CHAPTER 2

MARATHA INTERVENTION IN RAJASTHAN:
1761-1794 (PART II)

The second phase of the Maratha-Rajput relations covers the time period from 1761-1794, when the Rajputs tried to resist the Marathas only to be finally crushed by Mahadaji Sindhia. The Marathas had antagonized themselves to the Rajputs and their relations had soured to such an extent that none of them participated in the battle of Panipat to support them. The Maratha defeat in this battle had far reaching consequences. For the time being all their achievements were wiped off and taking advantage of the situation the Rajputs also tried to assert themselves. However, the Marathas soon recovered from this setback. Mahadaji Sindhia and Nana Phadnis who escaped the carnage of Panipat rose to be the saviours of the Maratha State. Malhar Rao Holkar also played a significant role. In a letter addressed to Sawai Madho Singh, Abdali acknowledged the fact that the Marathas fought courageously but that they were doomed to suffer utter defeat. From among the many causes of the Maratha defeat in the battle of Panipat, one was the injudicious Maratha dealings with the Rajputs. The friendship and good feeling sedulously cultivated by the first two Peshwas was destroyed by the personal rivalries between Sindhia and Holkar. They were posted in the North to act whenever occasion and emergency demanded. According to Sardesai, this alienation of Rajput sympathies by Sindhia and Holkar ultimately weakened the Maratha power.

An outcome of the Maratha defeat was a generalized revolution against their domination in Hindustan – in the Gangetic Doab, Bundelkhand, Rajasthan and Malwa. The pathetic situation could be best described in the following words from Hingane Daftar: “tyanchya najra firlya Hindustancha amal sarv utla,”

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1 Jadunath Sarkar, *Sindhia as Regent*, p. i.
4 Hingane Daftar, p. 119.
turned hostile and Maratha control in Hindustan ceased to be) and as per Holkarshahicha Itihas: “Hindustancha amal sarv uthla,” Marathas lost their control everywhere in Hindustan. Everywhere suppressed chieftains, and petty landlords raised their heads against the Deccanies. Badrinath Keshav also draws a graphic picture of the North after the Panipat disaster. The Maratha defeat at Panipat emboldened the Mewar sardars who brought Rampura, a fertile plain of Mewar under their control. The seizure of Rampura from the Marathas added a powerful source to the already depleted treasury of Mewar. Having realized the grimness of the situation the Marathas reached Rampura, killed four hundred Chundawats and regained their lost post. Malhar Rao Holkar reached Rampura three days later. As a result of the Maratha success, Holkar retained out of 519 villages of the pargana of Rampura, 488 villages yielding an annual revenue of 3,50,000 rupees.

The task of resisting the Marathas in Rajasthan now fell upon the Kachhwahas of Jaipur and Rathors of Jodhpur. But Sawai Madho Singh of Jaipur revived the dormant Kachhwa-Rathor rivalry. He backed the exiled Ram Singh for the throne of Jodhpur. This antagonised Bijay Singh of Jodhpur. The Marathas took full advantage of their rivalry and made them their easy prey. Balaji Gobind informs Dadasaheb that Bijay Singh proceeded to Merta from Jodhpur and that Sawai Madho Singh had espoused the cause of Ram Singh.

Sawai Madho Singh, in order to oust the Marathas from Rajasthan invited the cooperation of Shah Alam II, Najib Khan and Yakub Ali, as is evident from the Maratha documents. Sawai Madho Singh not only alienated Bijay Singh but also attacked Sardar Singh Naruka of Uniara. A battle was fought between the armies of Jaipur and Uniara. This is corroborated from a letter written by Malhar Tukdeo, the beginning and end of which are unfortunately missing. As per his report, there was

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7 S.P.D., Vol. XXIX, No.23.
8 R.K. Saxena, Maratha Relations with the Major States of Rajputana, p. 60.
11 Ibid., No. 19.
heavy fighting going on between Sawai Madho Singh and Sardar Singh of Uniara. At this time Malhar Rao Holkar was busy investing Kota. The Rajput Chiefs of Kota, Bundi, Karauli, Khichi and Sopar promised to join him. Additionally, Sawai Madho Singh sent a vast army to besiege Nenwa, which was held by the Marathas under Sadashiv Gopal. Another army was directed towards Patan which is twelve miles North-east of city of Kota. Balaji Govind wrote to Dadasaheb, informing him that Sawai Madho Singh had deputed his diwan Nandlal to proceed with an army to Nenwa and capture it. In a letter dated 26th September, 1761, the kamavisdar of Kota, Lalaji Ballal informed Jankoji Sindhia that besides trying to settle the matter with the Uniara thikana of Jaipur, a Maratha artillery and contingent assembled at Nenwa and that 4,000 to 5,000 soldiers were sent to Rampura where other forces would also join. Trimbak Ram Phadnis reported to the Peshwa about Sawai Madho Singh’s intrusions in the Maratha territory. The Marathas had their outposts in the Hada State. This combined army was led by Raj Singh Ghorchara, diwans – Kaniram and Nandlal and Surat Singh Shiv brahmpota. At the sight of the imposing Jaipur army the Marathas evacuated their outposts.

When the movements of the Jaipur army were reported to Malhar Rao Holkar, he marched from Indore to the Mukandara Pass with an army of 6,000 soldiers. The diwan of Kota, Akheram Pancholi, Zalim Singh and the foster-brother of the Rao Raja along with 3,000 Rajput allies joined Malhar Rao Holkar at Bariya, in the Kota territory. A battle took place between Mangrol and Bhatwara resulting in the total destruction of the Jaipur army. The Peshwa was apprised of the destruction of the Jaipur army by Dhan Singh that Malhar Rao Holkar after combining his forces with those of the Chief of Kota has crushed the Jaipur army which had crossed the river Chambal. Holkar pursued the Jaipur army upto Manoharpur, just forty miles North of Jaipur. Sawai Madho Singh, who was at Ranthambhor hurried back to his capital. Meanwhile Kaniram reopened negotiations with Malhar Rao Holkar to settle the dispute about the outstanding tribute. However, eruptions in Bundelkhand forced

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13 Ibid., Vol. XXIX, No. 20.
15 S.P.D., Vol. XXIX, No. 22.
16 Ibid., No. 27.
Malhar Rao Holkar to leave Jaipur territory. Holkar left Jaipur territory about 10\textsuperscript{th} February, 1762 and Jaipur had a respite for three years, from 1762 to 1765 from Maratha vahada (fear).\textsuperscript{17}

Sawai Madho Singh not only considered the Marathas as his arch enemies but also tried to expel them from the Jaipur territory. However, circumstances compelled him to seek Maratha help as he was not ready to co-operate with Bijay Singh and the Jat Raja Jawahar Singh. On 20\textsuperscript{th} February 1761, Bijay Singh received a letter from Ahmad Shah Abdali asking him to pay tribute and in return assured him of his cooperation against the Marathas. Meanwhile, the dispossessed ruler of Marwar, Ram Singh decided to take advantage of the situation and recover his throne. In this endeavour he received the support of Sawai Madho Singh. Together they attacked on Bijay Singh in May, 1761. They also received the co-operation of the Champawats, Kumpawats and Shekhawats.\textsuperscript{18} The Marathas were keenly observing these developments. Dadasaheb received the information from Balaji Govind that Sawai Madho Singh was espousing the cause of Ram Singh and that Bijay Singh was proceeding to Merta from Jodhpur.\textsuperscript{19} With the help of Malhar Rao Holkar, the renewed contest between Bijay Singh and Ram Singh ended once for all in favour of Bijay Singh. Ram Singh passed his remaining life at Jaipur, where he died in 1772.

The rivalry between Jawahar Singh and Nahar Singh also paved the way for Maratha intervention in the Jat affairs. From Mirza Raja Jai Singh (1621-1667) onwards successive Kachhwaha rulers played a pivotal role in the political management of the region. The Mughal emperors controlled and stabilized the area through the agency of the Amber house.\textsuperscript{20} Therefore, when Jawahar Singh wrested Narnol district of Jaipur, Sawai Madho Singh became alarmed. He knew that on his own he could not face his powerful opponent. Hence, he approached both Holkar and Sindhia for help.\textsuperscript{21}

Keeping in mind the Maratha interest in North India, both the Maratha leaders

\textsuperscript{17} Jadunath Sarkar, \textit{A History of Jaipur State}, p. 251.
\textsuperscript{18} G.R. Parihar, \textit{Marwar and the Marathas}, pp. 94, 95.
\textsuperscript{19} S.P.D., Vol. XXIX, No. 17.
\textsuperscript{21} Kharita from Madho Singh to Malhar Rao Holkar, \textit{Asoj Vadi} 2, V.S. 1822/1765 (Draft Kharita Section ).
favourably responded to Sawai Madho Singh’s appeal and sent their forces to Jaipur. The Maratha intervention in favour of Jaipur spoiled Jawahar Singh’s plan as he could not afford to take on the Marathas. He was forced to make peace with Sawai Madho Singh. The timely help of the Marathas saved Jaipur from the Jat incursion. This development was a turning point in Jaipur-Maratha relations at least for the time being.

Sawai Madho Singh intrigued with every possible enemy of the Jat Raja. He even supported the cause of Nahar Singh – Suraj Mal’s favourite son and Jawahar Singh’s rival for the throne. Nahar Singh held Dholpur as his appanage. Meanwhile Jawahar Singh inflicted a severe blow to the Marathas. This is referred in a letter written by Ramchandra Tukdeo to Raghunathrao that verifies the defeat suffered by a contingent of the Maratha army at the hands of the Jat. After having lost his own estate, Nahar Singh took refuge in Jaipur and died on 6th December, 1766. Consequently, Bijay Singh and Jawahar Singh joined hands against the Marathas. They decided to defeat the Dakhanis and then divide the area among themselves: (aapan sara Hindustan ra raja ek huan to Dikhniya su jhagdo kar mulak baant lesan.) Accordingly, the Jat Raja welcomed the proposal and marched to Pushkar through Jaipur territory.

This further infuriated Sawai Madho Singh. Bijay Singh was more than willing and welcomed Jawahar Singh on the bank of the sacred lake, at Pushkar. Jawahar Singh conveyed to Bijay Singh that as he was in mourning of his father Surajmal, therefore, as per tradition, he would not be able to come and meet Bijay Singh first. Hearing this, Bijay Singh himself went and met Jawahar Singh in his camp. We get the information from the Rathora ri Khyat that the two met and a lot of rejoicing took place. Bijay Singh presented two elephants, four horses and two guns to Jawahar Singh. The next day, Jawahar Singh visited Bijay Singh’s camp and was again presented two horses. On 6th November 1767 (Kartik fullmoon day), the two Rajas exchanged turbans and sat down side by side on the same carpet like brothers and sent an invitation to Sawai Madho Singh to come and join them. This provoked the proud

25 Ibid., p. 585.
Kachhwaha Raja. The vakil sent by Bijay Singh conveyed to Sawai Madho Singh that after getting rid of the Dakhani menace, they would divide their territory, out of which, Sawai Madho Singh would get Ujjain, he himself would take Gujarat and the eastern part would be given to Jawahar Singh:

“Pachhe Jaipur ukil meliya ne Madho Singhji ne kevayo ke the hee aaya ne samil huvo su Dikhiniyan ro machkur baandhan.Dikhiniyan ne Narbada paar utarandaa nahi. Uujin to thane desan ne Gujarat mein lesan, purab Jat ne desan.”

But Sawai Madho Singh sharply reprimanded Bijay Singh. Thus, Jawahar Singh’s pilgrimage to Pushkar without the prior permission of the Kachhwahas resulted in a battle between both the parties at Maonda on 14th December 1767. Jawahar Singh lost the battle but saved his life. A few months later, on 5th March 1768, Sawai Madho Singh breathed his last. After four months Jawahar Singh also died. With the deaths of Sawai Madho Singh and Jawahar Singh the last effort of resisting the Maratha dominance in North India also got lost. It is a matter of conjecture whether Sawai Madho Singh was at fault or Jawahar Singh.

