CHAPTER-IV

THE RATHORS OF BIKANER

Bikaner is situated in the northern part of the Suba of Ajmer. The state was surrounded by Ganga Nagar and Churu in the North-East, Nagore and Jodhpur in the South-East and Jaisalmer in the South-West.¹ According to Ain-i-Akbari the state of Bikaner comprised eleven Mahals namely Bikaner, Barsalpur, Barmer, Pungal, Barkal, Pokharan, Bikampur, Jaisalmer, Chhotan, Kotra and Dewadawar.² Besides, Merta and Nagore were conferred upon Rai Rai Singh by Akbar after his invasion of Marwar in 1571. The Chieftaincy according to Ain had total revenue 4750,000 dams and the chieftains maintained 12,000 cavalry and 50,000 infantry.³ The rulers of the Chieftaincy belonged to the Rathor clan and were connected with the rulers of Marwar. The founder of the Chieftaincy was Bika son of Rao Jodha of Marwar, who founded it in 1488.⁴ Originally the area was inhabited by Sankles of Jangloo, the Jats, the Bhati and some other clans.⁵ In the process of expansion of the territory the sons and brothers of Rao Jodha occupied these areas and established their Thikanas. The areas so occupied were known as Bhai-bant because being members of the same clan, they believed that it was their share in a cooperative efforts of the clan.

Therefore, following the policy of Bhai-bant, Rao Jodha ruler of Marwar assigned the conquered territories to his sons and brothers in 1488.⁶ But after his death in 1489, Bika one of his sons established an independent principality

¹ Ganger Nagar and Nagore were always under Agra and Delhi
² Ain, II, p.282
³ Ibid
⁴ Nainsi Khyat, II, pp.138-39, 199; Vir vinod, II, p.479
⁵ Nainsi Khyat, II, pp.198-99, 201-4; Vir vinod, II, pp.478-79
⁶ Vigat, I, pp.38-40; Jodhpur Khyat., I, pp.48-52
and settled a number of Rathors in his newly founded state. He died in 1504 and was succeeded by his younger brother Nara.¹

Unfortunately Nara also died in the same year and was succeeded by his younger brother Lonkarn (1505-26) and after his death by his son Jait Singh (1526-41). However, during all these years the Chiefs of Bikaner had to fight for their independence with the Rathor rulers of Marwar as well as other local chiefs. In the course of one such battle in 1541 Jaitsi ruler of Bikaner was defeated and killed by Rao Maldeo and the fort of Bikaner was captured by Jodhpur's army.² However, his sons and his wife succeeded to flee the fort and take shelter at Sirsa which was still under the control of Bikaner and Rao Kalyan Mal the eldest son of Jaitsi proclaimed himself as the ruler of Bikaner.³

However, expulsion of Humayun from India and the accession of Sher Shah in 1540 completely changed the political condition of Rajputana and fortunes of Rao Kalyan Mal of Bikaner. Rao Kalyan Mal sent an envoy to Sher Shah and sought his help against Rao Maldeo.⁴ Sher Shah who was not very happy with Rao Maldeo's attitude during his war with Humayun, marched against Rao Maldeo and reached Merta, where Rao Kalyan Mal also joined him (1544). Rao Maldeo was defeated in the battle fought at Samel and Rao Kalyan Mal recovered Bikaner.⁵ In addition to that Sher Shah also granted him a number of Parganas.⁶ Thereafter, we hardly get any reference of Rao Kalyan Mal after Humayun's reconquest of India or during the regency of Bairam Khan. The first reference about him relates to the period of Bairam Khan's revolt when he proceeded towards Bikaner. Abul Fazl writes that Kalyan Mal

¹ Vir vinod, II, p.480
² Vigat, I, p.44; Jodhpur Khyat, I, p.69; Vir vinod, II, p.483
³ Jaitsi had 13 sons. (Vir vinod, II, p.483)
⁴ Vir vinod, II, p.484
⁵ Vigat, I, p.56; Nainsi Khyat, pp.157-58; Jodhpur Khyat, I, pp.70-72; Vir vinod, II, pp.484-85
⁶ Dalpat Vilas, ed. Badri Prasad Sakarya, Bikaner, 1960, pp.4-5
and his son Rai Rai Singh entertained Bairam Khan and gave him shelter for some time. But the court authorities took no notice of this hostile attitude of Rao Kalyan Mal. Not only that, for almost eight years the Mughal imperial authority had no contact with the rulers of Bikaner. It seems that the rebellion of Turani nobility left no time and energy to look towards any other direction.

After the suppression of the rebellion of Turani nobles and the conquest of Rajputana (Jaipur, Jodhpur, Merta, Jaitaran, Chittor and Ranthambore) by the Mughals, Rao Kalyan Mal decided to offer his submission and in 1570 when Akbar was on his pilgrimage to Ajmer and stayed at Nagore, Rao Kalyan Mal along with his son Rai Rai Singh came to his presence, offered his submission and also offered the daughter of his brother (Kahan) in marriage to the Emperor. The Emperor received them with favours and both Kalyan Mal and Rai Rai Singh were admitted in imperial service. Thereafter, Rao Kalyan Mal was allowed to visit his watan leaving his son Rai Rai Singh at the court. But shortly afterwards Rao Kalyan Mal died (1571) and was succeeded by his eldest son Rai Rai Singh. According to Ain-i-Akbari Rao Kalyan Mal held the rank of 2000.

Prithvi Raj Rathore another son of Kalyan Mal also joined the imperial service about the same time and received the Jagir of Gagrone and served the imperial army in different campaign of the Empire (Kabul in 1581, Deccan in 1598) and died in 1600.

In 1572 when the Emperor was on his Gujrat expedition, Rai Rai Singh was appointed to look after the affairs of Jodhpur and its environ and Sirohi. He

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1 Akbarnama, II, p.105; Dalpat Vilas, p.12  
3 Vir vinod, II, pp.485-86  
4 Ain, I, pp.160-61; M.U., II, pp.148-49  
5 Nainsi Khyat, I, p.188
was further asked to keep watch on the movement of Chandra Sen the rebel ruler of Marwar and Rana Pratap the ruler of Mewar particularly to keep the road to Gujrat safe and secure.\textsuperscript{1} He remained the administrator of Jodhpur till 1577 when it was brought under \textit{Khalisa}.\textsuperscript{2}

As is well known Ibrahim Husain Mirza was defeated in the battle of Sarnal and fled away towards Nagore by the way of Jalore and Jodhpur.\textsuperscript{3} The Emperor ordered Rai Rai Singh and other officers whom he had left in Jodhpur to march in pursuit of the Mirza. Rai Rai Singh overtook him at Kahtoli near Nagore and in a face to face battle Mirza was defeated and fled towards Punjab and then to Gujrat by way of Sindh.\textsuperscript{4}

In 1573 a crisis in Gujrat again developed under the leadership of Muhammad Husain Mirza.\textsuperscript{5} The Emperor ordered Rai Rai Singh and other officers to march against him in advance. The Emperor also personally marched to supervise the campaign to establish permanent peace. A decisive battle was fought between the imperialists and the rebel Husain Mirza. The rebels were defeated and Muhammad Husain Mirza was captured and handed over to Rai Rai Singh and Bhagwant Das. In this campaign also Rai Rai Singh played a significant role and showed extraordinary valour. In the meantime Ikhtiyarul

\textsuperscript{1} \textit{Akbarnama}, II, pp.369-72, III, pp.5-6
\textsuperscript{2} \textit{Akbarnama}, III, p.5; \textit{Vigat}, I, p.68; \textit{Jodhpur Khyat}, I, p.118
\textsuperscript{3} \textit{M.U.}, II, p.149; Ibrahim Husain Mirza a cousin of Emperor Akbar was the son of Mohd. Sultan Mirza a Timurid Prince and son-in-law of Babur. The Mirzas as they are referred in contemporary accounts continued to create trouble from the time of Humayun. During Akbar’s reign Ibrahim Husain Mirza along with his brother Mohd. Husain Mirza also rebelled and after being defeated by the Imperial army fled to Gujarat and taking advantage of the confusion following the death of Ahmad Shah III, (1554-61) established himself in South Gujarat. Thereafter they attempted to capture Ahmadabad. (For details see \textit{Akbarnama}, II, pp.279-81, III, pp.34-36, 42-44, 50-51, 56-58, 60-61; \textit{Tuzuk}, pp.17-20, For a detailed biographical account see, \textit{Z. Khawanin})
\textsuperscript{4} \textit{Akbarnama}, III, pp.34-35; \textit{M.U.}, II, p.149
\textsuperscript{5} For more details about Muhammad Husain Mirza, see \textit{Z. Khawanin}, I, pp.343-44

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Mulk another rebel leader attacked imperialist forces, which led to complete confusion in the royal army. However, the rebels were again defeated and Muhammad Husain Mirza was killed by Rai Rai Singh. Thereafter he returned to Jodhpur.

