

Relevance of Jagirdari System in Jaipur State during British Paramountcy



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Abstract

I have chosen the period of transition among jagirdari system in Jaipur because historically and traditionally, the rajputs formed the ruling class. The structure of Rajput society has been very rigid and refused to let any liberal influence penetrate through its manifolds during 1818-1947. Status and economic differences within the order, which had been recessive in the old society and polity, assumed new senses and functions. The Rajputs divided on the question of whether they should repair to the ethic or to a more practical norm of conduct, two alternatives which historically had provided competing standards for action. It is these strains that shaped the processes of change and defined Rajput adaptability. Changes in historical circumstances, latent, deviant, minority within its traditional society provided the sources and means for the establishment of new identities and capable of encouraging and sustaining a modern society.

Keywords: Jagirdari system, Rajput, Jaipur, British Paramountcy.

Introduction

General Sleeman gives an account of initial settlements, 'The Rajputs get land gradually at lease, soon refuse to pay rent, declare the lands to be their own, collect bad characters for plunder, join the Rajputs of their own clan in all the villages around in their enterprises take to jungles in the first occasion of a dispute, attack, plunder and burn the village and soon get the estate for themselves on their own terms from the local authorities, who were wearied out by the loss of revenue arising from their deprivations.¹

There were triple division of Solar, Lunar and Agnicular Rajputs which was subsequently changed by successions into many clans, of which 36 were called "royals".

The Thirty – Six royal races:-

1. Gahlot or Grahilot	19. Silar
2. Yadu, Indu, Jadon	20. Sarwaiya
3. Tuar or Tonwar	21. Dabi
4. Rathor	22. Gaur
5. Kachwaha	23. Dor/doda
6. Parmara	24. Gaharwal
7. Chauhan	25. Bargujar
8. Chaluk or Solanki	26. Sengarh
9. Parihar	27. Sakarwar
10. Chawura	28. Bais
11. Tak or Takshak	29. Dahia
12. Jit, Get or Jat	30. Johya
13. Han or Hun	31. Mohil
14. Katti	32. Nikumpa
15. Bhalla	33. Rajpali
16. Jhalla	34. Dahima
17. Gohil	35. Surya/Solar
18. Jaitwar Kamari	36. Som/Lunar

The specialty of the clan feudalism was that the clan considered the state to be the joint property of the clan leader. Normally the nobility chiefs could not be deprived of their fiefs.² Generally, the two ways of inheritance were seen among the Rajputs. In one system the principality of the father was split equally among sons from different mothers. This system was prevalent in the Malani region of Marwar. It was called *bhai-bant* (distribution among brothers).³ In the second system, on the death of the feudal chief, his principality was split between both the wives and the sons then received a share from the mother's inheritance. For instance, in

Shekhawati region, Jujhar Singh of Gudha had two wives namely Gauriji and Bidawatji. He distributed his principality equally between the wives.⁴

Kachwaha clan was classified into twelve following Kotris.⁵ They claim themselves descent from one of the twelve sons of Prithvi, who was Raja of Jaipur about 1600, during the reign of Sikandar Lodi.

1. Chatarbhojot	7. Pachaenot
2. Kalyanot	8. Gogawat
3. Nathawat	9. Khumbawat
4. Balbhadarot	10. Khambani
5. Khangarot	11. Sheobaranpota
6. Sultanot	12. Banbirpota

Jagirdari System

Tod wrote in Annals and Antiquities, "Within each state, powerful Jagirdars holders of estates or Jagirs, exercised an almost exclusive domain in their areas. Most of the Jagirdars could claim rule by right of conquest.⁶ In Rajasthan, the king and the feudatory were connected by blood and kinship. Therefore he had a right to enjoy the land as owner and got his share of the produce from the tiller. But he was not allowed to mint their coins. They followed the tradition and custom. They conserved the heritage of their forefathers.⁷ Cavendish mentioned that the Rajput governments avoided providing executive authority to their relations.⁸ After the death of Jagirdar, the patta of jagir was renewed. Later, it became hereditary. The Rajput rulers granted lands to Brahmins also. This type of land was called *Maufis*. The *Maufisdar* (Brahmin) utilized it for the maintenance of the temples and performed rituals and rites on behalf of the rulers. Thus the most of the land was distributed among Jagirdars and Maufidars. Rajputs brought radical modification in the region. They established fortified towns with the view of strategic point. The capital town developed rapidly as the royal Rajput families focused here. The Jagirdars were also contributed towards the establishment of towns. Gradually, these towns rose as the spiritual and business centres. These towns were maintained by Rajput family, which increased the status of their family. Royal Rajputs constituted forts better known as *gadhs*. These were used as their headquarters. This shows that they were great builders. "Fort of Kalakh" was famous in Jaipur. In '*Short History*', "Thakur Kishan Singh ji Khangarot captured the fort and Lakshman Singh arrested him. The then fort guard, Bhairo Singh Nathawat, was displaced and Krishan Singh and Vishnu Singh annexed the fort. Jaipur Agent, Tharsvi, with military of Shekhawati and Nathawats attacked and captured the fort on 15 November, 1840. Lakshman Singh entered into the fort and captured the Chand Burj. Tharsvi appreciated his efforts.⁹ Mandan¹⁰ and Sadasiva¹¹ explored the reason of construction these forts was to hold down the conquered country and keep the people under their sovereign and provide safety in times of need. Thus, the Rajputs provided security by constructing a network of forts. Rajputs were organized as feudal society. The Rajput Society was living with three classifications:

