

CHAPTER II

HISTORY

THE ANCIENT PERIOD

Mahendragarh was earlier known as 'Kanaud' because of its association with Kanaudia group of Brahmans¹. During the middle of the nineteenth century, it came to be known as Mahendragarh. How it was known in earlier periods is not known. Possibly it may have formed a part of the Kurujangala², a territorial designation known to traditional literature.

Although the nomenclature of the district is not very old, the antiquity of the area it covered, can be stretched to earlier periods also. The archaeological explorations conducted in the region have brought to light late-Harappan sites specially from its Rewari tahsil³. This type of evidence along with Painted Grey Ware, Northern Black Polished Ware and Early Historical Ware is gathered from the adjoining districts of Bhiwani and Gurgaon.⁴ In the absence of archaeological excavations in the district nothing more can be added to what has been stated above. So far not a single PGW site has come to light in the district, perhaps suggesting the north-eastward migrations of the Aryans from the banks of the Saraswati and the Drisadvati possibly due to the drying up of their courses. Most of the sites explored in the district belong to the late-medieval period. The district, it may further be pointed out, might possibly have remained outside the main stream of Aryan culture and hence has not been specifically mentioned in the traditional literature as an independent territorial unit. In the absence of evidence it also becomes extremely difficult to trace the successive stages in the historical growth of the region. However, it has been suggested that some of the present streams of the district may be identified with those mentioned in early Vedic literature.⁵ The south-eastern Rasa (a stream mentioned in the Rigveda⁶ has been recognised with the Sahibi which passes through the region⁷, and the Dohan

1. Dharampal Singh Punia, *Archaeology of Mahendragarh and Gurgaon Districts* (Haryana) MSS Ph. D thesis, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra, 1976, p.2.

2. Kurujangala included the Rohtak and Hisar districts of Haryana (V.S. Agarwal, *India as known to Panini*, p. 54, Lucknow, 1953.

3. Suraj Bhan, *Excavation at Mitathal* (1968) and *Other Explorations in the Sutlej Yamuna Divide*, Kurukshetra 1975, p. 126.

4. Dharampal Singh Punia, *op. cit.*, Chapter on Explorations.

5. M.L. Bhargava, *The Geography of Rigvedic India*, Lucknow, 1964, pp. 45—51.

6. *Rigveda*, 41.5.

7. Bhargava, *op.cit.*, pp. 46-7.

with the Vadhusara mentioned in the *Mahabharata*, which is said to have originated from the tears of Divya Pauloma, the wife of the sage Bhrigu and the mother of famous sage Chavana and to flow past the ashrama of the latter¹. Quite interestingly, the stream still flows through the region near a place known as Chavanasrama, situated on Dhosi hills². The *Mahabharata*³ describes it as a sacred stream with many holy places on its course proving thereby that it might have been a fairly large and important stream in those early days⁴. Similarly the association of the stream Kasaunti or Krishnawati has been suggested with Rigvedic tribe Krishna⁵, who lived in its valley⁶. These identifications if accepted, would at least show the antiquity of the district through which the streams flowed, as far back as the Vedic period. Absence of material remains of early cultures in Mahendragarh, Narnaul and Rewari tahsils may be explained as mainly due to the geographical conditions namely, semi desert, excessive sand dunes, meagre water resources and reduced fertility of the soil.⁷ But at the same time, it is also true that because of these very conditions the region assumed strategic importance during the medieval and late medieval times.

The succeeding stages in the historical growth of the district cannot be traced in the absence of evidence. Possibly it was included in the empire of the Mauryas, the Guptas, the Pushpabhutis and the Gurjara-Pratiharas. The suggestion is, of course, based only on circumstantial evidence for it is very well known that these empires were very extensive and included several districts of Haryana as is also attested to by the archaeological as well as literary evidence.⁸

The district has yielded very meagre evidence for the period from the Mauryas to the end of the Rajput rule covering about one thousand and five hundred years, a very wide gap indeed in the history of the district. What we have at our disposal are some copper coins of the Yaudheyas, a few of the Tomaras, three inscriptions from Gurawada (Rewari tahsil) besides some scattered sculptural remains of gods and goddesses.⁹

1. M.L. Bhargava, *The Geography of Rigvedic India*, Lucknow 1964, PP. 48-9.

2. *Mahabharata*, *Adiparva*, 6; M.L. Bhargava, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

3. *Mahabharata Vanaparva*, 125.

4. M.L. Bhargava, *The Geography of Rigvedic India*, Lucknow, 1964, p. 49.

5. *Ibid.*, pp 47-8, 50.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 50-51.

7. D.S. Punia, *Archaeology of Mahendragarh and Gurgaon Districts* (Haryana) MSS Ph. D. thesis, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra, 1976, pp. 24, 57.

8. For details see—D.S. Punia, *Archaeology of Mahendragarh and Gurgaon Districts* (Haryana) MSS Ph. D. thesis, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra, 1976, Silak Ram, *Archaeology of Rohtak and Hisar Districts*, 1972, MSS, Ph. D. thesis, Kurukshetra University; Amar Singh, *Archaeology of Karnal and Jind Districts* (Haryana), Ph. D. thesis, 1981, MSS, Kurukshetra University.

9. D.S. Punia, *Archaeology of Mahendragarh and Gurgaon Districts* (Haryana) MSS Ph. D. thesis, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra, 1976, pp. 153-56, 167, 173, 213, 214, 222, 228, 230, 232-34.

The Yaudheya coins have been recovered from Rewari and are now preserved in the Gurukul Museum, Jhajjar. These show a facing standing Karttikeya, holding spear in right hand with left hand on the hip and a peacock at the left. It contains the legend Yaudheya Ganasya Jayah along with 'dvi' or 'tri'. On their reverse is the figure of a goddess walking to the left with right hand raised and left hand on the hip besides a *nandipada* and a beautiful dotted border all round.¹ These coins, which are very few, do not help historical reconstruction, but only suggest that the tribe which was dominant in the adjoining districts had some influence over this region also.

The three inscriptions are from the village Gurawada, about 20 km north of Rewari. Two of these were found engraved on a rectangular column which possibly formed a part of some temple belonging to 9th—10th century. The inscriptions speak of Viranchandra of meritorious service, entertainer of guests, most beloved of kinsmen, earnestly devoted to his people, of the sun like valour, afflicted by a serious disease, after remembering Lord Vishnu went to the heaven on 12th day of the dark fortnight of *Asadha* in the year 953 when the water was scant all around. The other inscription too records the same event. Both the inscriptions give the same date without mentioning the era. The script is northern Brahmi and the language is Sanskrit. The third inscription which is also found on a stone pillar mentions Vishnuhari who left his earthly body while engrossed in the thought of Lord Vishnu on the first of the dark fortnight of the month of Bhadrapada of the Saka year 819.² The inscriptions do not provide any detail of the family of the deceased. From the description they appear to be persons of local eminence and devotees of Vishnu. The discovery of these inscriptions together with two *Sasasi* sculptures from the same place clearly proves the prevalence of Vishnu worship in the district.³ The two pillars possibly belonged to some nearby Vishnu temple where the images might have been originally installed.

