

POLITICAL RISE DURING MUSLIM PERIOD

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ABSTRACT

This article traces the political ascension of the Mer caste, attributing it to the Mughal rule in Ajmer during the period of 1556 AD to 1719 AD. It examines how the Meras resisted Mughal supremacy, causing disruption and turmoil, until the astute diplomacy of Aurangzeb brought about a shift in their allegiance. The study sheds light on the strategies employed by Aurangzeb to win the favor of the Meras, recognizing their courage and intelligence. Subsequently, the article explores the socio-economic transformation of the Mer caste, as they transitioned from an agrarian society to one predominantly engaged in activities like robbery and looting. It also delves into their role in the Indian independence movement and their contributions as freedom fighters. Through historical analysis, this article provides insights into the dynamic evolution of the Mer caste in Ajmer.

Keywords: Mir, Ajmer, Akbar, Mughals, Jahangir, Society, Social Structure.

Introduction

The political landscape of Ajmer witnessed a transformative period during the Mughal rule, particularly under the reigns of Akbar and Jahangir. Despite Akbar's efforts to integrate kingdoms like Jaipur and Jodhpur into his empire, the Meras of Ajmer resisted Mughal authority, engaging in disruptive activities that plagued both the Mughal army and the local populace. It was only through the nuanced diplomacy of Aurangzeb that the dynamics began to shift. Recognizing the inherent courage and intelligence of the Mer caste, Aurangzeb implemented policies aimed at fostering camaraderie and cooperation, rather than confrontation.

This marked a turning point, allowing the Meras to forge closer ties with the Mughals. Notably, individuals like Harraj and Gajraj of the Cheetah dynasty played instrumental roles in bridging this gap, ultimately earning them titles of distinction. These developments paved the way for the Meras to enter politics and receive rewards from the Mughal rulers, significantly improving their socio-economic standing. However, with the advent of British rule, the landscape shifted once more, prompting a shift towards activities like theft and robbery.

This article also explores the crucial role played by the Mer caste in the Indian independence movement. Figures like Mehrat Wazir Singh Anakar and Brijmohanlal Advocate, among others, actively participated, contributing significantly to the struggle for freedom. The legacy of these brave revolutionaries, often unsung heroes, remains an integral part of the historical fabric of Ajmer. This study offers a comprehensive examination of the Mer caste's evolution, from their resistance to Mughal rule to their pivotal role in India's fight for independence.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis posited in this study suggests that the political rise of the Mer caste in Ajmer was catalyzed by the nuanced diplomacy of the Mughal ruler Aurangzeb, who recognized the inherent courage and intelligence of the Meras. It is anticipated that the Mer caste, initially resistant to Mughal authority, underwent a socio-economic transformation, transitioning from an agrarian society to one primarily engaged in activities such as robbery and looting. Furthermore, it is hypothesized that the Meras played a pivotal role in the Indian independence movement, actively contributing to the struggle for freedom. This study seeks to empirically validate these assertions through comprehensive historical analysis, aiming to provide a nuanced understanding of the political evolution of the Mer caste in Ajmer.

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History

The political rise of the Mer caste is believed to be from the Mughal rule. Ajmer was dominated by the Mughal rulers from 1556 AD to 1719.

AD. During the time of Akbar and Jahangir, Ajmer had become the center of major activities of the Mughals. Although Akbar, with his wisdom and foresight, gave the kingdoms like Jaipur and Jodhpur Had included it in his empire, but the Mero's of Ajmer did not accept the supremacy of the Mughals and hence, the Mero's continuously created havoc not only in the Mughal army but also in the villages around Ajmer and plagued the common people with looting and fighting. Finally, in 1632 AD, Maharaj Raj Singh of Jodhpur sent his minister, the famous writer Muhannot Nainasi, on a military expedition to punish Mero. Nainasi set fire to 15 Mero villages and punished many Mero chiefs, but Mero There was no improvement in the increasing activities of the Mughals. As a result of the far-sighted policy of the Mughal rulers, the Mughals won the hearts of the Meras. By adopting marriage relations with Hindus and many religious festivals, the Mughals had assured the Meras of their friendship and affinity.

Mughal ruler Aurangzeb knew that this caste of Ajmer was very courageous and smart. Aurangzeb is known as a far-sighted and diplomatic ruler. Under this diplomacy, he studied the geographical location of Ajmer and found that this area had been suffering from many problems for a long time due to famine and being an area devoid of agriculture. There is no major river in this area, hence there was a problem of water. He understood these problems and accordingly he used the brain instead of the sword to win the battles. Alamgir gave instructions to include capable Meras in the Mughal army, and the Mughal officers appointed in Ajmer were instructed to maintain leniency and harmony instead of confrontation with the Meras.

