

**RESISTANCE OF MAHARANA PRATAP AGAINST AKBAR****Khalid Bashir, Ph.D.***Ph .D History.***Abstract**

When Rana Pratap took over as the Maharana (King) of Mewar, the political scene in India was not stable. Mughal emperor Akbar was in control of Chittor, the ancient capital of Mewar but he wanted to occupy whole of Mewar. His dream of whole of the India under the Mughal dynasty required Mewar to be under him. On the other hand Pratap, as a matter of self respect, wished Chittor to be his capital of ancestors. By 1573 Akbar realised that Pratap would never accept his supremacy over Mewar. The emperor Akbar was therefore keen to strike a peace deal with Pratap singh and historians believe that Akbar sent six delegations for the same. The first three missions were led by Jalal Khan Qurchi, the fourth by Raja Man Singh, the fifth by Raja Bhagwan Das, and the sixth by Raja Todar Mal. The fifth mission of Bhagwan Das was first fruitful in that the Rana Pratap agreed to put on a robe presented by Akbar and he sent his son Amar Singh to the Mughal court, but later on Maharana Pratap rejected all the missions, the principal reason of rejection was that, the Maharana was not prepared to compromise the independence, integrity and sovereignty of Mewar. It is also said that the Mewar Rajputs castigated Man Singh of Amber, who himself was a Rajput general, for being a member of Mughal army, who headed the fourth delegation that the emperor sent to Mewar. All his efforts for a peaceful solution were unfruitful; Akbar decided that he would not be able to waver Pratap from his resolve. Then he contemplated taking on the enemy through an armed conflict. Akbar planned a complete destruction of Mewar and Maharana Pratap. In order to take Mewar, Akbar won all the Rajput rulers barring Pratap Singh. In return of safety and protection of their subjects and the rulers themselves, all the Rajput rulers promised loyalty and support to the

Emperor Akbar in case of a war with Pratap. Most of the Rajput rulers were all praise for Pratap , but they did not express their feelings in open for fear of the Emperor Akbar and the Emperor was also aware the same, Akbar also tried to win the hearts of the most important people of Chittor for the balance of power. After a detailed planning and meticulous implementation, Akbar blockaded Mewar from its traditional allies in 1573. He appointed and nominated Kunwar Sagar Singh, a younger brother of Pratap singh to head Mewar after the overthrow of Pratap Singh. This move of Akbar backfired because Sagar committed suicide in the Mughal court, as he didn't want to be called a traitor. Akbar had to bear with another jolt as another younger brother of Pratap Singh, who was a general with the Mughal army, warned his brother of the dangers posed by Akbar. Maharana Pratap on the other hand himself and his subjects to defend the sovereignty of Mewar.



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Introduction:

Rana Pratap (Partap Singh is usually called by the Muhammadans Rana Kika or Kika in Marwar giga, and in Malwa Kuka, meaning ‘a small boy’¹ was born to father Maharana Udai Singh II and mother Maharani Javantha Bai Songara on 9th May 1540, (Jyestha Sudi). Though born at Kumbhalgarh fort, some historians believe it to be “Juni Kacheri” near Pali District. His birth was considered auspicious and predictions were made about the glory he will bring to the clan. His education was worthy of a prince and early he mastered the warfare tactics and weaponry. Jealousy among the queens of Udai Singh however, resulted in depriving Maharana Pratap from father’s love and royalty and forced him to live in village below the ridge of Chittorgarh. There he was raised by his maternal grandfather Akheraj Sonagar, who soon died in a battle.

Maharana Pratap got married to Ajabade the daughter of Rao Ram Rakh Panwar, at the age of 17 and was soon blessed by a son named Amar Singh. Maharana Udai Singh II died at the early age of 42 in “Gogunda”, leaving behind twenty-five sons. Setting aside the established laws of “Primogenitor”, he proclaimed his favourite son “Jagmall” his successor. But surprisingly, in a coronation performed at Gogunda Maharana Pratap was crowned the 54th king in the lineage of Sisodia Rajputs Girding Pratap with the sword, thrice touching the ground, hailed him the

“King of Mewar” when Jagmall too was moved out of the seat by Rawat Kistna and ex-prince of Gwalior.²

Discussion:

