS 1298) – (IA, XVII, p.236).
The *thakkuras* as chiefs are clearly reckoned from the *Baudhā-doha*, a Prakrit text of early medieval period, in which *citta* immersed in ignorance, which is the source of bondage is termed as *thakkura*. In *Upamitibhavaprapanchakaha* (10th century) also the bondage of *samsara* has been conceived in terms of the estate of a chief or a ruler. The status of *thakkuras* as feudal chiefs in Kashmir in the 12th century is also confirmed from *Rajatarangini*. The villages were mostly held by them in the capacity of sub-vassals. *Lekhapaddhati* alludes an example of such a vassalage in Gujarat under western Chalukyas in one of the copper charters of VS 1288, which describes the case of a *ranaka* Lavanyaprasad, who has granted a village in his own subdivision (*pathaka*) to *thakkura* Somesvaradeva living in Devapattana as the guardian of the subjects. The latter was empowered by his overlord *ranaka* to collect taxes (*bhoga, bhaga, kara, hiranya* etc.) from the people of the village granted to him. Similar examples are found under the Chandellas, Gahadawalas and Paramaras.

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99 The Kayasthas came to emerged as a new caste around 9th century AD. But, they seem to have placed in the category of Kshatriyas owing to the title *thakkura*, which was held by many of them serving the state in various capacities as holders of different offices, feudalised in rank. (D. Sharma, *Early Chauhan Dynasties*, p.248.) R.S. Sharma views in the case of Kayastha scribes that they were invested with the title *thakkura* just to indicate their feudal and social rank and not their functions (R.S. Sharma, op.cit., p.160).

100 B.N.S. Yadav, op.cit., p.167.
101 Ibid.
102 *Rajatarangini*, VIII, (text), V.548.
103 *Lekhapaddhati*, p.5
It is evident from the inscriptive evidences that almost all the big feudal lords were served by the sub-vassals of the rank of thakkura under the Chandellas, Paramaras, Chalukyas, Chahmanas and other Rajput dynasties. However, a few of thakkura chiefs could directly receive grants from the state by exerting a good impression on the kings through their good behaviour and valourous deeds. Thus, the villages of Karanda and Karandattala were handed over to thakkura Vasistha by Gahadawala king Govindachandra. Similarly, thakkura Jajuka of the Vastavya Kayastha family, who was appointed to superintend all affairs of the state at all times by the Chandella king Ganda (sarvadhirakararanesu sadaniyuktah) received the gift of a village from the latter. Gahadawalas are also known to have made landgrants to thakkuras, Devapalasarmana, Baladityasarma, Devavarman, Bhupati, Sridhara, Kulhe and Anantasarma. The donees were given the right to collect bhagabhogakara, pravanikara and turuskadanda taxes.

In the capacity of the village chiefs the thakkuras acted as a wholesale incharge and the guardian of the people of the villages held by them. However, even in that strength, their power was owed to a great deal to the general assembly of the villages or to the panchkulas.

104 A Chandella epigraph refers to a thakkura named Sri Sujana, who was serving under a feudatory chief mahanrpati Indradhavala of Japila (Some East Bank Copper Plate Inscription, EI, XXIII, pp.223-230). Thakkura Udayasimha was subordinated to maharanaka Harirajadeva, a Vassal under the Chandellas (Rewa Inscription, IA, XVII, p.236). Thakkuras Mahaditya and Silhana were under Kiritvarmana of Karkkaredika in Kalachuri kingdom (Rewa Inscription, IA, XVIII, p.226). Thakkuras, Vachhuka and Rasala were under mahakumara Harischandra in Malwa (Bhopal plate, EI, XXIV, p.227), thakkura Pethoda under Rayapala of Naddula and thakkura Kheladiyya were under Alhanadeva of Nadol (Kiran Stone Inscription, DHNI, II, p.979-80). Further an inscription of the 12th century refers to a thakkura chief as a sub-vassal of a chief of 84 villages, who was a vassal of maharaja bhupala Rayapala, a ruler of Naddula mandala owing allegiance to Kumarpala of Gujarat (Prakrit and Sanskrit Inscription, p.206, Cf. B.N.S. Yadav, op.cit., p.151).

105 Earlier these villages were granted to Rajguru Rudrasiva by Raja Yasah Kama Kalachuri (JASB, XXI, pp.123-24).


107 See Roma Niyogi, op.cit.
members of the assembly of the village numbering five, a body similar to the village panchayat) in local matters. Thus, a Guhila thakkura Rajadeva of Naduladagika had to take the permission of the local mahajana\textsuperscript{108} assembly to collect certain cesses for the temple of Jaina Tirthankara Mahavira.\textsuperscript{109}

As village chiefs the military service was certainly the most important function on the part of the thakkuras to perform to their overlords. In Chachnamah (8th century), they are cited as valiant young warriors, appointed by Rai Dahar, the ruler of Sind to fight with the Arab vanguard.\textsuperscript{110} Samaraicchakaha also states to the thakkuras engaged in a battle with the Sabara chief and capturing him on the orders of his master.\textsuperscript{111} Some of the thakkuras were so much proficient in fighting that this spirit could successfully be maintained by them till the old age. One such example is cited in Kuvalayamala, according to which an old thakkura Kshetrabhata having fallen on evil days joined the military service of the ruler of Ujjaini, in return of which, the king bestowed on him the prosperous village of Kupavrinda where he resided.\textsuperscript{112}

Apart from the military servants, the thakkuras were also appointed on various official and unofficial posts.\textsuperscript{113}

\textsuperscript{108} Mahajanas probably delegated their services to the panchkulas (Early Chauhan Dynasties, p.204).
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., p.203.
\textsuperscript{110} Chachnamah, p.29.
\textsuperscript{111} S.R. Sharma, Society and Culture in Rajasthan, p.67.
\textsuperscript{112} Kuvalayamala, p.50, Cf. S.R. Sharma, loc. cit., p.66.

Mohd. Habib regards these thakkuras as the actual fighters in India like the knights of Europe. In his words, “the thakur could face death, that was easy for him but he could not risk captivity” (Mohd. Habib, Introd. to Elliot & Dowson, Vol. II, p.44.

\textsuperscript{113} The writers of the inscriptions entitled as thakkuras are also described as the holders of the office of mahaakshapatalika, while the conveyer (dutaka) of the grants usually appear to have holding the office of mahasandhivigrahika (see Kadi grants of VS 1317/AD 1261 (IA, VI, pp.210-213) & VS 1319/AD 1263 (IA, VI, pp.194-96, 205-206, Prakrit and Sanskrit Inscriptions, Bhavnagar, pp.214-218), Patan grant of Bhima II, VS 1256 (IA, XI, pp.71-73). In the category of unofficial post holders, the instance of thakkura Narayana entitled as mahakavi chakravarti is traced from Atru Stone Inscription (c. AD 1127-28). The inscription records the grant of a village to this leading poet of the State (Archeological Survey of India Report, 1905-6, pp.56-57).
Sometimes, the title *thakkura* is found allied with other well-known feudatory titles like *rauta, rajaputra, ranaka.*\(^{114}\) In the official and feudal hierarchy, some of the *thakkuras* had gained so much repute that the doors of the imperial services were opened to their sons, grandsons, great-grandsons, and other members of the family also.\(^{115}\)

**Samantas:**

One of the most substantial groups in the feudal polity of our times was constituted of *samantas.* The term carried with it a great significance and a high antiquity being used in a diversified manner since the ancient times. In *Arthasastra* of Kautilya and the inscriptions of Asoka, it had been applied in the sense of an independent neighbour.\(^{116}\)

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\(^{115}\) *Icchavar grant* of the reign of Chandella king Parmardi refers to the grant of a village to Brahmana *senapati* Madanapalasarma, who is stated the son of *thakkura* Maheshwara and grandson of *thakkura* Bhanapala. (*IA*, XXV, pp.205-8, *JASB*, 1895, LXIV, I, pp.155-58). Similarly, adhiraja Kumarapala, a feudatory of the Sakambhari king Prithvideva is described in *Dhod Stone Inscription* as the son of *thakkura* Mangalraja (*DHNI*, II, p.1079). The members of the family of *thakkura* Jajuka, who was the superintendent of all the affairs of the State during the reign of Ganda, were assigned important administrative and military posts. To one of members of his family, Vidana, the king is stated to have entrusted the responsibility of realm (*vinayastarajyam*) – (*EI*, XXX, pp.87-90, I, pp.330-36, V.15). Two other members of his family were appointed as *visisa* of the fort of Kalanjara. His son Maheshvara, who made the *visisa* also received the grant of a village from king Kirtivarmana in return for his efficient services. (*Ibid.*, V.9). The nature of this post (*visisa*) is unexplainable as it is not found mentioned in any other record of our period. Though, it seems that in all probability, it was an administrative post associated with fort. Alternatively, it may also have been used as title conferred on officials in recognition of some meritorious services, which appear to have remunerated by the gift of land to them.

