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PREFACE

It gives me great pleasure in presenting the proceedings of the Rajasthan History Congress held at Ajmer on February 1st and 2nd, 1975.

I am deeply grateful to Shri Khet Singh Rathore, Minister for Education, Government of Rajasthan and the Director Indian Council of Historical Research for the timely and generous aid of Rupees three thousand each towards the publication of the proceedings.

My thanks are due to Dr. P. R. Shah, Treasurer Rajasthan History Congress and Dr. Prakash Chandra Vyas, Office Secretary for rendering their services in the publication of the proceedings.

Shri Govind Narain of M/s Rajshri Printers, who printed the Volume expeditiously and with care, deserves all praise. Despite all care mistakes are bound to creep in. I hope the readers will overlook them.

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RAJASTHAN HISTORY CONGRESS

EIGHTH SESSION

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

by

Professor Satish Chandra

Vice-Chairman, University Grants Commission

SATURDAY, 1st FEBRUARY, 1975

AJMER

Fellow delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

I am deeply honoured to have been elected President of the 8th Session of Rajasthan History Congress. Since my primary work has not been in the field of Rajasthan history, I regard it as a token of your affection towards me. However, I have been deeply interested in Rajasthan History for more reasons than one. There has been growing consciousness that the history of India, particularly the history of the Indian people, cannot be understood without paying due attention to regional history and micro studies. I, therefore, welcome the growing interest in the field of regional history. Regional history congresses are being organised in a number of States such as West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Panjab, Rajasthan etc. This is a healthy trend as long as regional history is studied not in a narrow, parochial manner but against the background of national developments. For regions, even if they have a specificity, are not isolated, and ideas, movements and developments in one part of the country have repercussions on many regions. As far as Rajasthan is concerned, it lies across over the main routes linking the Gujarat sea ports within the Gangetic valley. Movement of goods and people across it, and hence exchange of ideas and culture was thus inevitable, and it would be doubly wrong to study Rajasthan history in isolation. I am glad that the Executive Committee of the Rajasthan History Congress has never taken a narrow view of Rajasthan history and has always invited historians from all parts of the country to join in its deliberations.

The study of Rajasthan history has passed through many phases. For Col. Tod, it was primarily a study of

chivalrous deeds by a band of people who would almost be equated to the English feudal aristocracy. Thus Tod's writing had aspects—the political and the social. The political aspect was carried further by Kaviraj Shyamaldas, Pt. Ram Karan Asopa, Gauri Shankar Hira Shankar Ojha, Pt. Vishveshwarnath Reu and a galaxy of eminent historians whom I cannot list in detail due to shortage of time. Many monographs have been published on the subject in various universities. Unfortunately, only few of them have been published so far. These published monographs, where Rajasthani records have been checked with Persian sources, are a useful addition to our knowledge.

The nature of the Mughal-Rajput relations has been an abiding topic of interest, and a number of detailed works have been produced on the subject. Amongst the earliest of these was Dr. Gopi Nath Sharma's book *Relations of Mewar with the Mughal Emperors*. Relations of Mewar with the Mughal Emperors have been studied by Dr. V.S. Bhargava and of Bikaner by Dr. Karni Singh. Dr. M.L. Sharma's book on the Kotah State has, to some extent, also covered its relations with the Mughal Emperors. Although a few gaps remain, the political aspects of the relationship of the Rajput rajas with the Mughal Emperors have been studied in fair detail. My own books, though written in the context of the Mughal empire, and Dr. Bhatnagar's recent monograph on *Sawai Jai Singh and His Times* which I have read with interest, have covered the first half of the 18th century. These studies have shown that the Rajput relationship with the Mughals was not a one-sided one, but was based on mutual advantage. The alliance helped the Mughal Emperors to meet the challenge to them from a section of disaffected and ambitious nobles and in consolidating an empire based on liberal principles such as religious toleration, equal opportunity in service to various ethnic and religi-