Rai Rai Singh along with Shah Quli Khan and Keshav Das in 1574 was appointed to suppress Chandra Sen the rebel ruler of Marwar, who had established himself in the Siwana and was creating disturbance in the region. When the imperial army reached Siwana, Rao Chandra Sen fled away towards Bhadrajun and the imperialist easily captured the fort of Siwana. Thereafter, Rai Rai Singh returned to Ajmer and presented himself before the Emperor. He also informed the Emperor that Rao Chandra Sen was still making disturbance in that region and imperial forces posted there were not able to put him down. The Emperor therefore again despatched an army under Rai Rai Singh to suppress the rebellious activities of Rao Chandra Sen. In 1575 however, the Emperor came to know that Rai Rai Singh and Shah Quli Khan were not conducting the campaign properly. The Emperor immediately summoned them to court and the command was given to Shahbaz Khan. Shortly after his arrival to the presence Rai Rai Singh was despatched towards Sirohi to bring Surtan Deoda of Sirohi and Taj Khan of Jalore under imperial subjugation. On his arrival to Sirohi Surtan Deoda and Taj Khan accepted the overlordship of the Mughals without offering any resistance. Shortly afterwards Rai Rai Singh along with Syed Hashim Barha was sent to Nadot to block the egress and ingress of Rana Pratap and to subdue his rebellious activities in the area. In the meanwhile Surtan Deoda on account of his suspicious nature returned to his home town Sirohi without the permission of the Emperor. This action of Surtan

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1 Akbarnama, III, pp.41-44,50-51,56-58,60-61; Tuzuk, p.20
2 Akbarnama, III, pp.80-82, 110-11,167-68; M.U., II, pp149-51
3 Akbarnama, III, pp.189-90; M.U., II, p.150
4 Akbarnama, III, pp.189-90; M.U., II, p.150

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Deoda was considered as a rebellious act, therefore the Emperor immediately ordered Rai Rai Singh to led the campaign against him and besiege Sirohi. The rebels were defeated but Surtan Deoda succeeded in escaping to the fort of Abugarh (Mount Abu). Rai Rai Singh after capturing Sirohi marched to Abugarh and besieged the fort. Surtan Deoda not only surrendered the fort but also agreed to accept sovereignty of the Mughals. Soon afterwards Rai Rai Singh came to the court along with Surtan Deoda and presented him before the Emperor. After that he was given leave to visit his watan.

In 1581 Rai Rai Singh was summoned to court and despatched along with Man Singh against Mirza Mohammad Hakim. After the end of the campaign he returned to the court at Sirhind and presented himself before the Emperor. After serving for sometimes in Punjab, Rai Rai Singh was allowed to visit his Watan. In 1582 Rai Rai Singh was again called to court and despatched to Bengal to help Mirza Aziz Koka who was hard pressed in suppressing the rebellion of Masum Khan Kabuli in Bengal and Qutlu Khan in Orissa. In 1585 he was sent to assist Imad Quli Khan against the rebellion of local Zamindars in Baluchistan. After the successful completion of the campaign he returned to the court.

In 1586 Rai Rai Singh married his daughter to Prince Salim. This new relationship considerably enhanced his prestige at the Mughal court and we find that immediately after this he was appointed as joint Subedar of the Suba of Lahore along with Bhagwant Das. It seems that sometimes after his appointment as joint Subedar, he left for his watan, possibly because of some

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1 *Akbarnama*, III, pp.196-97; *M.U.*, II, pp.151-52
3 Karni Singh, *The relation of the house of Bikaner with central power*, Bikaner, p.50
4 *Akbarnama*, III, pp.475-76,488
5 *Akbarnama*, III, p.494
6 Ibid, p.511

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misunderstanding with Bhagwant Das. The Emperor intervened and it was decided that either he should proceed to the Deccan to join the imperial forces or present himself at the imperial court. But Rai Rai Singh ignored the orders and continued to stay at his watan. Therefore, the Emperor sent him a strongly worded farman with orders to take up the work immediately otherwise the same may be assigned to some one else.\(^1\) We do not know what was the response of Rai Rai Singh to this order, but from the Akbarnama we come to know that he came to the court in 1590 and very soon granted leave to visit his watan.\(^2\)

Shortly afterwards (1590) Rai Rai Singh’s son Dalpat and Rawal Bhitn of Jaisalmer came to the court (Amarkot) and presented themselves before the Emperor. They were appointed to assist Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan who was being sent against Jani Beg the ruler of Thatta.\(^3\) It seems that at this time Dalpat was assigned the rank of 500.\(^4\) But in one the battles fought against Jani Beg, Dalpat, in spite of having a large force with him, out of cowardice did not participate in the battle and looked on as a spectator from a distance.\(^5\) Therefore, Khan-i-Khana’s complaint against Dalpat’s behaviour and requested for reinforcement of both in men and material. In response to Khan-i-Khana’s request, the Emperor immediately despatched Rai Rai Singh to Thatta to help Khan-i-Khana in his campaign.\(^6\) After the conquest of Thatta, Rai Rai Singh returned to court and got leave to visit his watan. In 1593 a tragedy took place in his family; Balbhadra his son in law died of a fall from the palanquin. Akbar himself went to his house for sharing the grief and stopped his daughter from becoming Sati as her children were too young.\(^7\) In 1594 Rai Rai Singh

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\(^1\) Tirmizi, p.65, s.no.76
\(^2\) Akbarnama, III, p.581
\(^3\) Akbarnama, III, pp.602,605-6; M.U., II, pp.152-53
\(^4\) Tuzuk, p.229; M.U., II, p.153; Ain, I, p.163
\(^5\) Akbarnama, III, pp.605-6,609
\(^6\) Akbarnama, III, p.606; M.U., II, p.151
\(^7\) Akbarnama, III, p.641; M.U.,II, pp.151-52
was appointed to serve in the Deccan and was assigned Junagarh in *Jagir*.

But from a *farman* of Akbar dated 12 July 1595 it appears that Rai Rai Singh did not follow the orders and continued to stay in Bikaner. As a consequence the imperial army was reduced to critical situation. The Emperor was so angry with him that he ordered him to proceed immediately on pilgrimage to some holy place and hand over the charge of the town and territories to the men of Dalpat. We do not know whether he followed the instruction or not but from the contents of another *farman* of Akbar and from the scrutiny of the later events it appears that he took no notice of the order and stayed in Bikaner. The arrogance of Rai Rai Singh angered Akbar so much that his *Jagirs* in Gujrat were confiscated. But within a short period Rai Rai Singh was again forgiven and his *Jagirs* were restored. In 1596 a *farman* was issued which was addressed to the Chaudharis, Qanungos, and rayots of *Pargana* Niryad, informing them that *Pargana* Niryad is bestowed upon Rai Rai Singh by way of *Jagir* in exchange for the *Pargana* of Tahara, Qasur and Atgarh from the beginning of the Kharif of *Bichi-it*. Similarly in 1597 a *farman* addressed to *Jagirdars* of Gujrat, informing them that the wrongs of Rai Rai Singh were forgiven and the *Jagir* of Junagadh and other district was restored.