Among the hereditary military chiefs, *Rajim Stone Inscription* tells us about *thakkura* Sahila's son Svamin and his grandsons and great-grandsons, who carried on successful wars for their masters, the Kalachuri kings of Ratanapura in the capacity of feudal chiefs. (*IA*, XVII, pp.135-40). *Thakkura* Sahila's son was an important feudatory chief, on whom the honour of *panchmahasabda* was conferred by his Kalachuri overlord.

books like *Manusmriti* used it as a neighbouring proprietor of land or estate owner,\(^\text{117}\) entrusted with the duties comprising the collection of the share of produce, taxes, fines etc.\(^\text{118}\) In the literary and epigraphic records of the post Gupta period the same term is referred in a wide way ranging from the vassal chiefs to official dignitaries.\(^\text{119}\)

A fairly extensive prevalence of *samanta* system is indicated from the literary sources of the 7th century. *Harshacharita* of Bana refers to the various categories of *samanta* chiefs such as, *samanta*, *mahasamanta*, *apta samanta*, *pradhanasamanta*, *satrumahasamanta* and *pratisamanta*; each one of them distinguished from the other in accordance with his relationship with the overlord.\(^\text{120}\) That the *satrumahasamantas* or the defeated enemy chiefs comprised a chief section of the *samantas* is reflected from their obligations in *Kadambari* of Bana, a nearly contemporary text of *Harshacharita*, which refers to the defeated kings who were reduced to the position of *samantas*, saluting the king by following the five special modes, which could indicate their subordination and obeisance to him.\(^\text{121}\) Besides this, they had also to pay a yearly tribute to

\(^{117}\) *Manusmriti* or *Manava Dharmasastra*, Sacred Books of the East, XXV, VIII, pp. 286-90. Also see Yajnavalkya Smriti, II, pp.152-3.


\(^{119}\) B.N.S. Yadav seeks the earliest reference of *samanta* in the sense of a vassal in *Buddhacharita* of Asvaghosa (1st century AD), a verse of which refers to the kings accompanied by *samantas* along with the *bhudevas* (Brahmans) in the company of their *bandhavas* or kinsmen (B.N.S. Yadav, op.cit., p.138). Though this fact was not noticed by R.S. Sharma, who states to the application of this term as extended from defeated chiefs to royal officials by the later half of the 6th century AD (R.S. Sharma, loc.cit., p.20). He quotes the examples from some Kalachuri inscriptions of 597 onwards where the officials like *kumaramatyas* and *uparikas* are found replaced by the *rajas* and the *samantas* (Ibid.).

\(^{120}\) The status of *mahasamanta* was certainly higher than the *samantas*. The *satrumahasamantas* definitely acquired the status of defeated enemy chiefs. *Aptasamantas* were those who reduced themselves to the status of a Vassal, willingly accepting the suzerainty of the overlord. *Pradhanasamanta* was one of the highly trusted Vassals or officials of the king, whose advice was regarded complementary to the latter. *Pratisamanta* was probably a hostile Vassal opposed to the king, while *anuraktasamanta* was personally attached to the king owing to his affection and admiration to him (R.S. Sharma, op.cit., pp.23-24, also see B.N.S. Yadav, op.cit., p.139).

\(^{121}\) The five modes included the status of bowing the head, and touching the feet of the king, bowing the head and touching the palm of the feet of the emperor and placing the head on the earth near the feet
the king and to please him by personal homage. The king was usually greeted by them by removing crowns and headdresses probably as a token of respect and subordination. Those who were subjected to a humiliating treatment performed certain improper tasks like bearing the fans and holding the chowries in the court. Some even felt danger to their lives and prayed for it tying a sword to their necks. Those who were deprived of all their possessions remained eager to salute the king with folded hands probably to please him. Some had worked as doorkeepers and reciters of the auspicious words in praise of king. Their access to the king was so much difficult that they had to approach repeatedly to the gatekeeper in order to have an audience with him. The wives of such chiefs offered their services to the royal ladies and the chief queen, regarding it as their privilege. Thus, it is known that Yasovati was consecrated with water from golden pitchers by the wives of noble samantas, when she was installed as chief queen. Bana also refers to the defeated samantas furnishing their minor sons to the conqueror so that they could be praised as loyal to their overlords after receiving training in the imperial tradition.

As discriminated from satrumahasamantas, the pradhansamantas had exerted a great influence on the king so much so that the latter could not disregard his advice even in personal matters. It was on the advice of a pradhansamanta that Rajyavardhana took food when he was

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122 Ibid.
123 Harshacharita, tr. Cowell and Thomas, p.48, ed. P.V. Kane (Text), p.27.
124 Ibid, p.27.
126 Harshacharita, ed. P.V. Kane, p.27.
128 Ibid., p.218.
afflicted with grief after the loss of his sister.\textsuperscript{129} Such \textit{samantas} might have remained with the king carrying with them the same power as his chief minister. In such a capacity his advice and co-operation in administrative matters was certainly not ignorable.

Bana in his \textit{Kadambari} gives a picturesque account of thousands of subordinate crowned kings (\textit{murdhabhisiktena samanta lokena}), seated in the assembly hall of the palace and passing their time in amusements like gambling, singing, dice playing, playing on the flute, drawing portraits of the king, solving puzzles, talking with the courtesans, listening to the songs of birds, praising or appreciating the merits of poets, drawing ornamented decorations on the ground etc.\textsuperscript{130} Whether these \textit{samantas} were obliged to perform any kind of military service to their overlords is not clear but they were probably different from \textit{satrumahasamantas}, who were assigned humiliating functions and duties to perform in the court. In all probability, they may have been consisting a class of those hereditary military chiefs, who had resided in the king’s palace in order to fight violently in times of any defensive war, while having a luxurious life in peace time. The Chinese traveller, Yuan Chwang most possibly meant this class while referring to the national guards of Harsha as the heroes of choice valour, hereditary in profession and skilled in military tactics, who guarded the sovereigns residence in peace and fought valiantly in wartime.\textsuperscript{131}

The performance of military service to the king or the overlord was certainly one of the most important obligations of the \textit{samantas}. Rajyavardhana was accompanied with his devoted

\textsuperscript{129} V.S. Agarwal, \textit{Harshacharita – Ek Sanskritik Adhyayana}, p.117.
\textsuperscript{130} V.S. Agarwal, \textit{Kadambari} p.100.
samantas, when he went to meet the Hunas. The Aihole inscription of Pulkesin II, while providing an eulogical account of him in relation to Harsha’s defeat at his own hands, describes the latter’s feet as arrayed with the rays of the jewels of the diadems of hosts of samantas prosperous with unmeasured might. Bana on his first meeting with Harsha at the camp in the village at Manitara found a large number of samantas of the enemy kings, who fighting for their overlords were defeated and captured. The number of Harsha’s troops as stated by Bana, while on march was so huge that he felt amazed after having a sight over them. In the record of Yuan Chwang, the army, managed by Harsha was huger than that of the Mauryans, who quite efficiently managed a centralized control over all parts of empire unlike Harsha whose kingdom was much smaller in extent. The probable explanation was that this was the feudal militia mustered in times of war. Kadambari refers that the samantas in the army of king Chandrapida viewed with one another to help the overload in times of war with whatever was possessed by them. The king during the course of his meeting with them, distributed among them the tokens of his favour such as quarter glances, side glances, full glances. Kamandaka in his Nitisara also states about the collective march undertaken by the king consolidating the forces of his samantas, known for their valour and integrity.

132 Ei, VI, No.1.
133 “अपरितितविभूतिस्फोट सामना सेना मुखुतमणिमुखाक्फ़ञ्जानपादारविन्दः। गवी पलितवज (अ) ज्ञायोको (भ) भलस्वूती 
भवविपलििाणेन चाफ़ारहासः ।।”

(Ei, Vol.VI, V.23)
134 Harshacharita, tr. Cowell and Thomas, p.48.
135 Canto VII, V.S. Agarwal, p.159.
136 Beal, II.
137 Kadambari, tr. C.M. Ridding, p.86.
138 Harshacharita, V.S. Agarwal, p.158.
139 Nitisara tr. Sisir Kumar Mitra.
paramount sovereign is included in the list of the duties of samantas. In Tilakmanjari of Dhanapala (10th century), samantas are referred to as having accompanied their lords in military expeditions at numerous places. The participation of feudal chiefs including samantas, mandalapatis, and rautas is referred in the description of war given by Salibhadra Suri in his Bahubalirasa (AD 1148). According to Medhatithi samantas were the chief element of the composition of army. Prabandhacintamani contains many references of samantas who participated in war for their overlord. In Rajatarangini damaras and samantas are referred as important constituents of army. Prithvirajvijaya informs us that the great Chahmana king Prithviraja succeeded in carrying off Samyogita, the daughter of Jayachandra Ghahadawala from the svaamvara ceremony with the military assistance of his samantas who fell fighting to the last for his beloved master and not many of them could return to the Chahmana capital to attend the marriage. In this case Dashrath Sharma regards the samantas of Prithviraja “not as individual warriors like the knight errants of European romances but as leaders of units or regiments of Prithviraja’s cavalry which swooped almost unexpectedly on the Ghahadawala capital, while Jayachandra was engaged in certain religious rites and carried off the princess as desired by their master and commander Prithviraja of Delhi and Ajmer. The same ruler,

