

RISE OF LOCAL POWER THE JATS IN THE SUBAH OF DELHI (1707-1761)

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Delhi subah comprised almost the entire territory of present day Haryana. In addition to this, some territory of the Uttar Pradesh, i.e., Saharanpur, Badaon, Bulandshahar, Moradabad, Bareilly, Bijnore etc. and that of Punjab Sarhind, Patiala, Ludhiana, etc. also fell under this subah. The subah was subdivided into eight sarkars, i.e., Delhi, badaun, kumaon, and sambhal, Saharanpur, Rewari, Hissar and Sarhind. These were subdivided into 232 parganas.

A part from the other developments, the period of chaos and confusions marked the rise of some local power .i.e Rewari and Ballabgarh came into prominence after the death of Aurangzeb. Inhabited mostly by jats. It was then ruled by Gopal Singh, a local chief, settled in sihi a village three miles north of ballabgarh, became wealth and powerfull by highway robbery on Mathura Delhi road in 1705. He allied himself with the Gujjars of tiajaon, eight mile east of ballabgarh and with their help killed the raj put chaudhary of neighboring villagers. The emperor farkhsiar was unable to check Gopal Singh recognized him, so Murtaza Khan, the local mughal officer of Faridabad instead of punishing him, made peace and appoints him as a Chaudhary of Faridabad pargana entitled to chess of one Anna in the rupee on the revenue in 1710. His successor, charan das, a man of independent deposition. Refused to pay the tax and to submit to the authority. Consequently, he was arrested and imprisoned by Murtaz Khan. Charan Das's successor Balabha Singh, popularly know as Ballu, who who was a wise ruler and with the help of Bharatpur ruler succeed in effecting the release of father. By his ability, Ballabha Singh, soon became the master of entire territory, between Delhi and Faridabad. And then built a fort of Ballabgarh to serve his headquarter.

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The Jats took to predatory raids in the villages and small towns. Jat villagers headman Raja Ram, Bhatta and Churaman led predatory of their clansmen to rob the royal highway from Delhi to the South. Sanjar Khan and Shamshir Khan, who were engaged in protecting the high road, used to escort the caravans from Hodal, their own boundary to Faridabad and Palwal. A caravan of merchants with 1600 carts laden with boiled and clarified butter and other articles were looted by Mewatis and thereafter Jats and robbers plundered the caravan and took the carts along with merchandise into one of the neighboring villages and divided the spoils among themselves. Goods and property worth twenty lacs rupee were plun-

Up to the middle of the eighteenth century the Jats in the vicinity Agra and Mathura region had not emerged as a well defined political system. No Jat state, no politically united Jat nation, no Jat king above the village headman was recognized as the first among the equals. They were robber leaders however the repeated success of the leading zamindars of the area had begun to attract to their banners many of their peers in social status as partners in their adventures and plunders. In November 1720 in a battle which was fought between Sayyid Abdullah and Muhammad Shah in the of Hobal, Churaman with other Jat companions attacked on the emperor's camp and carried many oxen and horses. The small beginning of this tribal organization and foundation as an emerging power, was severely, destroyed in 1721 by Sawai Jai Singh. Hence, the work of Raja Ram and Churaman, the early Jat leaders, left no trace behind them and their success had to begin from the very foundation. From a zamindar, Badan Singh, became shortly a petty raja, strong enough to be obeyed at home and feared abroad. During administrative disorders, caused by the Sayyid brothers in the usurpation of power at Delhi, the Jats continued their predatory raids and rebellion in a more intense form than before. Because Badan Singh was powerful, his band more numerous, more hardy, more sustained, doing more wide spread and irremediable harm than the Jats under Churaman or Rajaram, besides a large force of infantry, whom he had engaged little by little, Badan Singh employed a considerable corps of cavalry also. He used this cavalry in plundering the adjoining areas, the royal roads to Delhi and the environs of Agra the remainder in extending the territory under his control. In proportion to the gained territory he also increased his army. Jai Singh's officials entrusted to the Jat chiefs, the patrolling of the royal highway leading to Agra, Delhi, Jaipur, etc. they also put the collection of transit duties on Jats, in the hope of turning them back from rapine. But the Jats, in bands of two or three hundred men each armed with swords and musket, contributed their occasional predatory raids.

The invasion of nadir shah led to a sudden and vast expansion of the jat power and dominions. Unlike their parallel case of the Punjab, The jats expansion was made easier and more rapid by the fact of their being always on the side of the emperor and his ministers, also. Sharing in their campaigns. Hence their territorial gains were legalized by delhi government. Hemmed in by difficult neighbourers on all sides, it was a tough job for the jats to preserve their independence. Surajmal however was clever enough to steer clearly of all these tangles. During his father's lifetime surajmal had participated in some important campaign and came in contact with the neighbouring powers. He assisted sawai ishwari singh, against malaharrao holkar at the battle of bagru, 18 miles south west of jaipur in 1748. Suppressing the rebellious bangash afghans of farukhabad and their rohilla allies beyond the gang. Wazir then induced the emperor to accept badan singh as a raja and surajmal a kumar bahbdur.