In 1568, during the reign of Udai Singh, Chittor was conquered by the Mughal Emperor Akbar after the third Jauhar at Chittor. However, Udai Singh and the royal family of Mewar escaped before the capture of the fort and moved to the foothills of the Aravalli Range where Udai Singh founded the city of Udaipur. Rana Udai Singh wanted Jagmal, his favourite son, to succeed him but his senior nobles wanted Pratap, the eldest son, to be their king as was customary. During the coronation ceremony Jagmal was physically moved out of the palace by the Chundawat Chief and Tomar Ramshah and Pratap was made the King, the Rana of Mewar. Pratap did not want to go against the wishes of his father but Rajput nobles convinced him that Jagmal was not fit to rule in the troubled times of the day. Pratap ascended the throne of Mewar as its 54th ruler on February 28th, 1572. It was the beginning of a career of struggle and hardship. Maharana Pratap never accepted Akbar as ruler of India, and fought Akbar all his life. Akbar first tried diplomacy to win over Maharana Pratap but was unsuccessful. Pratap maintained that he had no intention to fight with Akbar but he could not bow down to Akbar and accept him as his suzerainty.³ Chittorgarh Pratap’s ancestral home was under Mughal occupation. Living a life on the run, the dream of re-conquering Chittor (and thus reclaiming the glory of Mewar) was greatly cherished by Pratap, and his future efforts were bent towards this goal. In essence Pratap remained king only on paper as he never ruled any land in his lifetime.

Nearly all of Pratap’s fellow Rajput chiefs had mean while entered into the vassalage of the Mughals. Even Pratap’s own brothers, Shakti Singh and Sagar Singh, served Akbar. Indeed, many Rajput chiefs, such as Raja Man Singh of Amber (later known as Maharaja of Jaipur) were serving as army commanders in Akbar’s armies and members of his council. Akbar sent a total of six diplomatic missions to Pratap, seeking to negotiate the same sort of peaceful alliance that he had concluded with the other Rajput chiefs. Pratap roundly rebuffed every such attempt displaying his self-respect and honour.

For the new capital Udaipur, Maharana Udai Singh constructed a water reservoir Udai Sagar in 1565. It was on its dam that in June 1573 Kunwar (Prince) Man Singh of Amber, as the emissary of Mughal Emperor Akbar, arrogantly demanded that Maharana Pratap should give up protocol and be present at the feast in his honour. Pratap and Man Singh were of the same

generation, Kunwar Man Singh was born on Sunday the December 21, 1550, but Pratap was king while Man Singh was a prince. Pratap, following the protocol, sent his son Kunwar Amar Singh to dine with Kunwar Man Singh, Akbar's special envoy. This incident precipitated the Mughal-Mewar conflict. Since Man Singh was a Kunwar, his father Raja Bhagwan Das led another unsuccessful peace mission to Maharana Pratap in October 1573 at which Maharana Pratap was personally present.⁴

1. Warfare Tactics:

Guerrilla Warfare had been in existence since time unknown, but Rana Pratap was probably the first to use "Organized Guerrilla Warfare" against a mighty enemy and very successfully administered a disastrous blow to the Mughal army.⁵ Many, at times it seemed that Rana Pratap was on the verge of being victorious. To lead his battle against the Mughals Maharana Pratap has the bravest of all brave leaders- Jhala Bida, Hakim Khan Sur, Poonja Bhil including Raja Ram Shah of Gwalior, Rawat Netsi of Kanod, Kishandas Chundawat of Salumber, Bheem singh Dodiya, Ramdas Rathore of Badnore, Shankardas Rathore of Kelwa, Jhala Maan of Delwara, Ram Singh Sandoo, Jaisa Barhat and Keshav Barhat were few of the leaders who laid their lives for the brave Rana Pratap in his efforts to keep the lamp of Independence burning. Rana Pratap had the very strong support of the indigenous tribe of Mewar- Bhils, who fought with him to till end and sacrificed their lives for the Honor of their ruler. Rana Pratap made his descendants Vow that until he brings back the glory of Chittor, he would sleep on straw bed and eat off a Pattras (leaf Plate). Rana Pratap could not win back Chittor and even today, many Rajput follows that promise and places a leaf under their plates and a straw under their bed.⁶ Akbar at the time of Pratap's accession, Chittor, the traditional capital of Mewar, was not under the possession of Guhilot Ranas of Mewar. In the words of Dr. G.N. Sharma "The gaddi that he (Pratap) had acquired and the territory that he inherited was not a bed of roses for the Rana."⁷