140 Agni Purana, II, p.865.
141 See Tilakmanjari, pp.86,114,123.
143 Medhatithi on Manu, VII, V.97.
145 Rajatarangini, ed. M.A. Stein, Vol.1 (Text), Bk.V, VV.145-47, VII, V.1072 “मञ्जिरिहारसागरमेन संहिताभृत्यसि लाहिलताः” (Bk.VII, V.48)“एवः नदि महान्यासामकतिनिर्लक्षि । जैसस्य तपस्वी गाम्भीर्यै भूवमशोभनत्यम् ।” (Ibid., V.360)
146 Dashrath Sharma, Early Chauhan Dynasties, p.79.
147 Ibid.
according to Firishta was assisted in the 1Ind battle of Tarain by 150 tributary chiefs, who were apparently his *samantas*. The praiseworthy note ascribed to Gopala, the minister and head *samanta* of the Chandella king Kirtivarman in *Prabodhchandrodaya* of Krishna Mishra for his successful military expeditions and capricious fighting spirit on the basis of which he could safeguard the fortunes of the Chandella dynasty in the hour of great crises, when it was barely attacked by the hedi King Laxmi Karna clearly suggests the immense contribution of a *samanta* chief as a warrior. *Ramcharita* of Sandhyakarnandhi refers how the Pala King, Ramapala could consolidate his position during the early years of his reign with the help of his faithful *samantas* and how he could ably crush the *kaivarta* rebellion and recover his ancestral dominion with the assistance of his *samanta-chakra*. A 15th century source, *Kanhadade*

149 Gopala is described as *sakala samanta chakra chudamani* (crest jewel of the whole circle of *samantas*) and is equalled with Parusrama who, extirpated the race of tyrannical kings and also with the man lion incarnation (*nrsimharupa*) and the primeval boar (*mahavaraha*), who raised up the earth when it had sunk in the waters of destruction, poured down upon its sovereigns (H.C. Ray, *DHNII*, II, pp. 695-97).

Besides the above two references, the term *samanta-chakra* is also found a prominent place in other contemporary sources. In *Tilakmanjari*, the presence of *samanta-chakra* on the battle-field is evidently referred (*Tilakmanjari*, p. 86). The *Bhavisyatkaha* also mention about an entire chakra of the *samantas* (*asesa-samanta-chakra*) (*IA*, XIV, pp. 451). The reference to the *samanta-chakra* is also made by some *samantas*, who claimed their superiority over the *chakra*; however, they do not make any reference to their overlord (*JIH*, V. 42, p. 246).

Some scholars have taken to these references as an assembly of the *samantas* (K.K. Gopal, “The Assembly of the samantas”, *JIH*, V. 42, p. 247) while, R.S. Sharma clearly states about the absence of any organisation of the *samantas* in India in the form of group or council as in England. The term *samanta-chakra* in his view does not appear just as a cliche, indicating the absence of any corporate body. He applied to it as a general meaning just like the *kavichakra* or the circle of the poets and says that the institution of courtship constituting the *samantas* presided over by the overlord may not be ruled out but the constitution of a deliberate assembly through which the organised voice of *samantas* was expressed does not seem possible. Finally to him, the *samanta-chakra* “seems like a prototype of *darbar* which developed in Muslim times and not the mother of Parliament which developed in England.” The main argument formed by him in support of his view is that the *samantas* performed the various types of obligations i.e. judicial, legislative, administrative etc, in their own individuality and not in the form of a body (R.S. Sharma, op.cit., p. 159).
Prabandh refers to Kanhadade’s samantas, who sacrificed their lives fighting bravely and devotedly to dislodge the enemy, while Jalor was attacked by the Turkish forces.  

Epigraphic records also furnish the similar information. A copper plate inscription of Avaniman II, Yoga, a mahasamanta of Chalukya race under the Gurjara-Pratihara king of VS 956 (AD 899) refers to the aforesaid chief as a router of the armies of certain Yakshadasa and other kings whose countries were invaded by him. He is also credited with for putting to flight one Dharanivaraha.  

The dependence of Kings or samantas for seeking military assistance was responsible for their growing importance and popularity during our age. The institution undoubtedly developed together with the unceasing development of feudalism and their number in a kingdom increased to a considerable extent. The sources of our period apply the normal epithets to a prosperous king as samanta-nivaha-nata-charana, samanta pranata charana and aneka-samanta-pranipatita-charana, i.e. one at whose feet bowed numerous samantas. The Kings of our age felt pride in having a number of sub-ordinate samantas under them. That the subordinate status of a number of samantas was a source of great pleasure to the king is apparent from the simile.

151 Kanhadade Prabandh, Canto III, p.49,51,53, also see Canto IV.
152 E.I., IX, pp.6-10.
154 The number of samantas in the kingdom of Kalachuri Karna has been considerably noted as 136 in the 11th century (Prabandhacintamani, tr. Tawney, p.73, cf. B.N.S. Yadav, p.156). The Chalukya king Kumarapal had 72 big samantas under him (Ibid). In Aparajitapraccha of Bhatta Bhuvanadeva, the number of samantas and laghusamantas is referred as 32 and more than 60 respectively (Aparajitapraccha, p.196, VV.32-34). Ramcharita of Sandhyakarnandi also refers to numerous samantas in the Pala kingdom (B.N.S. Yadav, op.cit., p.156).
156 Ibid., p.73.
provided by Uddyotana Suri between the bending low of trees full of flowers and the bowing of samantas.\(^{158}\)

Merchant Sulaiman who visited Gujarat in the 9th century might had been indicating the presence of defeated kings, who were probably reduced to the status of samanta chiefs by the Balaharas, which according to him was one of their great prerogatives that added to them the highest prestige and glory. He writes the Balahara is the most illustrative prince in all the Indies and all other kings there though each is master and independent in his kingdom, acknowledge in him this prerogative and pre-eminence. When he sends ambassadors to them, they receive them with extraordinary honours, because of the respect they bear for him.\(^{159}\)

It was perhaps owing to the increased power and growing importance of samantas that the chief officials of the state were also conferred with this title. The title samanta was though unusually bore by some of the important officials of Harsha. In this land-grants, the terms samantamaharaja and mahasamanta appear as titles of great imperial officers. The office bearer of mahaakshapataladhikrta is referred as mahasamanta maharaja Bhana in one of the land-grants.\(^{160}\) According to Banskhera Plate mahasamanta Skandagupta was mahapramatara\(^{161}\) while in Madhuban plate samanta Maharaja Isvaragupta is referred as mahaakshapataladhikrta\(^{162}\) The Pratapgarh inscription of Gurjara-Pratihara King Mahendrapala II mentions the title of one Madhava who was nominated by baladhikrta Kokkata for transacting business at mandapika as tantrapala mahasamanta dandanayaka\(^{163}\) Under Gurjara-Pratiharas

\(^{158}\) Kuvalayamala, text, p.51.
\(^{159}\) Elliot & Dowson, Vol.I, p.3.
\(^{160}\) E\(\text{i}\), IV, No.27, p.208.
\(^{161}\) Ibid., No.29, pp.208-11.
\(^{162}\) E\(\text{i}\), I, No.11, p.67.
\(^{163}\) E\(\text{i}\), I, p.20.
mahasamanta Undabhatta\textsuperscript{164}, the mahapratihara in the reign of Mahendrapala I and mahasamanta Vishnusena\textsuperscript{165} in the reign of Bhoja are referred as the governors of Luachagiri. Similarly, samanta Sri Mandalla is also known to held the office of the mahasandhivigrahika during the reign of Rashtrakuta Dhruva.\textsuperscript{166} Samantas as administrators are also referred in contemporary literary sources. In Udayasundarikatha (11th century) of Soddhala samanta counsellors are referred as distinguished from common ministers.\textsuperscript{167} The former were specially consulted by the king in matters of war, while with the others of the common category he generally discussed the ideal code of royal conduct.\textsuperscript{168} Kumarapalcharita also refers to a council of samantas and other high dignitaries in which the matters of foreign policy and war were discussed by the king.\textsuperscript{169} Manasollasa (12th century) states about the samanta counsellors (samanta-amatyakas) together with the kumaras (princes) and mandalesvaras, sitting before the king in the right and left sides in the meetings of royal court.\textsuperscript{170} In Brihat-Kathakosa samanta counsellors, (samanta mantrinah) are found mentioned, deliberating after the death of the king.\textsuperscript{171} The expression samantamantrin is also found in a colophon of a manuscript from Pattan belonging to AD 1170 in which a samanta minister (samanta mantrin) is referred to have ruled over an administrative division called pathaka\textsuperscript{172} In Sringarmanjarikatha of Bhoja a samanta is

\begin{enumerate}
\item\textsuperscript{164} Ibid., I, p.173.
\item\textsuperscript{165} Ibid., IV, pp.309-310.
\item\textsuperscript{166} EI, X, No.19, 11, 65-66.
\item\textsuperscript{167} B.N.S. Yadav, op.cit., p.158.
\item\textsuperscript{168} Ibid., p.158.
\item\textsuperscript{169} Kumarapalcharita, Cf. B.N.S. Yadav, p.158.
\item\textsuperscript{170} Manasollasa, Vol.II, Vimsati, III, Adhyaya II. VV.3-6.
\item\textsuperscript{171} K.K. Gopal, “Assembly of the Samantas in Early Medieval India”, op.cit., p.248.
\end{enumerate}
referred as an incharge of a visaya. The evidence is further supported by an 11th century inscription belonging to the reign of Bhoja Paramara of Dhar which refers to a samanta as a holder of a visaya comprising 1500 villages. The holding of another samanta comprised of 84 villages is also referred as visaya in another inscription.