Kami Singh on the authority of *Dayal Das ri Khyat* writes:

>“in 1597 a friction occurred between the Emperor and Rai Rai Singh over an incident which happened while Rai Rai Singh was at Bhatner. The incident was that Nasir Khan one of Akbar’s father in law was staying at Bhatner with him. Rai Rai Singh who had deputed Teja (one of his servants) to look after the comforts of Nasir Khan reported that the Khan had misbehaved with a khatri girl. Rai Rai Singh accepted the version of Teja’s complaint and allowed Teja to use his discretion to bring Nasir Khan to his

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2. Tirmizi, p.69, s.no.91
3. Ibid, p.71, s.no. 96
4. Ibid, p.73, s.no. 103
senses. Teja who was on the look out for an excuse, found one when Nasir Khan, on account of some defect in the supplies sent to him, addressed Teja in foul language; whereupon Teja and his men beat Nasir Khan. When Nasir Khan returned to Delhi, he complained to Akbar against Rai Rai Singh's men. The Emperor ordered Rai Rai Singh to send Teja to him. But Rai Rai Singh reported that Teja had fled. The Emperor was so put out that he deprived the Raja of the gift of Bhatner and granted it to Dalpat.¹

In the chieftaincy of Bikaner also after this incident attempt were made to remove Rai Rai Singh as the ruler of Bikaner and enthrone Dalpat in his place. The lead was taken by Karam Chand. As soon as Rai Rai Singh came to know of this conspiracy, he tried to arrest and kill Karam Chand. But he fled from Bikaner and came to the court where he reported to the Emperor that Rai Rai Singh was harassing the servants loyal to the Emperor and was himself indulging in rebellious activities. Having come to know of the arrival of Karam Chand at the court and his hostile activities, Rai Rai Singh himself came to the court to clear the misunderstanding which had been created by elements hostile to him. But the Emperor was so angry with him that he was not allowed to present himself before the Emperor². But Rai Rai Singh continued his efforts to clarify his position and bring the truth to the knowledge of the Emperor. Ultimately Rai Rai Singh was able to convince the Emperor that Karam Chand was actually a fugitive and had misled the court. Therefore, Rai Rai Singh was pardoned and restored to his previous position. He was also immediately despatched to the Deccan and in addition to the Jagirs earlier held by him, Sortath was also added in his Jagir.³ He started from the court towards Deccan

¹ Karm Singh, p.53  
² M.U., II, pp.152-53  
³ Akbarnama, III, pp.717-18; Tirmizi, p.73, s.no.103; M.U., II, p.153; Shyamal Das writes that Kishan Chand who was a servant of Rai Rai Singh wanted to kill him and enthrone his son Dalpat. When Rai Rai Singh came to know of this conspiracy he himself, tried to kill Kishan Chand but he fled away to the Mughal court and lodged a false complaint to save his life. (Vir vinod, II, p.487)
but after reaching Bikaner he stayed there. When the matter was reported at the
court, Prince Salim sent him a *Nishan* with orders to proceed immediately to the
Deccan and help Khan-i-Khanan to recover imperial glory.¹ But it seems that
the order of Prince also had no effect and he continued to stay in his *watan* and
made certain representation to the Emperor about Rawl Ham and Rawal Bara
who were probably involved in some rebellious activities and now Rai Rai
Singh had represented that they may be pardoned. Although the Emperor was
unhappy with his delaying tactics, but probably keeping in view that he was a
senior Rajput noble and with whom imperial family had matrimonial relations
agreed to pardon then provided he was satisfied of their conduct and the rebels
themselves were prepared to make amends for what they have done in the past.²
But the Emperor also warned him that if he would not proceed on duty
immediately, he will be brought to court and Salahuddin was actually deputed
for this duty. Shortly after receiving this letter Rai Rai Singh came to the court
but as he had ignored the imperial orders for long, for some time he was not
allowed to present himself before the Emperor. However, in consideration of
his past services the Emperor again pardoned him ³ and appointed (1599) to
serve in the Deccan under Prince Murad. But for his safe conduct his son and
grand son were summoned to the court. The Emperor further advised to him
that he should not break the journey at any place and negligence in any way
will not be tolerated.⁴ Rai Rai Singh according to the instruction sent his son
Dalpat to the court and himself marched towards Deccan. But while he was on
his way Prince Murad died and he returned to the presence.

Some times in the same year (1600) Muzaffar Husain Mirza, who was
imprisoned, fled from the court. As the Emperor was in the Deccan a very

¹ Tirmizi, p.73, s.no.102
² Ibid, p.73, s.no.104
⁴ Tirmizi, p.74, s.no.107
awkward situation was created. Dalpat who was present at the court was immediately despatched to capture him. But soon after leaving the capital Dalpat himself fled to Bikaner and started making disturbance in the region, because he was not satisfied with the Jagir assigned to him. When Rai Rai Singh came to know of the rebellious activities of Dalpat he took leave from the Emperor and marched towards Bikaner. Within a short period he was able to re-establish peace in the region (1601). He also visited the court and apprised the Emperor about the state of affairs in the chieftaincy. But it seems that Rai Rai Singh was not able to completely quell the rebellion of his son. Therefore, when he visited the court in 1602 he was not allowed to present himself before the Emperor. After making repeated representation and apologies, he was pardoned and admitted to presence. The Emperor also seems to have pardoned Dalpat because at the same time in regard to Dalpat he is said to have remarked:

"until he attain the good graces of his father, who is his visible god and the pleasing of whom is bound up with the pleasing of God he can not participate in the favours of the sovereign."

Shortly afterwards in 1603 Rai Rai Singh was deputed with Prince Sultan Salim to serve in the Mewar expedition. The campaign however, failed as is well known due to carelessness of Salim and the imperial army returned to the court. Soon after his arrival the Pargana of Shamsabad was divided into two parts namely Shamsabad and Nurpur and both the Parganas were granted to him in Jagir. He held the rank of 4000 at the close of Akbar’s reign.

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1 Akbarnama, III, p.770; Vir vinod, II, p.487
2 Vir vinod, II, p.487
3 Akbarnama, III, p.770,784,790; M.U., II, p.154
4 Akbarnama, III, pp.798-99,809-10
5 Akbarnama, III, pp.809-10
6 Akbarnama, III, pp.822-23; M.U., II, p.154
7 Tirmizi, p.78, s.no. 121; Kami Singh, p.56
8 Tuzuk, p.23; M.U., II, p.154

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Rai Rai Singh had ten brothers but only one brother Amar Singh seems to have joined imperial service. But it seems he was not satisfied with his position; therefore, sometimes in 1587 he rebelled against the imperial authority. The Emperor appointed Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan, Hamza the Jagirdar of Bhimbar along with some retainers of Rai Rai Singh to suppress the rebellion. In the battle fought between the imperialist and the rebels Amar Singh and his son Keshav Das were defeated and killed. Another member of his family Kaka Singh was also admitted in service and served in Kashmir where in 1587 he performed meritorious service and saved the life of Qasim Khan, Mughal Subedar of Kashmir. His son Dalpat about whom we have discussed above held the rank of 500 at the end of Akbar's reign.

During the closing year of Akbar's reign due to his serious illness a crisis developed for succession to the throne. The details of the whole drama are quite well known and hardly need any further explanation. Prince Salim who was then in a very difficult situation send a Nishan to Rai Rai Singh informing him about the crisis and also asked him to reach the court immediately. Soon after receiving the communication of the Prince, Rai Rai Singh came to court and openly supported the cause of Salim who was also his son in law. Although we are not informed about the activities of Rai Rai Singh but it seems that he remained firm in his loyalty of Salim and in reward for his service, after the accession, he was promoted to the rank of 5000.

