

# Jind State and the Revolt of 1857

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## ABSTRACT

As we all know the Uprising of 1857 was a major event in the history of Haryana & India as well. The present research paper titled '1857 Revisited in Jind: A Study' is divided into two parts. In the first part, the position of Jind has been discussed from a historical perspective. In the second part, the role played by Raja Sarup Singh, the head of the princely state has been critically examined in the Uprising of 1857. The State of Jind was the second of the three Phulkian States namely Patiala, Jind and Nabha which was founded by Gajpat Singh, a great-grandson of Phul. He ruled as an independent Prince after conferring upon him the title of Raja. Raja Bhag Singh successor of Gajpat Singh recognized as a 'friend and ally' by Lord Lake. After death, he was succeeded by Raja Fateh Singh, and Raja Sangat Singh who died in 1834, leaving no issue. Then, Sarup Singh of Bazidpur, a second cousin of the deceased Raja succeeded the 'gaddi' until 1864. During the course of the Uprising, he sided with the British. Raja Sarup Singh offered his troops and personal services to the British Government. He conducted his troops to Karnal by forced marches & undertook the defence of the city and cantonment. He sent a detachment of his troops to Baghpat. In the battle of *Badli -Ki- Sarai*, the Jind troops behaved most gallantly. Raja Sarup Singh was the only Prince who led his troops in person. In the Aftermath, as per the policy adopted by the British to Loyalist & Punishments for Disloyal', Raja Sarup Singh was rewarded by granting Dadri and Kularan in recognition of his valuable services & on the condition of good behaviour as a loyalist. So, he played a very crucial role & supported the British during the Uprising of 1857.

**Keywords:** Jind state, 1857 revolt, the contribution of the state, Uprising of 1857, Raja Sarup Singh, British loyalty

The present research paper is based on primary as well as secondary sources which include *Mutiny Papers*, *Foreign Department Proceedings* lying at National Archives of India (N.A.I.), New Delhi, Gazetteers, L.H. Griffin, *The Rajas of Punjab*, J. Cave Brown, *The Punjab and Delhi in 1857*, C.T. Metcalfe, *Two Native Narratives of the Mutiny in Delhi*, P. J. O. Taylor (ed.), *A Campaign to the Indian Mutiny of 1857*, F.W. Rawding, *The Rebellion in India 1857*, K. C. Yadav, *The Revolt of 1857 in Haryana*, S.C. Mittal, *Haryana: A Historical Perspective* and Ram Singh Jakhar, *1857 Ki Jankranti Mein Haryana Ka Yogdan*. It is a matter of fact that the Uprising of 1857 was a major event in the history of Haryana & India as well. The present research paper titled '1857 Revisited in Jind: A Study' is divided into two parts. In the first part, the position of Jind has been discussed from a historical perspective. During the period of *Mahabharata*, it is said that *Pandvas* here built a temple in honour of Jainti Devi, the Goddess of victory and the place was known as *Jaintapuri* which in the time corrupted Jind. The place is noted for its numerous temples sacred to the worship of Shiva. Jind lies at 29°19' north latitude and 76.19° east longitude<sup>1</sup>.

Historically, the State of Jind was the second of the three Phulkian States namely Patiala, Jind and Nabha which was founded by Gajpat Singh born about the year 1738 and grew up a fine handsome youth. He was well-skilled in all military exercises<sup>1</sup>. Gajpat Singh married in 1754, one of the widows of his brother Alam Singh, and succeeded to his estate of Balanwali. One of his daughters Raj Kaur was married to *Sardar* Mahan Singh Sukarchakia and became the mother of *Maharaja* Ranjit Singh. Gajpat Singh joined the Sikh Army in 1763 when Zin Khan, the Afghan Governor of Sarhind was defeated and slain<sup>2</sup>.

Gajpat Singh obtained the title of 'Raja' from Emperor Shah Alam under a royal *farman* in the year 1772. He then ruled as an independent Prince and coined money in his capital<sup>3</sup>. Raja Gajpat Singh was a constant ally of the Patiala chief and accompanied him on many of his expeditions<sup>4</sup>. Gajpat made a fort here in 1775, part of which is now used as a jail<sup>5</sup>. Raja Bhag Singh was 21 years old when he became chief. In 1786, the districts of Gohana and Kharkhoda conferred upon him in *jagir* by Emperor Shah Alam. He also joined the Patiala Army under the command of Rani Sahib Kaur in the attack on the Maratha Generals Anta Rao and Lachman Rao<sup>6</sup>.