The official titles attached to the samantas however, could be interpreted in two ways, either the samantas or mahasamantas were appointed to different official posts or the officials were provided the feudal status. The second option is regarded as more plausible by R.S. Sharma as he thinks to the officials posts certainly older than the feudal ranks. The process of feudalism, in his view, had engrossed the whole administrative and social order to such an extent that the officials were not regarded as significant without bearing feudal recognition. Though, the practicability of the former explanation may not be ruled out explicitly one such inference is drawn out from Ratanpur stone inscription, which refers to a samanta named Brahmadeva, who was appointed as minister by King Prithvideva III in reward for his military exploits and was entrusted with the government of the whole kingdom. The reference of samantas as one of the seven limbs of the state and as pillars of kingdom in an Apabhramsha writing of Lakkhana (13th century) is a reflection of the official or ministerial status of samantas.

A section of chiefs holding the 84 villages was known as chaturasitikas during the 12th century. Aparajitpraccha refers to 400 of them, as the feudal chiefs in the court (p.196, VV.32-34) higher than the rajaputras. Later on, this system of chaurasi became widely prevalent in Rajasthan and the Rajput kingdoms of medieval Chattisgarh (B.N.S. Yadav, op.cit., p.145), where the group of 84 villages formed the estate of some members of ruling families (R.S. Sharma, op.cit., p.146). A cluster of 84 villages is also referred in a Paramara record of the second half of the 11th century AD (EI, XIX, 10, II, 8-17).

173 Sringarmanjarikatha, Introd., p.72.
175 Ibid.
178 Ibid., p.157.
The samantas unequivocally formed an important element of body politic. They constituted a prominent place in the royal courts. Kharataragacchapatavali gives a picturesque account of Prithviraja's court as mainly composed of the samantas including ministers, mahamandalesvaras, brave warriors, pundits, poets, bards, musicians and courtesans.\(^{179}\) Kharataragacchabrihadgurvavali also refers to a court scene of the reign of Chahmana king, Prithviraja, wherein the king is shown sitting on a decorated and jewelled throne, being attended by his samantas.\(^{180}\) Kanhadade-Prabandh, providing a true picture of the Jalor court during the age when the Chauhan power had already declined refers to the Chahmana assembly being attended by amatyas, pradhanas, samantas, mandalika, etc.\(^{181}\) They greatly prevailed in matters of accession of the kings and the consecration of yuvarajas. Harshacharita describes the samantas after the death of Prabhakarvardhana as prevailing on Rajyavardhana to accept the throne.\(^{182}\) In the same manner Samaraicchakaha imparts the credit for placing prince Jaya on the throne after the death of his father to samantamandala (body of samantas).\(^{183}\) An important place was usually assigned to them in yuvrajyabhishek ceremonies. Kuvalayamala of Uddyotana Suri (12th century) describes the samantas, led by the king in the ceremony of yuvrajyabhishek, shouting victory to yuvraj and pouring on him scented water from golden pitchers interspersed with auspicious articles.\(^{184}\) Samaraicchakaha also refers to a similar besprinkling ceremony whence the erstwhile monarch expressly called upon the assembled samantas to recognise his successor as king after him.\(^{185}\) It seems that the king probably wanted

\(^{179}\) D. Sharma, Early Chauhan Dynasties, p.197.
\(^{180}\) B.N.S Yadav, op.cit., p127.
\(^{181}\) Early Chauhan Dynasties, p.197.
\(^{182}\) Harsacharita ed. P.V. Kane, p.38 f. (text).
\(^{183}\) Samaraicchakaha, Cf. S.R. Sharma, Society and Culture in Rajasthan, p.64).
\(^{184}\) Kuvalayamala, p.200 (text).
\(^{185}\) Samaraicchakaha, Cf. S.R. Sharma, p.64.
to gain the cooperation of *samantas* by entangling them in such ceremonies so that the future monarch could make his hand strong with the support of powerful *samantas*.

Besides the administrative ceremonies, *samantas* also participated in various social and religious activities of his overlord. A mixed picture of *samantas* assembled on the occasion of Nala’s marriage is provided in *Naisadhiyacharita*. “They offered their homage to Nala and bowed to him and covered the passage with wreaths of their heads. The king honourably looked upon them and then they quickly offered to the king the present of marvelous jewels. Like a father, Nala sent them away after they had been gratified by his increasing queries about their welfare”.

The king had also accompanied *samantas* in his personal accomplishments. *Samaraicchakaha* of Haribhadra Suri refers to the king appended by his *samantas* when he went to pay his respects to Jaina Saints. Similarly, in *Kuvalayamala*, the king is referred in the company of *samantas* when he went for initiation into the Jaina order of monks. This further adds to the pre-eminence of *samantas* in the mind of the king. It was in all probability on account of their militaristic usefulness. The king had undoubtedly become most dependent on the armies provided by his *samantas* and other feudatories. In such conditions, his efforts to appease them through various means were not ingenious. Our literary sources are full of such examples of appeasement before going out for expedition. The author of *Manasollasa* advises the king to satisfy his *samantas*, princes, *mandaladhishas* and soldiers with presents of gold, garments and ornaments on the day preceding the date of starting out on an expedition. The *Agni Purana* lays down to a king to bring under his sway the leader of his own army, the warriors, the rural

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186 B.N.S. Yadav, op.cit., p.152.
188 *Kuvalayamala*, pp.209, 211 (text).
population (janapadadikas), his samantas and forest people, who are not well disposed towards him by means of gifts of money. Prabandhacintamani refers to king Mularaja, who summoned his samantas, rajaputras and foot soldiers and honoured them duly by making presents to them before going out on the expedition of Sapadalaksha. The goodwill of samantas was regarded such essential that the author of Samaraicchakaha refers to the disregard of them as one of the signs, which indicated the loss of one’s kingdom. He regards the prosperity of a kingdom depended on the devoted and loyal samantas. The state governed by such samantas is described by him as free from all sources of nuisance.

The high titles conferred on samantas also reflect their important status. Some of them, who were highly effective and powerful acquired the honour of panchmahasabda from their overlords. Thus, Bhartrvaddha II of Broach held the significant titles like paramesvara-samadhitapanchmahasabda-mahasamantadhipati. Similarly, Undabhatta of Siyodani inscription is known to have bear the eloquent title of mahapratihara samadhitasesamahasabda mahasamantadhipati. The Chalukya samantas, Bappabhatti and