For the outstanding military services rendered by Rai Rai Singh in different military campaign, the Emperor rewarded him with lavish Jagirs in

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2 Akbarnama, III, p.596
3 Akbarnama, III, pp.521-22
4 Tuzuk, p.111; M.U., II, p.154; Ain, I, p.163
5 Tirmizi, p.79, s.no.124
6 Tuzuk, p.23

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different parts of the Empire. Early in his military career he was assigned Nagore, Sirsa, Maroth, Hansi, Hissar and a number of other Parganas.¹ Later in 1581 Rai Rai Singh also held Lakhipur in Jagir in Suba Punjab.² In 1585 he was granted the Pargana of Bhatner in the Sarkar of Hissar Firoza in exchange of Lakhipur.³ In 1596 he was granted the Jagir of Niryad in exchange of Tahara, Qasur and Atgarh.⁴ In 1597 Jagir of Junagadh was restored to him. Later on he received the Jagir of Nurpur and Shamshabad.⁵ He is also said to have held Sojat and Merta.⁶

From the above it is quite clear that the relations of Bikaner, right from the time of joining imperial service under Rao Kalyan Mal down to the time of Akba’s death, remained by and large extremely cordial. The relations were further strengthened with the marriage of Rai Rai Singh’s daughter with Prince Salim. However, the favours of assignment of ranks and offices were not extended to other members of the family. Although, the Emperor was very kind to Rai Rai Singh but at least on two occasions he defied imperial orders and the Emperor got so angry with him that his Jagir was confiscated and he was debarred from personal presence. But there was apparently no reason for him to disobey the imperial order; possibly it was the result of some misunderstanding because on both the occasion within a short period of time on his personal pleading, he was pardoned. In spite of holding charge of a small principality, Rai Rai Singh was the only ruler after Kachhwahas who was assigned a high rank and important offices and military commands during the reign of

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¹ *Dalpat Vilas*, pp.22-23, Karni Singh, p.62
² *Akbarnama*, III, pp.545-46; Tirmizi, pp.63-64, s.no.71
³ Ibid
⁴ Tirmizi, p.71, s.no.96
⁵ Ibid, pp.7,73,78, s.no. 96, 103, 121; Karni Singh, p.56
⁶ *Dalpat Vilas*, pp.30, 41-42
Akbar. However, as mentioned above his other relations such as Shrang, Ram Singh, Prithvi Raj did not receive *mansab*.

Soon after ascending the throne as mentioned above Jahangir promoted Rai Rai Singh to the rank of 5000. His son Dalip was also confirmed to his previous rank of 500. Rai Rai Singh remained at the court and at the time of Khusrau’s rebellion when the Emperor himself proceeded in pursuit of the rebel Prince, he along with Sheikh Alauddin, Mirza Ghayas Beg Tehrani and Dost Muhammad, was made incharge of Agra with the specific task of conducting the ladies to Emperor’s presence at short notice. While the armies were still marching in pursuit of Khusrau, the Emperor ordered Rai Rai Singh to reach the imperial camp along with the ladies. He started towards Punjab and after reaching the village of Mathura, he suddenly left the camp and fled towards his *watan* Bikaner and along with his son Dalip and unfurled the banner of revolt.

In his memoirs Jahangir narrates in detail the causes of the revolt. He writes:

“when Khusrau fled and I pursued him, Rai Rai Singh asked Man Singh (a Jain Monk) what would be the duration of my reign and the chances of my success. That black tongued fellow, who pretended to be skilled in astrology and the extraction of Judgments, said to him that my reign would almost last for two years. The doting old idiot (Rai Singh) relied upon this and went off without leave to his home”.

The Emperor ordered Raja Jagannath, Muzul Mulk, Zahid Khan and Rana Sagar who were deputed in Mewar, to immediately proceed towards

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1 Karni Singh on the authority of Bikaner’s Gazetteers writes that Rai Rai Singh was appointed governor at least four different occasions, in 1581 governor of Punjab, in 1586 Burhanpur in Khandesh, 1593 Surat and in 1605-6, Burhanpur second time. (Karni Singh, p. 59)
2 *Tuzuk*, p. 23
3 Ibid, p. 111
4 *Tuzuk*, pp. 40, 62; *Iqbalnama*, pp. 5, 9; *Maasir i Jahangiri*, p. 71
5 *Tuzuk*, pp. 36, 40, 62
6 Ibid, p. 217
Bikaner and suppress the rebels. The imperial commanders marched towards Nagore which was under the control of the rebels and after a short encounter completely defeated them. However, both Rai Rai Singh and Dalip were able to escape from the battle field.\(^1\) From a *farman* of Jahangir address to Rai Rai Singh it appears that Rai Rai Singh soon after his defeat send an *Arzdasht* (request) through his wakil pleading for mercy. From the *farman* it also appears that Rai Rai Singh also proceeded towards Lahore to personally offer his submission. When the Emperor came to know of this, he ordered him to leave his sons and other family members at Lahore and come to the presence alone. Rai Rai Singh fully complied with the orders, hence on his arrival he was pardoned of his fault.\(^2\) However, he was not allowed to present himself before the Emperor. He stayed at the court and requested Amirul Umara Sharif Khan who was very close to the Emperor during this period to help him to present himself before the Emperor. His efforts yielded good results, Amirul Umara interceded on his behalf and the Emperor pardoned him. In the *Tuzuk* in this connection Jahangir writes: “To please Amirul Umara I ordered, the rank which he formerly held to be confirmed to him and his *Jagir* to remain as it was”\(^3\)

Shortly afterwards his son Dalip also came to the court and at the request of Khan-i-Jahan the Emperor overlooked his offences and readmitted him in the service.\(^4\) Soon after both of them were appointed to assist imperial forces in the Deccan. We are not aware of the role that they played in the Deccan but a *farman* of the Emperor indicates that Rai Rai Singh was providing very useful

\(^1\) *Tuzuk*, p.36,40; *Vir vinod*, II, p.294
\(^2\) *Tirmizi*, p.81, s.no 128
\(^3\) *Tuzuk*, p.62; *Vir vinod*, II, p.295
\(^4\) *Tuzuk*, p.70; But Karni Singh on the basis of a *farman* writes that when Rai Rai Singh was troubled by the rebellion of Dalpat Singh in 1607, the Emperor immediately sent a *farman* to express his strong disapproval of the son’s disgraceful conduct towards his father. The Emperor had at first thought of sending an army to Rai Singh’s assistance. But on second thought he refrained from doing so as he had not heared from Rai Singh. (Karni Singh, p. 60)
help to the Prince and he was assured that after the successful completion of the campaign he will be suitably rewarded. A robe of honour was also sent to him through Sarang Deo.\(^1\) He however, died at Burhanpur in 1612 before the completion of the campaign.\(^2\) After his death, his eldest son Dalip came to the court from the Deccan and presented himself before the Emperor. He was honoured with the title of Rai and a dress of honour was also presented to him.\(^3\)

Rai Rai Singh's another son Suraj Singh born of his most favourite wife also came to the court and represented to the Emperor that his father had nominated him as his successor and had also given him the Tika, therefore, he was the real claimant of the throne. Jahangir did not like the manner of his representation and in a fit of anger remarked “if they father has given the Tika to thee, we shall give it to Dalip.” The Emperor was so much annoyed that he put the Tika on Dalpat Singh's forehead with his own hands and in confirmation of his decision, his father's Jagir and hereditary possession were also conferred upon him.\(^4\) However, it is important to note that Suraj Singh was also assigned the Jagir of Phalodi along with 84 villages which were earlier assigned to him by his father.\(^5\)

Thereafter, Dalip was appointed to assist Mirza Rustam Safavi who had been sent as a governor of the Suba of Sindh. At the time of his departure to Sindh the Emperor promoted him to the rank of 2000/1000.\(^6\) But Dalip Singh instead of proceeding to Thatta, went to Bikaner and rose in rebellion.\(^7\) The Persian as well as Rajasthani sources are silent about the causes of his rebellion. It seems that Dalip who was already unhappy with the Emperor because he was

\(^1\) Tirmizi, p.83, s.no.135
\(^2\) Tuzuk, p.106; Z.Khawanin, p.132
\(^3\) Tuzuk, p.106
\(^4\) Tuzuk, p.106; Vir vinod, II, p.298
\(^5\) Vir vinod, II, pp.289, 489
\(^6\) Tuzuk, pp.111-12
\(^7\) Umrai Hunood, p.194
given very small rank (only a part of his father's rank) as compared to the rank of other Rajput houses, decided to rebel on being posted to Sindh.

