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# Causes of Mewati Revolt of 1857

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Abstract:
The Revolt of 1857 is the most written incident in the world and has been regarded as the most memorable episode in Indian history. After the suppression of the revolt, a series of research works were started by the British as well as the Indian intellectuals, describing its nature and causes. However, the causes of Mewati revolt were to some extent different to those of other regions of the country due to its unique socio-economic and geographical conditions. In 1803, most of the regions of North India, including Mewat came under the control of the British after defeating the mighty Maratha power. But the British rule of about half a century, from 1803-1857, produced a great deal of discontent and disaffection among every section of Northern India including Meos of the Mewat region. In the absence of the Native rulers, the agrarian and pastoral community of Mewat fought against the tyrant British rule due to their own grievances. The agrarian cause including the heavy taxation by the British Government, famine, poverty and courageous spirit played the most important role in mobilizing the Meo community against the British. The execution of Nawab Shamsuddin Khan of Ferozpur Jhirka and Karim Khan Meo was also may be considered as one of the causes of Meos' hatred against the British Government.
**Key Words:** Revolt, Indian history, British, socio-economic,geographical, Mewat region, courageous, Ferozpur Jhirka, Karim Khan Meo

## Introduction

The Mewat, a land of an ancient tribe called Meos, whose geographical position changed various times due to the aggression of the invaders of Delhi rulers. The alkaline soil of Mewat and the low production land made its residents rough and hard working. The barren land of Mewat forced even the womenfolk to work in the fields along with their men to earn the livelihood. However, the Aravali hills are the natural gift for the Meos which provides them wooden fuel free of cost for their hearths and also keeps the area neat and clean. Wolseley Haig in his book *Cambridge History of India* describes the area as well as the people of Mewat as follows:[1]

"The most turbulent of these petty chiefs were the leaders of the Meos, inhabitants of Mewat, the 'ill-defined tract lying south of Delhi and including part of the British districts of Mathura and Gurgaon, and most of the Alwar and a little of the Bharatpur State'…….. The depredations of the Meos extended across the Jumna into the Doab, and Northward even into the streets of Delhi…."

During the period of Delhi Sultanate, the Meos always remained rebellious against most of the Sultans, particularly Sultan Balban of Mamluks, later Tughlaqs and Sayyeds. Delhi sultans frequently attacked the Mewat region for withholding the land

revenue by the Mewati rulers. During the Mughal periods, the Meos served the imperial army and many other royal services. They were mostly employed in the postal department to carry the royal posts as they were famous runners and popularly called as *Dak Meora*. Abul Fazal in his *Ain-e-Akbari* has appreciated the Meos on their loyalty and obedience.[2] However, at the time Shah Jahan and Jahangir the Meos again became rebellious to the Delhi government and once again, their *guerrilla* fighting resumed.[3]

With the emergence of the British East India Company as the major political power in India, the Mughal Empire including the mighty Maratha Empire and many such kingdoms as Mysore, Hyderabad and Awadh lost their independent existence. After setting up their rule over India, the company started its tyrannical rule over the Indian masses to fulfil their empirical interests. It affected all the political, social, economic and religious spheres of lives of the Indian people.

After the battle of Laswari in 1803, Daulat Rao Sindhia, the Maharaja of Gwalior, was ousted by the British from the Mewat region. Consequently, a vast tract of land of Mewat fell into the hands of the British. The Mewat region under the principalities of Bharatpur and Alwar remained the same. Out of the conquered territories, Sohna, Nuh and Tauru were taken under the direct administration of the British Government. In 1806, Firozpur Jhirka and Punhana were given to the British ally Ahmad Baksh Khan as Jagir until 1836. Hathin was assigned to Faizullah Beg, the brother of Ahmad Baksh Khan, Hodal was given to Murtaza Khan and Palwal was assigned to Mohammad Ali Khan Afridi. Some of the European officers like Somber and George Thomas were also given Jagirs. Pataudi, an adjoining area of Mewat was assigned to Faiz Talab Khan.[4]

The most notable point is that all the rulers of Delhi Sultanate and Mughal dynasty were Indians and, undoubtedly, Muslims; when Meos could not tolerate the tyranny of such rulers, then how they could accept the tyrant foreign traders like Englishmen. No doubt the Meos were against the Europeans from the time of the establishment of their rule over Mewat, but they could not find suitable time before 1857. In this Revolt of 1857, the Meos defeated British forces many times and set the Mewat free from the foreign yoke and added a new chapter of their bravery, patriotism, and nationalism in history.

