UNIT 4 THE RAJPUTS: CONFLICTS AND COLLABORATIONS

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4.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you would learn about:

- the changing character of Mughal Rajput relations;
- the significant role played by Rajput rulers in the Mughal expansion;
- the significance of Rajputs in redefining the character of Mughal Nobility;
- the way Mewar resisted Mughal suzerainty and
- the way Rathor kingdom of Marwar resisted interference of Mughals.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Rajputs constitute an integral part in the process of Mughal expansion and consolidation. Mughals, especially since Akbar could realize that for consolidation of the empire incorporation of local intermediaries and regional power magnets into the Mughal nobility

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is necessary. After initial conflict between Babur and Rana Sanga, a new phase in Mughal Rajput relations begin with Akbar, which continued till later Mughals, albeit with few cases of confrontations. Although we are not addressing the significant role played by Mughal-Rajput alliances in the internal politics of these princely states but it is important to bear in mind that this association altered internal politics of these princely states to a great extent. Lastly, it is important to highlight that despite siding with the looser, Rajput rulers were usually accommodated by the succeeding ruler during war of succession/s.

### 4.2 RAJPUTS AND EARLY MUGHALS

By the time of 15th century, many Rajput chiefs had established and consolidated their tribal monarchies. (For details please refer BHIC 107, Unit-8- Emergence of New Kingdoms in the 15th Century) One of them is Rana Sanga who in league with Sultan Ibrahim Lodi of Delhi and so many others such as Man Singh Tomar of Gwalior and Mewati chief Hasan Khan endeavored to check the advance of Mughal Emperor Babur, but the Indian forces could not face the superior war technology of Babur in the battle fought at Khanua in 1527. Consequently Babur succeeded to lay the foundation of the Mughal Empire. Babur in his short period of four years’ reign could not cultivate a visible constructive and sustainable relationship with the Rajput chiefs. His son and successor Humayun had to struggle with his brothers and the Afghans who were challenging his authority. He failed to resist them. Sher Shah Suri forced him to flee to Iran and there he got asylum. In 1555, he came back and recaptured the Mughal throne and died in 1556. Thus in this short span of time, there was no direct conflict or collaboration between the Mughals and the Rajput chiefs.

### 4.3 RAJPUTS AND AKBAR

With the gradual expansion of Mughal Empire it was necessary to consolidate the gains. Akbar initiated various kinds of political-administrative measures to ensure a solid foundation for the Mughal Empire. Given the experiences of Humayun, Akbar was very eager to cultivate local roots for the Mughal Empire, which is reflected in the redefined orientation of Mughals towards local princes and intermediaries, especially the rulers of Rajputana.

#### 4.3.1 Mughal-Rajput Relations: Redefining the Orientation

Relationships between the regional landed aristocracies and the central power vacillated between ‘Hot’ and ‘Cold’. As long as the centre remained powerful, the subordinate regional powers remained under their control, but in case of debilitation of the centre, the regional powers displayed the sign of independence. Thus, this kind of relationship based on military strength had temporary nature and could not establish permanent and sustainable relationship. Similar nature of relationship between the centre and indigenous Rajput monarchies continued till Akbar assumed the power of sovereignty. Akbar’s world view was for constructive and sustainable relationship with the local potentates. Akbar, when his father Humayun was fugitive and in distress condition, was born in Amarkot, a Sodha Rajput chieftdom in the Thar desert of Sind. He was brought up in the Hindustani culture. Thus, he developed independent broader socio-cultural world view rather than narrow religious and racial outlook. His world view was mixture of Indian, Persian and central Asian cultural outlook. From his childhood,
he had seen ups and downs of his fugitive parents. Thus, his own experience with
time and space and also his memories helped him develop to pragmatic, forward
looking and positive vision. This is clearly reflected from his future political and socio-
religious actions. He formed an efficient team for management of good governance.
This team helped him to execute his visionary policy. He evolved such a policy which
was followed by his political descendants and in fact proved sustainable and successful
for a long time.

One of his challenges was the formation and managing the nobility of different racial
and religious identities. How to keep them together and integrated under the central
command was a great challenge to him. To be above to his personal belief and to
respect the beliefs of others, he attracted the Rajput chiefs in general. In other words,
he gave full freedom to his raiyat or riyaya to follow their religions and cultural ethos.
His foundational political relations with his nobility and particularly with Rajputs are to
be seen in the light of socio-religious and economic developments till the down fall of
the Mughal Empire in the 18th century.

4.3.2 Initial Phase

Akbar introduced sharp change in the political relations between the local chiefs and
the central power. Till Akbar’s time, a local vanquished chief after accepting hegemony
of a victorious power, was imposed an amount of stipulated Peshkash (tribute) and
was left free to run his chieftdom as he liked. In other words, he was granted autonomy
till he continued to pay the Peshkash. To make this relationship sustainable, Akbar, in
addition to this provision, offered them to share imperial power and wealth. For this,
they had to join the Mughal service and to participate in the expansion of the Mughal
Empire. This policy of Akbar was well thought out. It is obvious from the contemporary
historian Arif Qandhari who points out that there were two to three hundred Rajas
who possessed very strong forts. Since each fort would have taken one or half year to
conquer, it was not possible for an emperor of Hindustan to conquer all the forts of
Rajas by force. It was thought better by Akbar to conciliate them. It is also significant
as Qandhari says that the Rajputs were determined to be ‘sincere and loyal to the
Emperor.’ At that time there were two challenging strong military powers i.e. Afghans
and Rajputs. The Mughals were afraid of Afghans because they were their potential
political rivals and had expelled Akbar’s father Humayun to Iran. Thus the only choice
left for Akbar was Rajput potentates. A prevalent seventeenth century saying recorded
by Shaikh Farid Bhakkari in his book Zakhirat-ul Khawanin says that the Shah of
Iran advised emperor Humayun when the later was in Iran, to rely on Rajputs instead
of Afghans. He also advised him to strengthen his power by establishing social relations
with them by contracting matrimonial alliances with them. Akbar also knew that without
human resources, his empire cannot be expanded and to keep it integrated and
sustainable, it was necessary to create permanent interests of the local chiefs. Human
resources or men power could be provided by the local chiefs and particularly by the
Rajput chiefs as is evident from the Ain-i Akbari’s survey of the infantry, cavalry
including war animals maintained by the local chiefs including the Rajput chiefs. Only
the Rajput chiefs of nine clans are known to have 2,62,000 cavalry and 12,25,000
infantry soldiers under their command. Central power’s concern for the military human
resources is also evident from the perusal of a statement expressed by the contemporary
writer on Raja Bharmal Kachawaha’s submission’. The Raja’s submission was not
seen as submission of big land lord but he was seen as a chief of large ulus (tribe). This
The Rajputs: Conflicts and Collaborations