After reaching Bikaner, he captured the Jagirs of local chiefs and later on, on the advice of his minister Purohit Man Mahesh, he captured the entire area except Phalodi assigned by the Emperor to his brother Suraj Singh.\(^1\) Suraj Singh along with his officials went to Bikaner and unsuccessfully pleaded with his brother to return the villages wrongly occupied by him. Thereafter he sent Purohit Laxmi Das his representative to the court to lodge a complaint against the hostile activities of Dalip.\(^2\) As no action was taken on his complaint, he decided to approach the Emperor personally. On his way to court at Sanganer he met Raja Man Singh and requested him to intercede on his behalf in the matter. When he reached Soram he received the summons of the Emperor to present himself at the court.\(^3\) About the same time the Emperor also summoned Dalip. But Dalip who had already unfurled the banner of revolt did not respond to the repeated calls of the Emperor. Sur Singh after reaching to the court presented himself before the Emperor, and apprised him of the wrong doings of Dalip. Therefore, the Emperor despatched a strong army under the command of Ziauddin Khan and Sarbarah Khan to expel Rao Dalip from Bikaner and install Suraj Singh on the throne of Bikaner.\(^4\) In a battle fought near Hissar on the borders of Bikaner, Dalip was completely defeated, due to the treachery of some of his important Sardars such as Bhim Singh, Devi Das and Tejsi. However, he escaped from the battle field and saved himself from being arrested.\(^5\) But shortly afterwards Hashim the Faujdar and Jagirdar of that

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1. *Vir vinod*, II, p.489
2. *Vir vinod*, II, p.489; Ojha, V, part 1, p.208
3. Tirmizi, p.89, s.no. 155; *Vir vinod*, II, p.489
4. Z. Khawanin, p.411; *Vir vinod*, II, p.489
5. *Tuzuk*, p.126; Shyamal Das in *Virvinod* writes that during the course of battle Sur Singh and Ziauddin sent out their agents to the sardars of Dalpat to garner their support for the imperial cause. For details the events and name of sardars see, *Vir vinod*, II, p.489

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region (Hissar) arrested him and sent him as a prisoner to the Emperor who was at Ajmer. The Emperor was much pleased to know the defeat and capture of Dalip. He immediately sent a farman to Rao Suraj Singh expressing his pleasure on the capture of Dalip and ordered him to come to court at once. The Emperor took very strong action against Dalip. On the charge of repeated act of misbehaviour and rebellions he was executed. No other Chieftain was awarded death sentence either in the reign of Akbar or in Jahangir and Shah Jahan’s reign, although such rebellions were usual. Why such an harsh punishment was given to Dalip is unexplainable.

However, after execution of Dalip, Rao Suraj Singh with the approval of Emperor ascended to the throne of Bikaner. He came to the court and presented himself before the Emperor. In reward for this service he received promotion of 500/200. At the court he met Lakshmi Chand and Bhagehand sons of Karan Chand a former minister of the Bikaner state and persuaded them to return to Bikaner. After their return, Rao Suraj Singh to take revenge of their role in an attempt to supercede his father, treacherously killed them. He also took action against Purohit Man Mahesh on whose advice Dalip had confiscated his Jagirs. During his stay at Bikaner he regularly received farmans of Emperor Jahangir and offered his help to imperial officials.

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1. *Tuzuk*, p. 126; *Vir vinod*, II, p.490
2. *Tirmizi*, p.90, s.no.159
3. *Tuzuk*, p.126; But Shyamal Das on the authority of local sources writes that while Dalpat was imprisoned at Ajmer, Hathi Singh Champawat (a Jagirdar of Marwar) who on his way to visit his wife’s family halted for a day at Ajmer and expressed his desire to see Dalpat. But being denied permission to meet him, he attacked and killed the guard and freed Dalpat. Subedar of Ajmer immediately marched in their pursuit, over powered them and killed both Dalpat and Hathi Singh. (*Virvinod*, II, pp.490-91)
5. *Tuzuk*, p.126
6. *Virvinod*, II, p.492; It was Karam Chand who hatched a conspiracy in 1597 to remove Rai Rai Singh and enthrone Dalpat in his place. (*Vir vinod*, II, p.487)
7. *Vir vinod*, II, pp. 491-92; Dalpat had resumed all the Jagirs of Sur Singh on the advice of Man Mahesh in 1612. (*Vir vinod*, II, p.489)
Nizamuddin Asaf Khan and Alif Khan in the suppression of the revolt of Mansur, Bhati and the rebels of lakhi Jungle. He also received several *Nishans* of Prince Khurram and acted according to his suggestions.

In 1615 he was summoned to the court and appointed to serve in the Deccan campaign. Although Rao Sur Singh complied the imperial order and reported for duty in the Deccan but it appears that he wanted to go back to his *watan*. Probably in this connection he also made an appeal to Khan Khanan as well as to Prince Khurram because we get reference of a *Hukmnma* of Khan Khanan in which he is advised to remain in Deccan and wait for fresh order. In his two *Nishans* dated 14 July 1616 and 13 Feb 1617 Khurram also informed him that his representation had reached the Emperor who had promised him royal favour and that the orders to call him to court will be issued soon. Further he was also advised to discharge his duties carefully and whole heartedly. However, he was allowed to visit his *watan* only after the successful completion of the campaign. While he was in Bikaner in June 1617 he again received a *Nishan* of Prince Khurram ordering him not to interfere in the affairs of the *Pargana* of Phalodi and its villages because those *Pargana* were included in the *Khalisa Mahals*. Shortly afterwards he received two more *Nishans* dated 4th Dec. 1617 and 24th Dec. 1617 assuring him of royal favours for his devoted service to the cause of imperial authority. He was also order to take such step that may stop the migration of Tahara tenants to the villages of *Pargana* Bhatinda. About the same (Nov 16, 1617) time he also received a *Hukum* from

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1 Tirmizi, p.89, s.no.154
2 For details of the *farman* see, Tirmizi, pp.90-94, s.no. 160, 161, 163, 167, 168, 170, 171
3 Tirmizi, pp.96, 99, s.no. 179, 187
4 Ibid, p.99, s.no. 187
5 Ibid, pp.100-1, s.no.189, 196
6 Ibid, p.102, s.no.198
7 Ibid, p.103, s.no. 203
8 Ibid, p.104, s.no. 204
Nurjahan Begum ordering him to pay some money to her treasurer Kishan Das and his son Barman from his estate and realise it afterwards from their salary.¹

Sometimes in 1619 again Rao Suraj Singh was appointed to serve in Deccan. He was also promoted to the rank of 2000/2000² However, we hardly have any information about his activities in the Deccan in the next two years. But the situation in the Deccan continued to deteriorate and the hold of imperial officials considerably slackened. Khan-i-Khana’s repeated appeals of reinforcements were not seriously taken up by the Emperor. Consequently imperial officials were expelled by the Deccanis from several forward positions. The Emperor who was in Kashmir, now decided to send Khurram to punish the Deccanis and re-occupy the imperial territories.³