After the death of Sawai Madho Singh, the Peshwa demanded the succession fee (tika nazar) from his heir Sawai Prithvi Singh. The Marathas were conveying to the Rajputs that they were the paramount power. This also symbolized that the Mughal authority was being replaced by the Marathas. Similarly, the Marathas entered into an agreement with the Rao Raja of Bundi, Ummed Singh, in the year 1769-70, according to which he was required to pay his khandani (tribute or contribution) punctually to the Peshwa’s agent and to refrain from allying himself with any enemy of the Maratha State. Though the Peshwa agreed to protect the Rao Raja if he behaved loyal to the Maratha State. However, the nature and extent of this protection is in no way indicated in the above mentioned agreement.

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Sawai Prithvi Singh, Madho Singh’s elder son was merely five years when he ascended the throne. The queen mother became the regent but in reality power was wielded by the young Raja’s maternal grandfather, Jaswant Singh Chundawat, of Deogarh in Mewar. During his reign (1768-1778), there was respite from Maratha incursions. Sawai Prithvi Singh had a son Man Singh, only six months old at the time of his death. The little orphan’s rights were superceded by his uncle Pratap Singh, a boy of thirteen. He has been harshly profiled by Sarkar.\textsuperscript{30} Successive minority rulers created lot of political instability in Jaipur.

Khushali Ram Bohra, a prominent banker was espousing the cause of Man Singh whereas, Roda Ram Khawas was the supporter of Pratap Singh. The Raja imposed a fine of rupees 15-20 lakhs on the Bohra, yet he did not hand over the child.\textsuperscript{31} The nobles were mostly the Raja’s clansmen and had served the state loyally. The Narukas, Khangarots and Shekhawats had served Sawai Jai Singh and Sawai Ishwari Singh loyally. Harnath Singh Naruka of Choru, Rao Raja Sardar Singh of Uniara, Rao Raja Shiv Singh of Sikar, Deep Singh of Kasli and Zorawar Singh of Kalakh fell into disfavour during the time of Sawai Madho Singh and now sided with the posthumous son of Maharaja Sawai Prithvi Singh.\textsuperscript{32} However, they could not bear the disgrace of taking orders from Roda Ram, popularly called Rodoji, (a tailor). Due to the Raja’s personal favour, he wielded supreme power over the government. The enmity between the old Brahman diwan, Khushali Ram Bohra and Daulat Ram Haldia ultimately proved disastrous for the Jaipur State. When the Raja made his life intolerable, Khushali Ram had no choice but to seek shelter in Sindhia’s camp.

In the later part of the eighteenth century, Mahadaji Sindhia rose to prominence and began to dominate North Indian politics. It was Mahadaji Sindhia who restored Shah Alam to his capital of Delhi in 1772. Later when Mirza Najaf Khan died on 6\textsuperscript{th} April, 1782, the Emperor deputed the Maratha ambassador at Delhi to proceed to Mahadaji’s camp with full instructions for the future plans. Hingane wrote to Mahadaji, “this is an occasion for you to secure not only monetary gains, but many other solid advantages.

\textsuperscript{30} Jadunath Sarkar, \textit{Fall of the Mughal Empire}, Vol. III, p. 337.
\textsuperscript{31} Marwar-Maratha Aitihasik Patravali, p. 24.
\textsuperscript{32} Narendra Singh, \textit{Thirty decisive battles of Jaipur}, p. 228.
Such an opportunity may not come again.” Sindhia accepted the Mughal Emperor’s invitation to come to Delhi and administer his reduced Empire. On the 1st of December, 1784, at a public darbar, the Emperor appointed the Peshwa as his Deputy (naib-i-munaib) as well as Commander-in-Chief (bakhshi-ul-mamalik), subject to the written condition that Mahadaji Sindhia and none else should be the permanent agent of the Peshwa in discharging the actual functions of these exalted offices. The khillats and rich presents bestowed by the Emperor on the Peshwa as the adjuncts of his new office, as well as complimentary robes for the Peshwa’s regent Nana Fadnis, were made over to Sindhia for dispatch to Poona. Shah Alam conferred on Mahadaji Sindhia the title of Regent Plenipotentiary (wakil-i-mutlaq). The appointment of Mahadaji Sindhia as wakil-i-mutlaq of Delhi created conditions for a possible evolution of a political arrangement legitimized by the Mughal monarch but actually dominated or governed by the Marathas. For many years the Rajput rulers had not paid a penny to the Imperial treasury. Hence, they were asked to pay rupees three crores as the arrears of their tribute and of the Maratha chauth. There was a meeting between Sindhia, Najaf Quli and the Rao Raja Pratap Singh Naruka of Machheri and they were deputed to lead an expedition against Jaipur. Sindhia began his march towards Jaipur on 3rd January, 1786, along with the Emperor. The mediation of Rao Pratap Singh and Khushali Ram Bohra was availed of to secure a peaceful payment.

After much deliberation Jaipur having agreed to pay rupees 63 lakhs (rupees 60 lakhs as peshkash and three lakhs as darbar kharch). It was further agreed that out of this amount rupees 11 lakhs were to be paid immediately (rupees 7 lakhs as cash, jewels worth rupees 3 lakhs, elephants and horses worth rupees one lakh). Rupees 10 lakhs were to be paid in six month’s time and rupees twenty lakhs were to be provided by

34 Stewart Gordon, “Ibn Batuta and a Region of Robing”, in *Robes of Honour: Khilat in Pre-Colonial and Colonial India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2003. Stewart Gordon writes that the ceremony termed khila in Arabic and khillat or sar u pa in Persian is found in much of South Asia in the pre-colonial and colonial periods, p. 1.
the secession of land. The remaining twenty two lakhs were to be covered by assignments on the revenue on the *thikanedars*. Khushali Ram became the regent again and successfully discharged the payment of the first installment of rupees 11 lakhs by the end of May. On 4th June, 1786, Sindhia started on his return journey after deputing Rayaji Patil, Najaf Quli and the Machheri Raja to collect the amount of the second installment of ten lakhs and the assignment for rupees 22 lakhs from the *thikanedars*. Sadashiv Dinker reported to Nana Saheb that Sindhia had stationed a large army to realize the stipulated amount.\(^{38}\)

Here it is important to mention that the Jaipur State’s policy towards the Marathas varied between overt resistance and covert friendly overtures. In a period of minority rule, *diwan* of the state largely determined the policy. Khushali Ram Bohra and Daulat Ram Haldia pursued conflicting policies towards the Marathas. Khushali Ram Bohra stood for friendly relations with the Marathas while his adversary Daulat Ram Haldia followed a vigorous policy of resistance. The terms agreed between the Jaipur State and Sindhia in 1786 were the result of the efforts of Khushali Ram Bohra. When Daulat Ram returned to Jaipur in the middle of January, 1787, Rao Pratap Singh Naruka once again made him the *diwan* and in that capacity he influenced the Raja to resist the Marathas. The pro-Maratha faction among the Raja’s nobles was sidelined.\(^{39}\) Khushali Ram had fallen out of favour, he along with his partisans fled to the camp of Sindhia to save their lives.

Daulat Ram Haldia made every possible effort to garner support against the Marathas. To begin with, a close defensive alliance was formed with the Jodhpur Raja. Sadashiv Dinker reported to Nana Saheb about the Rajput coalition having sent agents to the English to secure their assistance in their war against Sindhia.\(^{40}\) The next step was to instruct the Jaipur *thikanedars* everywhere not to make any payment to Sindhia as per the terms of agreement of 1786. In retaliation, Rayaji Patil at the head of a 5,000 force was deputed by Sindhia as his agent in Jaipur. The local chiefs started resisting the payment of revenue. Not only did Rayaji lost 700 men, the Jaipur government also

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\(^{38}\) G.S. Sardesai, ed., *Historical Papers*, No. 476.


\(^{40}\) G.S. Sardesai ed., *Historical Papers*, No. 415.
tried to lure the Mughals against Sindhia. In these circumstances Sindhia started preparations for an expedition against Jaipur.\footnote{G.S. Sardesai ed., \textit{Historical Papers}, No. 415.}

In the case of Jodhpur, Mahadaji Sindhia’s \textit{vakil} at Jodhpur asked the Maharaja to send the amount of the \textit{khandani}. Bijay Singh then sent two \textit{hundis} worth two lakhs and 350 elephants, eight pairs of oxen, six horses, jewellery worth 50,000, \textit{Multani chheents} (cloth), \textit{pashmina} and some weapons, that made up another one lakh. In the meanwhile, it was reported that Sindhia was going towards Agra. The Maharaja immediately sent orders to stop further movement of animals and items gifted to Sindhia. Soon Bijay Singh’s \textit{vakil} with Sindhia, Kriparam Joshi reported that he was being asked to get the \textit{khandani} amount deposited, else he should go back to Jodhpur. Bijay Singh then sent fresh orders that the installments of \textit{Magh} and \textit{Falgun} should be sent.\footnote{\textit{Marwar-Maratha Aitihasik Patrawali}, p. 21.} Meanwhile, Khushali Ram Bohra and the Machheri Raja were pushing Man Singh as a Maratha protégée and rival to Sawai Pratap Singh. In a letter dated, 11\textsuperscript{th} April 1787, the Resident informed the Governor General that Sindhia’s success was partly due to his management but principally it was due to the disunity among the rival chiefs. But it was for the first time that an association had been formed against him. Sindhia soon marched towards Jaipur and reached Dausa which is 32 miles East of Jaipur. On his arrival, Mahadaji realized that the Rajputs not only broke off their conference with him but next day left the camp without taking leave.

Apprehending an attack from the Marathas, Bijay Singh got the Jodhpur fort strengthened and also invited the \textit{sardars} and asked them to make preparations by assembling their army. He also told them that the Jodhpur State had to pay the \textit{khandani} of the last seven years. The State had been suffering from a famine for the past three years, he asked the \textit{sardars} to deposit the \textit{rehk-bab} (tax on income) in the treasury. The \textit{sardars} agreed to do so. They started depositing rupees fifty per thousand rupees. From the ordinary people, ten rupees per plough were collected. In this way, the \textit{vakil} reported that about 12-14 lakh rupees were expected to be deposited in the treasury.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 21, 22.} Due to Sindhia’s threat, Bijay Singh sent his \textit{chaubdar}
(sceptreholder) to Nana Fadnavis’s vakil, Krishnaji Jagannath and asked him to attend the court as per the protocol. In a letter written on 30th August 1787, by the Maratha vakil at Jodhpur, Nana Fadnavis was informed that all the Raja-Maharajas of Northern India had united internally.

The services of the Kachhwahas were held in high esteem even by the Mughal Emperor. When Mahadaji at the instigation of Rao Raja Pratap Singh, the challenger of Jaipur marched to conquer the Jaipur kingdom, despite the prohibition of the Emperor, the latter wrote to him:

“The house of Jaipur is an old servant and strong pillar of this empire. It is not proper to destroy it. Don’t mind the abatement of a few lakhs, but accept what tribute is paid by compromise.”

But Sindhia would not listen. He camped at Balabas, ten kos from Jaipur and demanded rupees twenty five lakhs as the arrears and current tribute, and the fort of Ranthambhor. The Jaipur Raja offered 2 or 4 lakhs. The Rao Raja secretly assured Sindhia that he himself undertook the conquest of Jaipur for the Marathas. Thus, Mahadaji spent two months in these negotiations. We get this information from a Delhi letter addressed to Hari Pant Tatya, dated 29th-3rd August 1787.

