

# Princely States of East Punjab: A Historical and Geographical Description

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## Abstract

PEPSU (Patiala & East Punjab States Union) was the name of that state which inaugurated by the Home Minister of India, Sh. Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel on the date of July 15, 1948. It was a union of eight princely states; Patiala, Nabha, Jind, Malerkotla, Kapurthala, Faridkot, Nalagarh and Kalsia. Scattered across the map of Punjab, these states did not constitute any kind of particular difference in character between their people or territories. Beyond this, territories of these states were dovetailed and closely interwoven with the provinces of British Punjab.

## The Princely State of Patiala:

In all those princely states that comprised the PEPSU after its formation in 1948, the most important was the princely state of Patiala. It was the part of inherited Phulkian states. The three princely states of Punjab named Patiala, Jind and Nabha were collectively known as the title of 'Phulkian House'. These were the most important of Cis-Sutlej states, having a total area of 7,599 square miles, with a population (1901) of 21,76,644 souls.<sup>1</sup>

The chief section of the princely state of Patiala formed just about a four-sided figure, 139 miles from East to West, and 125 miles from North to South, with a remote area to the South of the Ghaggar River, which was the division of the nizam of Karamgarh. The second block was laid within the 'Simla Hills' between 30<sup>0</sup>-40' and 31<sup>0</sup>-10' North latitude and 76<sup>0</sup>-49' and 77<sup>0</sup>-19' East longitude, and comprised within the Himalayan section. The Patiala here encountered Simla Hill states of Koti, Bhagal and Bhajji bound it on the North, on the West by Mahlog and Nalagarh, and on the East by Keonthal and Sirmaur state, while on the South, the division of the Shiwalik range divided it from the Kharar tehsil of Ambala district. The third block was the section of Narnaul that was remote from the core province of the state, laid 180 miles from its capital between North latitude 27<sup>0</sup>-47' and 28<sup>0</sup>-28' and East longitude 75<sup>0</sup>-56' and 76<sup>0</sup>-17'. The Dadri region of the Jind state touched it on the West and South by Jaipur state, and on the East by the state of Alwar. The Nabha region of Bawal-Kanti bound it on the North.<sup>2</sup>

The Phulkian states consisted of Patiala, Nabha and Jind as their common ancestor Phul. Phul had descended from Baryam, a Sidhu Jat, to whom Babar (the first Mughal Empower) gave the office of revenue collection of the wild terrain of the South-West of Delhi in 1526.<sup>3</sup> Phul had three sons, Tiloka, Rama and Raghu, and one daughter Fateh Kaur. Rama was married to Sabi, daughter of Nano Singh of Khonse village and had six sons named Dunna Singh, Sabha Singh, Ala Singh, Bhagta Singh, Buddha Singh and Laddha Singh.<sup>4</sup> The story of the princely state of Patiala began with the third son of Rama; Ala Singh, who frequently known as the name of Baba Ala Singh.<sup>5</sup> Ahmed Shah Abdali awarded the governorship of the areas

neighboring Patiala to Ala Singh; that's why, he is considered as the founding father of Patiala state. He was in the good books of the Mughal rulers, and gave great assistance to them in diverse military missions against Abdali and Durrani, for which he was rewarded jagirs and other favoures.<sup>6</sup>

Ala Singh was a great soldier and was virtually the first independent ruler of Patiala. He was the first Sikh Misdar (marshal leader), who conceived the idea of setting up an independent principality to fill void created by the fall down of the 'Mughal Empire'.<sup>7</sup> Ala Singh expanded his territory gradually, and occupied Barnala and the neighboring areas in 1731. In the year of 1762, he received recognition as 'Raja' and a court dress from the Afghan invader Ahmed Shah Durrani, who appeared almost annually challenge to Sikhs in the 1750s and 1760s.<sup>8</sup> Ala Singh's line of succession is as follows Maharaja Amar Singh, Maharaja Sahib Singh, Maharaja Karam Singh, Maharaja Narinder Singh, Maharaja Mahender Singh, Maharaja Rajinder Singh, Maharaja Bhupinder Singh and Maharaja Yadavindra Singh.<sup>9</sup>