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190 Agni Purana, Ch.CCXL, p.870.
192 Cf S.R. Sharma, op.cit., p.64.
193 Ibid.
194 Ibid.
195 The term panchmahasabda usually denoted the sounds of five great musical instruments (panchmahavadya), the use of which was allowed as a special mark of distinction to persons of high rank or authority (EI, XII, pp.254-55, IA, 1, p.81, IV, pp.166, 180, 204, XIII, p.134 etc.) These five instruments are enumerated by a Lingayat writer as sringa (horn), tammata (tambour), sankha (conch), bheri (drum) and jayaghantta (bell of victory). Earlier, this privilege was exclusively upheld by royal persons or imperial monarch while later on it was extended by the latter to the feudatory chiefs and important administrative officials. Sometimes this privilege was extended by the samantas to their own vassals. Hence, it is evident from the Kiradu Inscription, (VS 1235) of Bhima II of Gujarat that his samanta at Kirata Kupa (mod. Kiradu) conferred it on his vassal, general Mehetta Tejapala, (Poona Orientalist, Vol.I, 1936-37, p.44, Cf. B.N.S. Yadav, op.cit., p.154).
Mandalla used the title *panchmahasabda* in their records, belonging to AD 739 and 775 respectively.\(^{197}\) Dharanivarah and Balavarman of Saurashtra,\(^{198}\) Gunaraja of *Terai inscription* had their titles as *samadhigata-panchmahasabda, mahasamantadhipati*.\(^{199}\) Besides this, *mahasamanta* Buddha-varsha,\(^{200}\) a vassal of Gujarat Rashtrakutas and *mahasamanta* Vishnurama,\(^{201}\) known from *Deogadh Pillar Inscription* of Bhojadeva of Kannauj (VS 919/AD 862) are again known to have acquired *panchmahasabda*. *Samantas* were assigned lands or estates by their overlords in remuneration to their services. Sukra states to a *samanta* as a feudatory ruler over 100 villages having the income of one lakh *karshas*.\(^{202}\) While *Krityakalpataru (Rajdharmakanada)*\(^{203}\) and *Rajinitiratnakar* prescribe the status of *samanta* to the persons holding 10,20,100 or 1000 villages.\(^{204}\) That the *mahasamantas* were the holders of estates in Gujarat is evident from epigraphs. The *Torkhede copper plate grant of Govindaraja* (AD 812) refers to *Siharaki* 12, a cluster of villages as an estate belonging to Salukika *mahasamanta Buddhavarsha*.\(^{205}\) Sometimes the king appears to have endowed his personal estates on his *samantas* to look after them only as governors.\(^{206}\)

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197 *EI*, IX, pp.1-2.
199 Ibid.
200 R.S. Sharma, op.cit., p.81.
201 *EI*, IV, pp.309-10.
202 *Sukraniti, op. cit.*
204 *Rajinitiratnakar*, p.60.
205 *EI*, III, pp.53-55.
206 The *Kapadavanaj grant of the Rashtrakuta king Krishna* (AD 832) records the gift of the village Vyaghrasa or Vallurika, which belonged to a cluster of 750 villages called Harshapura in general and *chaturasitika*, a group of 84 villages in particular, to a Brahman. The inscription in itself refers to that village as a personal belonging of the king, though governed by a certain Chandragupta, described as *andanayaka, mahasamanta prachanda (EI, I, pp.52-58).*
The samantas holding the larger estates maintained their own officials and sub-samantas.\textsuperscript{207} It was owing to the fissiparous attitude of some samantas that the author of Agni Purana advises the king first to satisfy the discontented subordinate samantas and his amatyas and again instructs him to destroy those disloyal.\textsuperscript{208} Mitra Mishra while quoting the Matsyapurana regarded such samantas as the enemies of the state.\textsuperscript{209}

Sometimes the king had to undertake war against the disgruntled and rebellious samantas. Thus, Dommanapala or (Ma)dommanpala of Khadi mandala (Sunderbans) made the neighbouring samantas helpless by waging war against them.\textsuperscript{210} Sringarmanjarikatha refers to a king of Ahicchatra named Vajramukuta to have defeated the circle of neighbouring samantas with the support of his ministers in their service.\textsuperscript{211} Sometimes, the rebel samantas after being defeated were dethroned. Kumarapala (AD 1150 century) defeated and dethroned a rebel samanta chief Vikramasinha and placed the latter’s nephew on the throne.\textsuperscript{212}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{207} A Gujarat inscription (AD 541) conveys the order of mahasamanta maharaja Sangamsimha regarding the grant of a land to his subordinate officials including rajasthaniya, uparikas and kumaramatyas (R.S. Sharma, p.16, CII, 11, II, 1-3). Similarly, the charter of the Vishnusena (6th century AD) found in the Gujarat region refers to his officials entitled as rajan, rajaputra, rajasthaniya, ayuktaka, viniyuktaka, saulkika etc. However, it is to be noted that in this charter Vishnugupta is holding various titles such as mahadandanayaka, mahakritakritak, mahapratihara, mahasamanta, maharaja etc. (D.C. Sircar, Studies in Political and Administrative Systems, pp.176-178). This trend of the sustention of officials by big samantas also continued during our age, as we learn of a dandanayaka of mahasamanta Pranchanda, a feudatory of the Rashtrakuta king, Karkka II, serving in the unit of 750 villages (EI, I, pp.52-58).

In an eleventh century inscription of the time of Bhoja, Paramara samanta Amma of the Ganga family, a chief holding 84 villages refers to his sandhivigrahika and other officers having the titles of gramtaka, desilaka, gokulika, caurika, saulkika, dandapasika and pratirajyika (EI, XIX, No.10, Cf. B.N.S. Yadav, op.cit., p.152). Ratanpur stone inscription also refers to a samanta chief of 84 villages, addressing mahamatya and sandhivigrahika (A collection of Prakrit & Sanskrit Inscriptions, Bhavnagar, p.206).

\item \textsuperscript{208} Agni Purana. p.865.

\item \textsuperscript{209} Rajnitiprakasha, p.277, Cf. B.P. Mazumdar, op.cit., p.29.

\item \textsuperscript{210} The above statement is mainly interpreted by B.C. Sen in IHQ, X, p.326, fn.11, while D.C. Sircar meant it as neighbouring samantas (D.C. Sircar, Indian Culture, I, p.680).

\item \textsuperscript{211} Sringarmanjarikatha, op.cit.

\item \textsuperscript{212} B.N.S Yadav, op.cit., p.153.
\end{itemize}
However, in all cases the nature of relations between the kings and his samantas and other feudatories depended on the relative strength and expansion of their states. It was the power of the suzerain that maintained the subordinate status of samantas by exerting a strict control over them. The samantas were always looking for the opportunities to declare their independence and the power of the ruler had to bring them to submission. Thus, their subservience was only subjected to the fear of the might of his overlord. The Sanjan plate of Amoghavarsha throws an important light on the relative power and position of the king and his samantas. A similar expression is found in Upamitibhavaprapnchakaha. In Gujarat, the samantas declared independence after the death of Siddharaja. Though, Kumarapala had succeeded in restoring a control over them for sometime, but soon they came into prominence under his successors. Similarly, in Bengal when the central power became weak at the end of the 11th century, the powerful samantas rose into revolt and declared themselves independent. Though the domination of some of the powerful kings over his samantas is clear from some instances.

In some cases, the samantas had to approach to the king or his officials for the approval of the grant. Thus, the grants of both mahasamanta Balavarman of Nakshipura and his son Avanivarman were countersigned and approved respectively by Dhika, tantrapala of

213 The above plate refers "the soul is the king, the samantas, according to Political Science and speech etc. are the servants conforming to the prescribed rules. Presiding over his place, namely the body, he (the soul) is able to enjoy independently his own vishaya (kingdom, worldly objects), when that enjoayer is subject to sannipata (a kind of fever, collision), they all perish" (EI, XVIII, No.26, cf. B.N.S. Yadav, op.cit., p.160).
214 Ibid., p.160.
215 Rasmala, Cf. B.N.S. Yadav, p.159.
216 Ibid., p.159.
217 Ibid.
Mahendrapala I.\textsuperscript{218} It is also evident that mahasamanta Indraraja of Chahmana dynasty had to apply to tantrapala mahasamanta mahadandanayaka Madhava at Ujjaini for securing a permanent endowment for a temple built by him.\textsuperscript{219} In another case Naravarman, the samantadhipati of Dharamapala appealed to the latter for ensuring the grant of four villages to a temple built by him, as he himself was not empowered to make such endowments.\textsuperscript{220} Sometimes, the overlord exerted his power over samanta chiefs by appropriating villages for himself in the latter's territory. This was objectively done to have vigilance over samanta's activities. The Rashtrakuta ruler of the Gujarat branch, Krishna II allotted a village within the jurisdiction of his mahasamanta Prachanda.\textsuperscript{221} The most trusted and influential officials and the samantas were also appointed by the king to deal with the matters of disturbing samantas.\textsuperscript{222}

As the heads of their own estates the samantas had taken all initiative to construct and manage the religious buildings and institutions within them. The Pratapgarh inscriptions states that a Chauhan mahasamanta Indraraja had built the temple of Sun god, Indradityaraja at a village, seven miles to the east of Pratapgarh and applied to the provincial governor Madana of Ujjain to make an endowment for its upkeep.

\textsuperscript{218} EI, IX B, No.11, pp.32-58.
\textsuperscript{219} EI, XIV, No.13, VV.20-29.
\textsuperscript{220} EI, IV, No.34, VV.30-52.
\textsuperscript{221} EI, Vol.1, No.8, Plate II, VV. 33-35.
\textsuperscript{222} Manasollasa, written in AD 1131 by Someswara III of Chalukya dynasty of Kalyani, which had supplanted the Rashtrakutas in AD 973, referring to the merits of a person, who should be appointed as sandhivigahika requires him to be an expert to summon, dismiss, and install the samantas and mandalesas (see Manasollasa, Vol.II).