Raja Bhag Singh was the first of all the great Cis-Satlej chiefs to seek an alliance with the British Government. In 1803, immediately after the battle of Delhi, he made advances to the British General. He then joined the English camp and his title to the estate of Gohana and Kharkhoda was upheld by General Lake and he was recognized as a 'friend and ally made Singh Bhag Raja that noteworthy is it Here.'<sup>7</sup> relations with the state of Patiala and the British as well. Raja Bhag Singh received 24 villages worth Rs. 15,380 a year, 24 villages of Jhandiala from the same Maharaja. In April 1807, Raja Bhag Singh readily consented to the survey of his country by Lieutenant F. White and did all he could to make the expedition successful<sup>8</sup>. Raja Bhag Singh also joined General Ochterlony and continued till his arrival at Ludhiana<sup>9</sup>. In this way, the territory of the Jind state was extended and cordial relations with the British were established. Raja Fateh Singh succeeded after the death of his father Raja Bhag Singh in 1819. The reign of Raja Fateh Singh was very short and quite uneventful. He only ruled for three years and died on the 3rd of February, 1822 at his residence of Sangrur<sup>10</sup>. He was succeeded by Raja Sangat Singh. The young Raja Sangat Singh enthroned on the *gaddi* on the 30th of July 1822 at Jind in the presence of all the Phulkian chiefs, and Captain Ross, the Deputy Superintendent. In 1826, Raja Sangat Singh visited Maharaja Ranjit Singh at Amritsar<sup>11</sup>. He died in 1834 and left no son however he married three times<sup>12</sup>.

Then Sarup Singh of Bazidpur a second cousin of the deceased Raja claimed for '*gaddi*'. Initially, he was entitled to succeed only to the territory possessed by his great-grandfather. In April 1837, Raja Sarup Singh was formally installed in the presence of all the Phulkian chiefs and the British Agent<sup>13</sup>. The feeling of Raja was towards the British Government. In 1845, Raja Sarup Singh of Jind was asked to send 150 camels for the use of the Sirhind but despite promises and repeated orders, he neglected to do and the

<sup>1</sup> L.H. Griffin, *The Rajas of the Punjab*, Delhi, 2000 (First Published 1870), p.311

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 312.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p. 313

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p. 317.

<sup>5</sup> Jind District Gazetteer, 1983, p.257

<sup>6</sup> L.H. Griffin, *op. cit.*, p.319

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, p. 320

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, p. 323

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, p. 330

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, p. 353

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 354-355

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 360-361

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, p. 380

result was a great inconvenience to the troops<sup>14</sup>. When the Second Sikh War broke out, Raja Sarup Singh offered his troops to the Government and went in person to Lahore to join the English Army. His services were declined, as they were not needed, but he was warmly thanked for the offer and the loyalty that had prompted it<sup>15</sup>. He tried to prove his loyalty.

During the Uprising of 1857, Raja Sarup Singh played a crucial role and sides with the British. In the second part, the role played by Raja Sarup Singh, the head of the princely state has been critically discussed. On 10th May 1857, there occurred at Meerut<sup>16</sup>. On 11th May 1857, rebel *sepoys* occupied Delhi and proclaimed Bahadur Shah II as Emperor<sup>17</sup>. By the end of May 1857, all of Haryana was practically engulfed in the mutiny<sup>18</sup>. Raja Sarup Singh was not behind the Maharaja of Patiala in active loyalty. He was in Sangrur when the revolt took place in Delhi. He collected his troops and reached Karnal. Here, he undertook the defence of the city and cantonments. His contingent did not exceed 800 men, but it was orderly and well disciplined and its presence at Karnal gave confidence and secured that station from plunder. From Karnal, the Raja sent a detachment to secure the bridge at Bhagpat (twenty miles north of Delhi) to enable the Meerut force to cross the *Jamuna* and join Sir H. Barnard's column.

The excited state of Panipat was restored to order and the Jind force marched in advance of the British column<sup>19</sup>. Raja Sarup Singh joined the British camp at Alipur on 7th June. On the 8th of June the battle of *Badli-ki-Serai* was fought. The Jind troops behaved gallantly in this fight and were complimented by the Commander-in-Chief. He sent one of the captured guns to the Raja as a present. On the 19th of June, the Jind troops aided in repulsing the Nasirabad force which attacked the camp<sup>20</sup>.