When Mahadaji Sindhia made preparations for an attack on Jaipur, the Jaipur Raja Sawai Pratap Singh wrote to the Jodhpur Maharaja Bijay Singh that the Dakhanis had become so strong by now that Jaipur alone could not resist them. If they destroy the Kachhwahas then next it would be the turn of the Rathors. Therefore, he requested him to send his forces and then together the Rathors and the Kachhwahas could repulse the Dakhanis. He further said that then the Dakhanis would not venture to come back soon. A letter from Delhi to the Peshwa, dated 5th February 1787 provided the information that the Jaipur Raja had confined (Sindhia’s ally) Khushhali Ram Bohra in the house of the Rajawats and summoned Daulat Ram Haldia to come and

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45 Jadunath Sarkar, Delhi Affairs, p. 153.
46 Ibid., p. 155.
47 Rathora ri Khyat, Vol. III, p. 604, “Maansu ekla su ruke jisa een bakhraa dikhni hai nahi. Ne Maharaj mane Dikhniyan vigad diyo to maa vigadiyo pachhe aapne hee vari wari aavi. So maari madad kar aap fayj melavo to RThor ne Kachhwan bhela hui ne Dikhniyan ne pag pachha dirai deva.”
accept the premiership. Daulat Ram in fear of Khushhali Ram had fled to Jawan Bakht and the firingis, and after a few months to Maharaja Bijay Singh; confirming his arrangements there (i.e. Jodhpur) by inducing him to assist Jaipur and that he was coming with a Marwari army to Jodhpur.\textsuperscript{48} The Jodhpur Raja wrote to Sawai Pratap Singh to distribute among his troops the 4 or 5 lakhs of rupees that he had set aside for paying tribute to Sindhiha.\textsuperscript{49}

Bijay Singh then sent Singhvi Bhivraj with an army. When Mahadaji heard about this collaboration, he spoke to the Jodhpur vakil, Purohit Jeevraj, who was posted there. He said that a Jodhpur force was on its way to help Jaipur, but by helping Jaipur, why Bijay Singh was inviting animosity with Mahadaji:

"Jaipur ri madad saru Jodhpur su foj vida hui chhe so Jaipuriyan re vaaste Maharaj mansu kyu dusmani khadi karai hai."\textsuperscript{50}

The vakil then tried to reason with Mahadaji that the force had not been sent to help Jaipur, but in self defence. Mahadaji then told him not to worry and asked the vakil to write to the Kachhwahas. Bhivraj then encamped at Sambhar with an army of 20,000 men. Mahadaji once again called the Jodhpur vakil and said that the Rathor army had reached Sambhar which indicated that they were going towards Jaipur. The vakil then replied that the Jodhpur State was not on good terms with Kishangarh and the Maratha forces were also quite nearby and what if they damage the bordering villages. Keeping all this in mind approximately 3,000 men have reached Sambhar. Meanwhile, the Rajput Rajas had persuaded Muhammad Beg Hamdani to join them. Everyday he was to be given rupees 3,000 and if he was successful in defeating Mahadaji, then he would be rewarded with Agra and Deeg. Having secured these promises, Hamdani came to Jaipur and the Rathors also started from Sambhar and reached Jobner. Mahadaji realized the gravity of the situation and decided not to fight at that time. He then left for Mathura.\textsuperscript{51}

The Rathors decided not to follow Mahadaji. However, Hamdani felt that if they pursued Mahadaji, they could compel the Marathas to go beyond the Narmada. Then

\textsuperscript{48} Jadunath Sarkar, Delhi Affairs, pp. 153, 155. \\
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., p. 155. \\
\textsuperscript{50} Rathora ri Khyat, Vol. III, pp. 604, 605. \\
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., pp. 605, 606.
they could get Agra evacuated from their control. Hence, all the three forces pursued Mahadaji. Though Rao Pratap Singh of Machheri asked Mahadaji Sindhia to fight back but Sindhia chose to mark his own time and come back after two months. The Rao Raja told Mahadaji that if he turned his back towards the Rajputs now, then his control over the other areas would also get affected: “eeno aage pooh dikhavo chho su mulka maey su amal uth jasi.” He further instigated Mahadaji saying that who would then allow you to retain your hold over Agra and Delhi. Rao Raja advised Sindhia to attack Jaipur immediately, whereas Rana Khan, who had from the first advised Sindhia to make peace with Jaipur and not to despise the Rajput power, now reminded Sindhia of this and added: “Do what you consider best.” A similar sentiment was expressed in a letter written by the British Resident with Mahadaji Sindhia, William Kirkpatrick to the Governor General, the former informs that Mahadaji did not yield to the pacific measures suggested warmly by Rana Khan and Rayaji Patel. He writes that: “the Rao Raja and two or three disaffected Rajput fugitives are the only persons whose councils are violent.” Mahadaji then marched to Lalsot, although Rayaji, Patel, Ambaji and Bhauji tried their best to dissuade him from taking such a decision. The messengers immediately informed the Rajputs. Sawai Pratap Singh and the Rathors then marched to Bhinai and encamped there. From there they marched to Madhogarh and finally reached at Tunga.

**The Lalsot Campaign**

The Rajputs were itching for a battle with Sindhia. The Lalsot campaign of 1787 exhibited the accumulated hatred of the Rajputs against the Marathas. It also proved that Sindhia made the blunder of underestimating Rajput power. Somehow Mahadaji saved his army from a complete disaster in the Lalsot campaign. The invasion of Jaipur was undoubtedly a great error of diplomacy and strategy on the part of Sindhia. For this he had to pay a heavy price as he lost his patiently built power for full one year. The rebuff at Lalsot made Sindhia more revengeful towards the Kachhwahas and the Rathors.

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53 Jadunath Sarkar, Delhi Affairs, p. 155.
55 Jadunath Sarkar, Sindhia as Regent, p. 17.
56 Ibid., p. vii.
Towards the end of August, 1787, there was battle between Jaipur and Patil Bawa:\footnote{Mahadaji Sindhia was addressed as ‘Patilbawa’ by the Marathas.} “San 1787 che Aagastant Jaipurvale va Patilbuwanche yudh jhale.”\footnote{Holkarshahicha Itihas, Vol. I, p. 326} The Lalsot campaign continued for a period of five months. Interestingly, a volume of Persian news-letters covering the events, rumours in Mahadaji’s camp and also in the Jaipur court, give lot of details accurately.\footnote{Jadunath Sarkar, Sindhia as Regent.} We can also get a British perspective of the crucial years from 1785 to 1794 from the English Records of Maratha History.\footnote{Ibid., pp. iv,v.} Sarkar is of the opinion that the value of these letters get enhanced as their intelligence is far more accurate. The dispatches of the English Residents give a broader survey of Indian politics as compared to the terse matter-of-fact Marathi letters. The Resident’s despatches give us the official or front window view of North Indian politics.\footnote{Giles Tillotson, Jaipur Nama : Tales from the Pink City, Penguin Books, New Delhi, 2006, P. 51.} Among the Residents who were deputed at Sindhia’s camp include the Anderson brothers, William Kirkpatrick and William Palmer, to name a few. They give minute information about Mahadaji’s strategies in dealing with the Rajputs. William Francklin, a captain in the service of the East India Company, wrote a history of the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam few years later. Although Franklin did not witness the battle, he gathered from Mughal sources that the defections were crucial and were motivated by envy towards Sindhia on the part of his Mughal colleagues. Franklin’s account suggests that Sindhia was set up to fail.\footnote{Ibid., p. 2.}

Mahadaji advanced to Lalsot on 15\textsuperscript{th} June, 1787, lackadaisically. In view of the famine he decided to wait for his trusted detachments to join him. On 23\textsuperscript{rd} June Sindhia assumed the offensive. He was quite precautious and a well planned strategy was followed. Mahadaji himself with 7,000 and ten large guns proceeded with four or five miles ahead followed by Rana Khan Bhai. On 8\textsuperscript{th} July, Rana Khan reported to Sindhia that “Through starvation every day 150 men are leaving me, and you are not attending to it!”\footnote{Ibid.} Mahadaji’s army faced a severe crisis regarding the provisions: “Lashkarant mahagai far. Rasad yet nahi. Sarwasi badmali keli.”\footnote{Ibid.} The result was
that the cost of the consumer goods became very high. The Rathora ri Khyat informs us that the cost of food and fodder had risen very high. The Rathors and the Kachhwahas were closely watching the situation and tried to add to Sindhia’s problems. Besides these, Muhammad Beg Hamdani deserted Sindhia and joined the Jaipur Raja.

This fact can be corroborated by a Delhi letter dated 29th-3rd August, 1787 that informs about how Daulat Ram Haldia set about alluring Muhammad Beg Hamdani and the Hindustani troops with Sindhia, who were bitter as their salary remained unpaid. It further said that some Mughalia sardars – Mansur Khan etc. – went off to the side of Jaipur. Muhammad Beg Khan also defected. He received a royal welcome, rupees 3,000 a day and leadership of the Rajputs. The British Resident reported that the defection of Muhammad Beg Hamdani dispirited Sindhia, who now became suspicious of his Mughal and Hindustani troops. In another letter he reported that the Rajas of Jaipur, Jodhpur and Muhammad Beg Hamdani had entered into a treaty to share land and resources in the event of Sindhia’s expulsion from Hindustan. They agreed on the following points:

1. The Jaipur Raja would get the possession of all the territories that belonged to his family during the time of Sawai Madho Singh.
2. He is to divide equally with Bijay Singh, the Jodhpur Raja, the dominions of the Rao Raja.
3. Muhammad Beg was to enjoy whatever may remain of the country possessed by the late Najaf Khan, after restoring to the Raja of Jaipur such parts of it as originally appertained to his family.
4. Of whatever other districts they may subdue the Hamdani was to keep one moiety (half), and the Rajas were to divide equally the remaining one.

Tukoji Holkar’s jealous attitude further aggravated the situation for Sindhia. Holkar instigated more defections from Sindhia’s army. Dharam Rao, a Maratha commander

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66 Jadunath Sarkar, Mahadaji Sindhia and North Indian Affairs, p. 189.
67 Jadunath Sarkar, Delhi Affairs, p. 155.
68 Jadunath Sarkar, Mahadaji Sindhia and North Indian Affairs, p. 196.
of a thousand horse, defected to the Jaipur ruler along with two battalions of sepoys and about 3,000 horse.70 As pressure mounted for a decisive trial of strength in both the camps a battle was fought on 28th July, in the plains between Tunga and Bidakha. Lalsot, after which this battle is named, stands fourteen miles away from the actual field of encounter.71 Hamdani took charge of the cannons72. The Dakhanis also advanced in large numbers. There was a long and bloody struggle leading to large scale casualties on both sides.

But the greatest loss of the Rajputs was the death of Muhammad Beg Hamdani. When the Jaipur Raja was informed about this calamity, he ordered Daulat Ram to call Hamdani’s son to occupy the vacant seat of his father on the elephant.73 Later Hamdani’s coffin was sent to Jaipur where it was cremated at Ramjaani’s bagichi and a chabutara was erected in his honour74. From a Delhi letter dated 29th-3rd August, 1787, we get to know that after the battle, the Raja of Jaipur paid a visit to the tents of Agha Najaf Ali, the son of the deceased Hamdani and Mirza Ismail Beg, his brother’s son, and condoled with them.75 In the same letter it is mentioned that when the Jaipur Raja visited the Rathor camp; they complained that while fighting desperately they had not been supported by the Kachhwaha Rajputs. The Raja of Jodhpur on hearing of this news, sent another contingent of 10,000 Rathors to aid Jaipur, also 20 pairs of gold bracelets, 20 pearl necklaces and 20 swords for his sardars. Nearly 1,000 Sindhi mercenaries of Multan and a corps from the Raja of Bikaner and the Daudputra (Bahawalpur) came to the assistance of the Raja of Jaipur.76

On being summoned by Mahadaji, the daroga replied that if Mahadaji could pay their arrears, they were ready to fight: “Mari chadhi-chadhi kharchi chukai do to mein rad karaan.”77 As per a letter addressed to Hari Pant Tatya, Mahadaji Sindhia offered them one month’s pay then and the rest afterwards. But they demanded five month’s pay later.

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70 S.C. Misra, Sindhia-Holkar Rivalry in Rajasthan, Sundeep Prakashan, Delhi, 1981, pp. 93, 94.
71 Ibid., p.ix; Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. III, p. 367.
72 Jadunath Sarkar, Mahadaji Sindhia and North Indian Affairs, p. 211.
74 Ibid.
75 Jadunath Sarkar, Delhi Affairs, p. 157.
76 Ibid., pp. 157, 158.
77 Ibid.
Sindhia then offered to pay three months arrears but the commandants did not relent. They returned the jewels sent by Sindhia, saying “Of what use would this be? Give us cash. The Jaipur Raja has sent rupees 50,000 to us”. In anger, Sindhia ordered his Deccani fauj to plunder the commandants of the paltan. On hearing of it the latter scammed to the Jaipur camp and turning the muzzles of their 100 guns began to fire on Sindhia’s army. The battalions who moved off to the Rajput camp carried with them a great park of artillery, about 80 pieces of cannon. They were chiefley led by their chiefs and subedars. The battle ended in the evening without any decisive result. However, the support for Sindhia was depleting day by day. In panic the Marathas decided to retreat. Circumstances compelled Sindhia to beat a retreat on 31st July, 1787. The battle resulted in a resounding victory for the Rajputs. The newsreporter informed that the Patel had fled: “Halkara aaye khabar divi ke Patel naas gayo.”