ous groups, etc. The Rajput rajas on the other hand, were provided an opportunity for holding a variety of important positions and posts in far-flung parts of the empire. Imperial help and backing also enabled them to strengthen their internal position. The Mughal Emperors claimed the right to regulate and recognise the succession, and there are a number of cases on record when they even set aside the nomination of a father. But such occurrences were not numerous. The process of succession which had often led to fratricidal conflict was, on the whole, orderly. Nor were the inter-state rivalries among the Rajput States allowed to get out of hand. The long era of peace which Rajasthan enjoyed along with the rest of the country, and the growth of trade and commerce, benefited the rulers in other ways as well—a point which they became painfully aware of in the 18th century when the decline of Mughal power led to renewed internecine warfare and the incursion of the Marathas. The Marwar war of 1678 really formed a watershed, and it seems that important changes in the Rajput political structure can be traced back from it. Till 1678, many leading Rajput rajas received large jagirs in addition to their *watan*. In the case of Jaswant Singh, who held the mansab of 7000 zat, 7000 sawars *du-aspah sih-aspah*, the income from the Mughal jagirs was almost as large as the income from the *watan*. Jagirs granted in the area considered the *watan* of the Rajputs were not transferred during the life time of a raja. Both Raja Gaj Singh and Maharaja Jaswant Singh were granted only three parganas in Marwar at the time of their accession. Other parganas were granted to them in due course as their mansabs were increased. Thus the *watan* of a Raja was itself a variable one. The jagirs outside the *watan* were transferable as in the case of any other Imperial mansabdar. The details and the amounts of the jagirs have been mentioned by Nainsi, and have been checked with other sources by Dr. G.D.

Sharma in his thesis "*Politics and Administration in the State of Marwar 1638-1749*". He has shown that, while the income from jagirs outside Marwar never exceeded that from jagirs in Marwar, the income from the former was not inconsiderable—varying from 1.17 crores to 5.39 crores *dams*. In the case of the rulers of Jaipur, whose *watan* was smaller, the proportion granted in jagir outside their *watan* must have been larger. A clearer picture would emerge only after scholars have been allowed to scrutinise in detail the records held by the Maharaja of Jaipur in his personal custody. The same applies to the records in the custody of the Maharana of Mewar.

The nature of the *watan* held by the rulers of Jodhpur and Jaipur, has some other interesting features also. In the case of the rulers of Marwar, even in the pargana of Jodhpur, Raja Udai Singh was granted only 14 *tappas* with a *jama* of Rs. 10.47 lakhs, whereas Raja Sur Singh was granted 18 *tappas* with a *jama* of Rs. 16.92 lakhs (approximately). In other words, even within the *watans* of the Rajas, a number of *tappas* and villages were either administered directly by the Mughal emperors, or assigned to jagirdars. I had made a brief comment on this in an article written for the *Comprehensive History of India in 1970*. The article has yet to be published, but since then, both Shri G.D. Sharma and Shri S. P. Gupta of the Aligarh Muslim University have established this point with full statistics on the basis of village and pargana records of Eastern Rajasthan. Thus, it would appear that the Mughal control over the territories of the Rajput rajas could be very considerable as long as the jagirdari system worked effectively. As soon as it broke down, the jagirdars holding small jagirs in the *watan* of the Rajputs had no option but to let them out on *ijara* to the Rajput rajas. The alliance between the Mughals and the Rajputs was an alliance between two

ruling groups, each of which was rooted in a distinctive socio-economic background, and had their own ethos, political ideals and objectives. The alliance between the two was, therefore, subject to many strains—political, social, cultural etc. It is unfortunate that excessive emphasis on and preoccupation with the matrimonial aspect of the alliance between the Mughals and the Rajput Rajas has led to a neglect of the other aspects. A careful study of the stresses and strains in the Mughal Rajput alliance—its development, its social, political and cultural aspect—is highly desirable. I had tried to underline some of the social and political aspects in my article meant for the *Comprehensive History of India* in 1970. But many more detailed studies dealing with various aspects of alliance will be needed before all the various aspects of the alliance can become clearer.