About the same time (Jan 1621) the Emperor issued a farman to Rao Suraj Singh informing him that he himself along with Prince Khurram had left Lahore and that Khurram was being sent to the Deccan to strengthen the Mughal armies. He was ordered to guard his territories to the best of his ability and resources till the arrival of the imperial army under Khurram. He was also assured of royal favours.⁴ After about a month the Emperor sent him another farman dated 18 Feb 1621 providing him details of the movement of Khurram’s army towards Deccan, specially pointing out that after reaching Burhanpur, Khurram will take rest for a few day and then proceeded to punish the rebels. Rao Suraj Singh was ordered to join the Prince’s army and make every effort to uproot and annihilate the rebels completely.⁵ We have at least two other farmans of Emperor Jahangir addressed to Rao Suraj Singh regarding his action in the Deccan war. In the farman issued on 23 Feb 1621 the Emperor

¹ Tirmizi, p.103, s.no. 202
² Tuzuk, p.269
³ Iqbalnama, p.176; Saxena, p.27
⁴ Tirmizi, p.118, s.no.243
⁵ Ibid, s.no. 244
simply informed him that he had received a very favourable report about his exertions, devotion and attachment towards the Emperor from Khan Khanan and that the Emperor was very much pleased and that he will be duly rewarded. In the second farman dated 7 May 1621 the Emperor again gives a reference of the report of Darab Khan, where in his important role in the conquest of Khirki was highlighted. The Emperor again expresses his satisfaction and assured him of promotion in rank. Shahnawaz Khan writes that after the successful completion of the Deccan campaign Rao Suraj was actually promoted to the rank of 3000/2000.

The situation in the Deccan as well as at the imperial court took a new turn with the invasion of Qandhar by the Persian in March 1622. The Emperor, as soon as he came to know of the march of the Persian army, ordered Khurram to lead a campaign to save Qandhar. But Khurram did not obey the orders, as is commonly know to all of us and consequently relation between Khurram and the Emperor became strained, ultimately leading to Khurram’s revolt.

During the period of Persian invasion of Qandhar when the preparations of a campaign under Khurram were being organised the Emperor also summoned Rao Suraj Singh to court, apparently to join the campaign. Rao Suraj Singh, it seems immediately started towards the court. But shortly after his departure, the Emperor sent him another farman directing him to proceed to Jalnapur near Amber, where he was now transferred. It was further mentioned that if he would not follow this order and came to the court it would be considered a hostile act and his Jagirs will be resumed. The above information is gleaned from a farman of the Emperor to Rao Suraj Singh but other

1 Tirmizi, p.118, s.no.245
2 Ibid, p.246
3 M.U., II, pp.211-12
4 For details see Tuzuk, pp.345-47
5 Tirmizi p.120, s.no.252
6 Ibid, p.120, s.no.253
contemporary accounts, hardly provide any information about of these development. The anger of Emperor is hardly understandable unless we get a reference to indicate that Rao Suraj Singh at this time was close to Khurram and was acting at his behest. Rao Suraj Singh after receiving this order, pleaded with the Emperor that he had not acted in any manner against the imperial authority and requested for favours. Apparently in response to this Arzdasht, the Emperor responded favourably and in January 1623 Prince Shahryar send him a Nishan assuring him that the Emperor had accepted his pleadings. He further asked him to immediately proceed along with a well equipped army to join the Persian expedition. But soon after receiving the above mentioned Nishan, Rao also received a farman of the Emperor, ordering him to punish Kesho Das and Askaran of Kandlot and Jogal clans of Pargana Bhatner, who were harassing imperial officials and Jagirdars.

From the above it becomes quite clear that the Rao was able to regain the confidence of the Emperor; however, there is no reference in this farman of his appointment to Persian campaign. Possibly the matter was not referred because the campaign was not taken up seriously and in the meantime Khurram openly rebelled. As soon as the Emperor came to know of the rebellion of Khurram, he ordered important nobles posted in the Deccan under the Prince to come to the court. Rao Suraj Singh who was also summoned to the court, reached Delhi only after the battle of Bilochpur. It appears that from the Deccan he went strait to his watan and stayed there watching carefully the movement of rebellious army and decided to come to the presence only after defeat of the Prince at Bilochpur. Keeping in view the adverse political situation at the court, Emperor ignored his delay in reaching to the capital and appointed him to

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1 Tirmizi, p.123, s.no. 261
2 Ibid, pp.123-24, s.no.265
3 Tuzuk, p.360; Vir vinod, II, p.492
accompany Parwez and Mahabat Khan deputed to punish Khurram. In course of the campaign against Khurram, the activities of Rao Suraj Singh were closely monitored by the Emperor. The Emperor used to regularly send him farmans, informing him that he had received messages of his meritorious service in the campaign and assurances of continued favours.

After the suppression of Khurram’s rebellion he was appointed in the Deccan along with Prince Parwez and Mahabat Khan. But as is well known Mahabat Khan was transferred to Bengal and Khan-i-Jahan was made incharge of the Deccan. The transfer of Mahabat Khan was strongly opposed by Parwez and Mahabat Khan himself consequently a very awkward situation was created. Therefore to warn the nobles against any hostile move, the Emperor issued a farman to Rao Suraj Singh informing him that Khan-i-Jahan had been appointed as the commander of the army of the Deccan and if any one hereafter will visit to the house of Khan-i-Khanan and acts upon his advice he would not only be dismissed from service but would also be awarded exemplary punishment. Shortly after the above strongly worded farman, the Emperor issued yet another farman where in he was informed that the Emperor was much pleased to know of his devotion and sincerity for the imperial cause which the Emperor had come to know from the letter of Fidai Khan. Further, he was ordered to obey the orders of Khan-i-Jahan and discharge his duties faithfully. The Emperor, even after that send him several farmans, and in each of these, he was ordered to follow the advice of the Prince and discharge his duties faithfully. In one of the farmans, he was informed of the death of Malik

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2 Tirmizi, pp.125-26,s.no.272, 275; Dutch Chronicle, pp.69-70; The English factories(1622-23) ed. Foster, Oxford, 1908, p.218
3 Tirmizi, pp.127-28, s.no.281; ‘The Rajput Chiefs and Prince Shah Jahan’s revolt’, Islamic Culture, 1987, pp.74-75
4 Tirmizi, p.128, s.no.283; ‘The Rajput Chiefs and Prince Shah Jahan’s revolt’, Islamic Culture, 1987, 74-75

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Ambar, and directed to take advantage of the situation in extirpating the rebels completely. It was further added that Raja Sarang Deo was being send with more information in this connection.\textsuperscript{1} But shortly afterwards he was transferred to Multan. He was also informed that Mahabat Khan was being posted to Thatta 'to fight against the rebels.'\textsuperscript{2} It seems that after his transfer to Multan, the situation in the Deccan aggravated, hence the Emperor ordered him to proceed to Burhanpur immediately to punish the rebels and retrieve the situation.\textsuperscript{3} But from the later events it is apparent that he did not go to Burhanpur and proceeded towards Bikaner. In the meantime Mahabat Khan attempted a coup. The imperialist were able to overcome the crisis and Mahabat Khan left the imperial camp. Armies were deputed to pursue him. The Emperor sent a farman to Rao Suraj informing him of the action taken against Mahabat Khan and also ordered him that if Mahabat Khan or any of his men entered his territories they should be attacked and killed.\textsuperscript{4} Nurjahan Begum also issued him a Hukum asking him to obey the farman issued by the Emperor and serve with complete devotion and sincerity. He was also promised favours.\textsuperscript{5}

As soon as the problem of Mahabat Khan was overcome, the Emperor again issued him a farman ordering him to immediately proceed to Burhanpur and join Khan-i-Jahan Lodi.\textsuperscript{6} But it seems Rao still remained in Bikaner and made representation for additional Jagirs.\textsuperscript{7} Soon afterwards another farman was issued with a reference to an earlier farman with orders to immediately proceed to Burhanpur. He was further informed that Jamal Muhammad was being send