Bijay Singh was informed about their victory and the flight of Mahadaji Sindhia.

Hearing this there was a lot of rejoicing, cannons were fired, trumpets were blown. Rathor Badar Singh Champawat, along with 500 horses, had followed the Marathas and after covering about ten kos recovered and brought back two carts loaded with cannons. However, dastur komwar informs that on hearing about Sindhia’s flight, the Jaipur Raja ordered that the Patel should be looted. Accordingly, along with Hamdani’s son and nephew, Raja Amar Singh and the others pursued Sindhia with an army of 20,000. Shriji, i.e., the Jaipur Raja on the other hand stayed at the Sonad village and later went to Bidakha, where a battle had been fought with Mahadaji Sindhia. Thus, the battle of Tunga – miscalled that of Lalsot, “though sanguinary, had no decisive result.” But one can safely conclude that a united show of strength by the Rajputs compelled the Marathas to ponder that they had underestimated them. But the Lalsot campaign did not reduce the troubles of the Rajputs. They could not deliver themselves from the Marathas. While retreating from Lalsot, Mahadaji had

78 Jadunath Sarkar, Delhi Affairs, p. 158.
79 Jadunath Sarkar, Mahadaji Sindhia and North Indain Affairs, pp. 216, 217.
80 Rathora ri Khyat, Vol. III, P. 615, Mahadaji Sindhia was addressed as ‘Sindhia Patel,’ by the Rajputs.
81 Ibid., ‘Bando naas gayo.’
83 Jadunath Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. III, p. 380.
resolved to make the Rajputs pay for their audacity. He had turned his face back to the country and sworn, “If I live, I shall reduce Jaipur and Jodhpur to dust.”

Bijay Singh asked the nobles to make arrangements to send funds for the army. For this purpose, Bijay Singh gave the pattas of rupees 10,000 each, of the two villages, Panchlo and Kakdai to Maheshdas. Rupees 20,000 from both the villages were collected. Similarly baab was collected from some other areas also. This indicates the financial strain the State treasury had to bear on account of the war. The British Resident was of the opinion that the Jaipur Raja had great difficulty in keeping together the army. However Bijay Singh’s support was encouraging to oppose Sindhia. In a letter dated, 14th September, 1787, Kirkpatrick informed the Governor General, Cornwallis that Ajmer was seriously threatened by Bijay Singh. Kirkpatrick considered him to be, “the prime mover of the Rajput combination, and indeed as the author of it.” The Rathora ri Khyat corroborates it. Singhvi Dhanraj marched from Merta and came to Ajmer. The city was taken by him. The siege lasted for two months. The Marathas conveyed to Mahadaji that either he should make an attack on the Rajputs or the fort would get out of their control. The Marathas attacked Marwar in order to ease pressure from Ajmer. Rana Khan and Bapuji Vithal suggested that Sindhia should abandon Hindustan for the time being and that he should save Ajmer and all the old possessions which were slipping out of hands. Accordingly, Ambaji was sent with 7,000 men. Dhanraj sent messengers to Jodhpur that the State of Kishangarh had brought the Marathas on them: “Dikhniyan ri fauj mare upar Kishangarh vaala laaya hai.” One day Ambaji and the Kishangarh army entered Ajmer city. Thrice the city was attacked and each time it was repulsed. The Maharaja then asked his sardars and other supports to march to Ajmer and fight the Marathas.

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87 Ibid., p. 255.
89 Jadunath Sarkar, *Delhi Affairs*, letter dated 14th December, 1787.
Ambaji and Kishangarh

Ambaji left Ajmer and camped at Kawad where a severe exchange of artillery took place between Ambaji and the Chandawats. The next day, Ambaji went to Kishangarh. The Kishangarh Raja told Ambaji that all the great warriors of Marwar were in Dhundhar, and the Rathors had just somehow assembled those men to fight the Marathas. He further suggested that if his own army joined Ambaji, together they could easily defeat and loot the Jodhpur force:

“Kisangarh Rajaji Ambaji ne kaho ke Marwar ro kaju lok to Dhundhar mein chhe ne athe bhagat bheli karne laya chhe su moro hi lok saath husi so chalo foj lutsa.”

Bhadar Singh was declared as the Raja of Kishangarh by Maharaja Bakht Singh and they had affable relations. Maharaja Bijay Singh also gave his son, Pratap Singh due recognition. But Bhadar Singh’s successor, Pratap Singh severed his relations with Jodhpur. The Jodhpur forces joined the Jalore forces and waited for the Marathas to arrive. The Marathas formed themselves into three units. Moreover, the Marathas tried to create disturbance in the Rajput camp. But the Rathors put up a stiff fight. Soon Ambaji and the Kishangarh force had to flee. The Marathas lost 150 men and 120 were wounded. Ambaji accused Pratap Singh of misleading the Marathas. Bijay Singh sent instructions to the musayabs/musahabs (the wealthy men) to get Roopnagar and Kishangarh free from Maratha control. The Rathor force soon established its control over Rupnagar. Kishangarh resolved the issue by offering a peshkash of rupees three lakhs. Out of this amount, two lakhs were paid in cash, 50,000 were given as bharna and two khandi worth one lakh rupees. As the Jodhpur army was fighting on three fronts, it was facing fiscal strain. Therefore, the Jodhpur Raja asked Surat Singh, the ruler of Bikaner to send some money. The Jodhpur Raja applied tika to Surat Singh, who sent rupees three lakhs in return.

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92 Ibid., p. 619.
93 Ibid., p. 620.
94 Ibid., p. 626.
Mahadaji Sindhia was camping at Alwar wherefrom he decided to sneak out of Alwar and go to Ujjain via Ajmer, Kota and Bundi. When Mahadaji was at Manoharpur, he found the Rathors confronting him. He then went towards Mewat and while passing through Deeg he went to Agra, where a battle was fought with Ismail Beg. In this battle, the Rajputs did not help Ismail Beg. Even then Mahadaji was defeated and Ismail Beg triumphed. Mahadaji went towards Gwalior while Ismail Beg occupied Dhaulpur.  

**Abortive Rajput-Mughal Alliance**

Nandram Haldia and Lalji were sent to Delhi to meet the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II. The Rajputs desired to present a *nazrana* to the Emperor. The Emperor agreed and came to Rewari with 7,000 force. Sawai Pratap Singh also reached Rewari along with 40,000 force and other Kachhwahas. The Rathor force numbering 15,000 also assembled. Najaf Quli’s force of 10,000 also came. The Jaipur Raja presented 100 *mohars* (gold coins) to the Emperor. A total of 235 *mohars* were presented to the Mughal Emperor. The Emperor presented as *inam a siropav*, a sword and an elephant to Pratap Singh and gifts to all those who accompanied the Raja as per their status. The Rajputs requested the Emperor to co-operate with them to send the Marathas beyond the Narmada.” The Emperor then replied that Mahadaji used to give rupees 5,000 as daily expenses that were used to take care of the day to day expenses of the Emperor. If Jaipur and Jodhpur would give rupees 5,000 as daily expenses then the Emperor would be ready to march on anyone. All conquered *parganas* would belong to them. Sawai Pratap Singh assembled all the *sardars* and asked their opinion. The *sardars* said that they could not afford to pay such a huge amount. After much deliberation, Daulatram Haldia requested the Emperor to go back to Delhi saying that both the Rajas would fight the Marathas. Daulatram gave two fake *hundis* to assuage the feelings of the Emperor. The Rathor *sardars* went to their respective places after fighting at Kishangarh. In order to celebrate the occasion of defeating Mahadaji, all the *mutasaddis* were given refreshment. Meanwhile

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96 Ibid., p.623.
97 Ibid., “Paatsaji su araj kivi ke Hajrat kooch kije su Dikhniyan ne Narbada paar lopaey desaan.”
factionalism within the Rathor sardars resurfaced on the issue whether the Patel (Mahadaji Sindhia) should have been fought or not. Thus, the Maratha problem remained as it was. Khushaliram Bohra was with Mahadaji Sindhia at Gwalior. Chaudhary Bhera was sent to him for settlement. Mahadaji asked for the amount of peshkash that had accumulated for so many years. He assured not to insist on more khirni. He further demanded the surrender of Ajmer and the separation from Jaipur. Thus, chaudhary Bhera came back without accomplishing much. Clearly, the Maharaja as well as Mahadaji were adamant on their respective stand.

Despite the prevailing hostility, Bapuji Vithal wrote secretly to the Jaipur Raja to make peace with Sindhia, or else his realm would be devastated. This fact has been acknowledged even by a letter from Delhi dated 20th-27th September, 1787. The Jaipur Raja offered to make peace if Sindhia would surrender the Rao Raja Pratap Singh and remain within his own frontiers, he would only pay the tribute which was settled in the time of Mirza Najaf Khan. But Sindhia set aside their urge to make peace and said, “the Raja of Jaipur will know my capacity. When I have gained such a victory over him, I shall make peace.”

**Ismail Beg Versus the Marathas**

Mahadaji Sindhia soon started making preparations to avenge his defeat. He paid the arrears of his soldiers. He handed over the command of 12,000 men to De Boigne. All came to Dholpur with De Boigne. Hearing these developments, Ismail Beg wrote to the Jaipur and Jodhpur Rajas for funds and forces left with him, so he asked the Rajas to send a force of 10,000 each. The Jaipur Raja prevaricated and did nothing. Bijay Singh sent a hundi worth rupees 30,000 to Delhi to the Jodhpur vakil, Pancholi Rohila Ghulam Qadir came to Deeg with a 16,000 force. Mahadaji Sindhia marched from Dholpur and after reaching Agra, fought with Ismail Beg. The next day a severe fight took place. Having been repulsed, Ghulam Qadir went to Delhi and Ismail Beg fought for a while then ran for his life. But the Marathas pursued him. Many of the followers of Ismail Beg were killed. Mahadaji Sindhia emerged victorious.

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98 Jadunath Sarkar, *Delhi Affairs*, p. 163.
Both Ghulam Qadir and Ismail Beg came to Delhi. Ghulam Qadir inflicted unthinkable atrocities on the royal household and mercilessly blinded the Emperor Shah Alam II. These events forced Ismail Beg and Mahadaji to join. Accordingly, Rayaji Patel met Ismail Beg and gave him rupees 30,000. Ismail Beg stayed at Delhi only while Ghulam Qadir left Delhi and camped only after crossing the Yamuna. He had already sent the carts loaded with the wealth collected from the Red Fort. The Marathas pursued him. Later he was caught. His eyes were gauged out and his limbs were cut off.100

These happenings struck terror in the hearts of the Rajput Rajas. Bijay Singh immediately sent his vakil, Lalji Mehta to Jaipur and conveyed the news of Mahadaji’s victory. Bijay Singh thought to invite Taimur Shah who was an enemy of the Marathas. Bakht Singh sent Miyan Shah Nawaz Khan’s vakil and Lala Izzatram to the Shah of Persia. They were both given 1500 rupees as expenses along with saranjam. He also sent a letter to the Shah stating that the Marathas were the enemies not only of the Muslims but of the Rajas also. Bijay Singh assured the co-operation of Jaipur and Jodhpur against the Marathas. All this information was sent to Nana Fadnavis by the Peshwa’s vakil at the Jodhpur court. He also mentioned that Bijay Singh was determined to destroy the Marathas, hence he invited the Shah.101 Sawai Pratap Singh also tried to secure the armed services of Mirza Ismail Beg, the nephew and successor of the dead Muhammad Beg Hamdani who immediately joined hands with the Rajas of Jaipur and Jodhpur. The envoys of the two Rajas reached the camp of the Mirza near Narnaul with one and a half lakhs in cash and promises of more money. The following terms were settled:

1. The Jodhpur and Jaipur governments would pay the Mirza seven and five lakhs respectively, namely two lakhs down and ten lakhs on the eve of the actual fighting;

2. The Mirza should leave his family in Jaipur as hostages for his good faith and

101 Marwar-Maratha Aitihasik Patrawali, pp. 42, 43.
3. The Mirza should send away the *vakil* of Sindhia who had until now been in attendance at his camp.\(^{102}\)

In this fluid political situation and shifting loyalties, nobody was sure of anyone. For example, Ismail Beg was with the Marathas but secretly plotting to cross over to the Rajput Rajas. Jaipur nobles wanted their Raja to ditch the Jodhpur Raja. After much deliberations with their *sardars*, both the Rajas decided to join Ismail Beg but did not send sufficient forces as desired by the Nawab. All these developments were known to Mahadaji Sindhia: “*Patel nu khabar hui ke Nawab Ismal Beg Jepar Jodhpur ek hua.*”\(^{103}\) He immediately sent De Boigne to attack them. Lakhwa Dada was sent with 50,000 men. Mahadaji was also joined by Tukoji. Tukoji’s son, Kashiram also joined them with 10,000 men.