fact is corroborated from the number of Kachwaha nobles taken in the Mughal service by Akbar. In 1605, they were 11 out of the total number of 31 Rajputs of different clans. Others in descending number were Rathores - 7, Bhaduriyas, Baghelas, Tanwars – 2 each, Chandrawat, Bhati, Hada, Dhandhera, Pundir, Bundila, Sisodia -1 each.

However, among these clans, most of the clan chiefs joined Akbar or central government’s service without any major battle. Why did these chiefs join Akbar’s service without any significant conflict? It is a pertinent question and it needs elaboration. In the light of Arif Qandhari’s outlook, Akbar appears to have created such a political atmosphere of persuasion and conciliation that generated confidence in the local chiefs particularly in the Rajput chiefs. Here generating confidence means, Akbar from very beginning provided equal opportunity to all the chiefs on the basis of ‘merit and loyalty.’ As soon as Bharmal joined Akbar’s service, he was made the commander (mansabdar) of 5000 troops. In the Mughal hierarchy it was the highest rank in the Akbar Shahi nobility. In addition to Bharmal’s personal status and salary income, it was all the more important to take into account the generation of employment to a large number of his tabinan (followers). Obviously majority of the troopers were Rajputs from his territory. Further in 1572-73, when Akbar went to Gujarat campaign, in his absence the capital city of Agra was put under the charge of Bharmal with full power. He was made the wazir-i mutlaq (minister of unlimited power). Akbar needed efficient, devoted and meritorious loyal officers to manage the affairs of his empire. Therefore, from very beginning, he embarked upon a policy to assign important offices to them. Further, in 1580, when Akbar divided his empire into 12 subas (provinces), subedari (governorship) of four important subas were assigned to the Rajput chiefs. They were:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of chief</th>
<th>Name of suba</th>
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<tr>
<td>(1) Raja Jagannath</td>
<td>Ajmer</td>
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<td>(2) Raja Askaran</td>
<td>Agra</td>
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<tr>
<td>(3) Raja Bhagwan Das</td>
<td>Lahore</td>
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<td>(4) Kunwar Man Singh</td>
<td>Kabul</td>
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Subsequently in 1586, suba of Lahore was put under the charge of Raja Rai Singh Rathore of Bikaner. Other important departments like armoury and communication were assigned to Raja Jagannath and Raja Loonkaran in 1583. Raja Askaran was made in-charge of the property of the deceased. Jagmal got the charge of the department of purchase and sales.

Three strategically important and strong forts were put under the charge of the Rajput chiefs. These were:

1. Gwalior fort to Raja Jagannath,
2. Ranthambhor fort to Raja Man Singh, and
3. Rohtas fort to Raj Singh and subsequently to Raja Man Singh

This policy introduced by Akbar continued to be followed by his successors and remained sustainable till the down fall of the Mughal Empire. Emperor Jahangir continued to follow his father’s policy and patronized the Rajput nobles as per their merit and loyalty.
4.3.3 Mewar and Akbar

Mughal – Rajput relations begins with the battle of Panipat. Rana Sanga to establish political relations with Babar is known to have sent his son Bagh as envoy to him at Kabul. Obviously this step was against Sultan Ibrahim Lodi. After the occupation of Agra and Delhi, Babur moved to subjugate other potential chiefs. Besides the Sultans of Malwa and Gujarat, Rana Sanga was one of them. Immediate cause of conflict between the two was Nizam-ul Mulk, the chief of Bayana who was reluctant to accept suzerainty of either of them. The Mughal forces attacked Bayana and occupied it. Rana Sanga who had established his supremacy over Ajmer near Bayana challenged the Mughal forces and defeated them at Bayana but shortly Babur succeeded to defeat the Rana and his ally Hasan Khan Mewati. They both and many others were killed in the battle of Khanua in 1527. The major cause of Babur’s success in the battles of Panipat and Khanua was the better war technology. Babur had artillery force which played significant role in these successes.

Babur’s (died 1530) son and successor Humayun remained busy with the challenges of his brothers and Sultan Bahadur Shah of Gujarat and Sher Shah Suri. He is known to have received Rakhi from the widow Rani Karmawati, the wife of late Rana Ratan Singh with a hope to get help from her Rakhi brother (Humayun) against her internal foes and the external invaders Sultan Bahadur Shah of Gujarat and Sultan Baz Bahadur of Malwa. But Humayun who was already under pressure of his own challenges could not respond to the call of the Rani.

By 1568, Akbar’s forces succeeded to conquer the forts of Ranthambhor and Chittor. The chiefs of Bundi, Dungarpur and Banswara had also accepted the Mughal suzerainty but still Akbar had major challenge to defeat Rana Pratap, chief of the Mewar region. Akbar after the occupation of Gujarat in 1572-73 and Bengal in 1574 turned to Rana Pratap. After the death of Rana Udai Singh (1572) his son and successor Pratap became the successor of Rana Udai Singh. Pratap’s elder brothers Sakat Singh and Jagmal had joined Akbar’s service.