Patiala, however, was the biggest state of Phulkian House by far, in terms of territory, population and revenue, and acclaimed as the leading Sikh state in India, but in spite of their common religious legacy and dynastic ties, there were some causes of conflict among the Phulkian states. Nabha and Patiala, ruled over tangled territories with frequent examples of the territory of ones neighboring the region of the other state; this issue provided plentiful fuel for border disputes and jurisdictional contradictions.<sup>10</sup>

The last ruler of Patiala State was Maharaja Yadavindra Singh, who ruled till 1948, when the princely state of Patiala was merged into the PEPSU. Maharaja Yadavindra Singh joined the Union as Rajpramukh and played an important role in the political scenario of PEPSU.<sup>11</sup>

### **The Princely State of Jind:**

Jind was the second in area, and was the smallest in the population of the three Phulkian states. This state had 7 towns, and 437 villages with a total area of 1,267 square miles. According to the census of 1901, it had 2,82,003 souls, giving an average density of 224 persons to the square miles. Its territories extended over three tehsils of Sangrur, Dadri and Jind.<sup>12</sup> The tehsil of Sangrur was rather scattered and compromised in areas separated from one another by British territory or from the portions of the states of Patiala and Nabha. The princely state of Jind was an impassable triangle and was roughly surrounded by British provinces, being bounded on the North by the Narwana tehsil of Patiala and Kaithal tehsil (Karnal district), on the South by the Rohtak tehsil (Rohtak district), on the South-East by the Gohana sub-tehsil, on the East by the tehsil of Panipat (Karnal district), and on the West by the Hansi tehsil (Hissar district).<sup>13</sup> The history of Jind dates from 1764 in which year; the allied forces of the Khalsa Sikhs imprisoned the Sirhind. Prior to that year, Sukchain Singh, grandson of Phul, the ancestor of Phulkian Houses, had been a miserly rural notable on his death in 1751. Balanwali, which he had founded, fell to Alam Singh, his eldest son, Badrukhan to his second son Gajpat Singh and Dialpura to Bulaqi.<sup>14</sup>

The founder of Jind state was Gajpat Singh. He was also one of those sardars, who joined the Sikh alliance and took part in the attack of Sirhind in 1763 in which Zain Khan, the Afghan governor of the region was killed. Gajpat Singh got a big area, including Jind and Safidon as his share of spoil. He made Jind his headquarter, and built a huge brick fort in the town. In 1772, Emperor Shah Alam, granted Gajpat Singh the

title of 'Raja'. From this time onward, the Sikh chief ruled as an independent prince and issued coins in his own name.<sup>15</sup>

Raja Gajpat Singh died in 1789. His successor, Raja Bhag Singh, was a good follower of British and he gave full support to them in 'Lord Lake Mission' against the Marathas. He died after a long and successful career in 1819, and was succeeded by his son, Fateh Singh, who died shortly afterwards.<sup>16</sup> After him, Sangat Singh became the king, and then, Raja Sarup Singh and Raghbir Singh, respectively. Maharaja Ranbir Singh was the last ruler of Jind, who received the title of 'Maharaja' in 1911. He became the witness of that event in which Jind approved to be the part of the Union of India and after that joined the PEPSU.<sup>17</sup>

### **The Princely State of Nabha:**

The princely state of Nabha was the second in population and revenue, and smallest in area of the three Phulkian states. Its subsistence as a separate and sovereign state may be said to date from the lapse of Sirhind in 1763. Prior to that year, its chiefs had been merely rural notables, whose influences were surpassed by those of the trainee branch, which was mounting in royal power under Ala Singh, the founder of Patiala state.<sup>18</sup> The princely state of Nabha had an area of 966 square miles, with a population (in 1901) of 2,97,949 persons, and included 4 towns and 492 villages.<sup>19</sup> Nabha consisted of 12 patches of the region in the North scattered among the possessions of Patiala, Jind and Faridkot, and two other territories in the extreme South on the border of Gurgaon. The Northern segment of Nabha, was divided into the Eastern area of Amloh and the Western part of Jangal Des. The Sirhind Canal was the source of irrigation for both areas.<sup>20</sup>