They all marched from Mathura and reached Patan. From Jodhpur *bhandari* Gangaram, the Jodhas of Khari Dhava, the *sardars* of Chaurasi, Meratia Raghunath Singhot, Surtanot, the *asamies* (contingents) of Udawats, Bhawan Singh Lambia and the *Thakur* of Khejadala, Bhati Uranjot marched. But Jaipur did not show any enthusiasm in joining them.

**Battle of Patan (1790)**

Between 1787 to 1790, Rajasthan was free from Maratha ravages. This was the time utilized by Mahadaji to revive his lost power and prestige in North India. After having secured his position as the Regent of the Mughal Empire, he directed his attention towards Rajasthan to deal with the Rajas of Jaipur and Jodhpur. To meet Mahadaji, both the Rajas had also made preparations and even secured the services of Mirza Ismail Beg. However, this time Sindhia appears to have made better preparations as reported in a letter dated 21\(^{st}\) June, 1790, by W. Palmer to Cornwallis.\(^{104}\) In another letter dated 26\(^{th}\) June, 1790, W. Palmer informed Cornwallis that Sindhia was determined to crush the Rajas of Jaipur and Jodhpur.\(^{105}\)


\(^{105}\) Ibid., p. 368.
A battle was fought at Patan which is situated between Ajmer and Gwalior. De Boigne played a decisive role in this battle. The Rajput Rajas were completely routed. Patan was taken by storm after three days and it was under Maratha control: “Ya ladainantar teen divasani Patan shahar Marathyani kabij karun jamindost kele.” During this campaign, the Patel himself was not present. He was at Mathura when he received the news of the success at Patan. After the defeat of Patan, Ismail Beg marched towards Jodhpur along with a Jaipur force of 4,000 horse under the command of Daulatram Haldia. Interestingly, in this battle Holkar stood aloof which further strained the relations between Sindhia and Holkar. The Rajput Rajas tried to benefit from the rivalry between Mahadaji Sindhia and Tukoji Holkar. This is evident from British sources.

In 1788, Tukoji Holkar appointed Sardar Singh Mehta as his vakil to the Jodhpur court and conveyed to the Maharaja about brotherly relations between Maharaja Abhay Singh and Malhar Rao Holkar. Later Bijay Singh sent three vakils, Shrichand Shivchand Singhvi, Bishan Singh Purohit and Shivdas Chauhan to meet Holkar. Attempts began to be made to establish cordial relations between Bijay Singh, Holkar and Ali Bahadur (the grandson of Baji Rao and Mastani). As there were dissensions between Sindhia, Holkar and Ali Bahadur, Holkar and Ali Bahadur withdrew from the campaign.

Jodhpur’s Resistance to the Marathas

Having settled his score with the Jaipur Raja, Sindhia directed his attention towards Jodhpur. The Marathas tried to create dissensions within their opponents by bringing the paltaniyas (battalions) to their side. Accordingly, they met the daroga of the paltan and offered rupees three lakhs and promised to give more in future. As soon as Ismail Beg received this information, he became alert. But Ismail Beg was advised not to suspect
the *paltaniyas*. The Marwar force numbered 9,000. The *Nawab*, Shahmal, Vanechand, Gangaram along with the Jaipur force and the *paltaniyas* got ready for the fight. As the *Nawab* did not trust the *paltaniyas*, he watched them with 300 cavalrymen. Despite his watchful eye the *paltaniyas* ultimately betrayed and helped the Marathas to win. The Marathas plundered the camps of the *Nawab* and the Rajputs. The cannons were also captured by the Marathas. However, the *Nawab* and Najaf Quli escaped from the battlefield. The Jaipur force also left the field. There followed acrimonious accusations among the Rajput *sardars*. Bhivraj said that the mutual rivalry of the *mutasaddis* had proved ruinous to the state.\(^{111}\)

The Marathas took advantage of this pathetic situation of the Rajputs. All the property, guns and arms of the confederates left in the field or in their camps were captured. The spoils of victory amounted to 105 pieces of artillery, 21 elephants, 8,000 flintlocks, 1300 camels, 300 horses, besides many lakhs worth of other kinds of property. The casualities on the side of the vanquished were five battalions and 3,000 Rathor horsemen. Ismail Beg’s army was practically annihilated. In fact it ceased to exist as a military unit due to loss of arms, equipments, tents, and other baggage.\(^{112}\)

The Jaipur Raja Sawai Pratap Singh was asked by the Marathas not to join the Rathors. Meanwhile, many skirmishes took place between the Marathas and the Rajputs. The Marathas were able to establish control on many towns. After controlling Parbatsar, the Marathas marched to Ajmer. Mahadaji Sindhia spent three lakh rupees and got some *jaap* (ritual) done in the name of Hanumanji.\(^{113}\) The Marathas soon conquered Ajmer also. After that the Marathas went to Pushkar where they asked the *mahajans* to pay rupees one lakh as penalty: “Ne baab ghale su to mulak suno padiyo tare manjana upar rupiya (10,0000) ek lak dand ra ghaliya.”\(^{114}\)

**Battle of Merta**

Meanwhile, Raja Bijay Singh tried to win over De Boigne by bribing him. Anyhow he failed in his plan. The town of Ajay Meru, meaning invincible hill, also came to be

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known as Ajmer. It was coveted by the Mughals, the Jodhpur Rajas and the Marathas as well. Keeping in mind its geographical location, let us understand the importance of the fort of this city. In order to secure the safety and security of the travellers and also for protecting his domains, Ajay Pal Singh, the Chauhan ruler of Sambhar, built a fort and a town in the early seventh century on a lofty hill named Bitlhi. In due course of time, the fort of Bithli came to be known as Ajaygarh or Taragarh also. Garh Bithli is said to have been so called from the fact that the garh (fortress) was built on the Bithli hill.

The fortress of Taragarh at Ajmer was considered as “the key to Rajasthan.” The Rathors were encamped at Merta, seventy six miles north-east of Ajmer. Merta is called the “Gateway of Marwar.” A decisive battle was fought here between the Marathas and the Rajputs. On 21st August, 1790, De Boigne entered the town of Ajmer. When Taragarh capitulated, Mahadaji reported this achievement to Nana Saheb. The successes of Mahadaji’s arms over the Rajputs at Ajmer, Sambhar and Merta was reported by Appaji Ram to the Maratha authorities. To avoid further conflict, Bijay Singh sent peace proposals with Vyas Nawal Rai to Mahadaji on 14th September, 1790. But Sindhia did not entertain him.

**Treaty of Sambhar**

After several efforts the treaty of Sambhar was concluded through the services of Aba Chitnis on 5th January, 1791. The treaty was a great humiliation for Bijay Singh. He lost his prestige and standing among the rulers of Rajasthan. He had to part with a portion of the fertile land of Marwar. Bijay Singh had to pay a huge war indemnity, nazrana, court expenses, khasa-sawari (reserved conveyance), bharna (miscellaneous-cattle and jewels). As per the agreement, a mamlat of 60 lakhs was settled on Jodhpur. Out of this 20 lakhs were to be paid in cash, 20 lakhs worth elephants, horses, jewels etc. The

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116 Ibid., p. 29.
119 G.S. Sardesai, *Historical Papers*, No. 582.
remaining 20 lakhs were adjusted by transferring three and a half mahals.\textsuperscript{122} Ajmer was to be restored to Sindhia along with Sambhar including its lake, Khairwa, Masuda and 29 villages of Bhinai. As if this was not enough, Bijay Singh was asked to send prominent officials of Jodhpur as hostages.\textsuperscript{123}

After settling the affairs of Jodhpur, Mahadaji directed his attention towards Jaipur. Jaipur was directed to free Rampura from its hold.\textsuperscript{124} From Jaipur Sawai Pratap Singh sent Thakur Pahar Singh and Khawas Roda Ram to negotiate the terms. They met Mahadaji at Phulia in pargana Shahpura. The arrears of the past tribute came upto rupees 63,00,001. This sum was to be paid in cash by Jaipur after deducting the amount already given to Sindhia. Besides this, an amount of 15 lakhs was to be paid as war indemnity. Out of this, 3 lakhs in cash and one lakh in kind were to be paid immediately. The remaining eleven lakhs were to be made good by assignments. A supplementary treaty was also signed according to which the Marathas agreed not to interfere in the administration of the Jaipur State. The Maratha officials were to assist in the work of collection from Shekhawati out of which $\frac{1}{3}$rd was to be paid as fauj-kharch.\textsuperscript{125} Sindhia spared the life of Daulat Ram Haldia.\textsuperscript{126} The Jaipur Raja’s worst enemies were his mutually jealous ministers and his disloyal chiefs even when they belonged to the Kachhawaha clan. The most horrible of the last group were Rao Raja Pratap Singh Naruka of Alwar, Bahadur Singh Rajawat of Jhilai and Pahar Singh Khangarot.\textsuperscript{127} Thus, the battles of Patan and Merta, fought within a span of two-three months crushed the might of the Rajputs completely.\textsuperscript{128}

Having humbled the pride of the Jaipur and Jodhpur Rajas, Sindhia turned his attention to the calls of the Maharana of Udaipur. Mahadaji asked the disaffected nobles to render obedience to the Maharana. A war indemnity of 12 lakhs was imposed on the Chundawats, half of which was to be paid by the Salumbar Chief in

\begin{footnote}
125 R.K. Saxena, Maratha Relations with the Major States of Rajputana, p. 128.
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two installments. The other half of the due was to be paid by the rest of Chundawats. The Maratha dues from the State of Mewar were also settled. Mewar was to pay rupees 20 lakhs, in two equal installments, in the years 1791-92 and 1792-93 respectively. But reconciling the Chundawats to the Maharana was not an easy task. Therefore, Mahadaji appointed Ambaji Ingle as his representative to administer the country in the name of the Maharana and realize the Maratha dues as agreed upon. After deputing 10,000 Maratha soldiers under the command of Ambaji, Mahadaji left for Poona on 5th January, 1792.  

The Maratha presence in Rajasthan coincided with the expansion of the Maratha power in Malwa. Once the Marathas established their control over Malwa, they found themselves on the border of Rajasthan as Kota, Bundi and Udaipur were adjacent to Malwa. The gradual advancement of the Marathas into Rajasthan reached its climax in 1790-91, when Mahadaji Shinde decisively crushed the combined forces of Jaipur and Jodhpur at Patan and Merta. It also marked the end of Rajput resistance to the Marathas that had started from 1750 onwards and had found manifestation in the refusal to pay tribute and consistent opposition to the Maratha presence in the territories of Rajput States.

