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Rajasthan in 18th Century- Emergence of Regional Power

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ABSTRACT: Such relatively ephemeral successes at state building as that of Ranjit Singh are rare. However, one can find other instances in the context of the 18th century in which consolidation was rapidly followed by reversals. Such instances can be divided into two categories: those in which the consolidation of a particular state proved a threat to British power and hence was undermined (e.g., the case of Mysore, below) and others in which the logic of consolidation and decline appears not to have concerned the British. In the latter category can be placed the case of Jaipur (earlier Amber) in eastern Rajasthan, a Rajput principality controlled by the Kachwaha clan. From the 16th century the Kachwahs had been subordinate to the Mughals and had, as a consequence, gradually managed to consolidate their hold over the region around Amber in the course of the 17th century. The crucial role played in high Mughal politics by such members of the clan as Raja Man Singh thus paid dividends, and the chiefs were permitted to maintain a large cavalry and infantry force. In the early 18th century the ruler Jai Singh Sawai took steps to increase his power manyfold. This was done by arranging to have his jāgīr assignment in the vicinity of his home territories and by taking on parcels of land in which the tax rights were initially rented from the state and then gradually made permanent. By the time of his death in 1743, Jai Singh (for whom Jaipur came to be named) had emerged as the single most important Rajput ruler.

KEYWORDS- Rajasthan, 18th century, regional power, Rajput, Jaipur

I. INTRODUCTION

This example was followed some years later in the 1750s by Suraj Mal, the Jat ruler of Bharatpur, who—like Jai Singh—adopted a modified form of Mughal revenue administration in his territories. However, by this time, the fortunes of the Jaipur kingdom were seriously in question. Under threat from the Marathas, recourse had to be taken more and more to short-term fiscal exactions, while at the same time a series of crop failures in the 1750s and '60s spread a pall over the region's fragile agriculture. The second half of the 18th century was thus marked by an economic depression, accompanied by a decline in the political power of Jaipur, which became a vulnerable target for the ambitions of the Marathas, and of Mahadaji Sindhia in particular.[1,2,3]

Jats

- The Jats' insurrection was a prominent one of the various agrarian uprisings that the Mughal Empire experienced in the second half of the 17th century.
- The Jats attempted to create an autonomous zone under their rule, following the current trend. Churaman and Badan Singh took the initiative, but it was Suraj Mal who, between the years of 1756 and 1763, established the Jet state at Bharatpur
- The state's boundaries were increased in the east up to the Ganges' edge, the south to the Chambal, the north to Delhi, and the west to Agra.

Rajputs

- The Rajput kings also made an effort to create their autonomous political system. By annexing their neighbours' land, they carried out their expansionist programme.
- The major Rajput states, including Mewar, Marwar, and Amber, banded together to fight the Mughals.
- However, the Rajputs' internal power struggles undermined their authority. Ajit Singh of Jodhpur and Jai Singh of Jaipur were the two Rajput kings that garnered the most attention.

II. DISCUSSION

Many Rajput monarchs, especially those from Amber and Jodhpur, had distinguished themselves in their service to the Mughals. In return, they were allowed a great deal of freedom in their watan jagirs. These kings made an effort to take

over neighbouring territories in the eighteenth century. At the Mughal court, Ajit Singh, the ruler of Jodhpur, participated in factional politics.

These wealthy areas of Gujarat and Malwa were claimed by these strong Rajput households as subadari. Malwa was ruled by Sawai Raja Jai Singh of Amber, while Gujarat was ruled by Raja Ajit Singh of Jodhpur. In 1713, these positions were renewed by Emperor Jahandar Shah. They also made an effort to enlarge their sphere of influence by taking control of imperial lands that bordered their watans. While Nagaur was taken and annexed to the house of Jodhpur, Amber acquired significant portions of Bundi.

Sawai Raja Jai Singh created Jaipur as his new capital in 1722 after receiving the subadari of Agra. Maratha operations into Rajasthan starting in the 1740s exerted heavy strain on these principalities, preventing further growth. In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the Jats, like the other states, began to solidify their position of dominance. With Churaman as their leader, they took over areas to the west of Delhi, and by the 1680s, they had started to rule the area between the two imperial towns of Delhi and Agra. They served as Agra's de facto guardians for a while.[4,5,6]

The Jats were successful farmers, and in areas where they predominated, towns like Panipat and Ballabhgarh developed into significant trading hubs. Bharatpur's kingdom expanded under Suraj Mal to become a significant state. Many of Delhi's notables sought refuge there when Nadir Shah stormed the city in 1739.