Among the numerous followers of surajmal, balram jat came to prominence in the fifties of the eighteenth century in the territory of delhi subah. Ballu was a son of a petty revenue collector of Faridabad, 26 kilometers south of Delhi supported by his family connection with badan singh, the jat raja of bharatpur. He seized a large number of villages in the close proximity of the capital. Wazir wrote repeatedly to surajmal and balram to give up the pargana of Faridabad but they put off with false pretences and evasive replies. In the meantime ballu expelled the imperial out post at samshpur in 1748. So wazir safdar jang took the field against them in January 1749 and captured Faridabad. Surajmal prepared to back the jat of sihi with all their resources and putting of the forts of deeg and kumbher in a state of defence and marched against wazir 1749. Fortune befriended surajmal, the wazir on receiving the news on the rohilla rebellion in the neighbourhood of subah awadh, had to put off the settlement of his score with the jats, returned to delhi. Wazir Safdar jang sent an army against the jats and himself got ready, advanced as far as khizrabad. About this time the news of a great disaster and defeat of his deputy Nawal rai at the hands of Ahmad Khan Bangush, induced the Wazir to make up his engagements with surajmal. A compromise was effected through the mediation of Bapu Mahadev hingne Ballu jat won over the Marata wakil and safdar jang.. Raja surajmal joined the wazir in an expedition at pathri in Bangush territory against Ahmad khan bangush and the rohillas. Wazir safdar jang was wounded and returned to Delhi he then summoned Eaja Sutajmal, Raja Nagarmal Raja Lakhmi Narayan, Ismail khan, etc. to discuss the plan of a campaign against the Rohillas. He also took into his pay the Maratha army of mali ar Rao for RS. 25,000 per day and the jats of surajmal on daily allowance of RS. 15,000 on Jan 22 1751. He advanced against the Ahmad Khan Bangush about a month later. At the same time Ahmad Shah Abdali Punjab and threatened to march towards Delhi.

On the other hand Ballu jat Set himself up as a collector in his area and was confirmed in his position by safdar Jang. Gradually he extended his depredations farther. In 1752 he ravaged the imperial camp at Sikandrabad, 50 kilometers south of Delhi. He amassed wealth by his plundering foreigners. He also seized local tradesmen. Hung them up and flogged them to extort money. Ballu accompanied Surajmal to Delhi when the latter was called for counsel and assistance by Safdar Jang during civil war against the wishes of Imad. Imad invited the Marathas to help him against Surajmal and Safdar Jang during the civil war. Raghunath Rao started his expedition in north India in October, 1753 and entered the territory of Bharatpur. The Jat Raja sent his Purohit, Rupa Ram Katari as an envoy to negotiate with the Marathas for terms. Raghunath Rao demanded the extravagant ransom of one crore of rupees, Surajmal agreed to forty lakhs, then the Marathas resumed their advance and the envoy came back promising to procure a reply from the Jat Raja Surajmal. Surajmal wrote to Raghunath either to accept 40,00,000 or to take war. In November 1753, Delhi government took notice of the lawless activities of Ballu Jat. An expedition under Aqibat Muhammad assisted by 2000 Marathas under Gangadhai Tatya and further enforced by a strong force dispatched by Imad-ul-Mulk, a rival and opponent of Safdar Jang was sent against Ballu. They besieged Ballabgarh and forced Ballu to sue for peace.

Meanwhile a civil war began at Delhi, Safdar Jang was removed and Intizam-ud-Daulah was appointed new Wazir. Safdar Jang moved towards Ballabgarh and encamped at Sikri, 5 km. south of Ballabgarh. From here with the help of his Jat allies he put up a stout resistance. The city of Delhi, its environs and the regions of Faridabad and Ballabgarh were the scenes of fighting. Surajmal and Rajender Giri plundered the old Delhi especially the grain market and houses of Shahjahanabad. As this quarter contained no noble or rich man's mansion only the houses of middle class and poor men were plundered and maltreated.

Next day of May 10, 1753 the Jats spread their devastation to other suburbs like Sayyidwara, Bijal Masjid, Tarkaganj and Abdullahnagar. The residents could put up only a feeble resistance and the Jats plundered up the gate of city. The ravage was long remembered by Delhi population under the name of "Jat Gardi" on a par with the raid of Marathas and Afghans. Only those places were saved where imperial detachment could arrive in time. Subsequently, when Ballu met Aqibat Muhammad on November 29, 1753 and happened to use hot words in the course of discussion. This resulted in a scuffle in which Ballu and a number of his soldiers were killed while others fled away.

Safdarjung was being watched by Najib-ud-Daullah, who was in league with Imad. Before Abdali's arrival Surajmal wanted to crush Najib-ud-Daullah and other Rohilla Afghans and to

make Suja-ud-daullah, the wazir in the place of imad. In 1757 Abdali reached Delhi to help Naji-ud-daullah who was with league with imad, Raja Surajmal being the nearest among the refractory chiefs, the wrath of the Shah turned upon him. His son Jawahar Singh with 5000 troops at Ballabgarh was watching the movements of the Afghan army. He cut off a foraging party of Afghan who had gone to Faridabad. Raghunath and Dattaji were also in the same view. In this way of alliance between Marathas and Jats was purely defensive. On the other hand, Shah and other Afghans defeated the Marathas in several engagements. Dattaji raised the siege of Suikartal, reached Delhi and sent the baggage and families in the protection of Surajmal as a fine for his disloyal conduct. The Raja refused to pay so Abdali marched against Surajmal, who wanted to gain higher political ends.

Raja Surajmal accompanied by imad, joined Sadashiv Bhau with 8000 Jats and combined forces reached Delhi in July 1760 and laid siege to it. In Oct 1760, Bhau decided to march against Kunjpura, summoned Holkar, Sindhia and Surajmal to consult them. Surajmal was not agreed with Bhau's proposal. So he left the assembly and returned back. On the other hand, Abdali opened fresh negotiation with Jats through Suja-ud-daullah, the Nawab of Awadh, the treaty was to ensure only the neutrality of Surajmal but not active assistance on the Afghan side. However, in spite of harsh treatment of Bhau, the sympathy of Surajmal continued with Marathas. He entered into this alliance with Abdali only to provide state, in the then prevailing political conditions in India. After the battle of Panipat Surajmal impelled by Hindu religious sentiments sent out his troops to protect Marathas and relieved their distresses in every way by distributing food and cloths to them.

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