Rana Pratap was reluctant to accept Mughal suzerainty. Therefore, Akbar adopted stern attitude and dispatched a large and powerful contingent under the command of Kunwar Man Singh and many other powerful nobles in 1576. Ultimately, it led to a battle between the Mughals and the forces of Rana Pratap at Haldighati. The details of the battle are narrated in the contemporary Persian and later contemporary Rajasthani sources. After the battle, the Rana went to the hilly region Koliyari – Gogunda. but the conflict continued between the Mughals and the Rana’s followers. Rana Pratap died in 1597. After his death, his son and successor Rana Amar Singh faced the Mughal forces. The war between the Mughals and the Rana’s forces continued till 1615. Though a large part of the territory of Mewar was brought under the Mughal control but the Rana did not accept the Mughal suzerainty. There was no comparison between the military power of the Mughals and the Ranas of Mewar but the latter derived their power from the natural geographical situation of the Mewar kingdom. Aravalli ranges and ravines provided both the offensive and defensive power to the Ranas’ forces. The Mughal forces were not acclimatized and trained to fight in the hill tracts like the Aravalli ranges while these ranges and ravines were part and parcel of the Rana’s forces.
Check Your Progress 1

1) Write a note on the relations between Rajputs and early Mughals.
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2) Akbar’s reign marks a change in orientation towards Rajput rulers of Rajputana. Critically examine.
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4.4 RAJPUTS AND JAHANGIR

On the basis of macro study some of the modern historians held that Jahangir under the influence of some religious bigots abandoned his father’s policy and began to discriminate the Rajput chiefs in favour of Turani and Irani nobles, but recent micro researches have proved this thesis untenable.

4.4.1 Continuity with Minor Changes

Jahangir who had earlier rebelled against his father Akbar was supported by some Rajput, Turani and Irani nobles against his rival Prince Khusrau (son of Jahangir). When Jahangir emerged successful and after the death of Akbar ascended the Mughal throne, he began to favour all those nobles including Rajputs who were with him and adopted cold attitude towards those who were against him. Though after his accession, Jahangir had declared amnesty but his disliking is visible in his action and expression. Jahangir in his autobiography calls them disdainfully ‘Old Wolves’ of the empire. Raja Man Singh and Mirza Aziz Koka, who were the most powerful Rajput and Turani nobles, were in favour of Prince Khusrau to be the next Mughal emperor. They had common interests. Prince Khusrau was the bhanja (sister’s son) of Man Singh and the son in law of Mirza Aziz Koka.

Raja Man Singh’s career in Jahangir’s service remained stagnant. He was not given any further promotion in his military rank and after the removal from the governorship of Bengal in 1606, was not assigned any office. But on the other hand, other Rajput chiefs who sided with Prince Salim or Jahangir, the future emperor of the Mughal Empire, were favored by giving them promotions in their ranks. Ram Das Kachawaha and Raisal Darbari Shaikhawat were promoted to the ranks to 5000 from 2000 Zat and to 5000 from 1000 Zat respectively. Similarly, Raja Basu of Mau-Nurpur was also promoted to the rank from 700 to 3500 Zat. Bundila chief Bir Singh who at the instigation of Jahangir killed the famous court historian Abul Fazl, the author of Akbar Nama, was taken into the imperial service with a high status of 5000/2000 in the Mughal hierarchy. After Jahangir’s accession when his elder brother Ramchandra Bundila
Political Processes

rebelled, he was deprived of his *watan jagir* Orcha and it was conferred upon Bir Singh Deo. In the subsequent period of his reign, he also recruited Rajput chiefs of new clans and territories. They were Anup Singh Badgujar of Anup Shahr, Raja Sangram of Jammu and Debi Chand of Guler with ranks of 2000/1600, 1500/1000 and 1500/500. Among these newly recruited nobles, the most favourite was Badgujar chief Anup Singh who had saved Jahangir from a furious tiger. In addition to *mansab*, he was granted *paragna* Anup Shahr in the *sarkar* of Kol (Aligarh) as *watan*. He was also given the title of Ani Rai Singh Dalan. Jahangir’s mother treated him as her own son and he was free to walk in the royal palace without any hindrance. He became so trusted that Jahangir appointed him the *qiladar* of Gwalior fort and rebel prince Khusrau after his arrest was put in that fort under his custody. Subsequently, Shaikh Ahmed Sirhindi, an Islamic jurisprudent who was arrested with a charge of provoking racial and religious sentiments in the empire, was put under the charge of Ani Rai Singh Dalan in the fort.