His son Jawahir Shah had 30,000 of his own soldiers and contracted another 20,000 Maratha and 15,000 Sikh soldiers to fight the Mughals. The Jats constructed an exquisite garden palace at Dig that incorporated styles from Amber and Agra, in contrast to the fort at Bharatpur, which was constructed in a fairly conventional manner. During Shah Jahan's reign, the architectural styles used in its structures were inspired by those used by royalty.

Rajasthan (Hindi: 'Land of Kings')^[12] is a state in northwestern India.^{[13][14][15]} It covers 342,239 square kilometres (132,139 sq mi) or 10.4 per cent of India's total geographical area. It is the largest Indian state by area and the seventh largest by population. It is on India's northwestern side, where it comprises most of the wide and inhospitable Thar Desert (also known as the Great Indian Desert) and shares a border with the Pakistani provinces of Punjab to the northwest and Sindh to the west, along the Sutlej-Indus River valley. It is bordered by five other Indian states: Punjab to the north; Haryana and Uttar Pradesh to the northeast; Madhya Pradesh to the southeast; and Gujarat to the southwest. Its geographical location is 23°.3' to 30°.12' North latitude and 69°.30' to 78°.17' East longitude, with the Tropic of Cancer passing through its southernmost tip.

Its major features include the ruins of the Indus Valley civilisation at Kalibangan and Balathal, the Dilwara Temples, a Jain pilgrimage site at Rajasthan's only hill station, Mount Abu, in the ancient Aravalli mountain range and eastern Rajasthan, the Keoladeo National Park of Bharatpur, a World Heritage Site^[16] known for its bird life. Rajasthan is also home to three national tiger reserves, the Ranthambore National Park in Sawai Madhopur, Sariska Tiger Reserve in Alwar and the Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve in Kota.

The State of Rajasthan was formed on 30 March 1949 when the states of the Rajputana Agency of the erstwhile British Empire in India were merged into the new Indian Union. Its capital and largest city is Jaipur. Other important cities are Jodhpur, Kota, Bikaner, Ajmer, Bharatpur and Udaipur. The economy of Rajasthan is the seventh-largest state economy in India with ₹10.20 lakh crore (US\$130 billion) in gross domestic product and a per capita GDP of ₹118,000 (US\$1,500).^[17] Rajasthan ranks 22nd among Indian states in human development index.^[8]

Rajasthan means "The Land of Kings" and is a portmanteau of Sanskrit "Rājā" ('King') and Sanskrit "Sthāna" ('Land') or Persian "St(h)ān", with the same meaning.^[12] The oldest reference to Rajasthan is found in a stone inscription dated back to 625 CE.^[18] The first printed mention of the name Rajasthan appears in the 1829 publication *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan or the Central and Western Rajput States of India*, while the earliest known record of Rajputana as a name for the region is in George Thomas's 1800 memoir *Military Memories*.^[19] John Keay, in his book *India: A History*, stated that Rajputana was coined by the British in 1829, John Briggs, translating Ferishta's history of early Islamic India, used the phrase "Rajput (Rajput) princes" rather than "Indian princes"[7,8,9]

III.RESULTS

Parts of what is now Rajasthan were partly part of the Vedic Civilisation and the Indus Valley civilisation. Kalibangan, in Hanumangarh district, was a major provincial capital of the Indus Valley Civilisation.^[21] Topsfield^[22] writes that the Rajputs first entered India from the north west in the first millennium A.D. They established kingdoms in western India in the region that is now known as Rajasthan.^[22]

A archaeological excavation at the Balathal site in Udaipur district shows a settlement contemporary with the Harrapan civilisation dating back to 3000–1500 BCE. Stone Age tools dating from 5,000 to 200,000 years were found in Bundi and Bhilwara districts of the state.^[23]

The Matsya kingdom of the Vedic civilisation of India is said to roughly corresponded to the former state of Jaipur in Rajasthan and included the whole of Alwar with portions of Bharatpur.^{[24][25]} The capital of Matsya was at Viratanagar (modern Bairat), which is said to have been named after its founder King Virata.^[26]