## Causes of the Revolt

Mewat is a hilly region, its soil is alkaline and barren and even its water is salty. Due to all the above reasons, the crops yielded were not sufficient for the livelihood of the population of Mewat. Perhaps this is one of the reasons that the Mewatis are most hard-working, brave and courageous. When the Delhi government imposed land revenue, the Meos found it unable to pay in any circumstances. So the differences and skirmishes started from the Delhi Sultanate until the end of the Mughal suzerainty. The situation worsened during the British rule. The heavy taxation and miserable position of the Mewatis forced them to take an active part in the Revolt of 1857 and uproot the British paramountcy. There were several causes of Meos' participation in the rebellion against the British in 1857 as mentioned below:

**Watery and Alkaline Land of Mewat**

The hilly region, alkaline soil, salty underground water, etc. of Mewat region yielded the very low crops of both Rabi and Kharif. Some of the areas were useless as there were full of water accumulated for the whole of the year. Some British officers had also explained the miserable conditions of the Mewati peasantry by quoting the position of several lakes in Mewat. About the Khalilpur Jhil, Mr. Maconachine, the Deputy Commissioner of Gurgaon writes in 1898, "During the ordinary season the whole of this flooded…..Its area may be reckoned at about 1500 acres". About the Chandeni Jhil, he says, here is another permanent swamp…… The permanent basin is perhaps somewhat smaller, say about 1000 acres". The Sangel-Ujina Jhil spreads over a larger area than it covered at Khalilpur or Chandeni. The Kotla Jhil is largest in the district covering three miles long and two and a half miles broad.[5]

Most of the lands which were used for agriculture were alkaline and even the groundwater was also very salty and was not for irrigation or other edible purposes. Due to the salty soil, the Mewati peasantry could avail these lands only for the Ravi crops or once in a year. The production was, undoubtedly, not sufficient for their own consumption and in these situations, it was very burdensome to pay the land revenue to the government.

**Heavy Taxation and Miserable Position of Peasantry**

In 1809, Seton assisted by Charles Metcalfe made the first effort to establish regular administration in the Mewat region. Moreover, the Mewat was summarily settled in 1809 and heavy taxation was imposed. The growing burden of taxation and eviction from land led to the impoverishment of a large section of the peasantry in Mewat. To meet out the increasing burden of taxes, the peasants were compelled to sell and mortgage their lands and, ultimately, caught in the trap of moneylenders. In 1820, the government again made the land-revenue settlement which further ruined the peasantry of Mewat. The village headmen were forced to accept the terms and conditions of the government and also forced to assure them to pay fixed revenue of

their villages on time. Failing to fulfil these terms, the headmen were arrested and sent to jail. The mode of collection of revenue was extortionate as the assessment was oppressive. The revenue collections were made in February and September, long before the harvest.[6]

The harsh and unsympathetic heavy revenue policy greatly demoralised the people and shattered the peasant's economy. The taxation of the British Government was burdensome as the agricultural production in Mewat area was very low in comparison to other adjoining areas. F. C. Channing, the Land-Revenue Officer of Gurgaon district gives the details that wheat occupied only 5 per cent of the crop area and cotton which is chiefly grown in Firozpur tehsil 8 per cent. There was hardly any sugarcane, very little indigo or vegetables and no maize. Oil or seedy crops which in late years had been a very paying crop were grown to a very small extent. The autumn crop, chiefly consisting of millets and pulses which were generally retained for home consumption, occupied in this district double the area of the more marketable spring crops. Wheat had preference only on naturally irrigated (*Dahri*) lands.[7]