Of the sculptural remains from the district mention may be made of *Sasasi* Vishnu, Ganesa, Mahisasuramardini, Durga and Parvati all from Gurawada (Rewari tahsil) while the Adinatha and Parsvanatha *Tirthankara* images, although of a little later period, are from Narnaul. The Brahmanical images belong to a time bracket from 10th to 12th century A.D. while Jain sculptures to that of 13th—14th century on stylistic grounds. The four armed Lord Vishnu is represented in a reclining pose in the Kshirasagar, the

1. D-S. Punia p. 167. The terms 'dvi', 'tri' on these coins have been variously interpreted by scholars as denoting three tribes, sections, confederating units or their administrative divisions. (A Cunningham, *Coins of Ancient India from earliest times down to the seventh century AD*, London, 1891. J. Allan, *Catalogue of the coins of Ancient India*, (in the British Museum) London, 1936.

2. D.S. Punia, *Archaeology of Mahendragarh and Gurgaon Districts* (Haryana) MSS Ph. D. thesis, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra, p. 153-156.

3. Ibid.

fragmentary Ganesa sculpture is in blackstone, its pot belly, elephantine face, *ekadanta* and long *surparaka-karna* are well executed; the goddess Durga is beautifully carved in her Mahisasuramardini form, while the goddess Paravati wearing a *jatumukuta* is shown in *lalitana* in very well ornamented style. Of the two *Tirthankara* images, Adinatha is in meditation pose on a lion's seat, a *dharmachakra* placed between the loins, at the centre of his chest is shown a *Srivatsa* symbol, the hair are curly and all very well arranged. The Parsvanatha image has also similar style excepting that it has a canopy of seven snake hoods over the head.¹ This shows that during the early Sultanate Narnaul was an important centre of Jainism, whether it was so during early period is not known.

The inscriptions and the few fragmentary sculptural remains indicate roughly a period of about four centuries, i.e. from 9th to 12th century when some cultural activity was initiated in the region. It was the period when the Pratiharas, the Tomaras and the Chahamanas were powerful in the adjoining regions. The period also witnessed Muslim invasions as can be explained by the fragmentary condition of architectural and sculptural remains. The tradition has it that at Khole (33 km west of Rewari) there ruled a prince named Dharampala who had built a strong fort at that place. He was defeated by Ibrahim who established Muslim rule over Khole which, however, could not last long for the latter was defeated and slain by Anangapala, the Tomara ruler of Delhi. Remains of a fort complex are still visible at the village site.² Anangapala Tomara is also associated traditionally with the founding of the town of Narnaul where his cousin Raja Laun Karan ruled. The Raja had his seat near the Dhosi hills in the thick forest named *Jhinhervana*.³ The name of the town has been derived differently—*Nahar-Naul* or the 'Forest of tigers' or *Nar Naul* or 'beautiful women' perhaps it contained beautiful women, and *Nag Naul*, after a snake and mongoose who were seen fighting when the city was founded.⁴ The town later on fell in the hands of Rathor Rajputs. It is related that subsequently Hazrat Turkaman who came to India with jewels in one hand and sword in the other fought many a bloody battle with the Rathor Rajputs here.⁵ Part of the district (Rewari

1. D.S. Punia, *Archaeology of Mahendragarh and Gurgaon Districts* (Haryana) MSS Ph. D. thesis, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra, pp. 213-34.

2. Ibid., p. 107.

3. Ibid., pp. 55, 119.

4. H.B.W. Garrick, *Report of A Tour in the Panjab and Rajputana in 1883-84* (Archaeological Survey of India) Vol. XXIII, p. 27; D.S. Punia, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-5, 119; a Sanskrit inscription of 18th-19th century from Narnaul gives its ancient name as Nandigram (Punia, *op. cit.*, p. 121).

5. H.B.W. Garrick, *Report of A Tour in the Panjab and Rajputana in 1883-84* (Archaeological Survey of India) Vol. XXIII; D.S. Punia, *Archaeology of Mahendragarh and Gurgaon Districts* (Haryana) MSS Ph. D. thesis, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra, p. 120.

tahsil) was included in the Bhandanaka kingdom (which comprised old Gurgaon district, part of Alwar and Bhiwani tahsil).¹ These people are mentioned in literature for the resistance which they offered to the Chahamanas supremacy.² Dr. Buddha Prakash³ has tried to locate their seat at the village Bharawas (7 km south of Rewari) which, however, remains still a conjecture for the site has so far yielded only late-medieval remains in the form of glazed ware and *lakhauri* bricks as also tombs and *sarais* all pointing to a much later date than the period when the Bhadankas lived.

THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

After the death of Shihab-ud-din Ghuri, one of his generals, Qutb-ud-din Aibak, laid the foundations of the Turkish rule in India in 1206. The territory now comprising the Mahendragarh district though formed a part of his newly founded kingdom, yet he appears to have exercised no effective control over it. Except for creating an administrative agency to collect land revenue effectively, he did not interfere in the internal affairs of the villages. Aibak's successor Iltutmish is, however, reported to have made some far reaching changes which had great impact on the administration. He divided the kingdom into several *Iqtas* : the present district was parcelled into two *Iqtas*, namely, Narnaul and Rewari.⁴ An officer called *Mukti* controlled the total affairs of each *Iqta* under the direct supervision and control of the Sultan.

This arrangement continued upto 1290, when after the deposition of the last of the Mamluk rulers, Shamsuddin, the district came under the control of the Khaljis. The new masters exercised greater and far more strict control over the district than their predecessors. Their economic hold was coercive. As a result, the suffering people grew restive. But the strong hand of the rulers made them ineffective. The situation changed, however, after Ala-ud-Din Khalji's death (1316). The people raised their heads against the oppressive rule. There was some relief for sometime but they were again brought under the same type of rule by the Tughluqs who replaced the Khaljis. The same old story of oppression and exploitation was repeated during the reigns of the first two Tughluqs-Ghias and Muhammad, but Firuz (1351-88) who came after them gave some solace to the suffering masses by reducing taxes and giving other reliefs.

After Firuz's death, the district felt the full force of those intensive

1. Dashratha Sharma, *Early Chauhan Dynasties*, Delhi, 1959, p. 92.

2. Ibid., pp. 59, 74 (for Jinapati Suri's account), Bijolia Inscription, *EI*, XXVI, v. 19, page 104; *Kharataragachchha-pattavati* of Jinapala, ed. Jinavijayamuni, Singhi Jaina Granthamala, No. 42, Bombay, 1956, p. 258.