Like Chandra Sen Mewar, Pratap had also to fight a war of succession against his step brother Jamal in which he emerged out victorious but at the same time the war crippled his resources. Still Pratap continued his struggle against the imperial power of Akbar. Love for his country coupled with his determination to keep it free from the tutelage of Mughals goaded him to measure swords with the Mughal army headed by Man Singh Kachchwah of Amber in the battle of Haldighati. He lived and died as an independent person who was never tired of war

hoping against hopes for recovery of Chittor and other lost territories. Dr. V.A. Smith has summed up his struggle against the Mughals in these words “*Patriotism was his offence*”⁸

2. Causes of Pratap’s Resistance against Akbar:

“The two opponents Pratap and Akbar were extraordinary men. Both of them were inspired by idealism different though it was in each case in the pursuit of which they reckoned on sacrifice as too great and yet both were pre-eminently men of action.” According to Col. Tod, “Pratap succeeded to the titles and renown of an illustrious house, but without a capital, without resources, his kindred and clans decapitated by reverses, yet possessed of the noble spirit of his race, he meditated the recovery of Chittor, the vindication of the honour of his house, and the restoration of its powers.”

Elevated with this design, he hurried in conflict with his powerful antagonist. At the time of Pratap’s accession Chittor was in the hand of the Mughals. The frontier districts of Mewar (Badhor, Shahpura and Rayala) were also under the Mughal control. In the words of Dr. A.L.Srivastava, “By the end of 1572 Mewar was surrounded on the north, east and west by the Mughal territory; her southern and south–eastern boundary was alone outside the Mughal sphere of influence. It was Akbar’s settled policy to bring about a complete blockade of Rana Pratap’s dominion and thus exert military and political pressure so as to make him accept his suzerainty without a fight.”

Modern writers have painted Maharana Pratap as the champion of liberty and defender of his religion. Rana Pratap stood for the honour and dignity of Rajput race as a whole. Late Dr. A. L. Srivastava has refuted this assertion by saying, “*there was no danger to Hinduism or the Hindu way of life from Akbar, who respected religious beliefs and susceptibilities of all classes of people and more specially those of his Rajput allies and vassals.*”

According Dr. G.N. Sharma, “*equally revolting was the idea in Pratap’s mind to enter into a matrimonial alliance with him Mughal ruling family and send a ‘dola to Akbar’s harem.*”⁹

Pratap’s rival Jagmal was received with kindness by the Mughal Emperor who granted him jagir of Jahazpur on the frontiers of Rana’s territory. Thus, Pratap’s ideology behind his determination to keep him-self aloof from Akbar’s fold was based on the traditional, heroic tradition of his house.

3. Causes of Akbar's action against Pratap:

According to late Dr. A.L. Srivastava "Akbar's ambition," "was to unite the whole of the sub-continent of India under one sceptre."¹⁰ Commenting on the policy followed by Akbar towards Rajput states, Dr. R.P. Tripathi writes, "By his dealings with other Rajput princes, Akbar had clearly shown that he did not wish either to annex their states or interfere with their social, economic and religious life. He wanted nothing more than their allegiance to the new Imperial confederation which implied four things; firstly, the princes were to pay some contribution to the empire in the form of tribute; secondly, they had to surrender their foreign policies and their right to settle their disputes by mutual wars; thirdly, they had to send a fixed military quota for the service of the confederation whenever required; fourthly, they should consider themselves an integral part of the empire and not merely individual units." If formation of confederation was the idea in Akbar's mind he should not have insisted on Pratap's personal presence in the Mughal court during the period 1572-75 when the Rana was half inclined to enter into alliance with the Mughal Emperor. To say that Akbar did not annex any important Hindu State is also not correct historically. The Rathor State of Marwar was put under the direct administration of the Mughals. His policy towards the Rajputs was of complete submission which there by implied his over lordship. By joining the Mughals his (Pratap's) state would have ceased to exist as a sovereign state and would have been a Mughal zamindar as the head of watan jagir like his other coreligionists.

The next reason of Akbar's determination to subdue Pratap was that smaller states, like Dungarpur, Banswara, Bundi, Sirohi and Jalor looked to Mewar as the first among the Rajput states of India. Akbar could not have tolerated it because his ambition was to unite the entire sub-continent.