Due to the heavy revenue fixed by the British Government in the Mewat region, the peasants were bound to sell their cattle and stock to pay the land revenue. Most of the areas of Mewat such as Nuh, Sohna, Palwal, Tauru, Rewari, Firozpur, etc. were badly affected. Channing also describes that the Summary Settlements in Gurgaon were not favourable examples of fiscal arrangements. In Rewari, the villages were settled by Mr. W. Fraser with the highest bidders. The same officer's assessments in Bahora completely broke down; the Parganas of Nuh and Sohna greatly deteriorated; Tauru was equally unfortunate. Palwal was very heavily assessed in 1820, and in Firozpur, as late as 1836, the Nawab's high demand was maintained.[8] The heavy taxation and miserable position of the Mewatis forced them to take an active part in the uprising of 1857 and uproot the British paramountcy.

In the Bharatpur princely state, the Meo population was inhabited in the tahsils of Nagar, Gopalgarh, Kaman and Deeg. Nagar and Gopalgarh were most sensitive due to the periodic rebellions of the Meos as they were suffering from the heavy taxation policy of the state. In 1844, about ten thousand agriculturist Meos surrounded the Diwan and his group of Bharatpur state, who were rescued only after the intervention of the Darbar Regiment. In 1853, when the Naib Diwan came to collect revenue at Saimla in Nagar, he was shot at, and two of his party including a Goojar Risaldar were killed. The Diwan brought a strong force of Cavalry and Artillery to chastise the rebellious Meos but they had meanwhile fled to the neighbouring state Alwar.[9]

Subsequently, to the Nagar and Gopalgarh incident, the Meos' unrest was again burst out at Sikri and Bharatpur in 1854 and 1855. The British Officers Lawrence and O'Dwyer, in their reports severely blamed the Diwan, the Princely State and the native land revenue and administration. Because of the popular resentment, the demand was reduced by 19.8% in the Summary Settlement of 1855-56 to 1857-58.

That's why the Rebellion in Bharatpur State could not gain much momentum. However, after the termination of the Rebellion, the Bharatpur State once again raised the revenue by 12.5 % in the three-year settlement of 1859-62.[10]

The Mewati area in Alwar State was also troublesome, but the Maharaja had not imposed heavy taxation policy during the Rebellion. However, after the suppression of the Rebellion in 1858, the revenue was raised 5% by the Settlement Officer Captain Impey for three years. In 1861, the revenue was again raised by 20% by the same officer, for further ten years.[11]

**Famine 1837-39**

The British Government realised the folly of their heavy revenue policy when the severe famine clutched the region of Mewat. During the famine in 1837, a Regular Settlement of Gurgaon district was commenced under Regulation IX of 1833. In Tauru considerable relief was given, but the assessments of Mr. Lawrence in Palwal and of Mr. M. Gubbins in Firozpur were still decidedly high. This was a hard time for the Meos because on the one hand, they were suffering from the heavy taxation of the British Government and a severe famine at the same time on the other. For the famine relief, the British Government did nothing except for the Regular Settlement.[12]

*Imperial Gazetteer of India* reports that due to the regular famines in the years of 1833 and 1837, many villages of Mewat region lost their entire population through death and emigration.[13] As a result of the Regular Settlement of 1837-38 in Mewat and subsequently famine in 1837-39 in the entire area of Mewat, left no choice for the Mewatis except loot and plunder.[14] The Mewati people made the British Government and its tyrant policies responsible for all their distress and disaster. They find it a fair opportunity to overthrow British power during the rebellion of 1857.

**Revised Revenue Rates**

By the Regular Settlement, the reductions in revenue rates in Mewat were still burdensome. The British Government further decided to revise the rates of land revenue. In 1841, Mr. M. Gubbins revised his own assessment of Firozpur and Punhana made three years before, reducing it by 20 per cent and remitting all balances. About the same time, Mr. Barnes revised the assessment of Palwal and Tauru Pargana made by Mr. Lawrence in 1837 and 1838, granting here also the reductions of 20 per cent. Mr. Barnes also assessed the Nuh tahsil at similar rates. The rates of land revenue in Mewat were different following the type of land, fertility and means of irrigation. The rate of revenue on the land irrigated by the well was from Rs. 3.80 to Rs. 4.00 per acre. But where there was no means of irrigation except rainy water, the rate of revenue was Rs. 2. 80 per acre for *Narmot* (good loam) lands.[15]