The Kolhapur inscription of Silahara chief Gangaraditya refers to his mahasamanta Nimbadeverasa as "a breaker of hair parting of the dames of hostile barons......" (EI, XIX, 4a,11, 5-8, tr. L.D. Barnett, Ibid, p.34, Cf R.S. Sharma, pp.82-83). Though the evidence does not directly come from the region of northern India but it may clearly indicate one of the obligations of a mahasamanta in general to suppress the inimical and protect the friendly samantas, during our period.
The *samantas* had met a venerable treatment as long as they loyally performed their obligations towards the king. But, some of them are often found to divulge their overlords by their disdainful and perfidious deeds. Disloyalty on the battlefield by them had become such a common phenomenon that it was regarded by Jayanaka in his *Prithvira-vijaya* as the natural effect of *kali* age. Sometimes they exposed their conscientious disposition by transferring their allegiance in a battle from one side to the other. *Dvasrayakavya* refers to the twin *samantas*, Vijaya and Krishna to have changed their side towards the enemy king Vollala, the usurper of the throne of Malwa, while they were sent to oppose the latter. *Prabandhacintamani* informs us that the *samantas* of Kumarapala Chalukya became rebellions by obeying the chief of the Chalukya army, whence it was encountering the invasion of Chahada, who was accompanied by the Chahmana king, as they were already bribed by the former. *Tilakmanjari* of Dhanapala refers to many wicked (*dustasamantas*), whose end became necessary for the Paramara kingdom. Again, it is evident that in Bengal, the *samantas* of Mahipala II were highly responsible for the end of his rule. The difficulties of Paramara dynasty appear to have increased after the death of Bhoja owing to the selfish motives of *samantas*. Sometimes, the *samantas* were so filled with the feeling of revenge towards their sovereign that they wrongly advised them with bad intentions, where their co-operation and suggestions were required. Instantly, the Chandella king Parmardideva (Parmal) was ever misguided by his *samanta* in

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225 *Prabandhacintamani*, S.J.G., op. cit., 79.
226 *Tilakmanjari*, p.63.
relation to his enemy king Prithviraja and helped the latter by secret advices, being nourished by a secret feeling of revenge against the Chandellas.\(^{229}\)

A perusal of the above discussion leads to the conclusion that in the institution of feudalism, samantas played an important role in maintaining army and assisting the king. He was an important part of the administration and may be a minister of the king. Sometimes, it was difficult for a king to ignore them. However, a strong king like Harsha could manage their allegiance to him and many of them certainly played their game during the time of a week ruler, shifting their loyalty to another ruler, who served their purpose more effectively.

Other Feudatories with High Sounded Titles:

Apart from the above mentioned feudatory chiefs, the numerous grades of vassals referred in our sources are raja, maharaja, maharajadhiraja, adhiraja, maharajadhiraja paramesvara, nripa, narendra, mahipati, kshitipa, mandaulesvara, maha.mandaulesvara, mahamandalika, mandalika, maharajakula, rajakul etc. The chiefs bearing the titles of raja, nripa, narendra, nripati, mahipati, kshitipa are to be placed in one and the same category.\(^{230}\)

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230 The titles nripa and raja were adopted by the Chapa feudatory princes Vikramarka and his son Addaka respectively. (*Haddala grant of the Gurjara Pratihara king Mahipala*, *IA*, Vol.XII, pp.190-95). Prithvideva, the ruler of Tumanna branch of the Kalachuris is known to have bearing the title rajasrmat Prithvidevah, (*IHQ*, Sept. 1925, pp.409-11) in one of his records (*samvat*, 900). That he was no more than a feudatory chief of his relatives, the Kalachuris of Dahala, is indicated by his other titles such as samadigata panchmahasabda, mahamandaulesvara maharajadhiraja, etc. (see *Amoda grant* (Chedi era 831) and the *Lapha grant* of the same *samvat* – 806 in H.C. Ray, *DHNI*, II, p.805). In the *Khajuraho stone inscription* (VS 1173/AD 1117), the Chandella feudatory king Jayavarmadeva is described as nrpati (*EI*, Vol.I, p.147, L.33-34) Yasovigraha's son Mahichandra of the Gahadawala dynasty, who was feudatory of the Gurjara-Pratiharas also held the title nripa (*IA*, XXIII, pp.14-19). Similarly, one Sallakshana, who was serving as a feudatory chief under the Parmara king Arjunavarmadeva is found referred as mahasadhiras graha raja (*Bhopal grant of Arjunavarmadeva*, VS 1272/AD 1215, *JASB*, Vol.VII, pp.25-31, also see H.C. Ray, II, p.897).

In *Harsacharita*, the title raja is used for the feudatories of Harsa who supplied him the contingents of armed forces (*Harshacharita*, ed. P.V. Kane, op.cit., pp.956-57). In *Kuvalayamala*, (12th century), too, the titles narendra and raja are applied to the feudatory chiefs (S.R. Sharma, op.cit., pp.62 & 67).
However, the status and the category of feudal chiefs may not be reckoned on the basis of the titles adopted by them, as the variety of titles bore by a single chief creates a complexity in recognising his true affinity. Though, it appears that the prefix *maha* was added to titles to make them eloquent in order to denote the high status and the greatness of the feudatories. A survey of our sources reveal that the titles *maharaja*\(^{231}\) *maharajadhiraja*\(^{232}\) were assumed by significant feudatories vested with some political powers. The holders of the titles of *mahamandalesvara*,\(^{233}\)

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231 It is known that the title *maharaja* was widely adopted by the feudatories of Gupta and later Gupta period (B.P. Mazumdar, *Socio-Economic History of Northern India*, pp.8-9). During our age, this title was abundantly used by the persons belonging to the rank of feudatory chiefs or vassals of high status. Thus, the title was preponderantly assumed by Alhanadeva of Naddula Chahmana branch, who was a feudatory of the Chalukya Kumarapala. (Prakrit and Sanskrit Inscriptions, Bhavanagar, pp.172-73. Cf. *DHNI*, II, pp.979-80). It was also adopted by the feudatories of Ucchakalpa under the Kalachuri kings of Malwa, (Bombay Gazetteer, Part II, p.293 & CII ,III, ed. John Fleet, Calcutta, 1888, pp.117-35), Guhila feudatory rulers and the Chahmanas of Jalore (*DHNI*, II, 1125, 1180 & 91, also see IA, III, p.100 fn.2) and by Vakpati I of Sakambhari branch of the Chahmanas in the capacity of the feudatory chief of Vinayakapala (*DHNI*, II). Chandesvara, the author of *Rajnitiratnakar* was also a feudatory holding the title of *maharaja* and serving as the Prime-Minister of Harisimhadeva of Karnata Brahmmin family (B.P. Mazumdar, op.cit., p.23).

232 The title *maharajadhiraja* requires some attention as it was used by some more powerful feudatory rulers than those of the status of *maharaja*. It was significantly held by Bhattatppa, a feudatory of the Kannauj emperor Mahendrapala II, who was rightly been identified by G.H. Ojha with Bhattatppa II of Guhila family (*DHNI*, I, pp.587-595). The Chandella Yasovarmana, the nominal feudatory of the Gurjara-Pratiharas is also known to have held the title of *maharajadhiraja* (*ASR*, X, pp.94-95, IA, XVIII, pp.236-37). In the inscriptions of Mularaja Chalukya, his father Ragi who was possibly a Vassal of the Gurjara-Pratiharas is designated as *maharajadhiraja* (*IA*, VI, pp.191ff.). Simharaja, a feudatory chief belonging to the line of Sakambharis, who is eulogized in Harsha Stone Inscription for his military conquest over the Tomara chief (*nayaka*) Salvana is again referred with the title *maharajadhiraja* (*IA*, 1912, pp.57 ff., *EI*, Vol II, pp.116 ff.) The title was also adopted by Prithvideva, a feudatory of the Kalachuris of Dahala (*EI*, XIX, pp.75-81). Vajradamauna, the Kacchapagata feudatory prince of Gwalior (*JASB*, XXXI, p.393 plate, VI & pp.399 Cf. *DHNI*, II, p.823) and Rayapala of Naddula Chahmana branch (*DHNI*, II, pp.1111-1113). The feudatory chiefs of Siyodani, under the Pratiharas are also known to have assumed the above title (Dashrath Sharma, *Rajasthan through the Ages*, p.200).

233 The title was adopted by *maharajaputra* Jayatrasimhadeva, a feudatory of Balhana, the Chahmana king of Ranastambhapur (Manglana Stone Inscription, VS 1272/C. AD 1215, *EI*, 1912, pp.85-88) and the feudatory *rajakula* Somasimha of Chahmana dynasty (*Abu Stone Inscription*, II, *DHNI*, II, p.1012), *ranaka* Lavanyaprasada (Ibid.) his son Virdhavala (Ibid.) and grandson Visaladeva (Ibid., p.1032). Sangramraja of the branch of Chahmanas of Pratapgarh (Ibid., p.1057) and Vajjalladeva, a feudatory of Ajayapala Chalukya, has attained *panchmahasabda* by the grace of the latter and governed the area of Narmada tata Mandala (Bombay Secretariat Grant of the time of Ajayapala, ed. fleet, *IA*, Vol.XVIII, pp.80-85). Besides this, *mahamandalesvara* was also one of the various titles of Prithvideva (*Amoda Grant*, ed. Hiralal, *EI*, Vol. XIX, pp.75-81). The strong feudal
mandalesvara,^234 mahamandalika and mandalika^235 appear to have incorporated themselves in one single category being the heads or the executives of the mandalas (administrative division).

