Chapter-3

REBELLION IN DELHI AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD

The sepoys broke into revolt at Meerut on 10th May 1857. Much controversy exists over the sepoy revolt as may be seen from the pages of various English historical works.\(^1\) Whatever might have been the cause of the outbreak, it is undisputed that there existed a simmering discontent among the sepoys for the last one hundred years. To understand the attitude of the sepoys and the outbreak of the rebellion in 1857 a peep into the past would be essential.

It has been noted that under the British rule it became fashionable to contrast it favourably with the regimes it had replaced. In 1844 Elliot in his preface taunted the Bengal nationalists for forgetting the persecution the Hindus had suffered before the British ascended power in India. Elliot's views were ostensibly to protect the British interest in India so as to create religious and secterian divide among the Indian people ---- a beginning of which was probably made in 1773 when Narayan Rao, the Maratha Peshwa, was assasinated to the glee of the governor of Madras\(^2\). Here the secret British policy is exposed by W.Torrens,"..... except that the fanatacism of foolishmen, or the craft of worthless men, rekindled now and then old jealousies, the Hindu and Mohammadan lived happily together, and, at the approach of an enemy, went forth cheerfully to fight


side by side for one another's homes."¹ Torrens was right as the co-existence between Hindus and Muslims is largely seen after the enunciation of *Sulh-i-Kul* policy by Akbar. This policy was pursued by his successors. It is noted that neither Muslims nor Hindus were incapacitated for a public employment on account of the belief in which he had been brought up. Mohammadan princes gladly confided to astute and learned Brahmins civil trustees of importance; and many a Musulman rose to honour and won fortune in a Maharaja's camp.² This homogenous atmosphere in India was remarkable. To quote Torrens again "...... in Ireland no Catholic could inherit freehold, command a regiment, or sit on a judicial bench; while in France the Huguenot weaver was driven into exile beyound sea and while in Sweden not but Lutherens could sit as juries; and in Spain no Heretic was permitted Christian burials. While in India, Sunnis and Shias, Marathas and Sikhs competed fully for distinction and profit in almost every city and camp of Hindustan."³

The British, unlike other foreign conquerors did not come to India directly as invaders. They ascended to sovereignty by the policy of dividing the princely states and extending military support to the contending parties. In this power game the British employed Indians as sepoys. The Indian sepoys inducted in the British army played an important role in the conquest of their own country for their foreign masters, expecting a fairplay and justice in return for their services.

². Ibid. p. 105.
³. Ibid. p. 106.
It was the majority of these very sepoys who suddenly rebelled in 1857. The Sepoys in the past one hundred years had earned a great reputation for their loyalty and dedication to their masters who addressed them, "the faithful Sepoys." However these very faithful sepoys had developed a sense of great repentance and began to regard their English masters a species of "quint and some what objectionable demons", or, "a race of demidevils, neither quite human or quite supernatural; not wholly bad, yet far from perfectly good, who had been settled in the country by the will of fate."

The British officers could not find an answer to why the sepoys changed their behaviour. In this background the psychology of the Indian sepoys needs to be understood. It is not surprising that soon after the outbreak of the rebellion, the Meerut rebels rushed to Delhi and occupied it on 11th May. They had already informed their Delhi counterparts of their arrival in Delhi on 11th or 12th of May. The Meerut sepoys as well as their comrades in Delhi were confident of their success in expelling the English from India as would transpire clearly from their behaviour. All of them were charged with emotions and raising slogans, which Zakaullah sarcastically says, "When the Cavalrymen moved they cried Deen! Deen! (religion! religion!). It is why a large number of Muslims were flocking around them. Many religious minded Hindus were also offering sharbats.

1 Hope Grant, *Incidents in the Sepoy War, 1857-58*, London, 1872, p.6 (Hereafter cited as Hope Grant).
2 Ibid. p. 8.
and other eatables to these people".  

The English intelligence report had informed Mr. Simon Fraser, the Chief Commissioner Delhi, on the night of 10th May about the possible outbreak in Delhi. But he could not read the report and went to sleep. In the morning the Collector of Delhi was informed of the Meerut revolt. He gave orders to close the gates of Delhi and dismantle the boat bridge. According to Zakauallh, Simon Fraser was moving on a buggy. He stopped at the magazine where the company of Telanga (Sepoys) was standing in its uniform. The Commissioner had some conversation with the subedar of the Company. Later on the subedar disclosed that Fraser was asking them whether they were still loyal to the government. The answer of the subedar was, "We are loyal to our religion. They did not salute the commissioner as per practice."  