The story of Nabha began from Tiloka, the eldest son of Phul, who was married to Bakhto of village Roreke (near Dhanaula town), and had two sons Gurdita Singh and Sukhchain Singh. The rulers of Nabha belonged to the section of Gurdita Singh, the elder son of Tiloka, and the chiefs of Jind, Badrukhan and Depalpur descended from the division of Sukhchain Singh, the youngest son of Tiloka.<sup>21</sup>

The real founder of the Nabha state was Hamir Singh, who was the grandson of Gurdita Singh. Hamir Singh was a brave and energetic person and he added much to his inheritance. He established the town of Nabha in 1755, later to become the capital of the state. In 1759, he got control of the village of Bhadson and the area around. In 1763, he joined the allied forces of Khalsa Sikhs that sacked Sirhind ruler and occupied the entire government. Hamir Singh also occupied the area of Amloh in the neighborhood of Bhadson. In 1776, he conquered Rori from its Mughal administrator, Rahimdad Khan.<sup>22</sup> Hamir Singh's line of succession is as follows, Raja Jaswant Singh, Devindar Singh, Bharpur Singh and Bhagwan Singh. In the year of 1871, Bhagwan Singh, the ruler of Nabha expired without having any male issue and then Hira Singh, the chief of 'Badrukhan House' was chosen as descendant of Nabha throne. He proved himself a dynamic and capable ruler. For a long time the chief of Nabha, enjoyed the title of 'Raja', whereas the Patiala chief had the designation of 'Maharaja', but in the year of 1911, the rank of Raja of Nabha state was upgraded to the title of Maharaja.<sup>23</sup>

Maharaja Ripudaman Singh succeeded Raja Hira Singh and became the next head of the state. The last ruler of Nabha state was Maharaja Partap Singh, who succeeded his father Maharaja Ripudaman and got the administrative powers in 1938. He ruled over Nabha up to August 1948, when Patiala and East Punjab States Union was formed and Nabha was incorporated in it.<sup>24</sup>

### **The Princely State of Malerkotla:**

There were approximately 34 princely states in Punjab region, and the princely state of Malerkotla was one of only five Muslim-ruled states situated in Punjab. The name of this state derived from two names of 'revenue settlements, named 'Maler' and 'Kotla'. There are two accepted accountings about the name of Maler. The first story points to the origin of Maler being associated with Raja Maler Singh, who constructed a fort near the village Bhumsi, and named it Malergarh, which emerged in the vicinity unnamed in the name of the fort and came to be called Maler. The other account is related to an aged Muslim woman, named Mali, who became the first devotee of Shaikh Sadruddin (Haidar Shaikh), and from her, Maler took its name. As for the name Kotla, had derived its derivation from 'Kot', which means a barricaded area.<sup>25</sup>

The princely state of Malerkotla formed a condensed lodge of region which fitted together into the Northern border of the Phulkian states. On the North side, its border touched the Ludhiana tehsil, and encircled on the East, South and West by Patiala state terrain. The Loht Badi area of Nabha state touched it on the north-west. Two villages Manki and Sandaur belonged to the Ludhiana district laid between this part of Nabha and Malerkotla, and the tiny block of Ludhiana terrain called Jandiali Kalan was just within its Northern border. The Malerkotla state laid between 30<sup>0</sup>-24' and 30<sup>0</sup>-41' North, and 75<sup>0</sup>-42' and, 75<sup>0</sup>-59' East, with an area of 167 square miles. Its population in 1901 was near about of 77,506 souls.<sup>26</sup>