4.4.2 Mewar and Jahangir

However, from very beginning Jahangir after his accession in 1606 deputed Prince Parwez to Mewar and advised him, “If the Rana himself, and his eldest son who is called Karan, should come to wait upon you and proffer service and obedience, you should not do any injury to his territory.” It suggests that Jahangir was not in favour of war but wanted peaceful solution. After calling back Parwez from Mewar, powerful nobles like Abdullah Khan (1609) and Raja Basu (1612) with large military contingents were sent to Mewar but they failed in their missions to humble down the Rana and his forces. Thereafter, in 1613, Jahangir organized an army and put under the command of Prince Khurram and departed them from Ajmer to the expedition of Mewar. By this time after prolonged warfare and hardships forced Rana Amar Singh to accept the Mughal suzerainty with certain conditions such as the Rana will come in person to meet Prince Khurram (Shahjahan), the commander-in-chief of the Mughal army. Rana’s son Prince Karan will go to the Emperor Jahangir’s court. The Rana would enroll in the Mughal service and serve with 1000 cavalry force in proxy. One of the important conditions was that the Rana will get back the fort of Chittor but would not fortify and repair it. The meeting between Rana Amar Singh and Prince Khurram was cordial. The agreement was approved by Emperor Jahangir and sent a *farman* (King’s order) confirming the agreement and the status of the rank of 5000 in the Mughal bureaucracy. Subsequently Prince Karan went to the Mughal court where he received royal treatment. As per the Mughal etiquette and manners, Karan was honoured and gratified by the Mughal ruling family. Some of the narratives contained in the *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri* illustrate the point. When Karan reached the court Jahangir ordered to carve two statues of Rana Amar Singh and Karan. In Jahangir’s words, ‘I had ordered quick-handed stone cutters to carve full sized figures of the Rana and his son Karan out of marble. On this day they were completed and submitted to me. I ordered them to be taken to Agra and placed in the garden below the *Jharoka* (exhibition-window).’ Here, it is significant to note that making of statues or live images are considered repugnant to Islamic faith but without caring this Rana and Prince Karan were felicitated by this honour. Giving personal touch and showing affection to Prince Karan, Jahangir took him to a hunting trip. He says, “I took with me Karan, and said to him that I would hit it wherever he wished me to do so. After this arrangement I went to the place where they had marked down the tiger. By chance there was a wind and disturbance in the air, and the female elephant on which I was mounted was terrified of the tigress and would not stand still.
Notwithstanding these two great obstacles to shooting, I shot straight towards her eye. God almighty did not allow me to be ashamed before that prince, and, as I had agreed, I shot her in the eye. On the same day Karan petitioned me for a special gun, and I gave him a special Turkish one.” Karan was also honoured with several precious items in the ‘public audience’. Several horses, deer, Arabian dogs, a qaba (coat) of Kashmiri cloth presented to him. It was a rare favour to take him to female apartments, there Nur Jahan Begum bestowed a rich dress of honour, a jeweled sword, a horse and saddle and an elephant. After getting this royal and personal treatment from the Mughal ruling family, Karan with all fanfare went back to his homeland. After Rana Amar Singh’s death in 1620, Jahangir sent Raja Kishan Das to Udaipur to express condolences on the death of his father Rana Amar Singh. He was also congratulated to be the next Rana of Mewar. Jahangir to this effect confirmed him on his ancestral position, bestowed upon him the ancestral title of Rana, a robe of honour, a horse and an elephant.

4.5 RAJPUTS AND SHAHJAHAN

To understand the subsequent Mughal-Rajput polity, one should keep in mind, (i) like his father Jahangir, Khurram or Shahjahan also rebelled, (ii) the nobility divided between emperor Jahangir and the rebel prince Shahjahan, so was the case of the Rajput nobles, (iii) Shahjahan, after his accession rewarded those Rajput nobles and others who sided with him.

4.5.1 Growing share of Rajputs in Mughal Nobility

In 1622, when the prince rebelled, the nobles having the past experience were cautious to side with the rebel prince. Thus there were some nobles who showed lukewarm attitude towards the prince but also there were nobles who took risk to support the prince. During the period of rebellion, Rajput chief like Bhim Sisodia joined the service of the prince and distinguished in the battle of Bilochpur, he was rewarded with the mansab of 5000/5000 and the title of Maharaja. Prior to the battle of Tons in which Bhim was killed he had acquired the status of 6000/5000 in Shahjahan’s service. In 1624, when Shahjahan was in Bihar, Ujjainya chief Narayan Mal and his brother Pratap joined Shahjahan’s service with the mansabs of 5000/5000 and 3000/2000. The mansabs of other brothers of Narayan Mal were amounted to 2000/1000. Those nobles who supported the prince were rewarded by Shahjahan after assuming the sovereign power of the Mughal Empire. For instance, Gopal and Bal Ram Gaur who lost their lives in favour of the prince, their descendants became favorites of Shahjahan. Bethal Das, son of Gopal Das was taken in the imperial service with the mansab of 3000/1500. He was also granted the title of Raja, and presented with a flag, a horse, an elephant and Rs. 30,000. By rendering meritorious services, he continued to get promotions and other favours. Before his death in 1651, he was raised to the highest status of 5000/5000 with 2000 do aspa, sih aspa in the Mughal hierarchy. Many important offices such as qiladari of Ranthambhor fort, thereafter Agra fort were assigned to him. He was also appointed the governor of important subas such as Ajmer and Agra. All the more important was the creation of permanent residential jagir for him and Dhandhera was granted to him in watan jagir. Bal Ram, son of Siv Ram was taken in the imperial service with a mansab of 1500/1000. Their number continued to increase in the imperial service and by the end of Shahjahan’s reign their number rose to 12 in the Mughal service. Similarly Sodha chief of Amarkot who had given shelter to the fugitive Humayun and his pregnant wife Hamida Bano Begum where Akbar was born, was conspicuous for not finding any place in the Mughal...
service till Shahjahan’s period. Rana Jodha who is known to have helped rebel Prince Shahjahan to pass his territory was rewarded with the mansab of 800/300. Other Rajput chiefs who joined service during Shahjahan’s reign were from distant regions. These Rajput chiefs seeing the increasing better socio-economic positions of the previous servicing Rajput chiefs and also visualizing the mighty central power had no qualms to become a part of the Mughal bureaucracy. They were Raja Kunwar Sen from Kishhtwar (1000/300), Surajbansi Raja Prithvi Chand of Chamba (1000/400), Sombansi Tilok Chand of Kumaon (800/400), Songar Chaithr bhuj (500/500), Nahar Solanki (500/400), Jadon Raja Jagman and Mukund (500/300 each), Jhala Rawat Dayal Das (500/250) and Tunwar Raja Kishan Singh (800/400).