Probably the activities of Fraser were unknown to other English officers. The revolt of Meerut Sepoys had a stunning impact on them as may be seen from the reports published in the Delhi Urdu Akhbar of 17th May, 1857. By and large the English bureaucracy in Delhi was greatly upset over the development. Some of the magistrates were busy in disposing of cases in the court at seven a.m. when the Darogha-i-Pul informed the magistrate of the arrival of the rebel Sepoys, and their atrocities on the government officials. He also informed the authorities that he was successful in dismantling the bridge and had temporarily stopped the entry of the rebels despite

1. Zakaullah, Tarikh-i-Urooj-i-Ahde saltanat-i-Englis, Delhi, 1901, p.411. (hereafter cited as Zakaullah).
2. Ibid. p. 409.
their aggressive attitude. He, however, conceded that when their number swelled the officials controlling the bridge took flight. By that time a number of horsemen assembled under the jharokha of the Fort and began to cry urging upon the Emperor to allow their entry to the city. In the meantime some English Officials also came to the Fort, and began to threaten the Sepoys of dire consequences. The situation in the city was getting bad to worse, even the fort was not safe as many Sepoys were threatening to kill the English officers. Bahadur Shah II was almost taken by surprise by these developments. In the initial stage he succeeded in preventing the rebels from committing atrocities on the English officials.

As the number of rebel Sepoys increased in Delhi they became more aggressive. Consequently, they killed Fraser and others. They killed Mr. Taylor of Delhi College and plundered the Bank which was in the garden of Begum Samro. The manager of the Delhi Bank, Beresford, sought English officers' help to protect the Bank and release of ladies and children who had been taken prisoners. The anti-English sentiments had become so surcharged that the Khansaman who was working there informed him of the arrival of the rebel Sepoys. Hearing the news the manager became furious and went upstairs directing the Khansaman not to disclose his whereabouts. The rebels, however, located him and his family. They killed them. After plundering the Bank the roving bands of the rebels plundered the Delhi Gazette press and killed a number of converted Indian Christians whom they considered to be accomplices of the English. After the plunder

4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
of Delhi Gazette the Sepoys turned to magazine which was near the royal palace. Evidently the intention of the Sepoys was to destroy all the existing devices of the English rulers or the persons who were controlling these devices, so as to destroy the English Power machine. The Magazine was one of the most important devices which provided gunpowder and ammunitions to the English army. The attempt of the rebel Sepoys was to seize the magazine and to use it against the English. Unfortunately, they could not succeed to seize the magazine through negotiations. They decided to seize it by force. The keeper of the magazine, Willoughby set the magazine on fire. Willoughby and three other Englishmen ran away to save their lives. The editor of the Delhi Urdu Akhbar gives a graphic account of the incident as under, "This humble creature went towards the magazine just ahead of Masjid Nawab Hamid Ali khan. He saw that the mujahids had occupied the barracks of the magazine. He also heard that some Englishmen along with some khalasis were sitting inside the Magazine closing its door. Thereafter this humble creature returned to his residence. The sounds of gunfire were coming from all sides. After 3'O Clock there was a bang of artillery fire. Those who were present were anxious that the second explosion of artillery was heard, this humble creature immediately went towards the Kothi to find out the truth. Suddenly there was a severe earthquake which was so dangerous that I thought that the day of judgement had arrived. In brief when I saw, the Magazine was blown out. There was darkness in which the stones of the walls were seen to be flying like birds.

and leaves of the tree. This humble creature apprehending to be hit by the stones immediately retired from that place reciting holy names. In the end it came to be known that 25 Englishmen locked inside the Magazine were threatened for life by the Sepoys who had ascended the wall of the Magazine with the help of a staircase. They hardly succeeded in their mission. Being disappointed the rebels brought artillery on the gate of the Magazine to break it open. The besieged had already opened a tunnel. Blowing up the Magazine they escaped taking advantage of the hue and cry of the people. They might have also been killed. The destruction of the magazine took a heavy toll of life of the sepoys and the civilians. Zakaullah writes that despite the destruction of the magazine the sepoys succeeded in acquiring considerable stock of ammunition which they continued to use later on till the reconquest of Delhi by the English.

Charles Metcalfe was within the walls of the city for making arrangements putting himself in a difficult situation. He saved his life with great difficulty through the help of Moinuddin Khan and escaped through Ajmeri Gate and from there to Pahari Dheeraj.

The beginning of rebellion in Delhi in 1857 heralded a new era. The Sepoys had an upper hand in the daily affairs as the English regime had been replaced by the Rebel's Government. Unfortunately, the change of power was devoid of an effective leader. Undoubtedly the Sepoys had