3. Buddha Prakash (Ed.), *Glimpses of Haryana*, Kurukhetra, 1967, pp. 29-32.

4. K.C. Yadav, *Haryana Ka Itihas*, (Hindi), 1981, Vol. II, p. 33.

discords which rent the Delhi Kingdom. As a result, Mahendragarh along with other adjacent territories went out of the control of the Tughluqs. The people over here accepted no body's command and lived in freedom for a long time.¹

The Sayaids after Tughluqs, tried to bring the district under their control, but they also seem to have achieved little success. However, in 1450, Bahlol Lodi, the then Governor of Punjab capitalized on the prevailing situation and brought them under the Lodi sway which lasted (under him and his successors) for a little over 76 years (1450—1526). It was during the rule of the Lodis (Bahlol) that a jagir was given to Ibrahim Khan Sur, the grand father of great Sher Shah near Narnaul with headquarters at a small village named Simla² (Simli). In 1526, Babur, the Mughal invader from Central Asia, wrested the district along with other territories from Ibrahim Lodi.

Soon after establishing his rule in northern India, Babur brought the district under his effective control. He placed a sizeable part of the district under the *sarkar* of Mewat. The rest of the territory was given to one of his faithful officers, Ahsan Taimur, in Jagir.³

Humayun, who succeeded Babur in 1530, seems to have made no change in the existing arrangement. Humayun's rule proved short-lived; he was thrown out by Sher Shah Suri in 1540. Sher Shah had immense liking and love for the land of his birth.⁴ He built a very magnificent mausoleum at Narnaul on the grave of his grand father, Ibrahim.

Sher Shah was an administrative genius. He divided his whole kingdom into sixty six *sarkars*. Mahendragarh came under the *sarkars* of Narnaul and Rewari. Their administration was carried out by two officials, namely, *shiqdar-i-shiqdarn* and *munsif-i-munsifan*. The two *sarkars* were further divided into *parganas*. Unfortunately there is no direct evidence to give the exact number of *parganas* into which the district was then divided, but it is surmised that their number was about six, namely; Rewari, Eawal and Pataudi under Rewari; and Narnaul, Kanaud (modern Mahendragarh) and Kanti under Narnaul. The *parganas* were controlled by *shiqdars*, *munsifs*, and junior officials like *Qanungos*, *Khajanchis*. The smallest unit of administration was village which was administered by the *muqadams*, and *panchayats* with the help of the *patwaris* and *chaukidars*.⁵

Sher Shah ruled for only five years (1540-45). There was peace, pros-

1. In the contemporary literature no reference is made to this region for a pretty long time which suggests that the region had gone out of the hands of the Sultans.

2. K.R. Qanungo, *Sher Shah and His Times*, Bombay, 1965, p. 26.

3. See K.C. Yadav, *Haryana Ka Itihas* (Hindi) 1981, Vol. II, p. 67.

4. Sher Shah was born at Narnaul in 1486. See K.C. Yadav 'Sher Shah Suri Ka Janmasthan', *Journal of Haryana Studies*, Vol. IX (1977), pp. 50-52.

5. For more details see K.C. Yadav, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

perity and tranquillity everywhere during his rule. He was succeeded by pigmies who brought chaos and confusion. The Mughal emperor, Humayun, took advantage of the situation, and wrested his lost kingdom. In consequence, the district again came under the Mughal sway (1555). But the very next year Humayun was no more on the scene; and once again there was confusion all around.

At this juncture, a remarkable local noble appeared on the scene. He was Hemchandra (popularly called Hemu), a resident of Rewari. He had a very humble origin, but by dint of his ability and sheer strength of character, he rose up to lofty heights. Islam Shah, the Sur King of Delhi (1553) developed a special liking for him and gave him high rank in his court. His successor, Adil Shah, went still further, he entrusted him with all his powers and functions. Hemu did not betray the trust reposed in him by the Sur potentate; he defended the falling fortunes of the Sur empire, by fighting as many as twenty-two battles against the enemies of the Surs and defeated them.

When Akbar came to occupy his paternal throne, Hemu gave him tough opposition. Agra and Delhi, the two strong Mughal fortresses collapsed like a house of cards at the very first knock of Hemu. He was equally strong at Panipat where Akbar himself stood in opposition on 5 November, 1556. Riding "proudly on an elephant named 'Hawai', he (Hemu) showed every stratagem which his powerful capacity could conceive..." Abul Fazl admits. "He made powerful onslaughts and performed many valourous acts and dislodged many strenuous soldiers of the sublime army." Hemu's men, too, fought well. They were in a better position to begin with, but fate had something else for them in store. "Suddenly in the midst of the contest", says Abul Fazl, "an arrow reached Hemu's eye and piercing the socket came out at the back of his head." He collapsed in the *howdah* and Akbar won the battle of Panipat.

Akbar divided his Empire into several provinces, provinces into *sarkars* and *sarkars* into *mahals*. The villages were, like the earlier times, the smallest units of administration. The administrative picture of the district based on the *Ain-i-Akbari* was as given in table below :³

	Subah	Sarkar	Mahals
Mahendragarh district	Delhi	Rewari	1. Rewari
			2. Bawal
	Agra	Narnaul	1. Kanaud
			2. Kanti
			3. Khudang
			4. Narnaul

1. Abul Fazl, *Akbar-nama*, (Eng. Tr. Haveridge). 1912; Vol. II, p. 64.

2. Ibid., p. 65.

3. Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari* (Eng. Tr. H.S. Jarret), 1949, Vol. II, pp. 291-310.

The *Ain-i-Akbari* does not give the number of villages in different *mahals* or in aggregate.

The administrative machinery that controlled the villages, *mahals* and *sarkars* was almost of the same type as was found in this region in the time of Sher Shah.

This administrative set up remained intact during the reigns of 'Akbar's successors—Jahangir (1605—1627), Shahjahan (1627—1658), and Aurangzeb (1658—1707). There was peace and tranquillity all around except of course in the reign of the last named king. His economic exploitation and religious harassment led the Satnamis of Narnaul to challenge his authority.

The Satnamis were a peaceful sect believing in the unity of God, mostly employed in agriculture. They were honest, industrious and formed a brotherhood calling themselves Satnamis. Satnam means good name.

In 1672, a petty quarrel near Narnaul between a Satnami cultivator and a Mughal foot-soldier of the local revenue collector led to the rebellion. The high-handedness of the soldier was too much for them to bear and the wrangling soon developed into a religious war against the Mughals. The Satnamis defeated the imperialists on several occasions and took possession of the town and district of Narnaul. When these alarming news reached the emperor, he sent there a large force under Radanaz Khan, equipped with artillery. The Satnamis fought with courage and determination but could not succeed against the well-organised and well-equipped Mughal force. Two thousand men of this sect fell fighting on the field and many of them were killed during the pursuit. The rebellion was thus crushed and the affected areas brought under control.¹

After Aurangzeb's death (1707), the position changed drastically. The mountebanks and imbeciles who sat on the Mughal throne after the last of the great Mughals, failed to check the forces of chaos and confusion that were let loose at that time. In consequence, the people became disorderly all around and refused to pay revenue. Their villages which were nothing short of fortresses surrounded by mud walls could only be reduced by artillery and huge force which the local authority could not always muster.