Rajput Allies of the Marathas

In Rajasthan, the Marathas emerged as a supreme power. The success of the Marathas was partly due to their understanding of the situation in Rajasthan and partly on account of their superior military power. They became a formidable military power, after they had organized their army on European pattern. Another factor behind Maratha triumph was the unending internal disputes in the Rajput States as well as inter-state disputes over various issues. During 1780’s and 1790’s, the chiefs of Machheri, Kishangarh, Salumbar were having territorial disputes with bigger States. They looked upto the Marathas for supporting them against Jaipur, Jodhpur and Udaipur. The rulers of Kota and Bundi also depended upon the Marathas to sort out their internal and external problems. These forces proved to be useful allies to the Marathas. These chiefs not only provided active military

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assistance to the Marathas but also made available valuable support in the form of military and local intelligence, supply of provision and safe base for the army.

There were different considerations that motivated local Rajput chiefs to go over to the Maratha side. Let us take into consideration some of these. The chiefs of Kishangarh and Salumbar were having territorial disputes with their powerful neighbouring rulers of Jaipur and Udaipur. Others who joined hands with the Marathas were aspiring to expand their hereditary dominions at the expense of the parent state. Since they themselves could not afford to fulfill their aspirations, they looked up to the Marathas for support. Here a brief discussion about the role of some of these ambitious and disgruntled political persons would help us to better understand the ease with which the Marathas managed to subdue the premier Rajput States.

**Rao Pratap Singh Naruka of Machheri**

The case of Rao Pratap Singh Naruka of Machheri, is the best example of the rise of the local elites who befriended Shinde and helped him against Jaipur and Jodhpur. The title of Rao denoted a high status within the larger Kachhwaha clan. Usually this title was given in recognition of meritorious service and unflinching loyalty to the state. Initially Pratap Singh just held two and a half villages as his jagir. As long as there was a powerful head of the Jaipur State, he refrained from adopting any adventurous policy. In fact, he rendered active support to Sawai Madho Singh in his fight against Jawahar Singh Jat of Bharatpur in 1767-68. However, during the reign of Sawai Prithvi Singh (1768-1778), a phase of internal weakness set paving the way for the rise of factions within the Jaipur nobility.

The emergence of powerful *sardars* belonging to the Nathawat and Khangarot offshoots of the Kachhwaha clan led to the marginalization of the Narukas who were also Kachhwahas. In due course of time, Rao Pratap Singh Naruka went personally to present his tribute to the Mughal Emperor, Shah Alam. In return, he was suitably rewarded. He was given a *sanad* to hold Machheri as a jagir from Delhi. The Mughal Emperor also gave a title of ‘Rao Raja’ and other insignias of honour to Pratap Singh Naruka.  

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130. R.P. Rana, ‘Chakar to Raja : The Emergence of Naruka State of Alwar (c. 1660-1790),’ p. 72.
131. Ibid., p. 75.
Taking advantage of the situation, Pratap Singh usurped territory belonging to Jaipur and laid the foundation of the independent Naruka State of Alwar. This act of Pratap Singh Naruka spoiled his relations with Jaipur and brought him into direct conflict with Sawai Prithvi Singh and after him Sawai Pratap Singh. This conflict with Jaipur brought Pratap Singh closer to Mahadaji Shinde. Pratap Singh accompanied Shinde throughout the Lalsot campaign and the battles with Jaipur and Jodhpur.\[^{132}\]

Prior to the battle of Merta, Bijay Singh called Nana Fadnavis’s vakil to the court and told him that the Jodhpur State had sent the remaining mamlat dues to the Mahadaji Sindhia. Besides this, some two to four lakh rupees more had also been given, despite all this Mahadaji had brought destruction on Gohad (25\[^{th}\] February, 1784) Khichivada (1786).\[^{133}\] Apparently, Pratap Singh Naruka and Khushaliram Bohra had decided to invade Jaipur and Jodhpur. This further strengthens the point that Mahadaji made crucial moves on the promptings of Rao Pratap Singh.

The close ties between Shinde and the Naruka chief Pratap Singh further become evident from the manner in which he was consulted by Shinde before making any move during the Lalsot campaign. Even after the debacle of Lalsot when Shinde was preparing for another attack on Jaipur and Jodhpur, the Maratha sardar followed the advice of Pratap Singh and retreated from Lalsot. In this battle Jaipur had got an upper hand over Shinde due to the desertation of the latter’s troops. The close relations between Sindhia and the Naruka chief can be corroborated by a letter from Delhi dated 27\[^{th}\] September, 1787, when after the battle of Tunga, during the peace negotiations, the Jaipur Raja had offered to end the hostility with the Marathas if Sindhia surrendered the ‘arch-mischief-maker Rao Raja Pratap Singh’. But Sindhia refused to surrender Rao Pratap Singh who had always sided with him.\[^{134}\] The Rao was given so much importance by Sindhia that at times he overruled the suggestions offered by his wise and able generals like Rana Khan and Bapuji Vithal. This would become clear from the following description. The same letter informs that the Rao Pratap Singh invited Sindhia to Alwar fort, where he would have plenty of provisions.

\[^{133}\] Ibid., pp. 26, 27.
\[^{134}\] Jadunath Sarkar, \textit{Delhi Affairs}, p. 163.
and fodder etc. He said that this was a fort that could not be taken by less than one or two years of fighting. Mahadaji could stay there till the reinforcements from the Deccan arrived and in the meantime they could plunder the Jaipur territory, so as to force the Raja to make peace. Therefore, Mahadaji wanted to march to Alwar. Rana Khan, Bapuji Vithal and the others opposed this idea saying that he should reject the counsel of the Rao and stay in Deeg for sometime, or else they would not march with him to Alwar. But Sindhia replied that he would march to Alwar alone, others might do as they liked. At this they all had to accompany him. Later when Sindhia asked for financial aid from Pratap Singh, the latter gave him a sealed bag of jewels, saying that he had no cash.

In 1789, when Shinde contemplated a second attack on Jaipur, he invited Pratap Singh for consultation. Pratap Singh was visited by Shinde’s commander, Ambaji Ingle for consultation regarding the proposed attack on Jaipur. The Peshwa’s vakil at Jodhpur, Krishnaji Jagannath mentioned in his letter dated 17th February, 1790, that with the help of the Bundi diwan, Dalel Singh Hada, Bijay Singh called the Machheri chief Pratap Singh’s vakil at Bundi. He wrote to the vakil that by allying with the other people, he was causing the destructin of his own caste and gotra. The Naruka chief was promised a jagir worth one lakh rupees and the Jaipur territory that he had already occupied. But Rao Pratap Singh Naruka demanded (a) reinstatement of Khushaliram Bohra, (b) Daulatram Haldia’s removal, (c) Pratap Singh would surrender the Jaipur territory provided four nobles from Jodhpur guarantee this and (d) The Naruka chief be given assurance that any understanding with the Marathas would be made as per the wishes of the Naruka chief.

As these demands were not acceptable to the Jaipur and Jodhpur Rajas, the vakil was sent away. The effort made by Bijay Singh clearly shows that Jaipur and Jodhpur Rajas wanted to dissuade Pratap Singh Naruka from joining Mahadaji Sindhia. In June 1790, in the battle of Patan, Pratap Singh offered valuable services to Shinde. This is acknowledged by the British Resident, William Palmer also in a letter dated,

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136 Ibid.
23rd August, 1790\textsuperscript{138}. Pratap Singh, along with his 15,000 strong cavalry, gave a stiff resistance to Ismail Beg and his forces who had joined Jaipur and Jodhpur. In the successive battle of Merta also Pratap Singh fought from Shinde’s side. Pratap Singh wanted to reap the harvest of his friendship with the Marathas. It was his ambition that with the help of his new friends, the Marathas, he would acquire more territory. But Shinde’s commander, Ambaji Ingle, thwarted his plans when after the battle of Patan, he made an attempt to take possession of Patan. Though the Machheri Rao kept on trying for Patan, all his attempts were turned futile by Ambaji.\textsuperscript{139} In a letter dated 15th August, 1787, William Kirkpatrick informed the Governor General that:

“The truth is that most of the Maratha sardars are exceedingly indisposed towards the Row, some of them regarding him with jealousy, and others considering him as the author of all the difficulties in which their Chief is at present involved.”\textsuperscript{140}

Pratap Singh had tried to exploit his friendship with Shinde on earlier occasions also. He had tried to meddle in the affairs of the Jaipur court. He had proposed to Shinde that the qiledars of Ranthambhor were under his control. If Shinde helped Sawai Prithvi Singh’s son Man Singh to acquire the throne of Jaipur, then the fort could be given to him. But it was not taken seriously by Shinde. In fact, as a proof of his loyalty, Shinde asked him to surrender the fort of Alwar. In another letter dated, 14th September, 1787, Kirkpatrick wrote that the:

“Row Raja’s opinions and advice… prevailed over every other consideration, and betrayed him into difficulties of which he did not become sensible till he had advanced too far to retreat without sacrificing his military reputation and consequently without hazarding his political existence in this quarter of Hindostan.”\textsuperscript{141}

Due to his allegiance with Sindhia, the Rao Raja had to bear the brunt of Rajput hostility. This is testified from the letter of William Palmer, dated 21st February, 1790,\textsuperscript{138}

\textsuperscript{138} Jadunath Sarkar, \textit{Mahadaji Sindhia and North Indian Affairs}, p. 367.
\textsuperscript{139} Marwar-Maratha Aitihasik Patrawali, pp. 64, 65.
\textsuperscript{140} Sarkar, \textit{Mahadaji Sindhia and North Indian Affairs}, p. 228.
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid., p. 252.
in which he informs Cornwallis that on account of the confederacy of the Rajputs and Ismail Beg, they will not wait for Sindhia’s attack and:

“Ismail Beg has already invaded the country of the Row Raja, the firmest and most useful of Sindhia’s allies and whom he must unavoidably assist.”

The fact that Pratap Singh continued his allegiance to Shinde is evident as we find Shinde and his officials seeking his co-operation in 1791 also.

**The Kaura lI Raja**

Karauli occupied a favourable position between Jaipur and Gwalior. Karauli’s geographical location gave direct access to Shinde to enter Jaipur territory from Gwalior side. This motivated the Marathas to seek the co-operation of the ruler of Karauli State. The *kharitas* exchanged between them are an invaluable source of information in this regard. The *kharitas* from the Karauli rulers to their counterparts in Jaipur reveal that both the States were maintaining harmonious relations and co-operating with each other. Minor issues cropped up in between but these were amicably resolved. The *kharitas* of the Karauli rulers express their concern about the Maratha advancement in Rajasthan, particularly in the neighbouring territories of Bharatpur and Jaipur. In 1753, Sawai Madho Singh was informed about the movement of Maratha forces from the side of Kumher and the evacuation of people all around. The next year, in 1754, Gopal Singh Jadam, the Karauli ruler requested Sawai Madho Singh to acquaint him with the affairs of Delhi, Marathas and Marwar. In 1759, Tulsipal Jadam reminded Sawai Madho Singh of the traditional ties between the two houses and expressed regret over recent disruption in relations with Jaipur and assured him that all efforts would be made to clear misunderstanding. It seems that around 1784 the ruler of Karauli was feeling the heat of Maratha presence in their neighbourhood. This becomes evident when Manikpal Jadam conveyed his concern over the departure of the Maratha forces and requested Sawai Pratap Singh to find a way out to avert their visitation as it would be detrimental to the interests of Jaipur.

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The Karauli ruler informed Sawai Pratap Singh of Jaipur that he had been paying tribute to the Marathas as per the agreement. When Shinde’s commander Ambaji Ingle plundered Jaipur villages to collect money, the Karauli chief was informed by the Jaipur State through Shah Dulichand. The ruler acknowledged the receipt of this information. He was informed by the Jaipur Raja about his intention of paying the pending dues to the Marathas at the earliest. The year 1786 witnessed several letters being written by the Karauli ruler to Sawai Pratap Singh regarding the Maratha affairs in Jaipur. He asked the Jaipur ruler to send information regarding the terms of settlement with Shinde. He also expressed joy over Shinde’s departure from Jaipur.