---
1 Delhi Urdu Akhbar, 17th May, 1857.
2 Zakaullah, p. 421.
3 Delhi Urdu Akhbar, 17th May, 1857; The Author of Khadang-i-Ghadr gives a detailed account of the escape of Metcalfe see Moinuddin Hassan Khan, Khadang-i-Ghadr, Delhi, 1972, pp.37-58, ed. by Khwaja Ahmad Faruqi.
foisted upon the last Mughal Emperor, Bahadur Shah, the responsibilities of the so called leadership of the rebels. It was a great misfortune that Bahadur Shah was an old man of 80 Years, totally incapable to lead an organised movement to defend the country against the English. He was bereft of power, lacked economic resources, an empty treasury and a host of irresponsible flatterers and intriguers. It was even more unfortunate that taking advantage of the growing anarchy owing to the disappearance of the English administration, a large number of criminals and undesirable elements became active\(^1\) in Delhi. Poor Bahadur Shah found himself in a very difficult situation. The plundering bands of bad characters were moving from place to place in the city. Some of them were using the Sepoy uniforms and plundering shop keepers and rich persons.\(^2\) The genuine rebel Sepoys averse to plunderers apprehended five such plunders and sent them to jail\(^3\). It appears that the author of *Roznamcha* and Moinuddin Hasan Khan could not distinguish between the imposters and genuine Sepoys and alleged that the later were plundering the *baniyas* of the city for money\(^4\). Had this been the situation the Sepoys might have not apprehended such people as stated above. It may be inferred that in the beginning of the rebellion the rebel Sepoys did not indulge in any undesirable activities. Their hearts were full with sentiments of expelling the English from India and had a vision of reestablishing Indian rule. However, the paradoxical

3. Ibid.
situation that existed in Delhi, adversely affected law and order situation in the city. Munshi Jeewan Lal tells us that on 12th May the condition of the city worsened further. The unwilling King was distracted by the cries and petitions, the servants of the Europeans, shopkeepers, rich people whose houses had been plundered, all appealed to Bahadur Shah for redress.\(^1\) Bahadur Shah was sad over this situation as like all the other Mughal Emperors he also wished to keep the people happy. Consequently, with a view to restore order in the city he summoned Mirza Ziauddin Ahmad Khan, Aminuddin Ahmad Khan and Hasan Ali Khan to form a committee to maintain law and order in the city. But Hasan Ali Khan declined and foiled his attempt\(^2\). Another bid was made on the recommendation of Hakim Ahsanullah Khan\(^3\) to restore order in the city and its neighbourhood. These arrangements were hardly enough to satisfy the terrified people. It seems that the rebel Sepoys were also keen that the semblance of authority of the King is established and order restored in the city. They pressed the King to visit the city personally making appeals and ensuring the shop keepers their safety, asking them to resume their business.\(^4\) On 12th May Bahadur Shah directed his eldest son Mirza Mughal to go to the city with a company of *telangas* to stop plunder in the city. But the prince could not succeed in his mission. Bahadur Shah himself riding on an elephant visited the Chandni Chowk and some of the adjoining areas and persuaded the shopkeepers to open their shops.

---

1. Metcalfe, p. 86.
2. Ibid p.85.
and supply the essential commodities to the rebels' army. Maulvi Zakaullah sneeringly writes about Bahadur Shah's visit to the city as under, "Before the elephant of the King there was an ordinary presence of the people, hundred of the telangas wearing dhoti and flying their colours on their shoulders accompanied Bahadur Shah raising slogans 'Bahadur Shah ki Jai'. They also called him Gusainya (master of religion and the world)." Bahadur Shah's personal appeal and visit to the shop keepers made little impact and they kept their shutters down. Delhi continued to reel under chaotic conditions for over two months.

Bahadur Shah's effort to control the affairs of the city remained largely unsuccessful owing to the emergence of several rebel factions. In order to understand the functions of various rebel leaders it may be pointed out that within the imperial family there were a number of ambitious princes. These princes were anxious to grab power through the help of the Sepoys. Consequently, it is noted that three important princely factions headed by (i) Mirza Mughal (ii) Mirza Abubakar and (iii) Mirza Jawan Bakht supported by the favourite Queen of Bahadur Shah, were active. Mirza Mughal was the eldest son of Bahadur Shah and possessed some quality to administer. He was being supported by a section of rebel Sepoys. Mirza Abubakar was also a talented youngman. He had enrolled a number of persons under his contingent. Zeenat Mahal headed the third faction as she was extremely keen for the succession of her young son Mirza Jawan Bakht, and was already

1. Zakaullah, p. 662.
2. Metcalfe, p.86.
3. It is said that all the eight sons of Bahadur Shah had given a written pledge agreeing to the succession of Mirza Jawan Bakht. See S.A.A. Rizvi, Sautantra Dilli (1857), Lucknow, 1968, 3rd ed. p.150. (hereafter cited as Sautantra Dilli).
hobnobing with the English. Under her influence Bahadur Shah had a sympathetic attitude to his succession. It may further be stated that Mirza Jawan Bakht is alleged to have an intense anti-English feelings. Sergent Fleming while deposing before the Commission of Inquiry said that in April 1857 his son visited the place of Jawan Bakht who reacted sharply and said. "Never try to come again. I don't want to see the face of a Kafir. Very soon I will kill and crush them"\(^1\)