1. The Ruler - the head of the clan
2. The Thikanedars - often Kinsmen of the ruler

3. The Jagirdars - Kinsmen of the thikanedars

These jagirdars had to pay an annual military cess called *rekh* (8% of the gross rental value of the estate). On the occasion of the ceremony, conducted by ruler new heir of the estate had to pay *khadg-bandhi* or binding of sword. On the contrast, the jagirdars paid *tagirayat* and *mustasadi-kharch* to their chiefs.¹² Sometimes the ruler married into other clans and provided them with jagirs. Thus such marriages in each clan principality there were *thikanedars* (nobles) who belonged to each other clans. These thikanedars were called *genayats*.¹³

A number of branches sprang up which took their origin from Udai Karan. From one of his sons Naru descended the Narukas (of Alwar, Uniara and Lawa). His grandson, Shekha ji was the founder of the Shekhawats of Sikar, Bissau etc.¹⁴ Samode was the thikana of Nathawats, the branch of the Kachwaha clan. It was exempted from payment of tribute. According to M. S. Jain, "Succession disputes in a major state thus became a contentious issue for the rulers and nobles of other states and clans having matrimonial relations with the contending parties to the dispute. For almost three-quarters of a century (1740-1818), succession disputes were decided by outside military help sought unhesitatingly by both sides of the conflict. In this process the contending parties offered prizes which were far in excess of their own or their state's capacity to pay. This generated a vicious circle which involved the states in protracted warfare, mutual rivalries and feudal, conspiracies. All this operated to sap the vitality of the Rajput society.¹⁵ Prithvi Singh of Jaipur ascended the gaddi at the age of five which provided an opportunity to his mother to ask her father (a non-kachhwaha noble) to look after the state affairs. This enabled all the four leading groups of nobles at Jaipur - the Nathawats, the Rajawats, the Shekhawats and the Narukas - to combine against the non-kachhwaha. Ambitious nobles began to seize state domains and refuse to perform their *chakri* obligations. This provided an occasion for the petty Narukha jagirdar of Macheri - Pratap Singh - to set himself up by sheer unscrupulous opportunism as an independent ruler by 1778¹⁶

At Jaipur the rivalry between Ishwari Singh and Madho Singh divided the nobility vertically and horizontally. Sawai Jai Singh, on account of the *ijaredari* system, became independent of the nobility and sought to make militarily strong by the recruitment of a mercenary army. The clan nobility, more often than not, was a divided house; the various subsections of a clan considered the smallest unit of the clan to be the total entity to which they, sometimes, confined their loyalty.

The feudals had got judicial rights in the 19th century. On the death of the jagirdar, the ceremony was organised called *Matami* in Jaipur State. In this ceremony, the ruler sent a representative to negotiate with the fief holder. The representative received the amount and handed over the '*patta*' of the fief of the new jagirdar.....In Jaipur, for the *patta* of 500 *bighas* a noble had to supply one cavalry man and on 250 *bighas* he had to provide one machlock man. They

were assigned 'Lawazama' which included men, elephants and palanquin.¹⁷

Among the jagirdars, Rawal Sheo Singh of Samode, Maji Ranawat ji of Khetri and Rao Raja Fateh Singh of Uniara were conspicuous for adopting a militant posture and defiant attitude towards the British Government and its protege Maharaja Ram Singh of Jaipur.¹⁸ Rawal Sheo Singh was the principal noble of the State. He had his 'creatures' throughout the civil, revenue and military departments of the State.¹⁹

A report of Captain W. F. Eden on the Jaipur State during May 1857 to October 1857:

....I may add the astounding fact of his (Rawal Sheo Singh) having endeavoured by force of argument and reasoning by every means in short in his power, to induce his Chief to secure his own interests by at once communicating with the Dehlie King and his insurgent force rather than continue to rely on the Government of the English, which, he said must soon be at an end....he might be accepted an ally and well-wisher by either power.²⁰

Conclusion

The primary weakness of the feudal was the lack of unity. Everyone was engaged in extending their boundaries of their respective territories. Rajputs swayed at all levels in the society. Thus system was based on kinship. They were of same clan but lack of unity could be seen. They fought constantly to enhance and show their superiority and power.

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