Moreover, "the garden of Rajasthan (was rendered) of no value to the conqueror (Akbar) and the commerce already established between the Mughal court and overseas, conveyed through Mewar from Surat and other ports of Gujrat, was intercepted and plundered." The defiant attitude of Rana Pratap was creating an infection in the newly acquired territories which Akbar could not have tolerated. According to Dr. R.P. Tripathi, "the Rana of Mewar was in alliance with the discontented Raja of Gwalior and the recalcitrant Afghans. His (Pratap's) alliance with Chandra Sen of Jodhpur and Raho Sultan of Sirohi who defied imperial authority, could hardly please Akbar".¹¹ Still, he was not prepared to court open warfare with Pratap

because it was likely to endanger his conquest in Gujrat. Therefore, he sent three messengers Mansingh, his father Raja Bhagwan Das, and Todarmal to make correct assessment of Pratap's attitude towards him and to enlist his submission by peaceful means. According to Abul Fazl, the Rana sent his eldest son Amara Singh to wait on the Mughal Emperor along with Raja Bhagwan Das and the three messengers reported that Rana was not planning quarrel with the Emperor (Akbar). In spite of inclinations of friendship, the attitude of both the parties grew stiffer towards each other with the passage of time. The Rana was feeling aggrieved against the sluggish recognition of his friendship by the Mughal Emperor who was all the time insisting on his personal attendance at the Mughal court and had no intention of restoring Chittor.¹²

4. The Battle of Haldighati, 18th June, 1576:

The Battle took place on June 18, 1576 between the imperial forces of Mughal emperor Akbar and Rajput king of Mewar Maharana Pratap Singh I. Haldighati a small village in the Aravalli Hills about 44 km north of Udaipur and about 1,839m above sea level. Beyond this is Haldighati pass, a narrow defile almost a kilometre in length, running south to northeast and finally ending in a broad plain. An interesting geographical feature of the pass is its soft yellow soil, which when crumbled resembles the turmeric (haladi), which gives the place its name. It was here that the famous Battle of Haldighati was fought on June 18, 1576 between Maharana Pratap Singh Mewar and the imperial army of Emperor Akbar of Delhi. The battle only lasted for four hours and was an indecisive battle, which signified, an inglorious success for the Mughals and a glorious defeat for Mewar. But still the battle of haldighati is remembered as most memorable episodes in Rajput annals.

History recounts that Haldighati battle was not fought in one day. By the mid 1500, Emperor Akbar had forced all Rajput kingdoms to become the part of his empire except Mewar. He could not make this leading Rajput force under his obedience. Akbar then changed his tactics. Throughout 1573, Akbar sent a series of emissaries to Rana Pratap with the proposal of peace treaty. Pratap singh agreed to sign the treaty but with the conditions of his own terms that he would not become submissive to any other rulers, particularly to any foreigner. And Mewar would not give up its independence. Akbar could not admit this rule. He was frustrated and humiliated and gathered the armies together and Mughal general Asaf Khan led the army. Rana Pratap's enemy Raja Man Singh of Amber also took part in this mission to destroy Mewar. The command of the army was conferred on Man Singh. The Mughal forces did not march against

Pratap under the leadership of Salim. The contemporary Persian Mughal historians, Abul Fazi, Nizamuddin Ahmed and Motamid Khan are of the opinion that “Akbar appointed Man Singh as the commander-in-Chief of the Mughal forces because of his bravery and farsightedness”. The Jaipur vamshavali informs us that on the request of Man Singh the command of Mughal army was entrusted to him. Late Dr. G.H. Ojha is of the opinion “that to take revenge of Man Singh’s insult by Pratap on the banks of Udaisagar, the Kachhava Prince was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Mughal forces. The orthodox Muslims were opposed to Man Singh’s appointment.”

Abul Qadir Badayuni writes “that one of his friends, Naquib Khan, requested the Emperor to permit him not to join the Mughal army because the infidel was appointed as Commander-in-Chief of the army of Islam”, Von Noer, the author of Akbar, Vol. II writes on page 24 and 25 “that Akbar wanted to defeat the Rajputs by the hands of Rajputs; that is why he appointed Man Singh as Commander of the Mughal forces which left Ajmer in April 1576, with him were Meer Buxi of the Mughal Khan, syyed Ahmed Khan, Syyed Hashim Baraha, Mahtar Khan, Khiroja Raft Badakshan, Mahiwas AH Khan and other well known Muslim warrior”s. Among the Hindu mansabdars the names of Man Singh’s uncle Raja Jagannath Kachhawa, Khangar Madho Singh and Rao Loonkaran are mentioned in contemporary works.