Apparently the allegations against Jawan Bakht were levelled to malign the prince and justify the prosecution in 1857. However the real picture was altogether different. Maulana Fazle Haq Khairabadi, a leading rebel leader of 1857 gives a graphic account about the character of the princes. He writes, "They had no experience of battle nor had ever the opportunity to play with sword and spears. They had made friendships with the street people and trusted them. They were zero in experience and involved in pleasure pursuits, extravagance and evil doings. They had become rigid yet they became wealthy. With the coming of wealth they indulged themselves in pleasure pursuits greatly. They began to collect money from the people in the name of raising army for the administration but they did not spend even a paie on the maintenance of the army. Whatever they collected they used to spend it on their ownselves. Hitherto it was tolerable, but the prostitutes and market people had not left them in a position to lead any war campaign. Whenever an incapable person is entrusted with such responsibility and the poor people are

\(^1\) Garret, p.170.
crushed under the grinding burden, then the things happen like this. They
passed their nights in slumber and days in intoxication. Had they been
awakening and alert they might have taken some care and pondered over
the situation.\textsuperscript{1} It will be seen that the rebellion in Delhi in its initial stage
had caused great confusion. It gave rise to disorder and factional fueds.
On the other hand, the English who had been forced to vacate the city
were trying to collect their scattered forces at one place. Metcalfe who
had already escaped, was seeking English armed help. A number of British
bureaucrats had taken shelter at Agra fort which was still in their possession.
The English had also written letters to all the ruling princes and rajas
seeking their full support to quell the rebels. At the same time they were
also trying to create bad blood between Hindus and Muslims through their
agents in Delhi. The situation for Bahadur Shah was very grim, his heart
was not with the rebels but he had been forced to become their leader.
Interestingly, the Muslim scholars who had been very active in engineering
the rebellion of 1857 realised fully well the consequences of the English
diplomacy in seeking help from the ruling classes of the country. The
\textit{Delhi Urdu Akhbar} published a news item on 31st May, 1857 which indicates
the concern of the Muslim scholars. To quote the \textit{Akhbar}, "A Maulvi
Sahab was preaching with warnings to all the \textit{Raizes, Rajas, and jargirdars}
that they should not succumb to the greed and deceit of the English and
invite their own destruction and ruin with their own hands. They should
see that the English had not allowed even a patch of land and a small
part of government under their control. They had occupied the government

\textsuperscript{1} \textit{Baghi Hindustan}, pp. 34-37.
and attempted to destroy the religions of Hindus and Muslims. They misbehaved with the Mughal ruler and the kingdom of Awadh, ignoring all the promises, and treaties and agreements for loyalty. The Maulvi further warned them not to fall into their trap otherwise the people of the country - Hindus and Muslims - will repent one day and it would do no good to them. He, therefore, asked them to welcome the opportunity given by Almighty God."

While the city of Delhi was reeling under chaos and disorder, the impact of the rebellion was being felt in neighbouring towns of the capital. Since these towns were very close to Delhi, the rebels had penetrated into the remote areas and made the people aware of the happenings in Delhi and Meerut. The immediate neighbouring district Gurgaon having a strong population of Mewati Rajputs, revolted against the English regime when 300 Sepoys reached there on 11th May 1857. The Mewatis were generally peasants by profession and were unhappy with the English land laws and other regulations which had adversely affected their age old economy. A large number of peasants, artisans and other professionals joined the rebels including those serving in the Bengal Army or the Sindhia's armed forces. Nawab Ahmad Mirza Khan and Nawab Dulajan also joined the rebels. It appears that the rebels did not trust the upper class gentry and considered them loyal to the English. So they did not trust the two nawabs and kept the leadership under their control. An important feature

of rebellion in Gurgaon was that the Mewatis had become independence conscious after centuries of subjugation. The Chaudhari of every village became the leader of the revolt as is evident from their letter dated 13th August 1857 addressed to Bahadur Shah Zafar. According to a modern historian the Chaudharis and other freedom fighters in Mewat wrote a letter to Bahadur Shah, recognised him as Emperor of Hindustan and assumed the responsibility of governance of Mewat on his behalf. By the end of May 1857 almost entire Mewat had declared independence expressing loyalty to Bahadur Shah. However, a small section of people residing in towns continued to profess loyalty to the English. The English officer Ford attempted to stop the movement of rebels but he could not succeed and he had to escape to Mathura. The rebels in Gurgaon are said to have been led by Hasan Ali Khan Mewati who defeated Ford near village Ghasera situated in between Sohna and Nuh. The rebels captured Gurgaon headquarter and occupied the treasury and Court. Rupees 7 Lakhs 84 thousand were obtained by them from the treasury. The rebels in Gurgaon made twopornged attacks. First was directed against the Europeans and English and the second was to punish the Indian loyalists of the English. The rebels also obtained artillery and some other equipments from the district head quarters. They also set on fire the record office of Gurgaon which preserved revenue records, obviously to evade payments to the baniyas, moneylenders and others. They, however, had to face the Khanazads

1. Arzdasht, Mujahideen-i-Mewat, National Archives, New Delhi.
of Nuh, who were loyal to the English - the only element in Gurgaon district which was intellectually and economically advanced than the Mewatis. Here Sadruddin Khan Mewati led the rebels and brought a number of villages under his control and gave fierce fight to the Khanazads several times. From Nuh Sadruddin diverted his attention to Holdal where Rawat, Jats and Rajputs had considerable population. The rebels apprehended their complicity with the English. Hence they attacked them. The struggle between Mewatis and Jat-Rawat-Rajput combined forces continued for several months. The English had to suffer a lot. It appears that the Rawat and Jats were in secret alliance with the English as Major Eden attempted unsuccessfully to rescue them.