The power of some of these mahamandalesvaras and mandalikas is indicated by the fact that they could make landgrants in their own rights out of the territories allotted to them without getting the formal consent of the king. Thus, one mahamandalesvara Vaijalladeva, who was a feudatory of the king Ajayapaladeva in AD 1173 and a ruler of Narmada tata Mandala needs to refer to a number of officials like dandanayaka, desathakkura etc., while making a landgrant but does make no mention of king’s permission to the grant.^^^ Similarly, mahamandalesvara maharajakula Somasimhadeva, the lord of Chandravati and the feudatory of Bhimadeva Chalukya did not take the permission of the king, while granting a village for the worship of Paramara rulers of Abu were also known as mahamandalesvaras (DHNI, II, pp.914-19, also see Pratipal Bhatia, op.cit.). It is also known that the whole administration of the capital was looked after by one Vijayaraja who was a noble of the rank of mahamandalesvara during the reign of mahakumara Visala (IHQ, II, pp.8-9). The high status of mahamandalesvara further becomes clear from Dohad Stone Inscription of the reign of Kumarapala (VS 1202) which refers to one mahamandalesvara Vapanadeva as the overlord of rana Samkarsihadeva (ed. Dhruva, IA, Vol. X, pp.159-60).

234 The title mandalesvara was also not held by insignificant chiefs. Prithviraja III’s chief advisor and minister Kaimbasa is known to have held this title (D. Sharma, Early Chauhan Dynasties, pp.198, 201). One Ahavamalla Bhuteyadeva in Dharwar district is said to have received the rank of mandalesvara from his overlord Bhima II for killing his enemy Panchala sometime before AD 1187 (B.P. Mazumdar, op.cit., p.16).

235 The titles mahamandalikas and mandalikas were mostly applied to the governors of mandalas. However, their functions as feudatory chiefs, officials and ministers may not be denied in the light of contemporary evidences. Manasollasa refers to them and the other feudatory chiefs along with the ministers to have attending the meetings of the court sitting on the right and left sides in front of the king (EI, XXV, p.2) and another mahamandalika Udayaraja is said to be a minister of south Bihar (Sone East Bank Copper Plate, EI, XXIII, pp.227-28).

236 IA, VIII, pp.80-85.

The tradition of addressing the grant to the officials was prevalent in other parts of India also. We find one such address of mahamandalika Iśvaraghoṣa, a feudatory of the Palas to more than four dozen officials (Inscriptions of Bengal, III, pp.156-57, JBORS, II, pp.6-8). Similar examples are also available in south Indian inscriptions. The omission of the king’s name in these grants most possibly indicates that the officials in a feudal administrative structure had became more powerful and the power of the king was curtailed by them to a considerable extent.
Neminatha. Some of the feudatories did also dare to declare themselves as *maharajadhira\textunderscore ja paramesvara*, the title, which indicates the imperial power. Though, the effete cause of the assumption of such titles is not properly known, it appears certainly a sign of the declaration of independence by the feudatories at the time of the decline of central authority. Thus, during the decline of the Pratihara empire, a number of its feudatories quietly assumed such imperial titles. 

*Rajor inscription* clearly states that when Vijayapaladeva was unable to strictly look after the administration, his feudatory Mathanadeva declared himself independent by assuming the aforesaid title. Rajyadeva, a feudatory of the Paramara king Narvarman is known to have made a landgrant out of the village enjoyed by him without the permission of the king. These feudatories also seem to have a control over the revenues of their estates as they are sometimes stated to have making cash endowments out of the revenues for religious purpose. *Nadol grant* (VS 1213/AD 1156), thus, records the case of *mahamandalika* Pratapsimha of Vadana clan of feudatory of Kumarapala Chalukya, who made a grant of one *rupaka* per day from the custom house of Badari to some Jaina temple at Nadduladagika (mod. Nadlai and Lavamdali); The inscriptions starts with the introductory note to Kumarapala but makes no reference to his permission to the grant.

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237 *EI*, VIII, pp.204-7.
238 *EI*, III, pp.266-67.
239 In this case, the charter refers to two land endowments one by Rajadeva himself and another by his wife. The donation made by the wife undoubtedly indicates that she may have given some land for her own maintenance by her husband. (*EI*, XX, No.11, Lines, 14-15).
The evidences of the landgrants to nayakas by kings indicated to their incorporation in the list of feudatories. The military functions of these nayakas like those of other feudatories may also not be disregarded.

King and the Feudatories:

Besides these usual titles, the feudatories of our age are also known to have assumed some unusual titles like, mahakumara, kumara, maharajakula, rajakula etc. Sometimes, the king being pleased by the valour of the feudatory chief granted them some unwanted titles. Thus, it is known that once Kumarapala Chalukya conferred the title of rajpitamah upon feudatory Ambada for defeating the king of Konkana named Mallikarjuna, who was also the bearer of that title.

241 See landgrants to nayakas, EI, XXXI, pp.70-73, XXX, pp.150-152.

242 Mahanayaka Pratapdhavala of Japila was a feudatory official of Vijayachandra Gahadawala. The charter of this nayaka found incised on the Tarachandi rock (Shahabad district) refers to the declaration of a forged grant by him regarding the gift of two villages, which the Brahmans of that place received by bribing an officer of the overlord of Kanyakubja named Deu (JAS, VI, pp.547-49).

Roma Niyogi, who had done an extended work on the Gahadawalas regards this nayaka as a feudatory chief, basing on the fact that the charter was specially issued for his successors, his sons and grandsons. They are so evidently referred by his successors as if their appointment did not depend on any superior authority. This could not be a case other than of a feudatory chief. The state officials like provincial governors etc. were undoubtedly hereditary in our age, but their appointment was formally made by the king and not by the official himself (Roma Niyogi, op.cit., pp.163-64).

243 Nayaka Kulasarma, son of a nayaka, grandson of a rauta and great grandson of a ranaka was an important military dignitary of the age of Trailokyavarmana. To him a village was granted in 1205 by Trailokyavarmana himself on the condition to performed military service. (EI, XXI, 11, II, pp.12-18). It is important to note that the nayaka was belonging to a family of military dignitaries as the three generations of him seem to have performed the military services in the capacity of feudal lords.

244 Mahakumara was the title of Paramara feudatory rulers, who received the honour of panchmahasabda from their lords. They made land grants with out referring to their overlords and could also create their own feudatories and appoint their own officers. They had the full right to assign their taxes, ailineate villages, exempt certain people from taxation without making any reference to the imperial power (Pratipal Bhatia, op.cit.).

245 Rajakula and maharajakula titles were assumed by the Guhilas, Chahmanas and the Pramaras of Abu.

However, the hierarchy of the feudatories described above in different regions is far from clear in our sources. The evidences from Lekhapaddhati denote the ranakas were subordinated to the king and were the overlords of the rajaputras. Aparajitpraccha, thus, classifies the feudatories and vassals in heirarchical order on the basis of the number of villages held by them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feudatory</th>
<th>No of Villages held</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mahamandalesvara</td>
<td>10,0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandalika</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahasamanta</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samanta</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laghusamanta</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaturasitika</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The lowest category of feudatory chiefs below chaturasitika was rajaputras in it, which is again a rare evidence determining the position of rajputras. Manasara, a text of the post Gupta period classified the feudal chiefs in nine different categories with special characteristics of their own in a hierarchical order. They are described as chakravartin, maharaja or adhiraja, mahendra or narendra, parshnika, pattadhara, mandaesa, pattabhaja, praharaka and ashtagrahin. The status of these chiefs, though very clearly differentiated by the author, the heirarchy proves to be invalid, since most of the chiefs described in the contemporary sources do not get any place in the above list.

247 Lekhapaddhati.
248 Aparajitpraccha, p.203, VV.4-10.
249 Ibid.
The position of feudatories vis-a-vis their kings or overlords and the mutual relations of both form an important aspect of the composite feudal structure of our age. It seems that the relations between the king and the feudatories were regulated both by the power and strength of the king and accordingly the services and sincerity of the feudatory chiefs. Thus, we have an example of the friendly relations of the powerful Chandella king Kirtivarman with his feudatory sakala samantachakra chudamani, Gopala. The military achievements of Gopala were indeed no less creditable to enhance the power and prestige of Kirtivarmana owing to which the king used to regard him his sahaja suhrt (natural friend). 251

The Prakrit work Samarasicchakaha also quotes such examples of close association and mutual dependence between the king and feudatories. In one story, the frontier chief, Vigraha is referred to have rebelled against the state. But the prince, who marched to crush the rebellion restrains his followers to take stringent measures, saying, “This Vigraha is an insignificant chief, but he has been paying tribute to my father and therefore, is our kinsman. Therefore, no precipitate military action is to be taken against him.” 252 While the defeated Vigraha offers to serve the prince the latter said to him, “Do not say so, as the bhritya (liegeman) of my father, you are my elder brother. So, if you like, go and see my father.” 253 The overlords felt it obligatory to help his vassal in his troublous times, even if the latter was not quite justifiable.