Abdul Qadir Badayuni was present at the Battle of Haldighati. “He writes that there were only 5,000 horsemen under Man Singh in the battle of Haldighati.” “Nensi writes that Man Singh was at the command of 40,000 soldiers at the battle of Haldighati.” Modern writer of Vir Vinod informs us that the Mughal forces were 80,000 in the Battle of Haldighati. The modern historians of Akbar accept the version of Badayuni. It is very difficult to believe that the Battle of Haldighati could be fought with only 5000 horsemen.¹³

Rana Pratap’s front consisted of Hakim Khan Sur, Kishan Das Chandwat, and Ram Das. The left was commanded by Ran Ram Shah of Gwalior and the right wing of the army was commanded by Jhala Man Sing. Poonja, Purohit Gopi Nath, Metha Ratan Chand and Jagmal were with the Rana who was in the middle of his army. On May 3, 1576 the Mughals proceeded south towards the village of Haldighati, where in a pass Pratap singh was waiting for the Mughal army in his temporary capital of Kumbhalgarh. Local tribal communities Bhils were also incorporated in this battle. On June 18, 1576 The Mughal army started to move. Before sunrise when the dawn broke, Bhil watchers saw the huge army of Mughal crossed the river and gathered near Khamnor. Pratap Singh moved his army at the neck of the Haldighati Pass. The

Rajput Army halted and waited for the right moment to strike. When the Mughal forces marched through the narrow gorge called the Neck of Haldighati, the tribals attacked and butchered them mercilessly. Several attempts of passing the narrow and deep ravine failed as thousands lay slain.¹⁴ Rana Pratap was a legendary warrior who looked impressive with his helmet, chain- armour over a white tunic. Rana Pratap sat proudly on his horse Chetak. Chetak was a handsome white Arab stallion that was his closest ally in many battlefields. The horse was adorned with colourful and beautiful flexible armours that ended in a mask that resembled a fantastic elephant head. This was designed to terrify the enemy army and protect the horse from enemy's war elephants with an assumption that elephants would think it as an elephant and would not harm another elephant. With one hand Pratap gripped his huge sword and with other hand he hold the ancient banner of the house of Mewar. The banner had crimson background with the golden face of Sun God at the centre.

With the advent of the day the Mughal army came even nearer, ground trembled by the march past of the huge Mughal army and hence began a terrific battle, the battle of Haldighati. Soon, a cloud of dust rose over the distant tree lines, covering the morning sun. Maharana Pratap led his army direct into a larger phalanx of troops under Qazi Khan. His war elephants covered the rear portion. An immediate panic spread among the Mughal army. The first attack was from the side of Rana on the Mughal forces on 18th o June, 1576. As the youth group of Mewar started to attack with the arrows on the Mughal force, the fighters were waffled and then stumbled back across the rocky terrain. The poisoned thorn bushes cut into their clothing and skin. The retreating army collided headlong with the youth warriors. A total chaos prevailed, horses screamed in fear, swords broke off, muskets cracked, arrows were strike off from the bows and the other sounds that could be heard of was either war cry or death howl. A band of Mughals turned and fled but they clashed straight with a line of Rajput troops entering from the right. There were many deaths and wounded from both sides and the ground turned scarlet by the blood flow at the battle of Haldighati. Rana Pratap and his group came out of the narrow pass but clashed directly with Qazi Khan and the Sheikhzadas of Sikri. The result was a fierce battle, the enemy army was broken and fled away but they did not stop until they reached within the 16 kilometers of the river. There they were confronted by the rear guards. The Mughal army reformed for a new assault. Already Rana Pratap and chetak had sustained several wounds but fearlessly he hold high his crimson banner and led his men deeper into the enemy army troop. A

wall of Emperors war elephants were brought forward to stop the advancement of Mewar's war elephants, thereby halting his persisting victory charge. An isolated musket ball killed the mahout of a Mughal elephant. The elephant was out of control and ran wildly trampling all in its path. There was also an impact in opposing elephants and they attacked the unprotected flesh with their sword like tusks attacking from different corners Pratap and his troop entered into the heart of the enemy and tried to encounter Man Singh and his heavy artillery. The loss of this artillery neutralized Mughal's advantage over Mewar.