In 1787, Amolakpal, the new Karauli ruler expressed in his letter happiness over the victory of Ismail Beg against the forces of Shinde. When Ismail Beg moved towards Agra to gain control of it, Sindhia dispatched a detachment under the command of the son of Apa Khande Rao for the relief of Agra. The British Resident expressed his anxiety that as it advanced from the Chambal its progress was likely to be checked by the insurrection of the intervening zamindars and the hostile conduct of the Karauli Raja as he had taken a decisive part against Sindhia. In a letter dated, 31st December, 1787, W. Palmer informed Cornwallis that:

“Sindhia marched this morning about seven kos to Southward, in order to overawe the Rajas of Narwar and Karauli, who have dispossessed him of some mahals which he had reduced in their respective countries, and to support the detachment under Rayaji Patel which he had sent into those districts. The rapid fall of Sindhia’s power has excited an almost general defection among the Rajas who have been subjected to his authority from the Jamna to the Narbada.”

This proves that Sindhia’s reverses at Lalsot had emboldened not only the Karauli Raja but even that of Narwar. In yet another letter dated 8th January, 1788, W. Palmer informed the Governor General that Sindhia had detached the greatest and best part of his troops under his best commanders, Rana Khan and Rayaji Patel, and Ambaji to:

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144 Ibid., p. 276.
“reduce the Rajahs of Narwar and Kerauli, who have thrown off their subjection to him and have joined their forces to oppose him. These numbered to 15,000, which exceeded the number despatched against them by Sindhia. Should he fail to reduce these Rajas his retreat to Ujjain would be very difficult, and he would in all probability be obliged to take immediate shelter in Gwalior.”

The gravity of the situation for Sindhia can be just imagined when he requested the British Resident, W. Palmer to join him as he declared his intention to reduce the rule of Karauli. However, the Resident felt that such an enterprize was not only beyond his strength but also hazardous. He also informed Cornwallis in his letter dated 27th February, 1788, that the Karauli Raja had collected a considerable force and was in possession of forts which might be maintained until succoured by the Jaipur Raja and Ismail Beg. Therefore, the Resident felt that: “For these reasons I do not think Sindhia seriously designs to attack Kerowly, he probably expects to intimidate the Rajah by his preparation into a compliance with his demand of money.”

In 1790, the Karauli Raja conveyed to Sawai Pratap Singh that he is quite relieved to know about the progress of negotiation between the Jaipur State and Shinde. Amolakpal also informed the Jaipur Raja about Shinde’s apprehension regarding the stand of Karauli in his conflict with Jaipur. He again wrote to Jaipur that he has decided to comply with Shinde’s instruction for dispatching an authorized representative for talks.

In a letter dated 9th March, 1790, written by Krishnaji Jagannath, we get the information that a part of Mahadaji’s army had crossed the Chambal river from Dhaulpur side and had reached Karauli. They not only looted but also caused a lot of destruction. The ruler of Karauli had reached an understanding by sending 75,000 rupees with his vakil. Out of this 25,000 were paid in cash while two hundis worth rupees 50,000 were given which could be encashed after two months. In 1793, when negotiations between Shinde and Jaipur representative, Daulat Ram Haldia were

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145 Jadunath Sarkar, _Mahadaji Sindhia and North Indian Affairs_, p. 277, 278.
146 Ibid., p. 288.
147 _Marwar-Maratha Aitihasik Patrawali_, p. 55.
being held at Bhusawad, the Karauli chief requested Sawai Pratap Singh to ensure his uninterrupted possession over Karauli territory.

Interestingly the kharitas of the Karauli chief stress his friendship with Jaipur and reflect his sympathetic attitude over the Maratha affairs, at the same time he was loyal to Shinde and followed his instructions. In 1787, Shinde promised to restore Bijaygarh to Karauli. At the time of the Lalsot campaign, the Karauli chief supplied provisions to the Maratha camp and the Jaipur Raja had to request him to stop the same. But the Karauli chief could not afford to annoy the powerful Marathas. It was via Karauli that the supplies from Gwalior were sent to the Maratha camp. When Sawai Pratap Singh received this information, on 11th July 1787, he ordered five to six thousand troops to cut off the grain supply to Shinde. The order was promptly executed and on 30th July 1787, the Rajputs cut off a caravan of 6,000 oxen and 700 camels loaded with grain and other provisions which were badly needed by the starving Maratha army. Thus, less willingly and more unwillingly the Karauli chief was made to subserve the Maratha interest.

The State of Kishangarh

The Marathas also received active support from the Rathore State of Kishangarh which shared its border with the powerful State of Jodhpur. Kishangarh’s territorial dispute with Jodhpur paved the way for Maratha intervention. The Kishangarh ruler turned to Shinde for support and the latter was also keen to seek the former’s friendship. According to Nana Fadnavis’s vakil in Jodhpur, Krishnaji Jagannath, Virdi Singh, the ruler of Kishangarh was unhappy with Bijay Singh as he had turned down his demand for the grant of pargana Parbatsar in lieu of serving in Mewar on behalf of Jodhpur. There was also a longstanding dispute between Kishangarh and Jodhpur over the possession of some frontier villages. These villages were occupied by the bhomias of Kishangarh. Frequently tempers flared up on both the sides, especially when Rajputs from Jodhpur plundered and destroyed some villages belonging to
Kishangarh. The Kishangarh ruler received the news of this encroachment upon his territory. This incident forced the Kishangarh ruler to seek Shinde’s support.\textsuperscript{148}

Following the death of Sawai Prithvi Singh, Kishangarh also involved itself in the succession dispute of Jaipur. Sawai Prithvi Singh had married the daughter of Kishangarh ruler. From this wedlock Man Singh was born. After Sawai Prithvi Singh’s death, the Kishangarh ruler supported the claim of his grandson against that of Sawai Pratap Singh. He appealed to Shinde against the succession of Pratap Singh.\textsuperscript{149} When Kishangarh was surrounded and attacked by the Jodhpur forces, the Kishangarh \textit{diwan}, Surat Singh paid rupees five lakhs to Tukoji Holkar and invited both Holkar and Shinde to rescue Kishangarh. Jodhpur’s claim over Rupnagar was also contested by Kishangarh. In the battle of Merta, when Shinde’s army defeated Jodhpur, Rupnagar was restored to Kishangarh. Friendship with the Kishangarh ruler was beneficial to the Marathas as Kishangarh served as a safe base for them in their fight against Jodhpur for regaining the possession of Ajmer. No wonder that in their attack on Ajmer, the Marathas were supported by Kishangarh forces.

**The Chief of Salumbar and Zalim Singh of Kota**

In Mewar, the Chundawat chief of Salumbar, Rawat Bhim Singh was opposed to the Rana of Udaipur. Shinde found a willing ally in him too. He became a handy tool in the hands of Shinde and acted as per his dictates \textit{vis-à-vis} the Maharana. The regent of Kota, Jhala Zalim Singh was also an ally of Shinde. It was through his efforts that the settlement between Shinde and the Maharana was concluded regarding Mewar’s obligation to pay the tribute. Evidently, through active collaboration of local Rajput chiefs, the Marathas were able to occupy large areas of some key Rajput States.

**Collaborators in the Courts of Jaipur and Jodhpur**

As a shrewd Maratha leader, Mahadaji Shinde successfully created a powerful and influential group of supporters in the courts of Jaipur and Jodhpur. The role played by some of these important courtiers in extending help to the Marathas is briefly

\textsuperscript{148} \textit{Marwar-Maratha Aitihasik Patravali}, pp. 23, 24.

\textsuperscript{149} Ibid., p. 24.
analyzed here. Among these officials, the Jaipur diwan, Khushaliram Bohra was a leading light. On account of differences between the Jaipur ruler and the diwan, Bohra fell from grace, Khushaliram was suspected as a pro-Maratha element. On the basis of the report of Krisnaji Jagannath, Shinde asked Khushaliram Bohra to visit Jodhpur and gather military information. Shinde also required him to meet Govardhan Khichi of Khichiwada in Malwa to collect similar information. As Govardhan Khichi was opposed to Shinde, he used to advise the Jodhpur ruler on matters concerning the Marathas. To counter Govardhan Khichi, the services of Khushaliram Bohra were availed of. He was entrusted with the task of assessing the strength of Jodhpur army, their terms for settlement with the Marathas and other relevant information.\(^{150}\)

Another interesting person who emerged as an important actor in the course of Maratha-Jodhpur tension was Gulabrai. She was a student of Chaupasani’s Goswamiji. She later became a singer for the Maharaja who made her the Paswan.\(^{151}\) It was a tradition among the Jodhpur Rajas that if a woman belonging to any caste could be made to wear a gold ornament on her feet and kept behind parda then she was designated as the up-patni or Pardayat. As a mark of honour to her the respectable epithet of ‘Raiji’ was added to her name. Besides this, the Pardayat for whom the Raja developed greater fondness was addressed as the ‘Paswan.’ Just as Maharani was a higher designation among the ranis similarly the Paswan enjoyed the higher designation among the Paswans.\(^{152}\) Through her manipulations, Gulabrai managed to secure Bijay Singh’s affirmation for enthroning her own son, Tej Singh. Unfortunately Tej Singh died. The Paswan then adopted the son of the Dewadi Rani, Sher Singh and decided to get him enthroned. Sher Singh was a very simple person by nature.\(^{153}\) In a letter dated eighteenth January, 1791, the Maratha vakil, Krishnaji Jagannath informs Nana Fadnavis that Gokulasth Guru Gosain kept Raja Bijay Singh preoccupied with religious worship and the Paswan was controlling state affairs.\(^{154}\) In another letter written by the vakil on 1\(^{st}\) February, 1791, it was mentioned that Raja

\(^{150}\) Marwar-Maratha Aitihasik Patrawali, p. 32.
\(^{151}\) Ibid., p. 22.
\(^{153}\) Marwar-Maratha Aitihasik Patrawali, p. 80.
\(^{154}\) Ibid., p. 71.
Bijay Singh called Khubchand and confided in him that his own life was at her disposal. The *Paswan* along with the new *diwan*, Bhawaniram Bhandari, *Pradhan Sawai Singh Champawat* and her own *Mukhtiyar*, Bhairji Sarni, decided to imprison the Raja. Govardhan Khichi the ex-*diwan*, had been imprisoned by Sawai Singh. They had even plotted to kill the Peshwa’s *vakil*. When the *vakil* came to know about this, he feigned madness and managed to escape from there.\(^{155}\) The *Paswan* was at the helm of the political affairs. She sent some of the *mutasaddis* as guaranters to Mahadaji Sindhia. She needed the support of Mahadaji Sindhia in order to execute her plan. It is mentioned in the letter written by the Maratha *vakil* on 1\(^{st}\) February, 1791, that the claim of Bijay Singh’s elder son, Zalim Singh who was the nephew of Maharana Ari Singh was sidelined.\(^{156}\) He had been given a jagir worth one lakh rupees but it had been taken back from him. Even his name in the official papers (*sanad*) had been removed. The Maharana reproached Mahadaji for giving up Zalim Singh’s claim, and sending *tika* for Sher Singh. Mahadaji then replied that the *Paswan* had taken up the responsibility of the payment of the *mamlat* which would fetch rupees two lakhs for the Marathas.\(^ {157}\) This further illustrates that money and not political probity was the primary concern for the Marathas.

Mahadaji sent Dhan Singh to collect the *mamlat*. Gulabrai tried to influence him also. She wanted that her adopted son Sher Singh should be made the new Raja so that she herself could control state affairs. Dhan Singh was sent to Patil Baba.\(^ {158}\) On meeting Mahadaji, Dhan Singh gave the assurance on behalf of the *Paswan* that she would pay rupees 1,50,000 for the *tika* and 50,000 cash. The total amount paid by her would be two lakh rupees. Mahadaji agreed and accordingly clothes, *sirpech*, a pearl necklace and *chaukara* (*karnabhushan*) and clothes for the *Paswan* were sent. Suitable gifts were also sent for *diwan* Bhawaniram Bhandari and Bhairji.\(^ {159}\) The *tika* was given in the *rajtilak* (coronation) ceremony to Sher Singh. Bijay Singh had not stepped down. Yet the *Paswan* ordered that as the *tika* ceremony had taken place, all the big *sardars* would present an elephant each while the small *sardars* would give a horse each as

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\(^ {155}\) *Marwar-Maratha Aithhasik Patrawali*, pp. 79, 80.