The traditional Rajput chiefs from different clans in the Mughal service continued to enjoy high status in the Mughal bureaucracy. They were the Kachawahas and Rathores. Their numerical strength and power in terms of mansabs and offices enhanced during Shahjahan’s period. In 1621, the Kachawahas and Rathores were 07 and 07 each and held the mansabs of 13,200/6450 and 15700/7450 while towards the end of Shahjahan’s reign in 1657 their number and mansabs rose to 14 and 23 with the mansabs of 18,700/18500 and 28,950/24,230. These traditional serving nobles knew the disliking of Emperor Jahangir of those of their predecessors who had sided with the rebel Khusrau against the former. Thus Mirza Raja Jai Singh was cautious and continued with Jahangir but subsequently seeing the imminent success of Shahjahan switched over to him. He enjoyed the highest status of 5000/5000 with 4000 do aspa sikh aspa.

Shahjahan’s mother was Rathore princess of Jodhpur ruling family, therefore it seems Shahjahan had soft corner for them. It is one of the reasons that their number and mansabs had surpassed to the traditional Rajput Kachawaha clan of Amber – Jaipur.

The Hada chief Ratan Singh who had earned the title of Sarbuland Ray was favourite of Jahangir for the loyal services rendered by him since the beginning of his reign. He stood firmly on Jahangir’s side during Shahjahan’s revolt. In a skirmish with Shahjahan’s forces at Burhanpur, Sarbuland Ray who was posted there as hakim, distinguished there. His son Gopinath who chose to flee from the battlefield, was disowned by him. Finally when the imperial forces succeeded to defeat the rebels in the Deccan, as a reward for his loyal services, Sarbuland Ray was promoted from 2500/1500 to 5000/5000 with the title of Ram Ray which was considered the highest honour in the Deccan. Moreover during this period, Sarbuland Ray’s son Madho Singh and his brother Hirday Narain held the mansabs of 1000/600 and 1200/600. Though Shah Jahan after his accession could not ignore the Hadas but had developed disliking for them. Initially Shahjahan confirmed Ratan Singh and his son Madho Singh on their mansabs 5000/5000 and 1000/600. After Ratan Singh’s death in 1631, his territory of Bundi was divided into two parts. His son Madho Singh was assigned the paragnas of Kota and Falaita with the mansab of 2500/1500 and his grandson Satrsal was granted the paragnas of Bundi and Kankar with the mansab of 3000/2000 and the title of Rao. It was Madho Singh who pursued and killed rebel Khan-i Jahan Lodi and further after rendering meritorious services particularly against rebels Khan-i Jahan Lodi and Jujhar Singh, he was raised to the status of 3000/2000. Satrsal who accompanied Shahjahan to Deccan played an important role in the expedition against Shahji Bhonsle was promoted to 3000/3000. Towards the end of Shahjahan’s reign, after rendering services in the Balkh, Badakhshah, Kabul and Deccan, he was promoted to 4000/4000. After Madho Singh’s death (1648), his sons Mukund Singh and Mohan Singh were taken in the imperial service and had earned promotions of 3000/2000 and 800/400.
In addition to this, Rajput nobles of different clans had earned significant positions in the different parts of the Mughal Empire. They were assigned important offices such as subedar, faujdari, thanedar and qiladar of several forts. Raja Bithal Das was appointed to an important suba of Ajmer and his son Anirudh was made his deputy, to cite a few, faujdari of Delhi, Chakla Hisar, Bangash, Koh- Kangra, Kabul, and Daulatabad were assigned to them. Similarly they were trusted so much that several qilas were put under their charges. Qiladar of forts like Agra, Ranthambhore, Daulatabad, Asir, Qulat (Qandhar), Kabul and Mandu were enjoyed by them.

4.5.2 Mewar and Shahjahan

The relations between the Ranas and the Mughals continued to be cordial from 1615 to 1654 but when towards the end of 1652, Rana Karan’s successor Rana Jagat Singh violating the treaty of 1615 began to repair the fort of Chittor, was taken seriously by Emperor Shahjahan. Having experience of his previous expeditions in the difficult hill tracts of Mewar region, Shahjahan following the footsteps of his father Jahangir decided to organize an army and supervise the campaign personally, reached Ajmer. He selected Wazir Sadullah Khan, the chief commander with the army of 30,000. Many high ranking nobles accompanied him. After reaching Chittor, the Mughal forces began to demolish the repair works carried by the Rana. Both the parties having disastrous consequences of the previous battles decided for the peaceful settlement. Rana Raj Singh, through his emissaries begged pardon and assured the central government to continue to follow the terms and conditions of the treaty of 1615. As a mark of submission, the Rana sent the prince to the Mughal court. Thereafter, relations between the centre and the Ranas of Mewar largely rally round the agreement of 1615 till the heydays of the Mughal Empire.

4.6 RAJPUTS AND WAR OF SUCCESSION

Towards the end of Shahjahan’s reign, his four sons Dara Shukoh, Shuja, Aurengzeb and Murad aspired to be the next Mughal Emperor, rebelled against their father. At this time, Dara was with his father in the capital Delhi, Shuja was in Bengal, Aurengzeb was in Deccan and the youngest one Murad in Gujarat. Again the nobles including the Rajput nobles had to decide with whom they should stand. Again as per their interests and situation of postings, they sided with the different Princes. Before the decisive battle of Deorai near Ajmer there were two major battles at Dharmat and Samugarh between the imperial forces led by Dara and the forces of Aurengzeb and Murad. Similar to earlier cases of the revolts of Jahangir and Shahjahan, in this case also nobles including the Rajputs were divided between the contending forces.