Channing remarks about the heavy taxation and reduction that "1842 as also in previous years, it would appear as if successful calamities were caused by high

assessments and cured by their reduction. I believe this interference to be incorrect. The assessments of 1842 and previous years were higher than any we now make, prices were lower and our collection procedures were rigid; but what broke the agriculturists down was a succession of bad years (famine years), and what restored their prosperity, equally in those days and on the last and most recent occasion, was the re-occurrence of good years (end of the famine years). I earnestly hope that this will be remembered when trouble next comes."[16]

The reduced rates of revenue were still beyond the paying capacity of the Meo peasantry. They fell into the clutches of the Mahajans and other moneylenders. The British torture regarding revenue collection was surplus on the Meos. Due to their misery and sufferings, some of them were bound to theft and even beg. K. C. Yadav quotes an incident that one Mewati was caught for stealing one and a half *Seer* paddy (unprocessed rice) and produced in the court of Mr. Metcalfe and sentenced life imprisonment for that petty crime.[17]

## Chivalry and Martial Background of Meo Community

The Revolt of 1857, which broke out from Meerut and a day after in Delhi, firstly attracted the Meos of Mewat. They could not control their nerves from the active participation in the rebellion, which provided them with a chance, after many centuries, to prove their chivalry and patriotism. Their historical background goaded them to do or die for their motherland. Their first known chivalry after their settlement in the Mewat region was their fights in 1256, 1260 and 1266 against Balban, the Prime Minister and later the despotic Sultan of the Delhi Sultanate. In these fights, they lost over one lakh lives.[18]

At the time of Revolt of 1857, the Meos, whose history witnesses the bravery and patriotism, worked a lot in their participation in the war against the British rule. Each village proved to the British a fatal battlefield during the revolt in Mewat region.

## Meos' Unrest over Annexation of Firozpur Jhirka

The principality of Firozpur Jhirka in Mewat was awarded to Ahmad Baksh Khan for his role played in helping Lord Lake, during the Second Anglo-Maratha War in 1803. Firozpur principality, including the other Parganas of Punhana, Bichhor and Sakras, was bringing the revenue of Rs. 80,000. It was in addition to Loharu principality granted by Raja Bakhtawar Singh of Alwar at the same time.[19]

Although, Ahmad Baksh Khan was not a Meo Nawab, his marriage with a Meo girl of Ghata village named Maddi, and nomination of her son Shamsuddin Khan as his heir, acquired enough sympathy from the Meo community or his subject. Nawab Shamsuddin Khan became the ruler of Firozpur Jhirka in 1827 and was executed in Delhi for compassing, the murder of Sir William Fraser, the Resident of Delhi in

1835. Subsequently, the principality of Firozpur Jhirka was taken away by the British Government.[20]

In the murder of William Fraser, Nawab Shamsuddin Khan deputed Karim Khan, a Meo sharpshooter of Rangala village of Mewat. Karim Khan killed Fraser in Delhi on 22nd March 1835, and after the enquiry, Nawab Shamsuddin Khan Karim Khan Meo, were executed on 3rd October 1835, near Kashmiri Gate in Delhi and the Jagir of Firozpur Jhirka was confiscated.[21] Even after the execution and confiscation, the family of Nawab continued to play an important role in public affairs throughout British rule and were equally cherished by the Mewati people. The Revolt of 1857 in Mewat was, definitely, one of the consequences of these incidents.

**Interference in Village Communities**

After assuming the central authority in the Indian subcontinent, the British Government directed their attention towards the peasants and their agrarian conditions. The time-honoured institutions like the village communities and panchayats were abolished by the British. In fact, these institutions were the centres of all the social and economic life of the villagers. The village communities and the panchayats were built up according to the requirements of the people and under these institutions, they felt secure and happier. Their destruction brought social instability, and people felt insecure and unhappy.