Certainly, these new changes gave Mero the opportunity to come closer to the Mughals. The capable and courageous Harraj and Gajraj of the Cheetah dynasty went to Delhi to meet Aurangzeb. He remained in the service of the king for some time. Pleased with their services, the Sultan honored Harraj with the title of 'Katha' and Gajraj with the title of Ghoda. "It is also mentioned in the Rajasthan District Gazetteers that Harraj, who was in the service of the said king, kept a steadfast and unwavering guard with a shield over his head even during the rain, storm and storm during one night. Due to his steadfastness, the king He was greatly influenced. Hence, on the basis of 'Katha' being called 'Katha' in Marwari language, he was decorated with the title of 'Katha', similarly, Gajraj used to guard the city around the palaces while sitting on a horse, due to being a good horse rider, he was given the title of 'Ghodad. Today Their descendants are also known by the names of Kathat, Ghodaat etc. Harraj had reached very close to Alamgir due to his ability. He was very influenced by Alamgir. Ultimately, under the influence of Alamgir, to please him, he accepted Muslim religion. Colonel Tod has said that he became famous by the name Cheetah because of dominating the enemies like a panther (cheetah) in the war. "Duda, a descendant of this hero of the Cheetah sect, was named Dawood 'Khan' by the then ruler of Ajmer and Dawood Khan made Athun his main residence. It came to be known as Khan Ka Athun and this building was famous as the main building of the Mehrats.

After the establishment of Mughal relations with the Cheetahs, in return for their bravery, ability and services, the Mughal rulers kept on receiving village estates and other facilities as rewards, due to which their social and economic condition improved and during this period, the Cheetah group Got an opportunity to enter politics, which could not remain permanent over time because then the Mughal rule ended and the British took over India and the protection that cheetahs received from the Mughals ended and the nearby rulers were from the beginning, cheetahs Were against. These conditions shook the economic and social structure of the people. Theft, robbery, murder etc. now became the main occupation of the miners. Describing the occupational situation, Colonel Todd, Captain Hall and Dixon wrote that the livelihood of the miners was not dependent on agriculture but on looting. However (Mer) Cheetah group was initially dependent on agriculture. Cheetah was generally trustworthy, kind-hearted and generous. He loved his society and family very much.

British Occupation

During the period of British occupation, the Mer caste displayed a tenacious and fiercely independent nature. The Meras, known for their courage and quick temper, were unafraid to engage in combat, particularly when armed. However, the drought of 1832 severely impacted their morale, leading some to resort to looting and violence. Maintaining their initial self-respect, the Mer caste staunchly opposed British rule. The British rulers were taken aback by the Meras' audacity and organization, recognizing the need to suppress this formidable group for regional peace. To this end, the British entered into treaties with neighboring rulers to quell the Meras, who were also a source of concern for these local leaders. This collaboration with the British against the Meras ultimately proved successful.

In 1820 AD, the Meras, seizing an opportunity, mounted an armed assault on Bhim Fort, wresting control and reigniting fear in the region. Recognizing the challenges in subduing the Meras, the British opted for a different approach. They offered agricultural land and other amenities as a compromise, aiming to harness the bravery and fortitude of the Meras. Thus, the Merwada Force was established, headquartered in Beawar, and later reorganized into the Sainik Kaur battalion, with its base relocated to Ajmer.

The warriors of this battalion exhibited unwavering courage and valor. Their remarkable feats earned them recognition, including the prestigious 'Indian Order of Merit,' with Subedar Major Gopa being the foremost awardee. This transformation from figures associated with plunder and violence to individuals dedicated to hard work, discipline, and peace marked a significant societal shift.

In the context of the Indian independence movement, members of the Mer caste, recruited into the army, actively supported revolutionaries and made distinctive contributions. Notably, Mehraat Wazir Singh Anakar played a vital role in the Quit India Movement as a dedicated freedom fighter. Figures like Brijmohanlal Advocate and Haribhau Upadhyay worked to motivate Cheeta, Barad, Mehraat, Kathato, and others to participate in freedom movement activities. Additionally, several other brave revolutionaries, including Ghazi Thakur Kathat, Ahmed ji Kathat, Dhanna ji Patel Kathat, Sallaji Patel, Noor Mohammad, Teja ji, Noora ji, and Subedar, played instrumental roles, even if their names may not be as widely recognized. This period also saw the continued influence of historical figures like Prithviraj Chauhan, the Chauhan ruler, in shaping the political landscape.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the historical narrative of the Mer caste in Ajmer unveils a tale of resilience, adaptability, and transformation. From their early resistance against Mughal rule to their complex relationship with the British during the colonial era, the Meras displayed a distinct character marked by courage and self-respect. The socio-political landscape of the time necessitated strategic shifts, leading to alliances with both Mughal and British authorities.

The transition from a community known for its assertive nature to one actively participating in the Indian independence movement reflects the Meras' evolving role in shaping the destiny of their region. Notable figures like Mehraat Wazir Singh Anakar and others played pivotal roles in the fight for freedom.

Ultimately, the legacy of the Mer caste is one of multifaceted significance. Their journey, punctuated by moments of conflict and compromise, sheds light on the complexities of historical dynamics and the adaptive strategies employed by communities in response to changing political landscapes. The courage and contributions of the Meras, both in times of conflict and in their pursuit of independence, continue to resonate as an integral part of the broader historical narrative of the region.

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