
A STUDY OF RELATIONS BETWEEN RAJA NAHAR SINGH OF BALLABGARH & THE BRITISH

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Abstract: The main objective of this research paper is to study the correspondence that took place between Raja Nahar Singh of Ballabgarh and the British & vice-versa. Correspondence from 30 December 1829 to 9 September 1857 which was made from Raja Nahar Singh to the British and vice-versa has been taken into account. This research paper is based mainly on primary sources lying at National Archives of India (NAI), New Delhi. Besides some secondary sources have also been used to complete this research paper. The correspondence took place from 1829 to 1843 was connected with the *pargana of Pali Pokal, Faridabad, mauza Ranhera & non-interference in the matters of Maharaj Kaur of Sulabgarh*. It was a general practice of *Rajas/Nawabs* to write the British Authority after coming Haryana under British rule on December 30, 1803 from Marathas with the treaty of *Sirjianjan Gaon*. During the Uprising of 1857, Raja Nahar Singh sent three petitions on the same date i.e. 15 June 1857. The first letter was addressed to the Lord Canning, Governor General of India, second was addressed to George Anson, Commander in Chief in India and the third was addressed to J.R. Cohin, Esquire, and Lieutenant Governor the North West Provinces, Agra. Lastly, on 9th September, 1857, Raja Nahar Singh communicated to G.F. Harvey, Commissioner, Agra which was referred in a letter which Harvey wrote to C.B. Saunders, officiating commissioner of Delhi on 17 December 1857. Regarding last letter, it is pertinent to mention here that the letter was written on 17th December and produced in the trial on 19th December 1857. How was it possible?, Harvey mentioned that the Raja wrote him on 9th September 1857, then why was this letter not sent earlier & why was the original letter not produced in the court? At the end, it can be concluded that Raja Nahar Singh had to communicate to the British up to 1843 as a general practice being the head of a princely state. The three letters are all dated 15th June 1857, were drafted by Munro his trusted English Officer, who handled correspondence independently. It appears that these letters may have been written to keep a balance of political commitment but are shockingly revealing. It is important to point out that the letter to George Anson was written when he actually had died at Karnal. No valuable information was given in these three letters, it seemed mere eyewash.

Key-Words: *arzee, khillats, Kunwar, pargana, chiefship, Khwaja Serai, Gujjurs, Mewatis, thanadar, istamrar, mauza, biswadari, zamindari, jagirs, sowars.*

The main objective of this research paper is to study the correspondence that took place between Raja Nahar Singh of Ballabgarh and the British and vice-versa. This research paper is based mainly on primary sources lying at National Archives of India (NAI), New Delhi. Besides some secondary sources have also been used to complete this research paper. Correspondence from 30 December 1829 to 9 September 1857 which was made from Raja Nahar Singh to the British and vice-versa has been taken into account.

On 30 December 1829 through an *arzee*, Raja Nahar Singh informed the Governor General about the demise of his father and added that it had been a customary practice for the family to receive *khillats* of condolence. This was responded on March 30, 1830. The Governor General said that he was greatly grieved and conveyed that such an event must have been to him also a source of the deep sorrow. He hoped that Raja should endeavor to console the other members of his family.ⁱ It is noteworthy that the letter was responded; hence it was a customary practice.

In an another petition in January 1831 to the Resident at Delhi, Raja Nahar Singh stated that it seemed desirable that government should refer to the former correspondence submitted regarding the affairs of Ballabgarh Estate before final orders were passed in the dispatches from the Resident at Delhi reporting the death of Raja Ram Singh. In this communication Raja Nahar Singh also highlighted the political conditions of Ballabgarh from the time of Raja Anrudh Singh to Raja Ram Singh and the appointment of *Kunwar* Raj Singh as a guardian of the child, Sahib Singh and the manager of the Estate. Again, Raja Nahar Singh made another communication to the Resident at Delhi on 4 January 1831. Here, he described the condition of *pargana* of Pali Pokal which was bestowed to Bahadur Singh & other descendents.ⁱⁱ Raja Nahar Singh claimed right on the *pargana* of Pali Pokal through this communication.