This situation further worsened when Nadir Shah launched a fierce attack on India in 1739. Nadir was checked at Karnal, where a fierce battle was fought. Balkrishan, the Rao of Rewari, who fought heroically at the head of an army of 5,000 strong, was killed in this battle. Nadir, the victor, praised the late Rao's heroic deeds.²

1. R.C. Majumdar (Ed.), *The History and Culture of the Indian People, The Mughal Empire*, 1974, pp. 236-37.

2. Man Singh, *Abhirkuladipika*, (Urdu), 1900, Delhi, p. 110.

After Nadir's retreat from India, chaos and confusion which spread to every nook and corner of the Mughal empire held the district in its dark fold. Many ambitious powers came in the field to make capital of the prevailing situation. They occupied the territory showing the least regard for the imperial authority and the entire territory became dotted with small principalities of these, the Raos of Rewari were the most powerful and dominating.

The state of Rewari was carved out of a jungle-jagir by Ruda Singh, a Yadav noble from Tijara, who obtained it in 1555 from the Mughal Emperor Humayun for rendering meritorious services during the latter's encounter with the Surs.¹ Ruda Singh had his headquarters located at Bolni, a small village, 12 km south-east of Rewari. He cleared the jungle and founded new villages.²

Ruda Singh was succeeded by his son, Ram Singh, popularly known as Ramoji. His estate was infested with dacoits and freebooters who had created chaos and confusion everywhere. Ram Singh built a fort at Bolni and employed a small force of cavalry and infantry. He was a fearless warrior and after a long and hard struggle succeeded in extirpating the criminals. Two of these notorious dacoits, who had carried on the depredations to the very gate of the imperial capital were sent to Emperor Akbar. Pleased with the daring action, the emperor appointed Ram Singh as *faujdar* of the *sarkar* of Rewari in the *subah* of Delhi.³ Ram Singh is said to have witnessed the reigns of Akbar and Jahangir, while his son and successor, Shahbaz Singh, was a contemporary of Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb. The latter Rao was a great warrior who died fighting against a daring robber of notoriety, Hathi Singh, a Badgujar Rajput of Dhana, now known as Badshahpur.⁴

Shahbaz Singh was succeeded by his eldest son, Nand Ram. He retained the confidence of Emperor Aurangzeb who confirmed him in his jagir and granted him the title of Chaudhari.⁵ He founded the villages of Nandrampur and Dharuhera near Rewari, laid out gardens and tanks, and built a palatial residence for himself in the heart of the town of Rewari to which

1. Man Singh, *Abhirkuladipika* Urdu (1900) Delhi, p.105, Krishnanand Khedkar, *the Divine Heritage of the Yadavas*, pp. 192-93; Krishnanand, *Ahir Itihas*, p.270. K.C. Yadav, 'History of the Rewari State 1555-1857; *Journal of the Rajasthan Historical Research Society*, Vol. I (1965), p. 21.

2. Man Singh, *op. cit.*, 1900. pp. 105-6.

3. Man Singh, *Abhirkuladipika*, (Urdu), 1900, Delhi p. 106, Krishnanand Khedkar, *The Divine Heritage of the Yadavas*, p. 193. The *sarkar* of Rewari as described by Abul Fazl (*Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. II, p. 298) comprised 12 *Mahals* of Bawal, Pataudi Bhora, Tauru, Rewari, Ratai, Kotkasim, Ghelot and Nimrana. Its forces consisted of 2,175 cavalry and 14,600 infantry.

4. Man Singh, *Abhirkuladipika*, (Urdu), 1900, Delhi, p. 106.

5. *Gurgaon District Gazetteer*, 1910 (on p. 20) says : "In the time of Aurangzeb . . . Nand Ram rose into royal favour and was made governor of the *pargana* of Rewari".

place he shifted his headquarters from Bolni. A tank at Rewari called Nand-sagar still bears his memory¹.

The robber Hathi Singh was taken into service by the famous chief of Bharatpur, and Hathi Singh's rising power was intolerable to Nand Ram and his brother Man Singh. The latter, in collaboration with his brother, secretly put the notorious dacoit to death at Agra, and thus avenged the death of his father². Nand Ram died in 1713. He was succeeded by his eldest son Balkishan.

Balkishan was in the military service of Aurangzeb and as stated above, he fell in the battle of Karnal on 24th February, 1739 while fighting against Nadir Shah. Muhammad Shah was so much impressed with the Rao's bravery and heroism that on Nadir's departure he granted to Balkishan's brother Gujar Mal the title of Rao Bahadur and Commander of five thousand. His territories were largely increased by the addition of 52 villages in the district of Hisar, and the same number in the district of Narnaul. His jagir then included the important towns of Rewari, Jhajjar, Dadri, Hansi, Hisar, Kanaud and Narnaul³. In 1743, he received a few more villages worth Rs. 2,00,578.

Rao Gujar Mal's two bitterest enemies were the Baluch chief of Farrukhnagar and Bahadur Singh of Ghasera, a descendant of Hathi Singh who was now acting independently of Suraj Mal, the Jat Raja of Baharatpur. Gujar Mal counteracted their malicious designs by attaching himself with Raja Suraj Mal. Gujar Mal was also on friendly terms with Bahadur Singh's father-in-law Todar Mal of village Nimrana. The latter invited Gujar Mal to his residence and there killed him under pressure of Bahadur Singh in 1750.⁴ In him (Gujar Mal) power of his family reached its culminating point. He erected forts at Gurawada and Gokulgarh, near Rewari.⁵ At Gokulgarh what were popularly known as "Gokul Sikka" rupees were minted.⁶ He founded the villages of Brahanpur and Morna in Meerut *pargana*, Ramgarh, Jitpur and Srinagar in Rewari *pargana*, built large houses at Rewari, Gokulgarh and Digal (Jhajjar *pargana*); and built his father's tomb at Rewari and a tank near it.⁷

1. Man Singh, *Abhirkuladipika*, (Urdu) 1900, Delhi p. 107.

2. Ibid., p. 108.

3. Man Singh, *Abhirkuladipika*, (Urdu), 1900, Delhi p. 110; Krishnanand Khedkar, *The Divine Heritage of the Yadavas*, p. 193.

4. Man Singh, *Abhirkuladipika*, (Urdu) 1900, Delhi p. 110.

5. *Gurgaon District Gazetteer*, 1910, p. 21.

6. "These coins (of Gujar Mal)", says Khedkar (*The Divine Heritage of the Yadavas* p. 193) "are still extant in these districts."

7. Man Singh, *Abhirkuladipika* (Urdu), 1900, Delhi, pp. 113-14.

Gujar Mal was succeeded by his son Bhawani Singh. He was lazy and careless. In consequence, his estates began to dwindle rapidly. Baluch Nawab of Farrukhnagar, the Nawab of Jhajjar and the Raja of Jaipur encroached upon his territory, and he was left in possession of 23 villages only.