Samarasicchakaha refers that while Sabara chief, the vassal of prince Kumarasena was attacked by soldiers, who came to punish him for his previous misdeeds, the prince raised a helping hand towards him and said, “He has become my liegeman. Hence, even, though he was

doing reprehensible things and cannot be indifferent when he engages in fight.\textsuperscript{254} The relations among the feudatories themselves are also found permeated with the feeling of kinship. The same text further refers in this context to a Sabara chief, who just a moment ago had been plundering the caravan of a Vaishya named Sanudeva, after having been defeated by the prince, who accompanied the caravan and accepted the latter’s overlordship, addressed the same Vaishya thus: “O noble one, we did not know that this great man accompanied you. We have been vanquished by him and recognise him as our overlord. Hence, you are our kinsman (\textit{sambandhin}) and we can not loot your property.” Sanudeva also recognised the new relationship and said “with the \textit{aryaputra} (the prince) as my \textit{svamin} and you as my kinsman, what is there that I do not have?”\textsuperscript{255} The acceptance to an aboriginal Sabara chief in the form of kinsman by a prosperous Vaishya chief as they both were belonging to the common overlord clearly indicate that the kinship ties among the feudatories were not guided by caste and other distinctions. However, such feeling of closeness would have been found in the regions, where the central authority might had been remained strong. Otherwise, the mutual rivalries of the feudatories have been a usual feature of the political superstructure of our age.

Our study thus suggest that in a decentralised state, ruled by a large number of feudatories, the power now slowly and gradually have shifted to powerful feudatories who were directly under the king. The king acted no more than the tax collector of the powerful feudatories and the tributary chiefs under him. The feudatories and the tributary rulers lost no opportunity to declare themselves as independent in the hour of weak position of the king as stated earlier. The evidences are not scanty when the feudatories withheld to pay the obligations and tribute and then the king had to march against them.\textsuperscript{256}

\textsuperscript{256} \textit{Naishadhiyacharita}, Cf. B.N.S. Yadav, p.159.
The pride and power of these chiefs had increased to such an extent that they felt no hesitation in openly defying the authority of the king and declaring a hostile attitude towards him. Such relations of the king with his feudatories are proved by two sets of Chalukya copper plates (AD 1074), which refer to a grant of a village issued by king Karnal of Gujarat (AD 1064-94); but the grant was withheld by his feudatory mandalesvara, under whom the village was administered. The apparent reason of the witholding of the king was probably the one that originally the name of mandalesvara was not mentioned in the copper plates; hence, the order was issued by him to prepare another set with the inclusion of his own name therein.

The example of the open hostility of feudatory to the king may be gleaned from a copper plate grant from Sundarban (AD 1196), where a feudatory is found to declare with pride that he was hostile to maharajadhiraja. The expression of the real feeling between king and his feudatory further becomes clear from the epithet samjvaro Gurjaranam (scorching fire to Gurjaras) adopted by Yasovarmana in respect to his effete overlord. The expression clearly suggests that Yasovarmana may have come into violent conflict with his nominal Gurjara-Pratihara overlord. Likewise, the Pratihara rulers could not put a strict check on their powerful Chahmana feudatories, since it is known from the Harsha inscription that when the Chahmana feudatory Simharaja subdued the Tomara chief and captured the hosts gathered under his command, the Pratihara overlord had to march in person to the house of his feudatory in order to

258 IHQ, X, pp.322-23.
259 EI, I, p.129, V.23.

The independent Chandella ruler Vidyadhara is also known to have caused the destruction of the Pratihara king Rajyapal (EI, I, pp.219 & 222, V.22) after rebuking him for his flight and surrender of his territories to Musalmans.
make the release of some princes who were imprisoned after their capture in this war. Though, the Pratihara monarch is not named in the whole episode, he must be in all probability either Mahendrapala II (AD 946) or one of his weak successors. But, the coming of the overlord personally to the house of his feudatory for the release of the prisoners of war is a clear evidence of the increased power and importance of the Chahmana feudatory rulers of Sakambhari at the time of the decline of imperial Pratiharas. However, with the decline in the power of the king and the increased power of the feudatories, there was an immense rise of vainglorious royal titles and the glorification of the King; which is substantiated from the evidences of literary texts of our period.

However, these high sounding titles indicated nothing more than a mere show of dignity and greatness against the feudatories, who were not leg behind in the assumption of the imperial titles like *parambhattaraka maharajadhira rajaparameshwar* besides, the simple royal titles like *maharaja, adhiraja, raja, nripa*, etc.


261 The Paramaras in the 11th century remained confined to the general imperial titles *parambhattaraka maharajadhira rajaparameshwar* (Grant of Raja Bhoja in Hindustani, 1931, pp.495-515). The titles of the Gahadawala rulers were most high sounding and grandiloquent. Govindachandra assumed the long and glorious titles, *parambhattaraka maharajadhira rajaparammaheswar, maharajadhira najapati, gajapati, rajtrayadhipati, vividha vidyavicharavachaspati*, (JASB, LVI, p.108, V.1180). The same title was also adopted by the Kalachuri rulers. That the title does not reflect the power and prestige of the monarch is clear from the fact that even the powerless king Harishchandra also assumed the similar title born by his ancestors. (*Grant of Harishchandra*, VS 1253, *EI*, X, p.95, *JASB*, VII, p.762). The Chandella king Parmardi adopted the arrogant titles like *kopakalagni, rudra, avandhya kopa-prasada, raidrahabola, nissimavidyanidhi* (*Puratanaprabandhasangrah*, S.J.G., No.2, p.90). Bhimadeva of Chalukya dynasty (11th century) is also known to have assumed the high sounding titles *samastarajavalivirajita, maharajadhira rajumapatiwaralabdha prasada, jangama-janardana praptachaturbhuj* (B.N.S. Yadav, op.cit., p.114). The title assumed by Kumarapala was *parameshwar parambhattaraka, praudhapratapa njabhujavikram-rana gananirjita Sakambhari bhupal, jinasanasnaprabhavak, mahasravaka, parmartha* (Ibid.).

262 See Supra, pp.67-70.
The above mentioned feudal political structure, however, had taken a turn in the beginning of the 13th century, with the establishment of several north Indian Rajput principalities in different parts of western Marwar after facing an onrushing defeat from the Turks. Then, the lack of central control over the feudatories led to the division of territories among the clansmen. This practice was called bhai-bant as it was believed by the members of the same clan as their share in the co-operative effort of the clan. Under this system, the bonds of political and moral obligation to render military service to the overlord had become quite loose. Another particular development was the rise of a class of bhomias who being the members of the dislodged ruling families claimed their mastery over their respective lands, on the ground of the argument that they were the early conquerors of the land there and its first colonisers.

The state did not extract revenue from such bhomias, though, they had every right to collect land revenue from the peasants and to allot the uncultivated land to cultivators. Their chief obligations to the state were to render service (either military or administrative) and pay a tax for the expenses of the army (nalbandi and peshkash).

During 13th and 14th centuries, the rise of Rajput states was clan based. The organisation of these clans and sub-clans in reality were responsible for the power of the king and in the beginning the position of the ruler was ‘Primus Inter Pares’ but during the course of time, the rulers asserted their power and bestowed favours particularly to their kins and kiths and also outside their clan. Later on, they emerged as king’s feudatories or sardars. With the passage of time earlier feudal chiefs like rautes, rajaputras, and samanta had almost disappeared at once.

263 G.D. Sharma, Rajput Polity, p.5.
264 Ibid., p.20, fn.30.
265 Ibid.
266 The usual surviving titles of that age were rais, rawats and ranakas see Mohd. Habib’s, Introd. to Elliot & Dowson, Vol.II.
and the term *thakur* began to be used in the sense of a mere landholder rather than a feudatory chief. The territory conferred on such chief, henceforward began to be termed as *thakurai*.267

Thus, the above survey of the Rajput political organisation reveals that it should be broadly characterised with the considerable decline in the power of the king and an effective rule of the number of feudatories in a state. One of the important factors which led to an increase in the power of the feudatories was certainly the military dependence of the king over them. Besides the economic as well as the religious perceptions of the king were no less responsible for creating a class of powerful feudatories.

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267 G.D. Sharma, op.cit., p.18, fn.18.