Rajput nobles like any other racial group supported the princes as per their choice and interests. One can give plausible explanation of getting support of high number of Rajput nobles by Dara because of open and full royal backing of Emperor Shahjahan. The senior most and powerful Rajput nobles like Raja Jaswant Singh and Mirza Raja Jai Singh sided with the imperial forces led by Dara Shukoh. After Shahjahan’s critical illness and rumour of his death prompted Shuja to set out from Bengal to Agra. On getting this information, Shahjahan sent a force under Sulaiman Shukoh along with Mirza Raja Jai Singh and Anirudh Singh Gaur. At this juncture Mirza Raja was promoted to 6000/6000 with 5000 do aspa sih aspa and Anirudh to 3500/3000 with do aspa sih aspa. Raja Jaswant Singh was promoted to the rank of 7000/7000. A powerful
force under Raja Jaswant Singh with many Rajput nobles was deputed to check the powerful duo Aurengzeb and Murad who were heading towards Agra. On the other side, other Rajput nobles who were posted with Aurengzeb in Deccan and with Murad in Gujarat fought against the royal commander Raja Jaswant Singh in the battle of Dharmat. Raja Jaswant Singh was defeated by the forces of Aurengzeb and Murad. Murad instead of siding with Dara, preferred to be with Aurengzeb. Several Rajput nobles who fought with Jaswant Singh were killed in the battle. After discomfiture, Jaswant Singh left for his watan Jodhpur. Many other Rajput nobles followed the suit and left for their home territories.

Next battle was fought at Samugarh under the command of Dara Shukoh against Aurengzeb and Murad. Dara was defeated by Aurengzeb and Murad. He fled to Delhi and then Punjab. Many Rajput nobles were killed and injured from both the sides. On the side of Aurengzeb and Murad, Garib Das Sisodia was killed and Subhakaran Bundila was severely injured. Bundila chief Debi Singh who fought the battle from the side of Aurengzeb was rewarded by appointing him as faujdar of Bhilsa. Rana Raj Singh Sisodia who was maintaining distance from both thecontending parties congratulated Aurengzeb on this victory. Many Rajput nobles had no option and defected to Aurengzeb. Mirza Raja Jai Singh and Rao Rai Singh Rathore of Nagor had left Sulaiman Shukoh and joined Aurengzeb at Mathura. Aurengzeb rewarded the Mirza with a jagir of one crore dams.

The final and decisive battle was fought at Deorai, a part of Aravalli ranges near Ajmer. It had strategic importance. Dara and his forces fleeing from Sind had taken position at Deorai. Aurengzeb was quite worried about the possible support to Dara by Raja Jaswant Singh and Rana Raj Singh. It is evident from famous nishans written to Rana Raj Sing by Aurengzeb. He assured the Rana that he would follow the policy of religious tolerance like his predecessors. He also assured the Rana to restore all the territories taken from Mewar in 1654 as a punishment for the refortification of the fort of Chittor by the Rana. However, the Rana and Jaswant Singh did not participate in this battle. From the side of Aurengzeb, Raja Rajrup Singh Kohistani of Mau-Nurpur and his soldiers who were efficient in fighting in the hill tract climbed the hillock or pahari from the back side and attacked Dara’s forces. Eventually, it proved to be a decisive battle in favour of the next Mughal emperor Aurengzeb.

4.7 AURENGZEB AND RAJPUTS

Slowly and gradually from the time of Akbar, Rajput chiefs had emerged very important segment in the Mughal polity and no Mughal emperor could afford to ignore them. The testimony of this statement is substantiated by Francois Bernier, a French traveller, physician and employ of a Mughal noble. He stated, “the Great Mogol, though a Mohomedan, and as such enemy to the Gentiles (Hindus), always keeps in his service a large retinue of Rajas, treating them with the same consideration as his other Omras, and appointing them to important commands in his armies.”. Thus during the period of Aurengzeb also their number, mansabs and bureaucratic positions increased substantially. Raja Jaswant Singh was assigned the rank of 7000/7000, with 5000 do aspa sih aspa and twice he was appointed the governor of Gujarat (1659-61 and 1670-72). Mirza Raja Jai Singh with the title of Umdat-ul Mulk held the rank of 7000/7000 and Rana Raj Singh 6000/6000. Other hereditary and traditional Rajput chiefs continued in the imperial service and shared the wealth (jagir), power (mansabs), and bureaucratic positions (offices) of the empire.
Aurengzeb’s prolonged stay in Deccan, heavy expenses on the expeditions, increasing number of Deccani and Maratha nobles in the Mughal service and stagnant income of the empire caused many complicated problems. (See Unit of BHIC-109) These are manifested in form of reimposition of Jiziya, tax on Hindu traders, harsh way to realize land revenue and cesses from peasants produced uneasiness in the society. The impoverished peasantry had no option except to revolt against the government. These reactionary manifestations are seen as the beginning of the downfall of the Mughal Empire. Aurengzeb died in 1707 and left the Mughal polity and empire in the crumbling condition.

4.8 RESISTING INTERVENTION: RATHORE REBELLION

One of the major conflicts between the Mughal emperor Aurengzeb and Rathores of Jodhpur was the issue of succession to the gaddi of Jodhpur. In 1678, Jaswant Singh died on his duty in Peshawar. At the time of this death the Raja was heavily in debt to the imperial treasury. In such cases of debt from government, the property of the deceased nobles belonging to irrespective of the race Turani, Irani, Rajput or any other was escheated to settle the account. Thus in consonance with the Mughal rule, the whole property of the deceased Raja Jaswant was taken into custody by the Mughal officials. Further, Aurengzeb issued order to annex the whole state of Marwar with the exception of two paragnas to Khalisa. This decision of Aurengzeb was not liked by the sardars and caused a great uproar in the whole of Marwar. On the other hand at the time of death, the Raja left no male issue but his two widows were pregnant. Meanwhile news arrived that the two wives of the deceased Raja had given birth to two sons. They were Ajit Singh and Dalthambhan. For verification of the genuineness the newly born babies were brought to the imperial court. Shortly Dalthambhan died leaving Ajit Singh to be successor of the late Raja. It was also made clear that neither woman nor a servant could be considered for the succession. For better understanding of this issue, one should have a glance over the past traditions and practices followed for the succession in the Rajput states.