There was a strong reaction in the local society against the British intervention in their age-old customs and traditions. As for the Mewat region, the whole area was rural and the cities like Gurgaon, Rewari, Kanaud, etc. were just like villages. All the villages were self-sufficient and were regulated by the village constitution forming a community. The decision of the panchayats, the ruling body of the village community, was obeyed unanimously with religious bounds. Though living in different realms of their respective religions and castes, they generally adhered the common village deities, Pirs, Sadhus, saints, common customs and traditions, forming a composite culture. This common identity and composite culture goaded the villagers to take a united stand whenever the need arose.[22]

The past rulers like Turks, Afghans, Mughals, Marathas and Sikhs, who ruled over this region, always, realized the practical utility of this arrangement, and except the collection of revenue, they never tried to disturb it. The British also did not find it easy to administer the area without the existing system. Nevertheless, to improve the fate of the rural masses, the British implemented their own system of governance. The process of their so-called improvements somewhat directly or indirectly disturbed the social set-up of the Mewatis. Their courts took up the work of dispensing justice, throwing the panchayats into oblivion. The newly judicial setup was much disgusting, repressive, arbitrary and expensive. There was no proper check on the judges, and a provision for appeal was not made in the legal system. It was neither liked by the

people of the country nor appreciated by the efficient and reasonable administrators. It is said that bribery and corruption among the judges were prevalent. The British system of administration and its interference with the long-existing village communities greatly provoked the villagers of Mewat to rise against the British during the Rebellion of 1857.

**Religious Factor**

A modern historian Dalrymple's research emphasizes the religious factor of the Revolt of 1857 based on **Urdu documents in the National Archives. A British writer** Thomas Lowe writes, "The infanticide Rajput, the bigoted Brahmin, the fanatic Musalmans, and the luxury-loving fat-paunched ambitious Mahrattah, for they all joined together in the cause; cow killer, cow worshiper, the pig hater and pig eater the crier of 'Allah is God and Mahomet his Prophet,' and the mumbler of the mysteries of Brahm!"[23] Thomas Lowe concluded that they all joined together against the British during the Rebellion of 1857.

However, the factor of religion was having little importance, especially for the people of Mewat but due to the religious policies of the British Government, some of the Maulvis played an instrumental role in arousing their religious feelings against the Christianity and the British rule. Right from the occupation of Mewat territory, the British custom and traditions indirectly affected the people, and they felt that the British Government was bent on interfering their religion and age-old established customs. Doing away the Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit and imposing English on its place, confirmed the local intelligentsia that they would be deprived of knowledge of the principles of their own faith.[24]

Right from the beginning of the British occupation of Mewat, the Ulema class of that region was bitterly against the British rule. The religious interference and un-cordial behaviour of the British Government further added fuel in the existing hostility. Just after the annexation of the Mewat region, Maulvi Evaz of Notki village along with other Maulvis and Meo people attacked upon the British army in 1806 and harmed them severely. Fearing the defection of the Mewati people, the British Commissioner, Mr. Seton advised his officers for cordial behave with the people of Mewat.[25]

Most probably, the religious interference was the chief cause of the Wahabi revolution much before the Rebellion of 1857, which affected a lot in the Mewat region. The Maulvi class of the Mewati society were not only in touch with the Wahabi *Mujahideen* but also fought shoulder to shoulder against the British. As mentioned in *Tarikh-e-Meo Kshatriya*, a Mewati named Haji Abdullah Khan of the village Kankarkhera of Tijara Tehsil in Mewat went to the Frontier along with his followers to fight in the battle of Balakot. After their defeat, he returned to his country and began to organize his people for the new mission, or war against the British. Haji

Abdullah Khan was closely supported by another Mewati named Miyanji Karimullah Gohanvi.[26]

After the battle of Balakot, Maulana Mahboob Ali Dehlavi and Maulana Sayyed Hyder Ali Tonki, the close associates of Maulana Sayyed Ahmad of Rai Bareli, toured the whole area of Mewat and mobilized the Mewatis to fight against the British to save their religion and nation. They became successful in creating much followers in Mewat, who were ready to sacrifice their lives and property for the sake of their religion and nation.[27]