Apart from Gurgaon, Ballabhgarh, a Jat principality, also revolted on 11th May 1857. Its ruler, Nahar Singh, threw his lot with the Delhi rebels. He also sent a detachment of 30 cavalrymen under the command of Qalandar Baksh to support Delhi rebels. He also wrote a number of letters to Bahadur Shah assuring him support. But despite repeated calls from Bahadur Shah, he never visited Delhi which makes his position dubious. It is said that Nahar Singh was proceeding with extreme caution in the chaotic situation of 1857. On the one hand, he was helping the English Officers and, on the other hand, he was following

5. Nizami, pp. 129,139,156.
the orders of Bahadur Shah. Nahar Singh helped the fugitive Englishmen like Ford and Hanway. He not only protected them but also helped them in every possible way. Interestingly, in one of the letters sent to Bahadur Shah, Nahar Singh denied having extended any help to the English. The activities of Nahar Singh largely indicate that he had little interest in Delhi affairs. Taking advantage of the situation prevailing in the region, he was seizing villages after villages to consolidate his own position. He also informed the English officials that his aggrandizement was for the English. He also assured the English officials of his loyalty and kept on informing them of the rebel activities in Delhi. The activities of Nahar Singh within the close proximity of Delhi was bound to affect the solidarity and unity of the rebels in Delhi. The Delhi Urdu Akhbar published a revealing piece of information that with the help of Raja Nahar Singh a number of English men have reached Agra safely. The newspaper in the end expressing sorrow says that the small rulers were still supporting the English and paving way for their own destruction. The duplicity displayed by Raja Nahar Singh was very confusing. An Urdu newspaper wrote on 19th July, 1857 that Raja Nahar had become a strong opponent of the English. The fact was that the duplicity of Raja Nahar Singh emanated

2. Foreign Political Consultations no. 51-54, 4th March, 1859.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
from his own considerations and difficulties. Cave Browne's observations explain his position without any ambiguity. He writes, "...... his estate lay within 20 miles of Delhi, on the Agra Road, and he was surrounded by traitor (rebel) and a turbulent population on every side, and was consequently ( he said ) swept by the force of the tide into the rebellion; but, on the other hand, the line he from the first adopted admitted of no such palliation."¹

Nahar Sing pursued his policy till the rebellion came to an end. He was sentenced to death and his estate was confiscated².

Another town close to Delhi namely Sohna revolted. The rebels expelled the English from there and setup their own administration. They defeated captain Eden's troop on 9th June. Followed by this, Lt. Grant was sent there to protect the area. Bahadur Shah Zafar said to have acknowledged the contributions of the Mewatis against the English in Sohna.³

Another important place near Delhi was Bahadurgarh founded by Ismail Khan, brother of Najabat Khan. Bahadurgarh also supported the rebels. The Nawab of Bahadurgarh presented considerable sums of money on several occasions to Bahadur Shah despite his poor economic condition and expressed all sympathies with the rebels.⁴

². Ibid. pp.235-236.
Another small state in the close proximity of Delhi was Dujana. This state was formed in 1806 when the English assigned it to Abdus Samad Khan for his services. In 1850 Hasan Ali Khan occupied the state and earned a good reputation and popularity with his nice behaviour. Soon after the spread of the rebellion in the neighbourhood of Delhi Hasan Ali Khan appeared before Bahadur Shah on 12th May 1857 and paid his respects. Prof. Nizami, the editor of the *Tarikhi Roznamcha* of Abdul Latif, says that he was a frequent visitor to the Mughal Court prior to the outbreak of the rebellion. On the re-establishment of British rule in Delhi, Hasan Ali Khan abandoning everything went into the wilderness.