Since joining of Akbar’s service by the Rajput chiefs, the right of succession rested with the sovereign central power. In the case of the Baghela Rajput state of Bandhogarh-Rewa, when Raja Bir Bahadur died in an accident, the people of Bandogarh raised Bikramajeet, a distant relative of Bir Bahadur, the Raja of Bandogarh but Akbar rejected it. Akbar’s rejection was resisted and caused a large scale of disturbances in Bandogarh. After more than eight month long campaign, the imperial forces subjugated the territory and Durjodhan, the grandson of Raja Ram Chand, was declared the Raja of Bandogarh.

Further this kind of right was exercised by Emperor Jahangir after the death of Raja Man Singh of Amber. Late Man Singh’s eldest son Jagat Singh had died during the life time of the Raja. Hence, the succession should go to Jagat Singh’s son Maha Singh but Jahangir, instead of Maha Singh, bestowed the chiefship of Amber to the deceased Man Singh’s second son Bhao Singh. Thus, the direct lineage was changed from Jagat Singh’s family to the latter’s youngest brother Bhao Singh. In 1621, when Bhao Singh died and left no son, Jahangir granted succession to Maha Singh’s son Jai Singh. Thus, again the chiefship of Amber was restored to the direct lineage of the deceased Raja Man Singh. Further in case of Bikaner, when Rao Ray Singh died in 1612, Jahangir, instead of granting succession to the Rao’s choicest son Suraj Singh granted succession
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to the other son Dilip Singh. Unlike the other Rajput ruling families, there was a slight different tradition and convention for the succession in the ruling Rathore family of Jodhpur. Instead of the eldest son, a son from the Raja’s dearest queen was preferred to be the next heir apparent of the deceased Raja. Following this tradition after the death of Raja Udai Singh, popularly known as Mota Raja, in 1596, as per the desire of the deceased Raja, Emperor Akbar granted succession to Raja Sur Singh.

Though Udai Singh had elder sons but since Sur Singh’s mother was the dearest queen, hence Udai Singh bequeathed that after his death, Sur Singh should be his successor. Similarly, Raja Gaj Singh had asked Emperor Shahjahan that after his death instead of his eldest son Amar Singh, youngest son Jaswant Singh should be his successor. Thus in 1637 after the death of Gaj Singh, Shahjahan granted succession to Jaswant Singh instead of the eldest son Amar Singh.

For Amar Singh new *watan jagir* was created. He was already in the Mughal service and was raised to the status of 3000 *Zat* and 3000 *Sawar* with the title of Rao. Newly created *watan jagir* Nagore was bestowed upon him. Thus Amar Singh with his *sardars* had migrated to Nagore. Consequently, the Rathore *sardars* of Jodhpur were divided into two factions as indicated below:

i) Jaswant Singhi or Jodhpuri *sardars*

ii) Amar Singhi or Nagori *sardars*

From the above precedents following points emerge:

i) The right of succession rested with the central power and not with the *sardars* of a Rajput state.

ii) The line of succession won’t be changed and it would continue to be in the ruling family of the deceased chief.

iii) In absence of a male heir of a deceased Rajput chief, succession could be granted to a nearest blood relation of the deceased.

In the light of the above Rajput traditions and precedents, Aurengzeb decided to grant succession to the nearest family member of the deceased Raja. The nearest family member was Inder Singh, the grandson of Amar Singh, the elder brother of Jaswant Singh. Inder Singh paid thirty six lakh rupees as succession fee. It is also relevant to mention that the other nearest Rathore ruling family was of Bikaner. Anup Singh, son of Rao Karan of Bikaner offered higher amount of succession fee of forty five lakh rupees but Aurengzeb rejected the latter’s offer and candidature because he was distantly related to late Jaswant Singh. Thus Aurengzeb conferred *tika* on Inder Singh Against this order there was sharp reaction in Jodhpur as is evident from the correspondence between the government and Jaswant Singh’s widow Rani Hadi, representing the Jodhpuri *sardars*. From these correspondences, it is obvious that at any cost Rani Hadi and Jodhpuri *sardars* were not ready to accept Inder Singh, the next chief of Jodhpur. Earlier they were protesting against the inclusion of Jodhpur in the *khalisa* but now they argued that they would prefer inclusion of Jodhpur in the *khalisa* rather to handover Jodhpur to Inder Singh. They also offered bigger amount of *peshkash* than Inder Singh, if Ajit Singh is given *tika*. On the other hand, Inder Singh with the support of the imperial army started to take charge of the *gaddi* of Jodhpur. But he was extremely unpopular in Jodhpur. About this fact, the Mughal officials posted in Jodhpur were reporting to Aurengzeb. In between, Durga Das and his associates
managed to take away baby Ajit from the court. This development further complicated the issue when Aurengzeb refused to verify the real Ajit but accepted the fake Ajit as the real one. However, Inder Singh and his officials were not allowed to enter into Jodhpur. Though at initial stage, Aurengzeb was not against the succession of Ajit Singh but he had strong reservation for granting succession to an infant prince. He had also assured Jodhpuri sardars, Sonang, Raghunath Das Bhati, Ranchhor, Durga Das and others by saying that when he would come of age, mansab and raj would be granted. Some Mughal officials who were posted in Jodhpur had sympathies with the Jodhpuri sardars. Bahadur Khan Kokaltash who along with others had attended the birthday celebration of Ajit organized by Rani Hadi, suggested Aurengzeb to grant succession to Ajit Singh. Tahir Khan who was soft for Ajit, had to pay heavy price of losing his mansab. Eventually, when Inder Singh failed to get success, he was deprived of his status and Jodhpur continued under the direct control of the Mughal central government. The conflict between the Jodhpuri sardars and the Mughal government continued. In 1697, when Ajit Singh reached the age of 18 years, Aurengzeb assigned the mansab of 1500/500 and Jallore in jagir. But Ajit Singh and the Jodhpuri sardars were not satisfied without restoring watan jagir Jodhpur. Even after Aurengzeb’s death, the Rathores of Jodhpur continued their struggle. This aspect of struggle we shall study during the post Aurengzeb period.