Hardly any detailed work has been done so far on the internal administration of the Rajput states, and the nature of the relationship between the various Rajput states during Mughal rule. That there were many inner tensions among the Rajputs and between the leading states is well known. The Mughals were not unaware of them and utilised them for their purposes whenever necessary. Thus in 1574, Akbar placed Jodhpur under Raja Rai Singh of Bikaner. Pokharan Satalmer was always a bone of contention between Marwar and Jaisalmer, and pargana Gorwar between Marwar and Mewar. There were other tensions also. Hardly any study has been made of the position of different Rajput clans in individual states, and their relationship with each other and the Raja. A careful study of the *patta* system, the *thikanedari* system, and the working of the revenue system in the Rajput states is necessary in order to help us to understand the nature and evolution of Rajasthan society during the medieval period. Unless this is done with the help

of documents, the discussion about 'feudalism' in Rajasthan might degenerate into an exercise in logic chopping and semantics. Some of the young scholars, Sarvashri G.D. Sharma, S.P. Gupta and Dilbagh Singh, who have made critical study of pargana and village records, have already contributed to a better understanding of specific aspects of Rajput society and administration. I look forward to many more studies of this nature.

Of late there has been growing interest in the social and economic history of India. The massive documentary material available in Rajasthan which runs into millions of documents is almost unique in its range, variety and richness. It is an invaluable source of information not only for the economic and administrative history of Rajasthan, but has relevance to the country as a whole. It is hardly necessary for me to recall that it was Sir Jadunath Sarkar, the doyen of medieval Indian history, who first drew the attention of the scholars to the mass of documentary material lodged in the Jaipur State Archives. It was due largely to his untiring efforts that the *Persian Akhbarat* which was a unique source of information from the middle of the 17th century onwards could be made available to the historical world. However, it is only in the last decade or so and after the records from the various states have been centralised at the Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner that historians have been enabled to utilise the other documentary material which is several times more voluminous than the *Akhbarat* and which had remained largely unknown and inaccessible to Sir Jadunath. If I may be permitted to strike a personal note, the first list of the *arhsattahs* lodged in the Jaipur State Archives was prepared for my benefit in 1959. Neither the contents nor the nature of these documents were known at the time; in fact it was sometimes *atha-sathas* i.e. a document containing eight

knots dealing with miscellaneous topics. At my instance Shri Satya Prakash Gupta of the Aligarh Muslim University abstracted a full copy of some of the *arhsattas* which I analysed and in collaboration with S.P. Gupta presented it in the form of a paper in 1964¹. Subsequently, Professor Nurul Hasan in collaboration with S.P. Gupta, presented a paper on "the prices of Food Grains in the Territories of Amber" based on *arhsattas*². Since then a large number of other documents, such as *syaha mujmil*, *nirakh bazaar dastur-ul-amal*, and other records dealing with revenue administration have become available, and are being used for a detailed study of the trend of the cropping and price pattern, growth of agricultural production, village stratification etc., in eastern Rajasthan. Statistical studies of this kind have helped to take the study of medieval India to an altogether higher plane. Even though time series are not available, sophisticated mathematical models and use of the computer for analysing documentary material has yielded information vital for understanding the pattern of agricultural production and the broad economy in India during the 17th and 18th centuries. Some of these detailed studies which have been completed will, I hope, be published soon. I have been closely associated with these studies. Broadly speaking, while there was a marked rise of prices during the 18th century over the 17th, there appears to be remarkable stability in rents and production till the middle of the 18th century. I had argued earlier in my book, *Parties and Politics*, that the great anarchy on which English historians laid so much emphasis in the general context of the 18th century and which was used by them as a kind of justification for the British conquest of India was, in fact, confined to very narrow tracts of the country, generally near the

¹ Published as Jaipur Pargana Records in the Indian Economic and Social History Review, Vol. VI, No. 3, Sept. 1966, PP. 303-315.