Bhargava^[27] identifies the two districts of Jhunjhunu and Sikar and parts of Jaipur district along with Haryana districts of Mahendragarh and Rewari as part of Vedic state of Brahnavarta. Bhargava also locates the present day Sahibi River as the Vedic Drishadwati River, which along with Saraswati River formed the borders of the Vedic state of Brahnavarta.^[28] Manu and Bhrigu narrated the Manusmriti to a congregation of seers in this area. The ashrams of Vedic seers Bhrigu and his son Chayvan Rishi, for whom Chyawanprash was formulated, were near Dhosi Hill, part of which lies in Dhosi village of Jhunjhunu district of Rajasthan and part of which lies in Mahendragarh district of Haryana.^[29]

The Western Kshatrapas (405–35 BCE), the Saka rulers of the western part of India, were successors to the Indo-Scythians and were contemporaneous with the Kushans, who ruled the northern part of the Indian subcontinent. The Indo-Scythians invaded the area of Ujjain and established the Saka era (with their calendar), marking the beginning of the long-lived Saka Western Satraps state.

The Pratiharas ruled for many dynasties in this part of the country; the region was known as Gurjaratra.^[31] Up to the 10th century CE, almost all of North India acknowledged the supremacy of the Imperial Pratiharas, with their seat of power at Kannauj.^[32]

The Gurjara Pratihara Empire acted as a barrier for Arab invaders from the 8th to the 11th century. The chief accomplishment of the Gurjara-Pratihara Empire lies in its successful resistance to foreign invasions from the west, starting in the days of Junaid.^[10,11,12] Historian R. C. Majumdar says that this was openly acknowledged by the Arab writers. He further notes that historians of India have wondered at the slow progress of Muslim invaders in India, as compared with their rapid advance in other parts of the world. Now there seems little doubt that it was the power of the Pratihara army that effectively barred the progress of the Arabs beyond the confines of Sindh, their only conquest for nearly 300 years.^[33]

Rajputana territory (brown), and main South Asian polities c. 1525 CE, on the eve of the establishment of the Mughal Empire.^{[34][35]}

The Ghurids had made an attempt to invade India through southern Rajasthan, however they were defeated in the Battle of Kasahrada on 1178 by a confederacy of Rajputs under Mularaja II of Chaulukya dynasty.^[36] Prithviraj Chauhan led a confederacy of Rajput clans and defeated the invading Ghurids under Muhammad Ghori in the First Battle of Tarain in 1191. In 1192 CE, Muhammad Ghori decisively defeated Prithviraj at the Second Battle of Tarain. After the defeat of Chauhan in 1192 CE, a part of Rajasthan came under Muslim rulers. The principal centers of their powers were Nagaur and Ajmer. Ranthambhore was also under their suzerainty. At the beginning of the 13th century, the most prominent and powerful state of Rajasthan was Mewar. Since the invasion of the Muslim Turks from the 13th century onwards, the Rajputs resisted the Muslim incursions into India, and preserved Hindu culture at their courts.^[22]

The Rajputs put up resistance to the Islamic invasions with their warfare and chivalry for centuries. The Ranas of Mewar led other kingdoms in their resistance to outside rule. Rana Hammir Singh defeated the Tughlaq dynasty and recovered a large portion of Rajasthan. The indomitable Rana Kumbha defeated the Sultans of Malwa, Nagaur and Gujarat and made Mewar the most powerful Rajput Kingdom in India. The ambitious Rana Sanga united the various Rajput clans, including the Muslim Khanzadas of Mewar under Raja Hasan Khan Mewati, and fought against the foreign powers in India. Rana Sanga defeated the Afghan Lodi Empire of Delhi and crushed the Turkic Sultanates of Malwa and Gujarat. Rana Sanga then tried to create an Indian empire but was defeated by the first Mughal Emperor Babur at Khanwa. The defeat was due to betrayal by the Tomar King Silhadi of Raisen. After Rana Sanga's death, Marwar rose as a power center in Rajasthan under Rao Maldeo Rathore. He conquered Jaisalmer, parts of Gujarat, Jalore, Nagaur, Ajmer, Santhore, Bhinmal, Radhanpur, Bayana, Tonk, Toda and Nabhara. He expanded the territories of Marwar up to Sindh-Cholisthan in west and his northern boundary was just fifty kilometres from Delhi.^{[37][38]} After defeating Humayun, Sher Shah came towards Rajputana. He defeated Chiefs of Rathore army by trickery in Battle of Sammel and captured some territory of Marwar but it was recovered by Rathores in 1545.^[39]

Hem Chandra Vikramaditya, the Hindu emperor,^{[40][41]} was born in the village of Machheri in Alwar District in 1501. He won 22 battles against Afghans, from Punjab to Bengal including the states of Ajmer and Alwar in Rajasthan, and defeated Akbar's forces twice, first at Agra and then at Delhi in 1556 at Battle of Delhi^[42] before acceding to the throne

of Delhi and establishing the "Hindu Raj" in North India, albeit for a short duration, from Purana Qila in Delhi. Hem Chandra was killed in the battlefield at Second Battle of Panipat fighting against Mughals on 5 November 1556.