Bhawani Singh was killed in 1758 by his own manager, Tulsi Ram, who in turn was done away with shortly afterwards. Tulsi Ram's son Mittar Sain succeeded to the post of the manager under the next chief Ram Singh. Mittar Sain helped the Mughals against Jaipur in 1780. Najaf Quli, Begum Samru and Mittar Sain attacked and plundered Narnaul on 5 February. On 14th February, 400 men of the garrison made a sortie and attacked the trenches of Mittar Sain Ahir inflicting a hundred casualties.¹ To retaliate, the Jaipur rulers attacked Rewari in the early months of 1781; and in the conflict both sides suffered heavy losses. In 1785, a Maratha expedition to Rewari was repelled. Shortly afterwards Mittar Sain passed away. The Marathas invaded again, killed most of the members of the Mittar Sain's family and sacked the town. Rao Ram Singh died fighting.²

The next chief, Hira Singh, was a worthless fellow, and the real control of affairs fell into the hands of a local trader Zauki Ram.³ The famous Maratha general, Mahadji Sindhia stayed at Rewari in 1787, apparently to regulate the affairs and collect money from here. On Mahadji's departure a rebel courtier of Delhi, Najaf Quli Khan occupied the fort of Gokulgarh, three kilometres north of Rewari.⁴ Emperor Shah Alam II marched from Delhi to punish the refractory chief. The Emperor encamped at Bharawas, eight kilometres south of Rewari. Begum Samru was with the Emperor. On 12 March, 1788, Najaf Quli inflicted heavy losses on the Mughals in a night attack. But Begum Samru's artillery proved effective and compelled Najaf Quli to sue for peace.⁵

Zauki Ram's supremacy was intolerable to many. At this juncture, Tej Singh, a relative of the Raos of Rewari⁶, and the ruler of Tauru came to the front. He was supporter of the Marathas who granted him the *parganas* of Tauru, Sohna, Nuh, Hodal, Palwal, Tapukara, Kot Kasim, Pataudi and Bawal, all of the value of Rs. 25 lakh annually.⁷ He fixed his head-quarters at Tauru. Being appealed to by the mother of Ram Singh, he attacked Rewari, slew Zauki Ram and established his own power.

1. Jadunath Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. III, 1964, p. 140.

2. Man Singh, *Abhirkuladipika* (Urdu), 1900, Delhi p. 123.

3. *Gurgaon District Gazetteer*, 1910, p. 21.

4. Jadunath Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. III, 1964, pp. 272-282.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 292-93.

6. He was descended from a branch of the same stock as that of Gujar Mal which had settled at Mirpur in the Rewari Pargana. *Gurgaon District Gazetteer*, 1910, p. 21.

7. Man Singh, *Abhirkuladipika* (Urdu), 1900, Delhi p. 123; Krishnanand Khedkar, *The Divine Heritage of the Yadavas*, p. 193.

To control the state of Rewari properly Tej Singh appointed his four brothers in four frontier villages of Lisan, Dharuhera, Asiaki and Nangal Pathani.¹ Tej Singh built a fine house in the mud fort of Rampura, 2 kilometres west of Rewari and a tank in Rewari at the site of Idgah, a villa in his paternal village of Mirpur, a camp house in Mohalla Shah Tara in Ajmeri Gate, Delhi, two camp houses at Mathura and Benaras, and established three new streets at Rewari called Banjiwara, Tejpura and Bazar Kalan.²

Lord Lake defeated Daulat Rao Sindhia in September, 1803 and captured Delhi and a large part of the territory lying between the river Yamuna and the Ghaggar. Thus, Rewari and the whole estate of Tej Singh was forcibly taken possession of by the British East India Company. Tej Singh was allowed to retain 58 villages only in perpetuity.³ The *paragana* of Bhora was given to Tej Singh's brother Ram Bakhsh, who lived at Dharuhera. In 1808-09, all these villages were settled by Fraser, the Magistrate of Delhi.⁴

Tej Singh died in 1823, when his property was divided among his three sons, Puran Singh, Nathu Ram and Jawahar Singh.⁵ The youngest brother Jawahar Singh died childless and his estate was equally divided between remaining brothers, Puran Singh and Nathu Ram. On their death their estates were inherited by their respective sons Tula Ram and Gopal Dev.⁶ Tula Ram and Gopal Dev staked everything and played a significant role in throwing off the British yoke in 1857. This, as noted below, cost them their estates.

THE MODERN PERIOD

In 1750's like the Raos of Rewari, Raja Madho Singh of Jaipur seized a sizeable territory in the district around Narnaul and Kanaud.⁷ He placed the territory under the care of Balwant Singh. In the mid-decade the district passed under the sway of the Marathas. The Raos of Rewari, as noted above, opposed them for a while but ultimately accepted the Maratha overlordship. The Rajput chief accepted this position without any opposition. Maratha overlordship of the district proved short-lived, however, as situation elsewhere compelled them to leave this territory in 1755.⁸

1. *Gurgaon District Gazetteer*, 1910, p. 21.

2. Man Singh, *Abhirkuladipika* (Urdu), 1900, Delhi p. 123; Krishnanand Khedkar, *The Divine Heritage of the Yadavas*, p. 75.

3. *Gurgaon District Gazetteer*, 1910, p. 21.

4. For a detailed account of this settlement see *Punjab Government Records*, Vol. I, *Delhi Agency and Residency Records*, 1805-1857.

5. *Gurgaon District Gazetteer*, 1910, p. 25 File R/194, 267-69 (State Archives, Patiala).

6. File R/194, 267-69 (Punjab State Archives, Patiala).

7. K.C. Yadav, *Haryana Ka Itihas*, (Hindi), 1981, Vol. II, p. 98.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 99.

There was no development worth mentioning for the next fifteen years. But in 1771 there came Mirza Najaf Khan, who saved the falling fortunes of the Mughal empire as its Prime Minister by re-establishing his authority over the lost territories around the imperial capital. First he brought the Raos of Rewari under his control. Then he seized the Narnaul—Kanaud tract from the Rajputs and placed it in the charge of his trusted noble Najaf Quli.¹ This man proved to be a successful administrator and controlled the affairs of this region for well over two decades though his position had considerably weakened after his master's death in 1782.

In 1792, the Maratha chief Mahadji Sindhia succeeded in snatching the district from his rebel General Ismail Beg² and placed it under his direct control.³ This arrangement continued until 1803 when Mahadji's successor Daulat Rao Sindhia handed over the district along with other districts to the British East India Company by the treaty of Sarji Arjungaon.⁴ The new masters (the British) did not take the district under their control; they gave it to the local chiefs instead. Most of the Rewari—Bawal territory was given, as noted above to Tej Singh, a scion of the Raos of Rewari⁵ as an *istamarari* grant and the Narnaul—Kanaud tract was made a part of the Jhajjar State.⁶

The Jhajjar State, as noted above, was created by the British and was given to Nawab Nizabat Ali Khan, a Baharaich Pathan in 1806, for his meritorious services during the Anglo—Maratha War of 1803. Abdur Rehman who succeeded in 1845 was Nawab of Jhajjar in 1857 when there was an uprising. Although he did not play any positive role, yet his subjects rose *en masse*. The British, however, doubted his integrity and hanged him. His state was confiscated and the Narnaul—Kanaud tract was given to Maharaja of Patiala.