Above the din and bustle of the battle of Haldighati, Rana Pratap could hear a familiar war cry and spun back to look at. He found Man Singh was standing in his Elephant's howdah and encouraged his men to stop the advancement of Mewar army. Pratap advanced towards Man Singh. No weapon could stop his proceedings. He made his way through the Mughal generals. Chetak halted and threw up dust but collided with the armour plate of the elephant. The horse stood against the huge beast in his rear legs. Man Singh was partly covered by his Mahout but Pratap surged his lance towards the Howdah. The weapon passed through the elephant's driver's body killing him instantly and broke the howdah's metal plates.

Man Singh was disappeared. Pratap thought that he had killed Man Singh and cried out for the triumph.¹⁵ The driverless elephant moved around in a panic and the broadsword attached to its trunk cut through the tendons of one of the hind legs of Chetak. Pratap did not know about this wound of Chetak's. Pratap did not know about this wound of Chetak's. He forced Chetak to rejoin his men. The horse now had the use of only three legs but he advanced valiantly out of great zeal. Man Singh was simply hiding behind the Howdah's railing for protection. After a few moments he struggled down through the elephant's neck and tried to control his panicked army. The imperial cavalry now rushed to guard their commander and surrounded Pratap. A Mughal officer, Bahlol Khan charged the Maharana. A fierce sword fight took place between the two. Finding some of the faults in Bahlol Khan's fighting technique, Pratap sliced through the neck of the Mughal general and he was beheaded.¹⁶ The other Mughals now found Pratap on their grip. Still Pratap continued the battle of Haldighati, with great effort and forced his way back to the main body of Mewar's force though Chetak was limping and stumbling. Chetak succumbed to injuries but only after it had taken his master to safety, jumping a wide river only on three legs.¹⁷ Suddenly a great din of kettledrums was heard from the rear of the imperial ranks. Pratap forced his way through the muddled dead bodies. The Rajputs suddenly found that the Mughals were

making their entry and Man Singh followed closely the head of soldiers and horsemen. Rana Pratap attempted one more time to destroy the Rajput traitor in the Haldighati Battle. One of his officers Jhala Man Singh, snatched the royal flag of Mewar from Pratap's hand and was determined to fight the rear guard until the other part of Pratap's army reached to protect them. He yelled at his army "Ride swiftly to safety" Pratap took a wise decision though he was reluctant to utter this. He ordered the remaining of his village chiefs to take their men to the village Koliyari, where arrangements were previously made to treat the wounded.

The historian Badayuni had enthusiastically joined this campaign, because, as he put it, "I have a presumption to desire to dye these black mustachios and beard in blood through loyalty to your Majesty's person'. He said to Asaf Khan, the chief under whom he fought, "How are we in these circumstances, since there are Rajputs on either side, to distinguish between friendly and hostile Rajputs?" He answered, "Oh whichever side these may be killed, it will be a gain to Islam". He records with great satisfaction: "My hand prospered in the matter, and I attained the reward due to one who fights against infidels;" and that day through the generalship of Man Singh, the meaning of this line of Mulla Shir became known: -"A Hindu strikes, but the sword is Islam's." ¹⁸

Jhala Man Sing (also known as Jhala Sardar), waved the Sun-God banner and rallied his men to meet the enemy's counterattack. The remainder of the Mewar army disappeared into the cover of hills. Pratap made his way to an outcrop of rock. He tried to look back at the swirling dust that came out of the battlefield. For some time he was able to follow the progress of his crimson banner. And then, to his extreme agony, he fell. His attendant took Pratap's bridle. Chetak was now limping badly and Rana Pratap fainted from the loss of blood as he had sustained seven severe wounds from musket, sword and lance. ¹⁹ Pratap was saved by his brother Sakta. Chetak, after carrying his master safely to his destiny, died. Pratap joined the remainder of his men after recovering a bit from the wound. The battle of haldighati continued in guerilla manner. The battle was significant for the tenacity displayed by Rajputs and Bhils and the art of defensive mountain warfare.

Rana Pratap escaped safely from the battlefield of Haldighati. He moved in the direction of Kumbhalgarh. But he could not stay there for long because Gogunda had fallen in the hand of Man Singh. Rana did not get tired of his activities despite the fact that he was defeated in the battle of Haldighati. He began making an attempt to recover the lost territories by forming a

coalition of some of the leading Rajputs of the then Rajasthan. He could successfully persuade Narain Das of Idar to raise a revolt against Akbar. Rana also invited Rao Sultan Sirohi and Taj Khan of Jalore. At a time when Rana Pratap was forming a coalition of powers against the Mughal authority, Fazl informs us that the troubles of Rana Pratap was forming a coalition of powers against the Mughal authority, Chandra Sen of Marwar raised trouble in the area of Nadole. Abul fazl informs us that the trouble of Chandra Sen had some sort of connection with the troubles of Rana Pratap. The sum total result of Pratap's activities was the recovery of Gogunda from the Mughals during the absence of Man Singh.