Like Dujana, Pataudi was another small state very close to Delhi. It was also founded in 1806 through the generosity of Lord Lake for the services rendered by Faiz Talab Khan, the founder of the state, in the Anglo-Maratha-conflict. In 1829 Akbar Ali Khan succeeded to the Gaddi of the State. Akbar Ali Khan was invited by Bahadur Shah Zafar on the outbreak of the rebellion with the obvious hope of support and assistance in controlling the growing lawlessness in the capital. Like Raja Nahar Singh he expressed faithfulness to Bahadur Shah but evaded his presence to the court on one pretext or the other. Jeevan Lal reports that on 19th May Bahadur Shah received an *arzdasht* (Petition) from Nawab Akbar Ali Khan to excuse his presence for the time being and the impatient Emperor ordered that

---

4. Ibid. p. 188.
he should present himself immediately.\(^1\) It appears that the continued evasive attitude of Akbar Ali Khan annoyed Bahadur Shah as may be inferred from the petition sent to the Court by various dignitaries including the ruler of Pataudi to allow them to appear before the King. The later however declined.\(^2\) It appears that Akbar Ali Khan was also pursuing the policy of Raja Nahar Singh by expressing verbal loyalty to the King without offering any solid support to a greatly worried Emperor.\(^3\)

Within the close proximity of Delhi was another small state of Farrukhnagar founded by Daler Khan Baluch in 1803 during the Anglo-Maratha conflict. The ruler of Farrukhnagar, Isa Khan, extended no support to the Delhi Court. Consequently, after the treaty between the Marathas and English the size of his state was reduced to half. In 1850 Nawab Ahmad Ali Khan became the ruler of the state. On the outbreak of the rebellion of 1857, Nawab Ahmad Ali Khan appeared before Bahadur Shah on his summons.\(^4\) Perhaps he was the only ruler summoned by Bahadur Shah who wholeheartedly gave full support to the cause of the rebels. Unfortunately, the ambitions of Rao Tula Ram, the Ahir ruler of Rewari, had considerably reduced the power of Ahmad Ali Khan and consequently it weakened the rebel activities against the English in Delhi. Undoubtedly Nawabs' involvement in the rebellion led to the disappearance of the English rule from Farrukhnagar. However, Nawab had to spend more time in Delhi than to look after the state affairs at Farrukhnagar. After the

---

1. Metcalfe, p.97.
suppression of the rebellion Ahmad Ali Khan was prosecuted and hanged to death at Delhi.\textsuperscript{1}

Another important state near Delhi was Loharu founded by Mirza Arif Jan Beg during the 18th century. During the Anglo-Maratha conflict, one of his descendants, Ahmad Bakhs Khan, played an important role and with his efforts the Raja of Alwar concluded a treaty with the English in 1801\textsuperscript{2}. In reward for his services Ahmad Bakhsh Khan was given six \textit{mahals in jagir} in district Gurgaon yielding an annual revenue of 5-6 lakhs rupees. In 1827 Ahmad Bakhsh Khan died leaving two sons, Shamsuddin Khan and Aminuddin Khan. Shamsuddin Khan, being the eldest son, succeeded to the throne of Loharu. Unfortunately, he was executed in 1835 on the charge of conspiracy in the murder of the English agent, Fraser. The \textit{mahals} assigned to Nawab Ahmad Bakhsh Khan by Raja of Alwar remained in the possession of the family. Since Shamsuddin Khan had no offsprings, the \textit{pargana} of Loharu was given to Aminuddin Khan.

In 1857 when the rebellion broke out, Nawab Aminuddin Khan fell into confusion. He had been a regular visitor to Bahadur Shah prior to the outbreak of the rebellion and is reported to have been present with him on 12th May.\textsuperscript{3} It appears that Nawab Aminuddin Khan possessed great intelligence and fully understood the complexities of the rebellion of 1857 as may be inferred from his decline to accept Ferozpur Jhirka in Al-Tamgha.\textsuperscript{4} Bahadur Shah had also directed Aminuddin Khan to raise an army. The

\textsuperscript{1} Zakaullah, pp. 709-10.
\textsuperscript{2} Nizami, p. 123.
\textsuperscript{3} Ibid.
Nawab did not respond favourably\textsuperscript{1}. However owing to the growing lawlessness in the neighbourhood of Loharu, Nawab Aminuddin Khan raised a body of 600 men\textsuperscript{2}. On 13th July he was given great honours. Apparently, Aminuddin Khan was maintaining very cordial relations with the Mughal Court. The Emperor was pressing him for sending money. At one stage Mirza Mughal, the eldest son of Bahadur Shah, attempted to use force against Aminuddin Khan for realizing money. This aggravated the situation and Aminuddin Khan informed Bahadur Shah about this.\textsuperscript{3} People intervened and the matter was resolved. However it appears that as the rebellion continued and the rebel activities in and around Delhi were surcharged with emotions, Aminuddin Khan also began to support the rebels 'cause in Delhi.\textsuperscript{4} On the suppression of the rebellion, Nawab Aminuddin Khan was taken into custody, greatly humiliated by the English trial Court. He was made to stand before the Martial Law Court from 10 to 4 O' clock for several days. His life was, however, spared, and his estate was restored on the ground that he had extended full support to the English in Loharu when the rebel activities were at the height.\textsuperscript{5}