The British rule of about half a century from 1803 to 1857, produced a great deal of discontent and disaffection among almost every section of the people throughout Haryana. The Mahendragarh district was no exception to this; right from the chiefs to the lowest man over here was unhappy with the rule of British East India Company. In other words, the ground for a general uprising against the British lay prepared in the district. It only required a spark for the bursting forth of a conflagration. This was provided by the sepoys on 10th May, 1857 at Ambala and Meerut.

1. This work was done by Najaf Quli Khan, a trusted general of Mirza Najaf Khan in 1773. See *Ibid.*, pp. 122-23.

2. K.C. Yadav, *Haryana Ka Itihas* (Hindi), 1981, Vol. II, pp. 129-30.

3. Mahadji placed the Gurgaon-Rewari-Narnaul-Kanaud tract in the Mewat district. Three other districts were Hisar, Panipat and Delhi. See *Ibid.*, pp. 130-31.

4. Aitchison C.V., *Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads*, 1870, Vol. IV, pp. 42-46.

5. *Gurgaon District Gazetteer*, 1910, p. 21.

6. See Aitchison, *op. cit.*, Vol. VIII, pp. 126-27.

On hearing the news of the happenings at these two places and Delhi, the people of the district rose up in revolt. In the Rewari area, lead was given by Rao Tula Ram. His cousin Gopal Dev also stood by him. As seen above, the forefathers of the Raos had helped the Marathas in 1803 in their fight against the British and as a result when the latter came out successful in the struggle, they confiscated their jagir and gave instead an *istamarari* grant of about 58 villages. This was a great blow to the Raos which shattered their position and made them unhappy with British Raj.

On 17 May, 1857, the Raos went to the tahsil headquarters at Rewari with four to five hundred followers and deposed the tahsildar and thanedar. They appropriated the cash from the tahsil treasury, took all the government buildings in their possession and proclaimed, under the sanction of Emperor Bahadur Shah, their rule over the pargana of Rewari, Bhora and Shahjahanpur. For their headquarters, they chose Rampura, a small fortified village, one mile south-west of Rewari. Tula Ram, the elder Rao became Raja and Gopal Dev his commander-in-chief.¹

After assuming charge, Tula Ram organised the revenue department and collected revenue and taxes. He took donations and loans from the mahajans of Rewari. He raised a force (about five thousand men) and set up a large workshop in the fort of Rampura where a substantial number of guns, gun-carriages, and other small arms and ammunition were manufactured. The Rao enforced law and order and defended his State from outside attacks.²

These activities pleased Bahadur Shah and he confirmed Rao Tula Ram in his jagirs of Rewari, Bhora and Shahjahanpur. Tula Ram, in return, rendered all possible help to Emperor Bahadur Shah and those revolvers waging war against the British in Delhi. He sent Rs. 45,000 through General Bakht Khan at such a critical time when non-payment of the salaries to the sepoys had caused great insecurity and anxiety, though this small sum did not improve the situation. The Rao also supplied the Delhi forces with large quantities of necessary commodities.³

But this help could not protect Delhi which fell to the British on September 20, 1857. Soon after Brigadier-General Showers led out a column (from Delhi) of 1,500 men with a light field battery, 18 two-pounder guns and two small mortars, "to attack and destroy Rao Tula Ram and his followers and to raze his fort (at Rewari)." The column had light skirmish with some Rewari—*sowars* on October 5 at Pataudi, 37 miles from Delhi. In the

1. See K.C. Yadav, *The Revolt of 1857 in Haryana*, 1977, p. 59.

2. Ibid. p. 59.

3. Ibid., p. 59-60.

words of Hodson, who accompanied the column : "They fired at our advance and bolted at speed." The column's next attack was direct on Rewari which was still held by Rao Tula Ram. The situation was serious and the Rao foresaw that a fight with the British forces in the mud fort of Rampura, in the changed circumstances after the fall of Delhi, would result in the complete destruction of his army without any serious loss to the British. So he left his fort before Showers' arrival.

The British column reached Rewari on October 6. The fort of Rewari (Rampura) was taken without any opposition. Immediately after the occupation of the fort of Rewari, Brigadier-General Showers sent a messenger to Tula Ram telling him that if he submitted alongwith guns and arms, he would be treated on merits. But Tula Ram turned down the inducement.¹

Showers stayed at Rewari for a week and settled the villages around it. On October 12, he left for Jatusana where some horsemen of the Nawab of Jhajjar had collected. These *sowars* had no nerve to oppose the column and they surrendered without resistance. Next, going via Kosli, Ladain, Matanhail, the column reached Chuchhakwas (about 10 miles from Jhajjar), the hunting resort of the Nawab of Jhajjar, on October 16.²

The British forces moved speedily towards Kanaud. They halted for a while at Nahar, 30 miles from Jhajjar, where they were joined by other forces. Here a party of revolvers from Jhajjar and Delhi attacked them but they were soon defeated. The revolvers lost 40 of their men, 50 cavalry horses and a few nine-pounder guns.³

A word about happenings in the Narnaul-Kanaud tract was spread. As noted above, the Nawab Abdur Rehman Khan of Jhajjar beneath whose control this tract was, did not play any positive role. But his father-in-law (and General) Samad Khan did a great job. He gave inspiring lead to the people who rose up *en masse* against the British. The people of the Narnaul Kanaud tract in no way lagged behind their fellow compatriots.

At Chhuchhakwas, Showers contacted Nawab of Jhajjar and asked him to surrender. He was arrested later, tried and hanged.

Showers next asked his forces to proceed to Kanaud. The arrest of the Nawab had demoralizing effect on the garrison stationed there. It was for this reason that the British forces captured one of the strongest, best planned and best kept forts in India without firing a shot. Fourteen heavy guns, one 8—inch mortar, two 6—pounder guns and a large quantity of small

1. K.C. Yadav, *The Revolt of 1857 in Haryana*, 1977, p. 113.

2. Ibid, p. 114.

3. Ibid, p. 114

arms and ammunition fell in their hands. Besides that, the Nawab's treasure amounting to five lakh of rupees was also seized. Leaving Capt. Tozer in command of the garrison (comprising a wing of the 23rd Punjab Infantry and men of Tohana Horse) Showers left for Delhi via Rewari, Farrukhnagar, Ballabgarh, Taoru and Sohna on October 22.¹

But despite all these apparently impressive gains, the Brigadier-General's campaign could hardly be called successful: he had failed to realize his main aim that of capturing Tula Ram or General Abdus Samad Khan of Jhajjar, who had acted as nucleus of revolt in the district. Conversely, the attack of Showers came as a blessing in disguise to these persons—they left their respective places on Showers' approach and moved into the northern Rajasthan where they met a rebel force, the Jodhpur Legion from Rajasthan and formed a junction with it. Then they marched to Rewari and reoccupied it. But strategically speaking, Rewari was not a good place to camp, so they abandoned it in the first week of November and occupied Narnaul.²

The British authorities at Delhi were alarmed by these developments. They sent a strong column comprising about 1,500 strong under Colonel Gerrard, an officer of conspicuous merit on November 10, 1857. The column reached Rewari three days later. They occupied the abandoned fort of Rampura. Here they were joined by two squadrons of the Carabineers.³

After a few days rest at Rewari (Rampura), Col. Gerrard proceeded to Narnaul via Kanaud and reached there in the evening. In the night he was joined by the Haryana Field Force. On November 16, Gerrard marched to Narnaul. As the track was sandy, the column reached Nasibpur, a small village, two miles north-west of Narnaul and halted for a short rest.