² Procs. I.H.C., Mysore, 1966.

coastal areas far removed from the political centres of gravity of India, and only for a short period during the second half of the 18th century while new emerging states had not stabilised. To some extent the detailed economic trends in eastern Rajasthan appear to support my contention. But a final conclusion can only be arrived at when such statistical studies can be carried out for different parts of the country as well.

Friends, the unique importance of the Rajasthani records for the social, economic and administrative history of India during the medieval period should be clear from the foregoing remarks. I am, therefore, rather concerned at the neglect of languages in our syllabi in various universities. While the study of the English has its own importance, it obviously plays only a marginal role in the study of the evolution of our society and culture till the arrival of the British. Even during British rule, the study of records in regional languages is of great importance for the historian, particularly if we want to shift the focus of our study from British policies to the life and culture of the Indian people. A number of useful monographs and theses have been written on political and administrative aspects of the Rajput states during the 19th century. There is a mass of material for studying the development of society and the economy during the period. It is, therefore, regrettable that hardly any of the universities in Rajasthan have a provision for giving training in the various dialects and scripts of Rajasthan without a knowledge of which the records can hardly be utilised. In the same manner, the study of the Persian language and script which is essential since in the Rajasthani documents as well as in the Marathi review documents of the period innumerable Persian terms and expression are used is being neglected. I hope that in some of the universities in Rajasthan as well as outside it, due attention will be paid to the study

of the various languages in which documentary material is contained viz., Persian, Rajasthani, medieval Marathi etc.

The universities should also pay greater attention to the calendaring and indexing of documents. In view of the large numbers of the documents and the meagre staff and resources, it may not be possible for the Rajasthan State Archives authorities to undertake single handed the indexing and calendaring of the huge mass of documents in their custody. I wonder whether it is possible for the universities to amend their ordinances in such a manner as to enable a student to get his Ph.D. degree on the basis of preparing an index or calendar of certain number of documents or documents of a particular type. Of course, the index must contain appropriate footnotes and a brief summary as well as a scholarly introduction. The Indian Historical Records Commission has suggested this to the universities more than once. Unfortunately not many universities have cared to take up the suggestion so far. I wonder whether Universities in Rajasthan would take a lead in the matter. In addition to this, it is essential to publish the other material pertaining to Rajasthan history. Hardly any of the *Khyats* have been published so far. I am glad that with the assistance of the Indian Council of Historical Research, Dr. G. N. Sharma has undertaken editing and publication of Mewar *Khyats*. Maharajkumar Raghubir Sinh and G. D. Sharma have edited the *Hukmat ri-Bahi* which is in press. Shri Narayan Singh Bhati's contributions in the field are well known. But these efforts need to be greatly augmented.

Lastly, I consider it incumbent upon the universities, particularly those located in the State of Rajasthan, to undertake an intensive effort for the location, indexing and preservation of private papers. It is well known

that the various *thikanedars* have large collections of private papers. Some of these are already in an advanced state of decay and may be lost if proper efforts are not made to use them and to calendar them. Apart from the universities, other organisations such as the Indian Council of Historical Research could also play a role. At the instance of the Council, Dr. V.S. Bhargava, has already undertaken the task of indexing and calendaring of the documents in the possession of Rao Sahib Masooda. I hope more such enlightened *thikanedars* would throw their records open to scholars. This would help avoiding in Rajasthan the criminal destruction of old records which has taken place in a number of other states. The University Grants Commission has been inviting research proposals from scholars both in the field of natural science as well as in the field of social sciences and humanities. I am quite sure that the listing, collection and calendaring of historical documents, material objects, literary works etc., would certainly receive support from the Commission if proposals are sent to the Commission in the prescribed manner. The Universities might also send proposals for archaeology for which there is so much scope in Rajasthan, and for the study of art history, medieval architecture etc. Historical geography is another neglected field.

Friends, I have taken a lot of your time. I am grateful to you for giving me a patient hearing. I look forward to the Rajasthan History Congress playing an increasingly important role in reviewing the work done in the field of Rajasthan history, providing a forum to younger scholars and others for exchange of ideas, and for mapping out the emerging trends of research in the field of history.