On 25th January 1832, Nahar Singh petitioned the Governor General by saying that the *pargana* of Faridabad had been granted to them subject to the condition of maintaining the police in the environs of Delhi and the *pargana* of Pali Pokal was subsequently given to them subject to a similar condition of protecting the high road from Delhi to Palwal. The two *parganas* were held together by the head of the Ballabgarh family as an integral part of that chief ship until 1826. But later on, the *pargana* of Pali Pokal was separated and given to Kunwar Raj Singh, uncle of the late Raja, the father of Raja Nahar Singh. Then Pali Pokal had been transferred from *Kunwar* Raj Singh to the British government. Metcalfe had desired that Raja Nahar Singh should depute his horsemen and footmen from Delhi to *Khwaja Serai*. Raja Nahar Singh stated that if the British government was not willing to entrust him with the charge of the police he was only helpless. After Pali Pokal had been separated Nahar Singh said the inhabitants of that *pargana*, who were *Gujjurs* and *Mewatis* notorious for their turbulent and refractory dispositions, would soon reduce Faridabad to a state of ruin. Since Pali Pokal had come under the British management, its inhabitants had committed several acts of plunder in the Faridabad district. So much so that the *thanadar*, through partiality to his own people, always supported them and gave Ballabgarh no redress. If Pali Pokal and the *istamrar* villages were restored to him, Nahar Singh said, he shall have the means of keeping up the police establishments in the environs on the same efficient footing. Raja Nahar Singh also said that the charge for the police may be committed to him from the *pargana* of Pali Pokal with the villages of Harchandpur and Chatarpur.

If this was not done he would not be able to establish horsemen and footmen who he was expected to maintain from *Khwaja Serai* to Palwal.ⁱⁱⁱ Raja Nahar Singh described that the condition of *pargana* of Pali Pokal has been deteriorated & said that he shall be able to establish horsemen and footmen from *Khwaja Serai* to Palwal only after the *pargana* of Pali Pokal is given.

In continuation, Raja Nahar Singh wrote to Fraser on the 23rd April 1832 on the same issue. This was done against the decision of Metcalfe, for when the dispute occurred between *Kunwar* Raj Singh and Raja Ram Singh, Metcalfe with a view to settlement of the problem passed a resolution in 1827 directing the *pargana* of Pali Pokal to be assigned for the personal support of *Kunwar* Raj Singh. Nahar Singh added that in consideration of the long attachment and services of his ancestors as well as of his own to the British, the *pargana* of Pali Pokal may be made subject to the state of Ballabgarh, so that the satisfactory performance of duties may be done. On 19th March 1832 a petition was sent from Raja Nahar Singh to Fraser. Here he addressed Fraser as his good friend.^{iv}

On 28 May, 1832 Nahar Singh again wrote to Fraser by saying the following words:

'I shall with pleasure undertake the protection of the high road of the police of the environs of the city as formerly if the pargana conferred him in istamrar on a fair adjustment then the amount of which will regularly pay into government treasury for the support of the police and take adequate measures for serving into efficiency.'^v

In the next year on 28 Jan 1833, a reminder was sent to the Governor General, and prayed that the *pargana* of Pali Pokal might continue to be attached to the state of Ballabgarh.^{vi} No response has been received from the Governor General regarding the *pargana* of Pali Pokal.

Through two petitions dated 5 April 1834 and the 16 September 1834 it was came into notice that Nahar Singh claimed to hold *mauza* Ranhera on a quit-rent and his liability to keep up a police establishment on the environs of Delhi. Raja Nahar Singh described the facts regarding *mauza* Ranhera of *pargana* Pali Pokal. The entire *biswadari* and *zamindari* were purchased by his forefathers. The whole of the lands pertaining to that the village had ever since continued in the possession of his ancestors, who had always paid the supreme authorities (for the time an *istamrari* rent of Rs. 346 per annum).^{vii} Nahar Singh had been permitted he said to hold the lands in question at quit-rent, fixed at Rs. 346 per annum.^{viii} This was a big achievement of Raja Nahar Singh to hold the *mauza* Ranhera of *pargana* Pali Pokal with the approval of British Authority.

On 1 February 1843, Raja Nahar Singh petitioned the secretary to government of India with the Governor General on the subject not to interfere in the matters of Maharaj Kaur of Sulabgarh as per the orders of Auckland passed in 1839 which was replied on 18 February 1843. The Governor General required Raja Nahar Singh's presence at his camp on 21 March at Ballabgarh. Nahar Singh expressed his grateful thanks to the Governor General for restoring to him the management of his Estate and for friendly advice, given to him. He declared that he would use his best endeavors to administer the affairs so as to secure the welfare and happiness of his people, as desired the Governor General.^{ix} On 21st of March the Governor General passed through Faridabad, he was surprised to see the huge gathering around Raja Nahar Singh.^x

The correspondence took place from 1829 to 1843 was connected with the *pargana* of Pali Pokal, Faridabad, *mauza* Ranhera & non- interference in the matters of Maharaj Kaur of Sulabgarh. It was a general practice of *Rajas/Nawabs* to write the British Authority after coming Haryana under British rule on December 30, 1803 from Marathas with the treaty of *Sirjianjan Gaon*^{xi}. Ballabgarh was recognized as princely state with the sympathy of the British. Raja Bahadur Singh of Ballabgarh was confirmed to his *jagir* by the British^{xii}. There were ten princely states in Haryana in 1857 namely Buria, Kalsia, Jind, Jhajjar, Bahadurgarh, Farrukhnagar, Ballabgarh, Pataudi, Dujana and Loharu^{xiii}.