Akbar shoots the Rajput commander Jaimal using a matchlock, during the Siege of Chittor (1567–1568).

During Akbar's reign most of the Rajput kings accepted Mughal suzerainty, but the rulers of Mewar (Rana Udai Singh II) and Marwar (Rao Chandrasen Rathore) refused to have any form of alliance with the Mughals. To teach the Rajputs a lesson Akbar attacked Udai Singh and killed Rajput commander Jaimal of Chitor and the citizens of Mewar in large numbers. Akbar killed 20,000–25,000 unarmed citizens in Chittor on the grounds that they had actively helped in the resistance.^[43]

Maharana Pratap took an oath to avenge the citizens of Chittor; he fought the Mughal empire till his death and liberated most of Mewar apart from Chittor itself. Maharana Pratap soon became the most celebrated warrior of Rajasthan and became famous all over India for his sporadic warfare and noble actions. According to Satish Chandra, "Rana Pratap's defiance of the mighty Mughal empire, almost alone and unaided by the other Rajput states, constitutes a glorious saga of Rajput valor and the spirit of self-sacrifice for cherished principles. Rana Pratap's methods of sporadic warfare were later elaborated further by Malik Ambar, the Deccani general, and by Shivaji".^[44]

Rana Amar Singh I continued his ancestor's war against the Mughals under Jehangir, he repelled the Mughal armies at Dewar. Later an expedition was again sent under the leadership of Prince Khurram, which caused much damage to life and property of Mewar. Many temples were destroyed, several villages were put on fire and women and children were captured and tortured to make Amar Singh accept surrender.^[45]

During Aurangzeb's rule Rana Raj Singh I and Veer Durgadas Rathore were chief among those who defied the intolerant emperor of Delhi. They took advantage of the Aravalli hills and caused heavy damage to the Mughal armies that were trying to occupy Rajasthan.^{[46][47]}

After Aurangzeb's death Bahadur Shah I tried to subjugate Rajasthan like his ancestors but his plan backfired when the three Rajput Rajas of Amber, Udaipur, and Jodhpur made a joint resistance to the Mughals. [13,14,15]The Rajputs first expelled the commandants of Jodhpur and Bayana and recovered Amer by a night attack. They next killed Sayyid Hussain Khan Barha, the commandant of Mewar and many other Mughal officers. Bahadur Shah I, then in the Deccan was forced to patch up a truce with the Rajput Rajas.^[48] The Jats, under Suraj Mal, overran the Mughal garrison at Agra and plundered the city taking with them the two great silver doors of the entrance of the famous Taj Mahal which were then melted down by Suraj Mal in 1763.^[49]

Over the years, the Mughals began to have internal disputes which greatly distracted them at times. The Mughal Empire continued to weaken, and with the decline of the Mughal Empire in the late 18th century, Rajputana came under the influence of the Marathas. The Maratha Empire, which had replaced the Mughal Empire as the overlord of the subcontinent, was finally replaced by the British Empire in 1818.^[50]

In the 19th century, the Rajput kingdoms were exhausted, they had been drained financially and in manpower after continuous wars and due to heavy tributes exacted by the Maratha Empire. To save their kingdoms from instability, rebellions and banditry the Rajput kings concluded treaties with the British in the early 19th century, accepting British suzerainty and control over their external affairs in return for internal autonomy.[16,17,18]



IV.CONCLUSION

The State of Rajasthan was formed on 30 March 1949 when the states of the Rajputana Agency^[54] of the erstwhile British Empire in India were merged into the new Indian Union. Modern Rajasthan includes most of Rajputana, which comprises the erstwhile nineteen princely states, three chiefships, and the British district of Ajmer-Merwara.^[55] Jaisalmer, Marwar (Jodhpur), Bikaner, Mewar (Chittorgarh), Alwar and Dhundhar (Jaipur) were some of the main Rajput princely states.[19] Bharatpur and Dholpur were Jat princely states whereas Tonk was a princely state under Pathans. The three chiefships were Lawa, Neemrana and Kushalgarh[20]

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