The rebel force, having abandoned their strong fort in the centre of the town pounced on them. Rao Tula Ram's first charge was irresistible and the British forces scattered before them. The Patiala Infantry and the Multani Horse on the British left were completely disheartened. The whole of the right flank fled. But at this juncture, the Guides and the Carabineers came to their rescue and saved the situation.⁴

The English fire, especially of the artillery was too much for the revolted. The Guides and the Carabineers, under the cover of the artillery fire, made a heavy attack. Next, the 1st Bengal Fusilliers, swooping upon the weak revolted artillery, captured some of their guns. This encouraged the British cavalry on the right and they pressed through the Indian ranks and successfully overpowered them on right and in the centre.⁵

1. K.C. Yadav, *The Revolt of 1857 in Haryana*, 1977, p. 115.

2. Ibid., p. 116.

3. Ibid., p. 117.

4. Ibid., pp. 117-118.

5. Ibid., p. 118.

But soon the situation took an unexpected turn when Col. Gerrard, the British Commandant, was mortally wounded by a musket ball, with the result that the British troops were demoralised. Taking full advantage of the circumstances, Rao Tula Ram swooped down upon them. The British could not stand the charge and the Multani Horse fled away in bewilderment. They recaptured their guns and inflicted heavy losses on the enemy. The right and the left wings of the British forces were thrown into confusion.¹

Appreciating the gravity of the situation, Major Caulfield, the officiating British Commandant, ordered his artillery to start heavy bombardment and his cavalry and infantrymen to charge straight on with full force into their front ranks. Rao Tula Ram's forces fought back furiously and stood their grounds. The British artillery fire, nevertheless, broke their backbone and split their forces into two parts—one engaged in the close quarter battle and the other fleeing to go out of the range of the British guns. Meanwhile, Kishan Singh and Ram Lal, the two best commanders, received musket shots and died. This disheartened Rao Tula Ram's forces and they retreated.²

The British resumed advance until they came to a dry bed of a stream flowing between Nasibpur and Narnaul. The British guns were unable to cross the stream owing to sand, so they diverged to the right and took up a position near the Horse Artillery guns, whilst the 23rd Panjab Infantry and Patiala Infantry with other units of the cavalry crossed the stream and advanced towards the camp.³

The heavy artillery and infantry fire confused Rao Tula Ram, and they ran pell-mell in all directions. Mostly, they retreated to the town and hid in the buildings. The pursuit of the fleeing soldiers was quick and inexorable, and they were very soon driven out of the town after a little fighting. Rao Tula Ram lost the day and, when the sun went down, there remained none in Narnaul except heaps of corpses here and there. Though Tula Ram and Abdus Samad Khan escaped, Rao Kishan Singh, Ram Lal, Samad Khan's son and many other top-ranking officers were killed in action. The British captured nine guns and other arms. The total loss on the British side was 70 killed and 45 wounded. They lost their commander, Col. Gerrard and Capt. Wallace, while Lieutenants Graije, Kennedy and Pearse were severely wounded.⁴

The battle of Narnaul was undoubtedly one of the most decisive battles of the Uprising of 1857. The English felt jubilant over their success in this confrontation, for it resulted in the complete rout of all the revolvers, and thus

1. K.C. Yadav, *The Revolt of 1857 in Haryana*, 1977, p. 118-19.

2. Ibid., p. 119.

3. Ibid., p. 119.

4. Ibid., p. 119.

marked the close of the crucial period of the struggle in the Haryana region and northern Rajasthan.

After the battle, Tula Ram moved into Rajasthan ; then joined Tantya Tope's forces for one year. After the British proclamation of promising unconditional pardon, amnesty and oblivion to all offences against the British to all except those who directly or indirectly took part in the murder of British subjects (issued on November 1, 1858), he sent a petition to the Governor-General, Lord Canning, on December 24, 1858. He stated that he considered himself "an offender, but as he looked upto the government as his protector, he begged to solicit that an inquiry might be directed to be instituted and that he as well as his followers pardoned." He was refused pardon for he was chief instigator and prime mover of revolt. He therefore, left India in 1862. He went to Iran; then to Afghanistan in the winter of 1862, where he died of dysentery at Kabul on 23 September 1863 at a young age of 38.¹

His cousin Gopal Dev also fled from Narnaul and took asylum with one of his relatives at Udairamsar, a village in Bikaner State. He stayed there in perfect secrecy for four years. Offers of surrender were made to him through his friends by the Deputy Commissioner of Gurgaon but he shunned all enquiries. In consequence, his jagir of 41 villages was confiscated. He died in 1862.²

With the end of the revolt, the vengeance of the British started. Hundreds of people were hanged or shot dead and their villages burnt. Rao Tula Ram and Gopal Dev, as noted above, were dispossessed of their jagirs. The Nawab of Jhajjar was hanged and the part of his State which now constituted the Mahendragarh district was given to the two loyal chiefs of Patiala and Nabha : the former getting Narnaul and Kanaud Nizamat and the latter Bawal Nizamat.³

For quite some time after the Uprising, the people of Mahendragarh suffered a great deal : obviously the spirit of vengeance on the part of the victors was working there. They were denied almost all the benefits of the Raj as a consequence of which they became backward in all respects.

This condition was not to remain for long, however. In the last decade of the preceding century, as elsewhere, the winds of change began to blow here also. With the spread of western education, urbanization and technoeconomic changes, the people, especially the town-dwelling middle classes were influenced. The attempts of Arya Samaj were most significant in this

1. K.C. Yadav, *Rao Tula Ram : A Hero of 1857*.

2. Ibid, p.147.

3. K.C. Yadav, *The Revolt of 1857 in Haryana* 1977, p. 122.

direction; the main credit for which goes to Rao Yudhista Singh, a scion of the erstwhile ruling house of Rewari who invited Swami Dayananda, the founder of the Arya Samaj to Rewari in 1880. Through his efforts, a Samaj was established here.¹

The followers of Arya Samaj brought political awakening to the people in the district, especially in the Rewari region. As a result, they started taking interest in public life. Some people also joined the Indian National Congress. It may, however, be pointed out here that the Congress activities here were restricted to a limited number of people belonging to the urban middle classes only. To the villages the 'new wind' was yet to go.²

In 1914 came the First World War, which was by all means a big event. The people of Mahendragarh, as those of other districts in Haryana, came to the help of the government in its war efforts by men, money and material. Young men from villages enlisted themselves in the army. The rich contributed liberally to the War Fund and the War Loan. Bihari Lal of Rewari and Jagan Nath of Gurawada who contributed Rs. 65,000 and Rs. 55,000 respectively and topped the list.³ The states' people also made substantial contribution through their Rajas.