During the Uprising of 1857, Raja Nahar Singh sent three petitions on the same date i.e. 15 June 1857. The first letter was addressed to the Lord Canning, Governor General of India in which he stated that:

'...The King of Delhi is proclaimed the owner of the country, the Magistrates of Gurgaon, Bulandshahar, Rohtak etc. have fled and general disorder prevails, the country is being plundered by the Gujjars, as almost all the post offices from Agra to Ambala are destroyed/perhaps not Agra...'

Secondly, he also addressed to George Anson, Commander in Chief in India & said that:

'... On Monday a party of Native Cavalry (The 3rd) from Meerut came over to Delhi. On the road from Meerut, they broke the telegraph wires, and on reaching the bridge of boats they stopped the port man. They entered in the city, shooting every European and Christians. The King of Delhi has openly joined them and appointed his sons and relatives as their officers. There are several regiments now in the Delhi palace and they have forfeited the city...'

Nahar Singh also addressed to J.R. Cohin, Esquire, and Lieutenant Governor the North West Provinces, Agra by saying that:

'... the King of Delhi has appointed his relatives as their superior officers...'^{xiv}

Lastly, on 9th September, 1857, Raja Nahar Singh communicated to G.F. Harvey, Commissioner, Agra which was referred in a letter which Harvey wrote to C.B. Saunders, officiating commissioner of Delhi on 17 December 1857. It was said that:

'... during the period of my continuance with the troops of the Rajas of Bharatpur, Alwar and Jaipur, I received frequent communications from the Raja all of which were too much the same purport, professing and extreme loyalty to the British Government, activities of the mutineers and covering occasional state scraps of information regarding the process of the siege. I was in camp with the contingents of Native Chiefs from 20th of May to 23rd of July, and on the occasion of misbehavior and mutiny of the Bharatpur levies on 31st May, was compelled with the Bharatpur political officers to leave their camp, and endeavor either to get to Delhi or Join Captain Eden and the Jaipur troops. While at Mohna some 28 miles from Delhi, the Raja of Ballabgarh sent to us supplies and a request that we would take shelter in his fort. There were about 28 European gentlemen of the railways and customs department with me, and some 15 or 20 irregular horsemen; we declined his offer of shelter but upon this, as on previous and subsequent occasions I advised him to present himself to the commander-in-chief, and to employ his exertions in supplying the British camp and evincing his loyalty. I addressed communications to other native chiefs in the Delhi territory to the same effect and pointed out that as holders of jagirs conferred for services rendered

by their ancestors during the war of 1803-05, they were solemn obligations to come forward and in restoring order. Had the chiefs of Jhajjar, Bahadurgarh and Loharu etc. done their duty the miscreant mutineers would have been driven out of Delhi or starved and destroyed with in its wall before the 15th of May. I am bound to say that from my knowledge of Nahar Singh I should not think him likely to embark in any conspiracy against the British Government. He is a weak minded, timid man, and unfortunately always in the hands of dangerous and intriguing advisors. Fazl Hak and Munro of ignominious Delhi notoriously were ruining him, and both I am informed were traitors of the state. A brother of Nahar Singh's was also mischievous disserving man and any, or all of the persons named were very likely, if they failed in persuading him to join the insurgents, to take measures for effecting his ruin in any event. All the communications received by me were forwarded to the government but were of uniform character; the two or three in my possession were destroyed in a continuous ride of 64 miles in 20 hours during unceasing rain, after leaving the Jaipur force and on our way to Agra. The letter enclosed states that 225 sowars of the 8th N.I. sent by Muhmad Bakht Khan had arrived at Ballabgarh, and suggest that some of our troops should be placed at Badarpur to interrupt supplies going to Delhi...^{xv}

Regarding last letter, it is pertinent to mention here that the letter was written on 17th December and produced in the trial on 19th December 1857. How was it possible? , Harvey mentioned that the Raja wrote him on 9th September 1857, then why this letter was not sent earlier & why was the original letter not produced in the court?.

At the end, it can be concluded that Raja Nahar Singh had to communicate to the British up to 1843 as a general practice being the head of a princely state. The three letters are all dated 15th June 1857, were drafted by Munro his trusted English Officer, who handled correspondence independently. It appears that these letters may have been written to keep a balance of political commitment but are shockingly revealing. It is important to point out that the letter to George Anson was written when he actually had died at Karnal. No valuable information was given in these three letters, it seemed mere eyewash.

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