When the Rebellion started in Delhi, the revolutionaries from frontier areas rushed towards Delhi to fight for the nation. Most of them were having a close connection from the region of Mewat. They motivated the youths of Mewat to fight against the British by the name of religion and nation. They became successful in recruiting the freelance Mewati *Mujahideen,* who later joined the other revolutionaries of Delhi. This fact is being proved by the letters written on 13th August 1857 to the Commander-in-Chief General Bakht Khan by the Mewati *Mujahideen* (*Fidawiane Jameeye Mewat*) and their leader Alif Khan.[28]

After the suppression of the Rebellion at Delhi, the same *Mujahideen* came to Mewat and fought against the British at different fronts. Among these *Mujahideen*, Maulvi Noor Ali, Maulvi Mohammad Mureed, Maulvi Abul Hasan Afghani, Huzoor of Kheti, Dr. Nazar Mohammad of Badshahpur, etc. were in the fore. At the time, when the British completely suppressed the Rebellion in Mewat, some of these *Mujahideen* permanently settled in this region and began the tabligh work in Mewat.[29]

Maulana Abdul Shakoor quotes the version of Dr. Nazar Mohammad Badshahpuri that in July 1857, four persons came to his house at Badshahpur. One of them known as Maulvi Mohammad Mureed was injured with a bullet. The bullet was poisoning his leg. Dr. Nazar provided him with medical aid and arranged for their stay in a dome which was two furlongs away from his house.[30]

As the four aforesaid revolutionaries were hiding in the dome for a long time, they became known to the people of Badshahpur. It was the time when the Rebellion in Mewat was suppressed, and the British forces were combing and hanging the revolutionaries. Dr. Nazar advised them to change their destination. They all moved towards Mewat. Maulvi Mohammad Mureed settled at Firozpur Jhirka. One of them Maulvi Noor Ali had chosen his destination at Rewari. The third one lived at Kheti village in Alwar State and was more popular with the name of Huzoor. The fourth, Maulvi Abul Hasan settled himself at the village Bhoonri in Mewat.[31]

**Interference in the Cottage Industries**

Due to the Industrial Revolution in England, there was a heavy demand for the raw materials from India and the market for their finished products. The British

Governments began de-industrialisation policy which closely affected the petty industries of Mewat region. The import of European clothes and objects to India rendered traditional artisan communities like weavers, carpenters, ironsmiths, shoe smiths and so on, jobless and without any alternative sources of income except begging. Artisans and handicraft's men were largely affected by the British Government policy of promoting the British manufactured goods and neglect of indigenous industry in the Mewat region.

*Imperial Gazetteer of India* reports that the Rewari town was ranked as one of the chief trading emporiums in Punjab. Its merchants transact a large part of the commerce between the States of Rajputana and the Northern Provinces of British India. Salt from the Sambhar Lake, together with iron, forms the principal import; while sugar, grain, and English piece-goods compose the staple items of the return trade. The hardware of mixed metal is the chief manufacturing industry.[32]

The Mewat region was the centre of important manufacture of hardware and famous handicrafts. Nuh, Firozpur Jhirka, Palwal, Hodal, and Hasanpur were the chief minor marts for country produce. Fine class shoes were made at Sohna. Beautiful glass bangles were manufactured at Sohna, Basai Meo in Firozpur and Rangala in Nuh; iron vessels were made at Darapur and Tankri in Rewari, and there were the usual manufactures of coarse cotton cloth and rough blankets. These industries were shattered due to the import of British goods. Manufacture of salt another important industry in Mewat, that too suffered by unjust policies of the British Government. The salts were prepared by the evaporation of brine raised from wells; this is carried on in the clusters of villages near Nuh.[33]

In Firozpur Jhirka, there was the cotton industry in which many types of clothes were prepared for the people. Even the cotton was sent in large quantities from Alwar State for petty manufacturing of cloths in Firozpur Jhirka and other surrounding areas. Powlett mentions that the manufacture of iron was in former times a great industry in the Alwar State, as is testified by the large hillocks of slag, which are to be found in all directions; but it has fallen off largely of the late years, the value of the native iron having been extremely lessened by the large quantities imported from Europe.[34]

Thus, most of them actively joined in the Revolt of 1857 against the British as a protest against this social and economic injustice. During the rebellion, they find a fair opportunity to avenge the oppressor by murder, loot and plunder.