After the war, a few rich town-dwellers and big zamindars from the villages received jagirs and other benefits for their war services. The village youth, hundreds of whom had offered their blood during the war were discharged from army after the conclusion of the war. The working classes and poor people residing in the towns and villages suffered on account of economic depression and sufferings that came after the war. In consequence, there was discontent and disaffection all around. Mahatma Gandhi found great opportunity in this, and launched an All-India agitation when the Government wanted to pass the Rowlatt Bills in 1919.

The discontented and disaffected masses of the Rewari area took part in the Rowlatt agitation. Protest meetings were held at Rewari and other big villages in which strongly worded resolutions were passed against the bills. The government took no note of the protests and passed in March, 1919, one of the bills called the Criminal Law Emergency Powers Act. The Congressmen of Rewari area were furious when they heard about it. They observed hartal at Rewari and other places, took out processions and held meetings opposing the Act. After the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi at Palwal (April 10), and then Jallianwala Bagh tragedy (April 13), the movement reached a high pitch.⁴

1. K.C. Yadav, *Haryana Ka Itihas* (Hindi), 1981. Vol. III, pp. 121-23.

2. The people in the Princely States were even worse than their village counterparts elsewhere.

3. M.S. Leigh, *The Punjab and the War*, p. 123.

4. Meetings were held in the towns and people were exhorted to join the movement. The response was good. *The Tribune*, June 12, 1921.

After August 1, 1920, when Mahatma Gandhi launched the Non-Cooperation Movement, the struggle became still more intense. Several persons offered themselves for satyagraha. Many students left schools and some lawyers boycotted courts. The Swadeshi Movement also gained momentum.

On the whole, the movement progressed well. In February, 1922, when Mahatma Gandhi withdrew the movement after violence at Chauri-Chaura (Bihar), it came to a grinding halt here also.

As elsewhere, the withdrawal of the Non-Cooperation Movement gave a sort of setback to the national movement in the district. The Congressmen were divided into two camps; (i) Swarajists who wanted to give up non-cooperation (also called pro-changers) and (ii) Non-cooperationists (non-changers). In the Rewari area the former were in great majority. They left non-cooperation and took part in elections of 1923, 1925, 1926 and 1930. The Hindu Maha Sabha was a big force and surpassed the Unionists and the Swarajists.¹

In 1930, the Civil Disobedience Movement was launched by Mahatma Gandhi. The movement bestirred the nation and the Rewari area was no exception. Satyagraha *sabhas* were formed and volunteers were recruited and they went to jail after breaking salt laws. The movement was launched on April 22, 1930 when the Rewari Congress Committee organised a large meeting and made salt openly. In second week of May, 1930 the 'Mutiny' (1857) Week was also celebrated here. The government arrested prominent leaders to crush the movement. There were indiscriminate *lathi* charges at a number of places, especially on picketers of liquor shops, etc. The Congress organisation was declared unlawful. Despite all this, however, the struggle went on unabated (except for a brief halt in 1933) till 1933, when Mahatma Gandhi withdrew it and turned it into an individual satyagraha.

The withdrawal of the Civil Disobedience movement gave a set-back to the nationalist effort. The Hindu Maha Sabha became popular and it won the Rewari seat to the Punjab Assembly in the General Elections of 1937².

These were bad days for the Congress, as also for the national movement. Subhas Chandra Bose, the then President of the Congress visited Haryana and tried to put life into the organisation. This certainly gave morale boost-up to the local Congressmen and they became a little active. After some time there came the World War-II. As elsewhere, the Congressmen in the area opposed the war efforts of the government. The movement started at a low key, but by 1942 everything warmed up, when the British were asked

1. K.C. Yadav, *Elections in Punjab, 1920-47*, 1981.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 74-97.

to quit India at once. The government action was equally strong. As elsewhere, the Congress organisation was declared unlawful here; and its leaders were arrested. Yet the people came out to fight. Several of them offered satyagraha. There were some violent activity also. As a result of the arrest of leaders and heavy repressive measures adopted by the government, the movement failed.

As at home, the people of the district made sacrifices to the cause of national freedom outside India also. A large number of soldiers from here joined the Indian National Army (INA) and fought against the British forces under the leadership of Subhas Chandra Bose. Though the INA lost the war, its soldiers when they came to the villages after their release, gave great boost to the Congress activities and the national movement. As a result, the social base of the freedom struggle enhanced a great deal.

What the Congress did in the Rewari area, the Praja Mandal did in the region under the princely states. The people of the Mahendragarh Nizamat were also subjected to great economic exploitation by their ruler. To improve their lot some enlightened people formed a Praja Mandal in the Nizamat in 1938.¹ Soon its branches were opened in towns and villages. Narnaul was the most active branch of the Praja Mandal.

The Patiala ruler did not like the behaviour of his subjects indulging in such anti-state activities. He warned the people but Praja Mandal did not listen to him and launched a movement. Public meetings were organised to voice grievances. During the Quit India Movement (1942) the Praja Mandal also gained momentum. The Maharaja warned the people to leave the path of agitation but they kept up their struggle². Meantime, some revolutionaries also came in the field and joined the movement. The revolutionaries were, however, arrested before they could execute their plans because an accidental explosion exposed them to the authorities. As a result of frantic efforts on the part of the police, about 18 persons were arrested. The masses got agitated over the arrest of these persons. There was a lot of reaction in the town of Narnaul. People observed hartal and demanded release of the arrested persons. The leaders of the Praja Mandal capitalized on this situation and started their agitation with greater gusto. As a result, hundreds of people came up to offer arrests. The situation became grim. Ultimately, the ruler yielded before popular pressure : all the arrested persons were released and most of their demands were accepted.

1. K.C. Yadav, *Haryana Mein Swatantrata Andolan Ka Itihas*, (Hindi) 1975, pp. 173-74.

2. Ibid., pp. 175-76.

In Bawal area which was a part of Nabha State, the condition of the people was bad: the authorities used to take '*begar*' and levied exorbitant taxes on the people. Educational, medical and other facilities were denied to them. In the 1940's, when there was awakening in other states, the people of Bawal also organised themselves to get over their difficulties. The Praja Mandal was formed. The ruler tried to suppress the movement but he did not achieve any success. By 1946, the Praja Mandal gained great momentum in the region. On March 25, the state authorities arrested all the prominent Praja Mandal activists and promulgated Section 144 in the entire region. This, however, did not dishearten the people who offered satyagraha in large numbers. Ultimately, the ruler had to yield. He released all the prisoners and conceded many of the Praja Mandalists' demands.

After India achieved Independence, the Mahendragarh district along-with the other districts of the Patiala State formed part of the Patiala and East Punjab State Union (Pepsu) in 1948, which merged with Punjab in 1956. Haryana was carved out of Punjab in 1966 and Mahendragarh became the district of the new state.