Rana Pratap's activities posed a serious problem to Akbar. The Mughal emperor decided to first subdue Taj Khan of Jalore and Rao Sultan of Sirohi. Akbar succeeded in reducing them to obedience. Nadole was also taken into possession by the Mughal forces by the 19th of October, 1576. The Mughal commanders succeeded in re-establishing the royal authority in Idar. All these measures crippled the resources of the Rana who was almost cornered by the Mughals. Akbar's visit to Gogunda on October 11, 1576 was a significant event in the struggle between the Mughals and Pratap of Mewar. Akbar deputed Raja Bhagwant Das of Amber, his son, Man Singh and Qutubuddin Khan to trace the whereabouts of Pratap in the hilly region of Mewar. The Mughal commanders failed in their mission. But Akbar succeeded in establishing outposts at Pindwara, Haldighati and Mohi with a view to keep an eye on the contacts of Pratap with his allies. Akbar visited Udaipur in November, 1576. He appointed Fakrudin and Jagan Nath as the incharges of the city of Udaipur. The Mughal Emperor (Akbar) left for Malwa via Dungarpur and Banswara towards the end of 1576 A.D. He had made complete arrangements to encircle Rana Pratap. But the Rana continued to create troubles in the newly acquired territories of the Mughals. Therefore an imperial army was sent against Pratap under the command of Raja Bhagwant Das, his son Man Singh and Meer Bakshi reinforced took possession of the fort of Kumbhalgarh on the 3rd of April 1578 A.D. The Rana had already slipped out of the fort before its occupation by the Mughals. The Rana went to Dholan, a place on the western frontiers of Mewar, and passed some time there. His minister, Bhama Shah, rendered him financial help in hour of distress. He could manage to attack the Mughal garrison at Kumbhalgarh in November, 1578 A.D. Shahbaz Khan was again deputed by the Mughal Emperor to turn out Rana Pratap from the neighbourhood of Kumbhalgarh. Mughal Commander stayed in the region of Mewar till about the middle of 1580 A.D. The Rana was forced to retire to hilly tracks by the Mughal army.

With the retirement of Rana Pratap from the active military life are attached legends which depict him as a wanderer sleeping on grass and mats and moving from one valley to other in the company of tribes (Bhils). The most interesting legend is the story of a cat taking away a lot of bread from the hands of the crying daughter of Pratap. Dr. G.N. Sharma has rejected all stories on the authority of contemporary works like Amar kavya Vanshavli, Raj Vilas, Raj Prashasti and Khyats of Mewar in which no mention has been made of such romantic stories. He comes to the conclusion that Col. Tod picked up legends from some friends with a view to highlight the life of Pratap after 1580 A.D. Rana Pratap is described as a person who lost his balance of mind in hour of distress and wrote a letter of submission to Akbar. It is said that Prithvi Raj of Bikaner wrote a letter to Pratap to withdraw the letter of submission to Akbar. Dr. G.N. Sharma has rejected this story also because no contemporary historian, Hindu or Muslim, mentions it; a letter of submission from Pratap is not the kind of a thing a Muslim historian will overlook.²⁰

Akbar appointed Abdul Rahim Khankhana as the Subedar of Ajmer on 16th June 1580. He was also put in charge of the Mughal campaign against the Rana. This forced the Rana to evacuate Dholen and recede to the interior region of Mewar, known as Chhappan. He established his authority there. From there the Rana led expeditions against the states of Banswara and Dungarpur. Akbar appointed Raja Jagan Nath on the 6th December 1584 against Pratap and instructed him to bring the Rana to Mughal court as a captive. On hearing of Jagannath's march against him Rana receded further in the interior of Mewar Dr. G.N. Sharma writes, "Jagan Nath's invasion was practically speaking the last important invasion, after this the Emperor had no time to spare for Mewar." It is recorded by Dr. Sharma "that the Rana Pratap could recover 36 places from the Mughal possessions between the years 1585 and 1597". He was assisted by his son Amar Singh in his plundering activities against the Mughals. During this period, war time capital of Mewar was also established at Chavand. Maharana Pratap served (struggled) for 25 years and died a peaceful death on January 19, 1597, aged 56 at Chawand, the capital founded by him in deep hills south of Udaipur, the reason of his death being injury caused during a hunting game.²¹ Before his death the Rana had recovered all his territories except Ajmer, Chittor and Mandalgrah. It is said that as he lay dying, Pratap made his son and successor, Amar Singh, swear to maintain eternal conflict against the Mughals. His (Rana's) chiefs pledged themselves to see that his son Amar Singh should not forget his duty."