However, broadly some important points are to be kept in mind. These are: (i) Aurengzeb did not deviate from the past practices of succession followed in the Rajput ruling families. (ii) Basically it was a family feud of power and prestige between the Rathore ruling family of Jodhpur and the Rathore ruling family of Nagore. (iii) Coming back of the Amar Singhi sardars to Jodhpur meant shadowing the prerogative status of the Jodhpuri sardars in the Jodhpur kingdom. Obviously it was not acceptable at any cost to Jodhpuri sardars.

4.9 POST AURENGZEB PERIOD

As usual the sons of Aurengzeb began to contest for the Mughal gaddi. There was a major difference between the earlier conflicts for succession and now. In the earlier cases, the centre was quite strong but now it had become weak because of the reasons as stated above. However, it used to be testing or critical time for the nobles to decide to support a prince from the contesting princes. In absence of an alive Emperor and unlike to earlier cases, the powerful nobles created their factions and supported a prince of their choice. Though Rajput nobles had no prince of their choice to support but they had to join one of the rival factions emerged at the Mughal court. However, the leaders of these groups wanted the powerful Rajput nobles like Sawai Jai Singh, Raja Ajit Singh, Budh Singh Hara, Ram Singh Hara and Chatrasal Bundila to join them. Thus indirectly through these factions they supported or opposed the newly succeeding Mughal emperors. The relations between the Rajput chiefs and later Mughal emperors remained hot and cold from time to time. Jodhpur, the watan of Ajit Singh which was brought under khalisa after the death of his father Raja Jaswant Sigh, continued under the control of central government. Prince Azam to win over the support of Jai Singh and Ajit Singh raised them to the status of 7000/7000 with their traditional family titles Mirza Raja and Maharaja. To gratify them further, Ajit Singh and Jai Singh were appointed governors of the two important adjoining subas, Gujarat and Malwa. Though Jai Singh had joined Azam in Malwa but in the battle of Jaju, he deserted him. On the other hand, Jai Singh’s younger brother Vijay Singh had joined prince Bahadur
Shah and fought in favour of him in the battle of Jaju. Vijay Singh was rewarded by conferring Amber as *watan jagir* by displacing Jai Singh. Thus both the Rajas Ajit Singh and Jai Singh remained disgruntled without their chiefdoms. In the battle of Jaju, Ajit Singh remained neutral and taking advantage of the situation reoccupied Jodhpur for a short period. Bahadur Shah took action against him and on submission he was given the *mansab* of 3500/3000 with the title of Maharaja but again Jodhpur was brought under the control of the centre. It was not liked by Ajit Singh. Disgruntled Ajit Singh challenged the Mughal action and renewed the war. Another issue of confrontation was of governorships. Between the periods from 1707 to 1732, Jai Singh was made governor of Agra and then Malwa three times under the four succeeding later Mughal Emperors Bahadur Shah, Jahandar Shah, Farrukh Siyar and Muhammad Shah, but Ajit Singh’s desire to become governor of Gujarat was not easily accepted. He was offered the governorship of Kabul and then Thatta but he refused to accept and ask for Gujarat. Later on, he was appointed the *subehdar* of Gujarat intermittently in 1714, and 1719. Jai Singh rendered services against the Jats, Sikhs and the Marathas. Ajit Singh also rendered services against the Sikhs. Subsequently to pacify both the Rajas their chiefdoms were restored to them.

In quintessence the Rajput chiefs as landed aristocracy as well as commanders of a large number of military personals were an important segment for the Mughal Empire. Akbar’s acumen ship to understand and to utilize their power for territorial expansion and to tilt the balance of power in the nobility in his favour proved successful. It is also important to keep in mind that several thousands of ordinary soldiers were employed by these chiefs in their armies. These soldiers brought their savings to their respective homelands. The relations initiated by Akbar continued under his successors. During the eclipse of the Mughal Empire, the Rajput chiefs and other provincial powers had no option but to retreat to their regions and consolidate their position as alternative regional powers.

### 4.10 LET US SUM UP

Agrarian land based polities always encountered a dilemma with respect to its nobility. Efficient nobility was arms of the state, which helped not only in the expansion of empire but also in consolidation of structure of governance. However, nobility had the tendency of declaring independence at the first possible opportunity. Therefore, it was a continuous endeavour on the part of effective states to maintain the balance between these two conflicting possibility, most of the times by managing the composition of nobility. At times matrimonial alliances offered a very effective mechanism to ensure loyalty. Mughal-Rajput relations offer a much nuanced understanding of such negotiations. Recourse to religion was by and large a measure of political expediency.

**Check Your Progress-2**

1) Discuss the significance of Rajputs in redefining the character of Mughal nobility.
2) Examine the character of Rathor rebellion.

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4.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

1) See Section 3.2. It is expected that answer will highlight the Mughal’s preoccupation with the politics of Indo-Gangetic doab.

2) See Section 3.3. In what ways Akbar followed a different policy towards Rajput rulers of Rajputana and its impact on expansion and consolidation of Mughal empire.

Check Your Progress 2

1) See Sections 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5. Composition of Mughal Nobility and impact of inclusion of Rajputs should be examined.

2) See Section 3.8 Succession in Rajput kingdoms was also a very contentious issue should be examined in details along with policy of Mughals with respect to succession in Rajput principalities.

Recommended Readings