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Tirmizi, pp.130-32, s.no.296, 299, 304
\item The appointment was made just before his rebellion. Tirmizi, pp.132-33, s.no.306, 307
\item Tirmizi, p.133, s.no.309; For more details, see 'The Rajput Chiefs and Prince Shah Jahan's revolt', \textit{Islamic Culture}, 1987, pp. 76-77
\item Tirmizi, p.133, s.no.310
\item Ibid, s.no. 311
\item Ibid, p.134, s.no.313
\item Ibid, p.136, s.no. 323
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
to his presence to conduct him to Burhanpur. In the end it was mentioned that his request for additional Jagir had been accepted.\(^1\) A separate farman later on was issued about the details of the additional Jagir assigned to him.\(^2\)

Shortly afterwards Jahangir died at Bhimbhar (28 Oct. 1627) and a succession war started among his sons and grand son (Shah Jahan, Shaharyar and Dawar Bakhsh). Rao Suraj Singh preferred to stay in Bikaner and cautiously watched the development at the court. Dawar Bakhsh, although raised only as an escape goat, issued farmans to leading nobles of the Empire informing them of the sad demise of Emperor Jahangir and his own accession to the throne. He also asked them to discharge their duties honestly and remain in regular communication with the imperial court.\(^3\) Rao Suraj Singh also received a similar farman immediately after Dawar Bakhsh’s accession. However, we are not informed of his reaction after receiving this farman. We hardly get any reference about Rao Suraj Singh during the whole period of the crisis at the court and Khurram’s march from the Deccan towards Delhi. It seems as mentioned above, he remained at Bikaner, and kept on waiting for the dust of succession to settle down. But soon after the accession of Shah Jahan he came to court and offered his submission.\(^4\)

From the above discussion it is quite clear that Jahangir’s relations with the rulers of Bikaner remained cordial except for a brief period, between 1606 and 1613, when the Emperor was displeased with Rai Rai Singh and Dalip. The rulers of Bikaner, in spite of their small principality, acquired important position at the court and the Emperor also relied upon them. Rao Suraj Singh served the Emperor with sincerity and devotion. He remained completely loyal to the Emperor during the rebellion of Shah Jahan and Mahabat Khan’s coup.

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\(^1\) Tirmizi, p.134, s.no.315  
\(^2\) Ibid, p.136, s.no.323, 324  
\(^3\) Tirmizi, pp.136-37, s.no.325  
\(^4\) Iqbalnama, pp.294-99; Lahori, Ia, p.120; Inayat Khan, p.14
However, after death of Rai Rai Singh, neither Rao Dalip nor Rao Suraj Singh could get the rank of 5000. Rao Suraj Singh at the end of Jahangir’s reign held the rank of 3000/2000,¹ which was quite low as compared to the ranks held by other chiefs of Rajputana. There is another point to take note of. We have found a large number of farmans addressed to Rao Suraj Singh. These are related to his appointments, assignment of Jagirs, reply to his representations as well as advises relating to his conduct during campaigns in the Deccan. From a close scrutiny of these farmans it appears that the Emperor was suspicious of his conduct especially during his last years.

As mentioned above after Shah Jahan’s accession Rao Suraj Singh came to the court and presented himself before the Emperor. He was received cordially and promoted to the rank of 4000/2500.² Soon afterwards he was ordered to accompany Mahabat Khan who was being despatched to take action against Nazar Muhammad. But the army was called back because Nazar Muhammad was expelled by Lashkar Khan the Subedar of Kabul.³ After his return to the court Rao Suraj Singh was despatched along with Abdullah Khan to suppress the rebellion of Jujhar Singh Bundila.⁴ Jujhar Singh being unable to face the imperial forces, sued for peace. The imperial commanders recommended his case and the Emperor pardoned his offences. Thereafter Rao Suraj Singh was ordered to assist imperial forces deputed to suppress the rebellion of Khan-i-Jahan Lodi. The imperialist forces overtook the rebels at Dholpur where a battle was fought and Khan-i-Jahan Lodi was defeated and fled to Ahmad Nagar where he was given shelter by Nizam Shah. The Emperor took the matter seriously, and he himself marched towards Deccan to suppress the rebellion and also to punish Nizam Shah who had given support to the

¹ Lahori, 1a, p.120; M.U., I, pp.211-12
² Lahori, 1a, p.120; Inayat Khan p.19
³ Lahori, 1a, p.212; Tirmizi, pp.41-42, s.no.2, 3, 6
⁴ Lahori, 1a, pp.203-4, 242, 246, 294, 302; M.U., III, pp.599-603; For more details see, Saxena, pp.80-82
rebels. Armies under the command of Iradat Khan, Raja Gaj Singh and Shaista Khan were despatched to take action against both, the rebels and Nizam Shah. Rao Suraj Singh was sent to join the contingent of Shaista Khan.\(^1\) In the campaign Rao Suraj Singh along with his contingent fought bravely specially in the battle fought near Bir. The Emperor send him a *farman*, appreciating the exertion made by him and in recognition of his service increased his *mansab* by 500 *sawar*.\(^2\) Thereafter he was deputed in the Balaghat region to fight against the Nizam Shahis and remained posted there until his death in 1631.\(^3\) At the time of his death he held the *mansab* of 4000/3000.\(^4\)

After his death his eldest son Rao Karan succeeded to the throne \(^5\) and soon after along with his brother Shatmsal came to the court. Shah Jahan recognised him as the ruler of Bikaner and awarded the rank of 2000/1500. The title of *Rao* and hereditary *Jagir* of his homeland Bikaner was also conferred on him.\(^6\) Shatmsal was also admitted in imperial service and assigned a small rank of 500/200.\(^7\) Although, Shatmsal took active part in the Deccan campaign and lived up to 1638, he could not rise above the rank of 700/600.\(^8\) Except for these stray references we hardly get any details of Shatmsal’s career in any contemporary or near contemporary sources.

Soon afterwards Rao Karan was appointed to assist imperial forces under Wazir Khan to punish Fateh Khan son of Malik Ambar and to conquer

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\(^1\) Lahori, la, pp.294-98; *M.U.*, II, p.212  
\(^2\) Lahori, la, pp.295-96, 350-51; Tirmizi, p.45, s.no.19; *Vir vinod*, II, p.333  
\(^3\) Lahori, la, p.319; Tirmizi, p.46, s.no.21; *Vir vinod*, II, p.493  
\(^4\) Lahori, Ib, p.297, 398  
\(^5\) According to *Khyat* he had three sons namely Karan Singh, Shatrusal and Arjun Singh (*Khyat*, II, p.200); Shyamal Das writes that he had only two sons namely Karan and Shatrusal. (*Vir vinod*, II, p.493)  
\(^6\) Lahori, la, p.398, Ib, 302; *Vir vinod*, II, pp.334, 493; But Shahnawaz Khan writes that he was granted *mansab* of 2000/1000. (*M.U.*, II, p.212) According to the author of *Zakhirat ul Khawanin*, the Emperor at the request of Mahabat Khan assigned the *mansab* and *Jagir* of Bikaner to Rao Karan. (*Z. Khawanin*, p.399)  
\(^7\) Lahori, la, pp. 398; *M.U.*, II, p.212; *Vir vinod*, II, p.493  
\(^8\) Lahori, Ib, p.316; *Umrai Hunood*, p.257
Daulatabad. But before the imperial army could take any action, Fateh Khan accepted the subordination of the imperial authority and the army was recalled. But very soon he was again appointed to assist imperial army under Khan-i-Jahan in the Deccan against Shahji and Randola Khan of Bijapur and to conquer the fort of Daulatabad. The imperialist forces after defeating the Adil Shahis marched to Daulatabad and laid the siege of the fort. Meanwhile Mahabat Khan who was already present in the Deccan also reached there and vigorously press the siege operation. To create confusion in the enemy camp Khan-i-Jahan and Rao Karan were sent to plunder the enemy camp. The commandant of the fort Khariat Khan managed to escape and went to Mahakot. Mahabat Khan immediately marched forward and took position at Amarkot and send a detachment to besiege Mahakot. But about the same time it came to the notice of Mahabat Khan that Khiloji and Bahlol were marching towards Berar and Telingana to create disturbance there. He therefore, sent Rao Karan and other officials to take action against them. Hard pressed from all sides, the Deccanies finally handed over the fort of Daulatabad to Mahabat Khan. Rao Karan played an important role in the campaign and in appreciation of his service during the siege of Daulatabad the Emperor send him a farman, pointing out that the facts of his devotion, valour and loyalty have been brought to his notice by Khan-i-Khanan. He was also assured of favours and increase in his mansab on the recommendation of Khan-i-Khanan. He was further advised to serve in such a manner that Khan-i-Khanan was pleased with him.