On 21st June the Jind troops were sent to Baghpat to repair the bridge of boats which had been destroyed. The bridge was completed within three days but again destroyed by the mutineers who attacked the Raja in overwhelming numbers. In the meantime, Raja had to return to his own territories because of rebellious activities in Hansi, Hissar and Rohtak districts which incited Jind villages to revolt. Soon after the crushing of the disturbance, Raja Sarup Singh employed himself in raising recruits and purchasing horses for the British force before Dehli<sup>21</sup>.

Raja Sarup Singh was the only chief who was present with the army before Dehli. He was more fortunate though not more loyal or courageous than the Maharaja of Patiala and the Raja of Kapurthala. They wanted to join the besieging force but their presence was considered more useful elsewhere. The administration of the district of Rohtak was made over to the Raja Sarup Singh of Jind during the most disturbed period and the headmen of villages and the *zamindars* were directed to pay their revenue to him<sup>22</sup>.

After the restoration of Dehli, Raja Sarup Singh returned to Safidon. He left 25 men for service at the Larsauli tehsil. He sent a detachment of 200 men with General Van Courtland to Hansi. 110 men under the command of Commandant Khan Singh were sent to Jhajjar. Besides these, 250 Jind troops remained stationed at Rohtak and 50 at Gohana<sup>23</sup>. The Governor General acknowledged the services of Raja Sarup Singh through a notification issued on 5th November 1857 by saying that:

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 386-387

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, p.389.

<sup>16</sup> F.W. Rawding, *The Rebellion in India, 1857*, Cambridge, 1977, p.22.

<sup>17</sup> P. J. O. Taylor (ed.), *A Campaign to the Indian Mutiny of 1857*, Oxford, 1996, p. 355.

<sup>18</sup> K. C. Yadav, *The Revolt of 1857 in Haryana*, Delhi, 1977, p.108.

<sup>19</sup> L.H. Griffin, *op. cit*, pp.390-391.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, p.392./ J. Cave Brown, *The Punjab and Delhi in 1857*, Vol. II, Delhi, 1970 (First Published 1861), p.240.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*.

*'the steady support of the Raja of Jind called for the marked thanks of the Government'*<sup>24</sup>.

As per the policy adopted by the British that 'Rewards to Loyalist and Punishments to Disloyal', Abdur Rehman Khan of Jhajjar, Ahmad Ali of Farrukhnagar and Raja Nahar Singh of Ballabgarh were tried before the Commission for their role in the rebellion<sup>25</sup>. Raja Nahar Singh of Ballabgarh<sup>26</sup> and Nawab Abdur Rehman Khan of Jhajjar<sup>27</sup> were found guilty of charges levelled against them that they supported the revolt and helped the rebels and others in waging war against the Government which were considered heinous crimes under the provision of Act No. XIV of 1857 of the Legislative Council of India. Consequently, Nawab Abdur Rehman Khan, Ahmad Ali and Raja Nahar Singh were hanged by the neck until death. In the aftermath, all their property was forfeited and palaces ransacked.

On the other hand, as per British policy, Raja Sarup Singh received rewards. A confiscated estate from Jhajjar of about Rs. 50,000 was assigned to him. This was, however, situated a long way from Jind and would have been difficult to manage because of limited sources. Raja Sarup Singh also received 575 square miles of territory of Dadri which was confiscated on account of the rebellion of its Nawab. This territory was worth about Rs. 1,03,000 per annum<sup>28</sup>. Thirteen villages in the Kularan sub-district situated near Sangrur, and valued at Rs. 13,813 per annum were also ceded to the Raja Sarup Singh in perpetuity. These villages were Bhaiapura, Alampur, Balamgarh, Kularan, Dodura, Rotli, Rangloi, Dharamgarh, Bazurg, Saipura, Mani, Karkalsh and Shahpur. The confiscated house of the rebel *Shahzadah* Mirza Abu Bakr situated in the city and valued at Rs. 6,000 was given to him. The salute of Raja Sarup Singh was raised to eleven guns and the honorary title '*Farnad dilband rasikh-ul-itibld* Raja Sardap Singh Bahadar wali Jind, ' was conferred upon him.'<sup>29</sup>

Later on, Raja Sarup Singh of Jind received a new *sanad* granting him full sovereignty in his new and acquired possessions in 1860. Moreover, a special *sanad* was granted as per the same terms used in the *sanad* granted to Nabha and Patiala i.e. the right of adoption in case of failure of male heirs<sup>30</sup>. Raja Sarup Singh had been nominated a Knight Grand Commander of the Star of India in 1863 but unfortunately, he died of severe dysentery at Bazidpur near Patiala before receiving the same<sup>31</sup>.