Another very important place in the vicinity of Delhi was Rewari which in the beginning revolted against the English authority under the leadership of Rao Tula Ram. Taking advantage of the prevailing confusion, he seized a number of villages and attempted to collect revenue dues from the peasants falling within the newly conquered territory of Farrukhnagar. This caused a clash of interest between

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1} Nizami, p. 123.
\item \textsuperscript{2} Ibid. p. 180.
\item \textsuperscript{3} Ibid p. 160; Delhi Urdu Akhbar, 24th May, 1857.
\item \textsuperscript{4} Nizami, pp.170-71.
\item \textsuperscript{5} Foreign Secret Consultation, 13th August 1858, nos. 439-47, National Archives of India, New Delhi; Loharu State Gazetteir , pp. 3-4.
\end{itemize}
the Nawab of Farrukhnagar and Rao Tula Ram. According to Jeevan Lal, Rao Tula Ram also expressed his loyalty and solidarity with the Mughal Court and he also visited Delhi personally with the objective to collect the revenue from not only Rewari but also from Farrukhnagar.¹ From the narrative of Jeevan Lal and the account given by Abdul Latif in the Roznamcha, it appears that Nawab of Farrukhnagar held great influence in Bahadur Shah's Court. Hence Tula Ram could not gain much. Contrary to that, Tula Ram's detractors succeeded in convincing Bahadur Shah that Tula Ram was using force for revenue collection.²

Tula Ram was a shrewd and intelligent leader like Nahar Singh and the ruler of Pataudi. He maintained good relations with the English and also kept Bahadur Shah in good humour. Despite repeated letters from Bahadur Shah to send money, for a long time he kept on making promises until Bakth Khan appeared on the scene.³ Tula Ram, however, succeeded in collecting huge amount from the people by force and fraud as a report appearing in Akhbar-uz-Zafar on 22nd Muharram 1224 Hijri/9th March 1809, would suggest. However, despite issuance of repeated Farmans to Tula Ram, he did not present himself in person to Bahadur Shah on one pretext or the other.⁴

We find that another important state which had a close contact with Bahadur Shah was Jhajhjhar.⁵ This state also came into existence in 1806 as a consequence of reward by the English to its founder after the conclusion

---

¹ Metcalfe, p 159.
² Ibid p 195.
³ Nizami, pp. 184-85; One of the modern historians, S B. Chaudhary, says that Tula Ram obtained Royal Sanad of Rewari Paying Rs.40 thousand. See Civil Rebellion in the Indian Mutinies 1857-59, Delhi, 1957, p. 68.
⁴ Tankh-i-Meo Chattri, pp.169-70.
of Anglo-Maratha conflict. On May 11th 1857, Bahadur Shah summoned Nawab Abdur Rehman Khan of Jhajhjhar to come to Delhi.\(^1\) Nawab Abdur Rehman received a letter on 12th May.\(^2\) Having received the letter, Nawab Abdur Rehman Khan collected his men and sent spies to Delhi to obtain information of that place. Apparently, the Nawab was not sure of the correct situation and on 13th May he is seen obliging Ford, the Collector of Gurgaon, by supplying a small contingent of cavalry\(^3\). However, it appears that the cavalry was either instructed by the Nawab not to co-operate with the Collector or the cavalry was itself not willing to support the British officer in that surcharged situation for the fight of freedom. Abdur Rehman Khan had also sent some soldiers to help Scott, the Magistrate of Rohtak. But Metcalfe who arrived at Jhajhjhar from Delhi with great hopes was greatly disappointed. The people of Jhajhjhar were standing like a rock unitedly against the English. On 16th of May Abdur Rehman Khan was informed about Metcalfe's arrival in disguise of an Indian and his request for help.\(^4\) The Nawab sent his father-in-law directing to provide all assistance to Metcalfe. Unfortunately, one of the servants of the Nawab either under the direction of his master or of his own, asked Metcalfe to leave the place immediately.\(^5\) Jeevan Lal however states that on humanitarian ground Metcalfe was helped financially but he was directed to vacate the Kothi

---

\(^1\) Press List of Mutiny Papers, Box No. 39, May 11-December, 7 1857, National Archives, New Delhi. The author of Tarikh Roznamcha says that Nawab Abdur Rehman Khan was one of the most respected person in the Court of Bahadur Shah, see Nizami p 127

\(^2\) Ghulam Nabi, Tarikh-i- Jhajhjhar, 1301 Hijri, p. 236.

\(^3\) Foreign Political Consultations no 176-89, 9th July, 1858 The Punjab and Delhi in 1857, Vol. II, p 232


\(^5\) Tarikh-i-Jhajhjhar, pp 265-66
of Jhojhak Das in Jhajhjhar where he was staying.\textsuperscript{1} Jeevan Lal further says that in the affairs of Metcalfe Sannu Singh played a vicious role and consequently when the rebellion was suppressed and Metcalfe attained his position once again, the Nawab, was treated savagely.\textsuperscript{2} Interestingly, Nawab Abdur Rehman Khan's humanitarian outlook created a suspicious situation in Delhi as is evident from a report appearing in the \textit{Delhi Urdu Akhbar} on 24th May 1857 that the Nawab was behaving like a rebel against the authority of the Emperor and sheltering the English.