After the conquest of Daulatabad he was ordered to assist Mahabat Khan and Khan-i-Zaman in the conquest of Parenda. The imperia forces however,
failed to achieve any success in the campaign and after raising the siege returned to Burhanpur. The retreating imperial army was attacked by the enemy but Rao Karan and Rao Satarsal Hada repulsed their attack and safely conduct it to Burhanpur.¹

Farid Bhakkari writes that Mahabat Khan took much pain in patronising Rao Karan that within a short period he was raised to the mansab of 3000/3000.² After the death of Mahabat Khan in 1634 he was attached to Khan-i-Dauran, the governor of Burhanpur.³

When Emperor Shah Jahan came to the Deccan for the second time to personally supervise the campaign, Rao Karan was ordered to assist Khan-i-Jahan Barha against Adil Shah of Bijapur.⁴ Virvinod is of the view that Rao Karan played an important role in bringing Adil Shah under imperial submission and returned to the court along with the Emperor.⁵ In 1642 while he was in Delhi a boundary dispute arose between the state of Bikaner and Marwar. Amar Singh elder brother of Jaswant Singh who held the Jagir of Nagore took possession of Lakhania (in 1638) a border village in the territory of Bikaner. On being informed Rao Karan Singh who was at Delhi, requested Amar Singh to return the captured territories but he refused to do so. Therefore, Rao Karan ordered his Diwan Muhta Jaswant to take back the village forcibly. Diwan Muhta Jaswant launched an attack and in a battle fought at Silva, defeated Amar Singh’s army and took possession of the village. When Amar Singh came to know of these developments in Delhi, he requested the Emperor to allow him to visit his watan to bring about a settlement to the dispute. Rao Karan who was also present at the capital immediately met the

¹ Lahori, Ib, pp.35, 44-46; M.U., II, pp.287-88; For more details see Saxena, pp.159-61
² Z.Khawanin, p.399
³ M.U., II, pp.287-88
⁴ M.U., II, pp.287-88; Vir vinod, II, p.494; Saxena, pp.144-48
⁵ Vir vinod, II, p.494
Emperor and apprised him of the full facts of the dispute and resulting battle. The Emperor therefore, did not allow Amar Singh to visit his watan. Although Amar Singh obeyed the imperial orders but ordered his minister to forcibly recapture the village. On being informed of the movement of Amar Singh's forces Rao Karan immediately requested Salabat Khan Bakhshi to intervene in the matter and settle the dispute through the office of the Amin. Salabat Khan took cognisance of the issue and reported the matter to the Emperor and on his instructions an Amin was appointed to settle the matter.1

After the settlement of the dispute Rao Karan was granted leave to visit his watan. At the same time the Bhatis of Pungal revolted under the leadership of Bhati Rao Sunder Sen, a feudatory chief of Rao Karan. Rao Karan marched against the rebels and put to siege the fort of Pungal and after a long fighting captured the fort. However, Sunder Sen escaped and carried on the rebellious activities for sometime. Rao Karan left a detachment at Pungal to suppress the rebels and himself returned to Bikaner.2

In 1649 Rao Karan came to the court and presented himself before the Emperor. He was promoted to the mansab of 2000/2000 and appointed Qiledar of Daulatabad.3 In the very next year he was further raised to the rank of 2500/2000.4 Thereafter he remained posted in the Deccan along with his sons Kesari Singh and Padam Singh and rendered valuable service. In 1652 he was promoted to the rank of 3000/2000;5 and deputed to serve under Aurangzeb on

1 Amar Singh perhaps considered the whole action of Salabat Khan as siding with Rao Karan and in 1644, when he presented himself before the Emperor, he attacked Salabat Khan with a dagger and killed him in the court but in reaction he was also killed by Arjun son of Bithal Das and Khalilullah Khan. (Lahori, II, p.382; Inayat Khan, pp.315-16; M.U., I, pp.233-34; Vir vinod II, p.496)
2 Vir vinod, II, pp.496-97
3 Waris b, p.49; M.U., II, pp.287-88
4 Waris b, p.87; M.U., II, pp.287-88
5 Waris b, p.145
his second viceroyalty of Deccan. Soon after joining his service, the Prince ordered him to conquer Sarkar Jawar in the Province of Aurangabad, where Sripat the Zamindar of the area was creating trouble. But before the military operation could actually start Sripat offered his submission to the imperial authorities and also agreed to pay tribute regularly. However, he requested that the right of collection of land revenue of Jawar be given to him. His request was accepted and the hostilities came to an end. Rao Karan returned to the headquarters along with the son of Sripat and presented him before the Prince.

After his return from the Jawar campaign, Rao Karan remained in the service of Aurangzeb when the war of succession among the sons of Shah Jahan started. However, he decided to leave Aurangzeb when nobles posted in the Deccan including himself were summoned to the court. He left Deccan against the wishes of Aurangzeb but in place of going to the court proceeded to Bikaner. He left the Deccan in such haste that he could not bring his sons Kesri Singh and Padam Singh with him. After his arrival to Bikaner, we are completely unaware of his movements. It is also very surprising that at this critical juncture neither Shah Jahan nor Dara Shukoh approached him for his support, although such requests were made to other Chieftains of Rajasthan. Possibly the presence of his two sons with Aurangzeb made his position very vulnerable and during the entire period of the succession war he remained neutral and followed the policy of wait and watch.

As mentioned above Kesri Singh and Padam Singh the sons of Rao Karan who remained in the Deccan, accompanied Prince Aurangzeb and loyally

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1 Shahnawaz Khan writes that when the fort of Daulatabad was given to Prince Aurangzeb, 500/500 mansab of Rao Karan withdrawn which he had received on the condition of governing the fort of Daulatabad. (M.U., II, pp.288-89) But Wris and Salih recorded him as a mansabdar of 3000/2000 up to 1658. (Waris a, p.261; Salih, III, p.455)
2 M.U., II, pp.288-89
3 M.U., II, pp.288-89; Vir vinod, II, p.498
4 M.U., II, pp.289-90; Vir vinod, II, p.498

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fought in the battles for the cause of Aurangzeb.\(^1\) They were rewarded by the Emperor after his succession to throne but the Emperor was extremely unhappy with Rao Karan for his attitude during the war of succession. Therefore, soon after coronation an army under the command of Amir Khan Khwafi was sent to take action against him. But as soon as the army reached on the borders of Bikaner, Rao Karan submitted before Amir Khan without fighting and came to the court with imperial forces. He apologised for his past conduct and requested to be pardoned. The Emperor agreed to his request and conferred on him his previous rank of 3000/2000.\(^2\) On this occasion he also met his sons.

The account of Bikaner house discussed above makes it quite clear that Shah Jahan by and large followed the same policy which his father Jahangir had initiated. His relation with Rao Karan remained cordial, however, he was neither given charge of a Suba or a higher rank. At the end of Shah Jahan’s reign he held the rank of 3000/2000 and deputed to serve as one of the commanders under Aurangzeb.

\(^1\) Dayal Das Khyat, II, p.176; Karni Singh, p.81  
\(^2\) Maasir i Jahangiri, p.32; Alamgirnama, p.559; M.U., II, pp.289-90