“The last moments of Pratap,” writes Tod, “were appropriate commentaries on his life, which he terminated, like the Carthaginian, swearing his successor to eternal conflict against the foes of his country’s independence.”²² Thus closed the life of a Rajput, whose memory is even now idolized by every Sisodia, and will continue to be so till renewed oppression shall extinguish the remaining sparks of patriotic feeling. He also adds, “There is not a pass in the Aravali hills that is not sanctified by some deed of Pratap, some brilliant victory, or oftener, more glorious defeat. Haldighat is the Thermopylae of Mewar; the field of Deweir her Marathon.”²³

The end of the struggle with the Rajputs is thus briefly described by Dr. Ishwari Prasad, “Rana Pratap was succeeded by his son Amar Singh in 1597. He reorganized the institutions of the state, made a fresh assessment of the lands, and regulated the conditions of military service. The Mughals took the offensive again, and in 1599 Akbar sent Prince Salim and Raja Man Singh to invade Mewar. The Prince frittered away his time in the pursuit of pleasure at Ajmer, but the valiant Raja aided by other officers did a great deal. Amar Singh led the attack, but he was defeated, and his country was devastated by the imperialists. The campaign came to an end abruptly, when Raja Man Singh was called away by the Emperor (Akbar) in order to quell the revolt of Usman Khan in Bengal. Akbar contemplated another invasion of Mewar, but his illness prevented him from putting his plan ‘into execution.’”

According to Smith “the year 1581 may be regarded as the most critical time in the reign of Akbar, 1581. if his early struggles to consolidate his power be not taken into account.” When the year began he was undisputed master of all the fortresses in northern India, and had extended his dominion east and west from the Arabian Sea to the Bay of Bengal, and southwards as far as the Tapti River.²⁴

Conclusion:

Akbar was highly adamant to conquer Mewar. Despite making repeated attempts, he was unable to suppress the underlying spirit of Maharana Pratap. In another attempt to defeat Pratap, he sent Shahbaz Khan, a Mughal commander stationed at Ajmer. The bloody battle was fought in 1582, under the command of crown prince Amar Singh. Mewar decisively won the battle and they captured the strategic town of Diwar near Haldighati, which the Mughals’s had captured during the battle of Haldighati (18, June 1576). After this defeat and around 1587, Akbar got frustrated and gave up his desires of hegemony over Mewar. By that time he had learnt the futility of his

actions. Akbar having burnt his fingers on numerous occasions turned his attention to Punjab and Northwest Frontier. The last decade or so of the life of Maharana Pratap was relatively peaceful. In those days Pratap reigned with full authority. During this period Pratap eventually freed most of Mewar and won back the Udaipur and Kumbhalgrah but not Chittor which was the ancient capital of Mewar. Maharana Pratap was called the light and life of Hindu community. There were times when he and his family and children ate bread made of grass. But he died without realising his greatest dream of recapturing Chittor. Mewar was the only Rajput kingdom not to fall to Akbar. Akbar's eager desire to make Mewar a part of his vast Indian empire could not materialise during his lifetime. In 1599 he deputed prince Salim (future Jehangir) and Raja Man Singh to try their luck against Mewar but to no avail. The Prince Salim stayed back at Ajmer and instructed Man Singh to pursue a policy of destruction and devastation of Mewar which earned a bad name for the imperial armies and incurred the hostility of the entire populace of Mewar. Rana Amar Singh challenged the imperial armies in the plains but suffered a defeat and retreated to the hills albeit the people of the villages and towns, scarcely populated, refused to submit to the Mughal rule and made the stay of the imperial armies in Mewar impossible. The rebellious Mewar rankled in the eyes of Akbar like a thorn but his desire to subjugate it could not be fulfilled, but Pratap's stubborn of not submitting to the Mughal's was only limited to him because Amar Singh neither could war against Mughals nor had the mindset to go against them, ultimately signing a treaty in the Mughal favor.

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