Abdur Rehman Khan was a learned man and greatly valued the learned and the learning.\textsuperscript{3} The Nawab sought permission to appear in the Court personally on 22nd June, but for some reason the permission was not granted.\textsuperscript{4} The author of \textit{Tarikh-i-Jhajhjhar} alleges that after the outbreak of the rebellion, Abdur Rehman Khan began to correspond with the Lt. Governor of Agra offering full support.\textsuperscript{5} The author of \textit{Roznamcha} says that Abdur Rehman Khan sent 21 \textit{asharfs} in \textit{nazr} (offering) to Bahadur Shah Zafar and also dispatched 50 horsemen under the command of Mir Akbar Ali to assist the rebels in Delhi.\textsuperscript{6}

Divergent statements in regard to the activities of Abdur Rehman Khan project him to be a man of dialating nature. However if we go through the files of the newspapers, we find the totally different picture. He is

\begin{footnotes}
\item[1] Metcalfe, p. 243, \textit{Foreign Consultations}, No. 176-89, 9th July 1858
\item[2] Metcalfe, p 244; Yadav, PP. 88-93.
\item[3] Nizami, p 197
\item[4] Ibid pp 139-140.
\item[5] \textit{Tarikh-i-Jhajhjhar}, p 284
\item[6] Nizami, p 156, \textit{Punjab and Delhi in 1857}, Vol II, p 233, The Author of \textit{Tarikh-i-Jhajhjhar} (pp 267-68) claims that the Nawab sent 300 horsemen to Delhi
\end{footnotes}
projected as a nationalist. According to the *Delhi Urdu Akhbar*, he extended full support to the freedom fighters in Delhi in kind and cash. The economic position of Bahadur Shah in Delhi was very bad. He was writing repeatedly to Abdur Rehman Khan for sending five lakh rupees. Abdur Rehman Khan sent rupees one lakh to the Emperor. Probably due to the pressing demand by the Emperor, Abdur Rehman Khan began to demand money from the mahajans of Jhajhjhar. Within 15 days of the dispatch of rupees one lakh to Delhi, the Emperor sent Amjad Ali as his emissary to Jhajhjhar to collect more money. Apprehending persecution by Ahmad Ali, the Nawab sent his treasury consisting seven lakh rupees outside Jhajhjhar under the escort of Shalu Singh. Amjad Ali, on arrival, began to exercise undue authority on the Nawab causing a rift between the two. Nawab Abdur Rehman adopted a serious attitude towards Amjad Ali and the latter had to return without any success. In the meantime Prince Khizr Sultan, who was infamous for his activities in Delhi in exacting money from people also arrived at Jhajhjhar. The prince was not allowed to enter Jhajhjhar Fort. Abdur Rehman Khan and prince however held a meeting but what transpired between the two is not clear. The Prince returned to Delhi the next day.

As we have already stated that Abdur Rehman Khan had sent his father in law, Abdus Samad Khan, with a small contingent to assist the

---

2 *Akhbar-uz-Zafar* 1st Muharram 1274 Hijri./ 22 August 1857.
3 *Tarikh-i- Jhajhjhar* pp. 273-74.
5 Ibid p 274.
rebels in Delhi. When the English launched counter offensive against Delhi on 14th September 1857, Abdus Samad Khan was at Delhi and fighting against the English. His other accomplices, Ibrahim Ali Khan and Hasan Ali Khan escaped from Delhi to Jhajhjhar and narrated the details of British attack to Abdur Rehman Khan. After the occupation of Delhi, the English gave orders for the arrest of Abdur Rehman Khan and others. He was hanged to death by the English trial Court.

From the above discussion at least two things would emerge: First, after the outbreak of rebellion in Delhi and ascendency of the rebels in Delhi affairs, Bahadur Shah Zafar, though reluctant at the initial stage of the rebellion, was either forced to write letters to the rulers of Hindustan including those mentioned above or on his own to restore order in the country. And the second sad aspect that comes to our notice is that not only the big rulers like Maharaja Jaipur, Jodhpur, Bikaner and other Rajput chieftains and Nawabs but also the small rulers around Delhi could not extend sincere support to Bahadur Shah in 1857. Had the Indian rulers not acted in division and made it a point to exterminate the English rule from India, India could have been free 90 years earlier and it would have presented Indians united even with their religious diversity. Unfortunately this was not destined to be. Further it is a sad commentary on our own people specially the ruling classes including the Princes in Delhi who proved to be extremely shortsighted and indulged in fulfilling their own desires—which they could fulfill earlier as princes due to lack of resources as we will see in the next chapter.

1. Tarikh-i-Jhajhjhar. pp. 275-76.