Ram Singh Jakhar writer of '*1857 Ki Jankranti Mein Haryana Ka Yogdan*' accepted that Raja Sarup Singh of Jind sided the British<sup>32</sup> while only one para about Jind is given in the book. Punjab States Gazetteer described him as 'in person and presence eminently princely. The British Government has never had an ally more true in heart than Sarup Singh, who served it from affection and not from fear'<sup>33</sup>. K.C Yadav described that 'Raja Sarup Singh was a brave man with an ordinary intellect, certainly a type who would

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, p.393.

<sup>25</sup> *Foreign Department Proceedings*, Despatch from the Court of Directors, No. 12, N.A.I., New Delhi, 18 March 1858/ *Foreign Political*, Despatch from the Secretary of State, No. 25, N.A.I., New Delhi, 1 June 1859/ *Foreign Department Proceedings*, Despatch to the Court of Directors, No. 46, N.A.I., New Delhi, 7 August 1858./ *Foreign Department Proceedings*, Nos. 51-78, S.C., N.A.I. New Delhi, 31 December 1858.

<sup>26</sup> *Foreign Department Proceedings*, Nos. 51-55, F.C., N.A.I. , New Delhi, 4 March 1859.

<sup>27</sup> *Foreign Department Proceedings*, Nos. 176-190, F.C., N.A.I. , New Delhi, 9 July 1859.

<sup>28</sup> L.H. Griffin, op. cit, p. 393./ C.T. Metcalfe, *Two Native Narratives of the Mutiny in Delhi*, 1974, Delhi, p.74.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, p.394.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 397-399.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, p.409.

<sup>32</sup> Ram Singh Jakhar, *1857 Ki Jankranti Mein Haryana Ka Yogdan*, State Archives of Haryana, 1999, p.119.

<sup>33</sup> *Punjab State Gazetteers*, Vol. XVII, Part-A, 1904, p.217.

behave conservatively at the time of crisis. He chose to take sides with the British.<sup>34</sup>

So, in recognition of his valuable services and on the condition of good behaviour as a loyalist Raja Sarup Singh was rewarded. He played a very crucial role as he sided with the British during the Uprising of 1857. Undoubtedly, he was a loyalist, opportunist even a royal traitor who acted against the wishes of the masses. There are some major points which charged Raja Sarup Singh of being a loyalist:

1. Provided detachments to the British
2. Personally appeared before the British
3. Crushed the Indians during the course of Uprising
4. The estate assigned to him accepted

Finally, our sources/evidence lead us to submit that Raja Sarup Singh of Jind fought against the wishes of the masses, sided with the British proved loyalist to the British and received rewards up to 1864.

### Conclusion

The Uprising of 1857 marked a defining moment in Indian history, and the role of the Jind State under Raja Sarup Singh stands out for its distinctive alignment with British forces. This study examined the historical context and the motivations that led Raja Sarup Singh to support the British rather than join the popular uprising against colonial rule. Historically, the Phulkian states, including Jind, maintained strategic alliances with the British, and Raja Sarup Singh's actions during the revolt exemplify a continuation of this alliance. When the rebellion intensified, the Raja committed his troops, logistical support, and personal leadership to defend British interests, demonstrating an allegiance that brought both reward and criticism.

Raja Sarup Singh's loyalty yielded tangible benefits; he received territories, additional resources, and honours from the British as part of their policy to reward loyalty among Indian princely states. His actions, however, are debated in historical records. While some view him as a royal loyalist and skilled strategist who strengthened his state's standing, others regard his actions as opportunistic and contrary to the sentiments of the local populace who largely resisted British rule.

This paper contributes to a nuanced understanding of the era by evaluating Raja Sarup Singh's role not only as a British ally but as a figure whose decisions were deeply influenced by historical alliances, political pragmatism, and self-interest. Although he faced criticism for aligning with colonial powers, the rewards he garnered helped to consolidate the Jind State's position until he died in 1864. Ultimately, Raja Sarup Singh's story reflects the complex loyalties and pressures faced by princely states during the Uprising of 1857, where alliances often shifted between personal gain, regional stability, and the broader anti-colonial sentiment spreading across India.

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