\(^ {156}\) Ibid., p. 100.

\(^ {157}\) Ibid., p. 83.

\(^ {158}\) Mahadaji Sindhia was addressed as ‘Patil’ Baba by the Marathas.

\(^ {159}\) *Marwar-Maratha Aithhasik Patrawali*, p. 85.
nazar. Her directives enraged all the sardars. The Raas sardar, Jawan Singh expressed his feelings that with the support of Patil Baba, the Paswan had given the state to the son of a dasi. The Jaipur and Mewar Rajas also expressed their displeasure over these developments. The Paswan finally met a brutal end at the hands of the sardars of Jodhpur state.

Singhvi Fatehchand and Pradhan Devi Singh, Budh Singh and Sawai Singh Champawat, the officials and nobles in the Jodhpur court aligned themselves with the Marathas. In 1754, seeing the adverse circumstances, Singhvi Fatehchand and Pradhan Devi Singh Champawat decided to negotiate the terms for a settlement. The treaty concluded on 2nd February, 1756, between Bijay and the Marathas materialized due to the efforts of Singhvi Fateh Chand and Devi Singh Champawat. Again we find Devi Singh showing his reluctance when the other sardars suggested to occupy Merta in 1756, when they were facing severe famine conditions. He tried to dissuade them saying that they had entered into an agreement with Ram Singh, and therefore at least for a year, they should not flout it. It can easily be surmised that Devi Singh did not want to antagonize the Marathas for he knew that as soon as they tried to recover Merta and the other parganas, the Marathas were bound to return and disturb the peace of Marwar. Though reluctant, Devi Singh, along with the other sardars left to attack Merta. But even there he was in communication with the Dakhanis and conveyed to them that he did not want to oppose the Marathas and that despite all his efforts, the Marwar sardars had occupied the parganas. But they should stand firmly as he was not interested in fighting with them. Later, he wrote a letter to Kanhoji that the entire Marwar army was away and the path was open for them to enter Marwar.

In 1760, Maharaja Bakht Singh had got Devi Singh Champawat, along with a few other sardars, treacherously murdered. Ever since then the Champawats kept

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160 Marwar-Maratha Atithasik Patrawali, p. 86.
164 Ibid., p. 542.
165 Ibid., pp. 543, 544.
rebelling from time to time. This will become clear from the following incident. In 1785, when Mahadaji was expected to come towards Jaipur, Maharaja Bijay Singh’s son, Zalim Singh sent Champawat Budh Singh and Hiranand Hazari to meet Mahadaji. The Jodhpur vakil at Mahadaji’s camp wrote a letter to the Jodhpur ruler in which he mentioned that Budh Singh was very cunning. If he stayed there, he would create problem for the state. Therefore, he should be called back to Jodhpur. The vakil also suggested that he should be kept satisfied by giving him jagir. The Maharaja, in consultation with Govardhan Khichi, sent a sanad worth 15,000 jagir. In this way, before more damage could be done, he was called back and pacified.

On the basis of a letter dated 28th May, 1791, written by Krishnaji Jagannath we get the information that Sawai Singh Champawat was the Pradhan of Jodhpur. Earlier his grandfather, Devi Singh Champawat was the Pradhan of Jodhpur. Before the battle of Panipat in 1761, Bijay Singh invited Devi Singh Champawat along with some other sardars into the fort and later got them treacherously murdered. Sawai Singh secretly nursed the grudge of avenging his grandfather’s murder. Therefore, without allowing anybody to sense his intentions, he tried to control the state affairs through Gulabrai Paswan. He provided opportunities for progress to his relatives. He served as the Mukhtiyar for seven months. He indulged in double talk. He said one thing to the Maharaja and other to the sardars, the Raja was conveyed something else through the Paswan while Patil Baba was conveyed another thing. He was always plotting and scheming. But all this did not go unnoticed by the other sardars and they finally got together and met the Maharaja and the Paswan and said that Sawai Singh could not be trusted. His uncle Champawat Budh Singh was involved in the negotiations with Mahadaji. Patil Baba had not left the state boundary as yet. The possibility of Patil Baba’s attack was lurking. All these factors worked against the imminent and removal of Sawai Singh.

In Jodhpur, Bhawani Ram Bhandari, who later became the diwan after Bijay Singh’s death, became a close confidante of Shinde. Along with the Jodhpur vakil, Kripam

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166 *Maratha-Marwar Aitihasik Patrawali*, p. 25.
167 Ibid., p. 97.
Joshi, he was sent to the court of Shinde as a clerk. He rendered useful assistance to Gopal Raghunath Chitnis (Aba Chitnis) who was handling Jodhpur affairs on behalf of Shinde. Through him Bhawani Ram managed an amount of rupees three hundred for himself. When Bijay Singh came to know about this, he got angry and removed him from this post. Bhawani Ram was replaced by Lalji Mehta. Through Aba Chitnis, Bhawani Ram cautioned Mahadaji when he was going towards Jaipur that the Kachhwas and the Rathors were cunning and treacherous, therefore he ought to be alert. When this information reached Mahadaji, he called the Jodhpur vakil, Kriparam Joshi. After scolding him, the vakil was asked to leave the army. The vakil then requested for a reprieve of fifteen days within which he would contact the Maharaja, ask him to pay the khandani amount and sort out the matter. When the vakil informed the Maharaja about these developments, the latter called the Sindhia vakil, Ramrao Sadashiv and told him that Bhawani Ram was no more in the service of the Jodhpur State. He had unnecessarily distorted the facts and had made Mahadaji unhappy. Bijay Singh also told the vakil that on behalf of the Jodhpur State, only Kriparam Joshi and Lalji Mehta would be the official representatives, so the Marathas should not listen to anyone else.¹⁶⁹

In a letter dated eighteenth January, 1791, the Maratha vakil at Jodhpur, Krishnaji Jagannath informs Nana Fadnavis that five years back he had cautioned Bijay Singh that for creating enemity between Bijay Singh and Mahadaji Sindhia, Champawat Budh Singh and Bhawani Ram Bhandari were responsible. But the Maharaja did not give it any heed. Bhawani Ram Bhandari along with Champawat Budh Singh sidelined the Maratha vakil at Jodhpur. Both of them had gone to meet Mahadaji. It was decided that Jodhpur would pay forty lakhs as war expenses. For this the parganas of Sambhar, Didwana and Nawa were to be transferred to the Marathas. The remaining amount to be paid was decided as fifteen lakh rupees. Out of this amount seven lakhs were to be paid in cash and the remaining amount was to be given in installments. Ajmer and the fort would be surrendered. Mahadaji got these terms in writing from Budh Singh. Then they were sent back after giving them suitable

¹⁶⁹ Maratha-Marwar Aititasik Patrawali, pp. 20, 21.
presents\textsuperscript{170}. In the same letter, the \textit{vakil} further says that generation after generation, Bhawani Ram Bhandari’s family had served the Jodhpur ruler. He maintained his personal relations with Mahadaji Sindhia at the cost of being disloyal to his own master.\textsuperscript{171} The \textit{vakil} felt that if Bhawani Ram was brought to Jodhpur, he would be definitely killed.\textsuperscript{172} 

It was on account of his past services to Shinde that after the death of Bijay Singh, he was made the \textit{diwan} of Jodhpur. In a letter dated 28\textsuperscript{th} May, 1791, the Maratha \textit{vakil}, Krishnaji Jaganath informed that Mahadaji Sindhia had informed the \textit{subedar} (Holkar) that Maratha rule had been established beyond Delhi and both the rulers of Jaipur and Jodhpur had been suppressed. He also said that in Jodhpur pro-Maratha Bhawani Ram Bhandari had been made the \textit{diwan} and he had been successful in bringing many \textit{sardars} to his side.\textsuperscript{173} It was with his help that the Marathas dominated the affairs of Jodhpur State. In the same letter, the \textit{vakil} also mentioned that Bhawani Ram was not a stable man. He wanted to benefit from both the worlds. Bhawani Ram Bhandari’s letters of conspiracy were interjected on the way and the \textit{sardars} became unhappy with him. In case Patil Baba moved away then these \textit{sardars} would take his life.\textsuperscript{174} 

The political elites were not the only allies of the Marathas. There is some evidence to suggest that the Marathas were also able to create support base at the level of village gentry. This is evident from the instance of Uda and other \textit{patels} of the village Kahar in pargana Malarana. He became a supporter of the Marathas and used the military might of the Maratha contingent present in pargana Sherpur to fulfill his own ambitions. In fact, he even assisted the Marathas when they plundered the villages of pargana Malarana. In their petition to the Jaipur ruler, the \textit{patel} and \textit{paltis} (cultivators) of village Maroti reported the plunder and ruination of the village by the Marathas with the connivance and collaboration of Uda Patel.

\textsuperscript{170} \textit{Maratha-Marwar Aitihasik Patrawali}, pp. 74, 75. 
\textsuperscript{171} Ibid., p. 76. 
\textsuperscript{172} Ibid., p. 77. 
\textsuperscript{173} Ibid., p. 96. 
\textsuperscript{174} Ibid., p.101.
To escape the plundering raids of the Maratha invaders, sections of the society, took initiative on their own to placate the Marathas. For instance, *panch mahajan* of Sambhar town decided to extend financial support to the Marathas in order to protect their own interest. The *panch mahajans* ignored the state officials while approaching the Marathas. It appears that in the absence of state protection, some people were organizing local self defence in both the States of Jaipur and Jodhpur.

The campaigns against the Rajputs were meticulously planned by Shinde. This is evident from his attempt to lure the *Banjaras* to his side. The support of the *Banjaras* was necessary for maintaining the line of supply in Rajasthan during the Maratha campaigns. To keep the *Banjaras* in good humour, just before his Lalsot campaign, Mahadaji honoured the chief of the *Banjaras*. He was invited to the camp of Shinde and presented the robe of honour and turban. The co-operation of the *Banjaras* was required by Shinde not only to ensure an uninterrupted supply of food grains and other essential commodities but also to prevent the upward movement of food prices. From time to time the *Banjaras* were also given other incentives such as tax concessions. It was on account of Shinde’s shrewdness that the *Banjaras* maintained a more or less regular supply of provisions that they brought from Gwalior and made available at Shinde’s camp.

The second half of the eighteenth century witnessed regular military campaigns and warfare due to the presence of the Marathas in Rajasthan. As their presence was continuously resisted, the Marathas dealt the Rajputs with strong military campaigns. The Marathas under the command of Shinde and Holkar acquired military superiority by adopting European style of warfare and crucial help given by local collaborators. This shifted the balance of power in favour of the Marathas. Mahadaji Shinde won decisive victories over the combined forces of the Rajput rulers between 1780’s and 1790’s. Thus, Shinde overcame all resistance to the Maratha domination in Rajasthan by combining military superiority and diplomacy.

In this chapter an attempt has been made to find whether there was a continuity from the first phase or some changes were occurring in the Maratha-Rajput relations during post 1761 period. The Maratha defeat in the third battle of Panipat accelerated the
efforts of the Rajputs to unite against them. They tried to avail of this opportunity to extricate themselves from the clutches of the Marathas. It also proved to be their last united effort to oppose the Marathas. There is definitely a change in Maratha-Rajput relations in the post-Panipat phase. The Rajputs tried their best to unite in order to drive the Marathas out of Rajasthan. The bitterness between Mahadaji Sindhia and the Rajput Rajas had become too deep seated. When Mahadaji Sindhia became the Regent of the Mughal Emperor, the Rajas were asked to pay the arrears that had accumulated over the years. However, the success of the Rajputs in the battle of Tunga, emboldened the Rajas. But Mahadaji reorganized his forces and defeated the Rajput Rajas in the battles of Patan and Merta. In these victories, the help rendered by the Rao of Machheri, the Rajas of Karauli and Kishangarh was immense. The information provided by pro-Maratha faction at the courts of Jaipur and Jodhpur greatly facilitated the Maratha’s success.

Moreover, the oscillations in the attitudes of the Rajas of Jaipur and Jodhpur towards each other also proved to be helpful for the Marathas to further their agenda in Rajasthan. In the next chapter we discuss the economic impact of the Maratha presence in Rajasthan.