**Unrest among Meo Sepoys Serving under British and Native States**

The Meos, historically as the martial community, were largely employed by the British Government directly under Bengal army and in their contingents of the Princely States and Native Governments such as Alwar, Bharatpur, Gwalior, Dhaulpur, Rewari, Ballabhgarh, Jhajjar and Kota Contingents. The introduction of the new Enfield Rifles and rumour of the cartridges greased in swine and cow fats surely

would have affected the Mewati Sepoys like the other Sepoys serving under the British Government. It is said that the rural panchayats issued the decree that the Sepoys using the greased cartridges would be treated as outcastes and expelled from all communion. Instances of such a decree were firstly noticed at Ambala. It was more probable that the Mewati panchayats would have also issued such decrees.

In the State of Dhaulpur, the Mewati inhabitants were in abundance. In the military forces of Dhaulpur Rana, there was a Mewati contingent consisting of 100 to 1200 Cavalry.[35] Surely they would have played a very remarkable role during the Rebellion of 1857. In the British army, the exact numerical strength of the Mewati Sepoys is not known from the records, but some of the Mewati Sepoys, who were hanged after a short trial by William Ford, the Gurgaon Deputy Commissioner, is shown in the government files. The Mewatis were largely recruited in the British army in the 10th Regiment of Irregular Cavalry, Punjab Cavalry, 2nd Regiment of Gwalior Contingent, 4th Regiment of Gwalior Contingent, 2nd Troop, 5th Regiment of Gwalior Contingent, 3rd Regiment of Gwalior Contingent, 3rd Regiment of Punjab Cavalry, 2nd Regiment of Punjab Cavalry, 15th Punjab Regiment, 4th Irregular Cavalry, 15th Irregular Cavalry, 2nd Irregular Cavalry, Kota Contingent, Gwalior Contingent, 3rd Regiment of Gwalior Contingent, and Haryana Light Infantry.[36]

The Mewati Sepoys fought many battles against the British in the Revolt of 1857, such as the battles of Raiseena (Alipur), Ghasera, Mahu, Rupraka, etc. In these battles, the Mewati Sepoys were equally assisted by the Meo peasants and farmers. After their defeat at Ghasera, the Meos completely evacuated the village and when the British force made house to house search they find the Sepoys' uniform and other belongings in most of the houses. For the British force each village, where they fought, was a regiment in itself. The Meo Sepoys not only fought in Mewat but showed their bravery at the battle of Nasibpur (Narnaul) and other various fronts. The Meo chaudharies also sent an army of Sepoys and civilian to fight in Delhi, on the call of General Bakht Khan and Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar.

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28. *Ibid.*, p. 457. (The letter was as, "Aali Jaah! As we, the hundreds of *Mujahideen* from the district Mewat, promptly rushed to sacrifice our lives on your request after leaving our children and other family members on the mercy of God. We have been doing so for several months. Other revolutionary fighters are getting the proper salary and we the *Mujahideen* are without diet, living on the blood of our heart, and being martyred in the same condition of thirst and hunger. Our sacrifices are well-known among the other revolutionaries. We had sold one of our horses and got one female horse and 45 rupees for our daily subsistence. Nevertheless, we are sorry to say that you have taken over the rupees and female horse and also made serious allegations of mismanaging the Government property. Our team leader Alif Khan had many times submitted his request before you but you have not heeded his appeal. We have no concern for mixing the lead. The lead defaulters had run away and somehow we the innocents were arrested in the way, and you have still not enquired about the matter. This is improper according to the constitution and justice. On doomsday, we have to show our face before God, who has given us the present life. That's why we are here to seek justice otherwise we the hundreds of *Mujahideen* would have gone to our homes after informing you formally. If you would not give us justice, we surely would be given on the Day of Judgment. Now we are requesting to your honour. Whatever we deemed fit we said.")
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