The Malerkotla state was founded in 1454. Its rulers were 'Sherwani Afghans' distantly related to the Afghan tribe of the Lodhis, the last House of the Delhi dynasty, before the initiation of Mughal power in 1526. Both, oral and written histories of Malerkotla usually begin with the influx of the Sufi Saint, Shaikh Sadruddin Sadar-i Jahan. In the history of the dynasty written by Iftikhar Ali Khan, the last Nawab of Malerkotla, the Shaikh was described as a Sherwani Afghan from Khurasan, "a very honorable man of much celebrity in his time." Haider Shaikh, as he was frequently known, was sent to the region from Multan by his spiritual preceptor. He settled on the bank of a small river to attach in religious devotions. In 1451, Bahlol Lodhi met the saint on his way to surmount Delhi at which point he established the Lodhi dynasty (which lasted until 1526). Bahlol Lodhi asked the saint for the blessing that he would be winning in the war. After winning Delhi, Sultan returned in 1454 and wedded his daughter Taj Murassa Begum to Shaikh Sadruddin, and gave him 68 villages near Ludhiana as wedding gift. With this strong matrimonial relationship, the Malerkotla state came into existence.<sup>27</sup>

Until the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century, this state remained under the independent rule of Afghan rulers. Nawab Ataullah Khan was one of the famous rulers of Malerkotla, who joined the 'Lord Lake Mission' against the Marathas in 1803, and got the British protection through the treaty of 1809. He died in 1810 and was succeeded by Nawab Wazir Ali Khan, who in turn was followed by Nawab Amir Ali Khan, Nawab Mahbub Ali Khan, Nawab Sikandar Ali Khan and then Nawab Ibrahim Ali Khan. Nawab Ibrahim Ali Khan's son, Sahibzada Muhammad Ahmed Ali Khan, became regent of the state on 1 February, 1908. He got the ruling powers on the date of January 5, 1909. His eldest son, Nawab Muhammad Iftikhar Ali Khan, succeeded him on his death on

16 October, 1947. The princely state of Malerkotla accepted to join the Indian Union on the lapse of British paramountcy and it became the part of PEPSU in 1948.<sup>28</sup>

### **The Princely State of Kapurthala:**

The story of Kapurthala began about 900 years ago, when the eminent ancestor Rana Kapoor Singh came from Jaisalmer's imperial family and established the town in the Doab section. For the next 700 years, it remained under the Muslim rulers. After that, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia appeared as a giant power and he exiled the Muslim rulers from this province.<sup>29</sup>

It is recorded that in 1773-74, Rai Ibrahim engaged the area of Kapurthala, but since the Rai had surrendered, approving to pay the land revenue in time, he was allowed to keep in his control the city of Kapurthala and 27 villages, but steadily, he misbehaved in his disbursements. There were also grievances against him about the annoyance of the people. As a result, Kanwar Singh (Whom Jassa Singh had handed over the administration responsibility of his own mansion) attacked Kapurthala with armed forces. Jassa Singh accompanied him personally. Hence, the city of Kapurthala came under the control of 'Ahluwalia Misl'. Rai Ibrahim, however, was arrested, but Jassa Singh leaved him alive. A fixed pension was approved for Rai Ibrahim and he was allowed to live freely there. Jassa Singh made Kapurthala his capital.<sup>30</sup> Very soon, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia extended his hold along the Sutlej River and got the possession of the town of Sultanpur. Jassa Singh recognized Kapurthala as an important part of his administration and established Kapurthala as a princely state.<sup>31</sup>

The Kapurthala state included three separate divisions of the region, all of which laid in the Jullundur Doab. The main part, laid at the Southern boundary of Doab, between 31°-9' and 31°-49' North, and 75°-5' and 75°-41' East expanding to the convergence of the Beas and Sutlej Rivers. This part of the state had an area of 510 square miles and was 45 miles long from North-East to South-West, while its breadth varies from 7 to 20 miles. The British district of Hoshiarpur bounded it on the North, on the East by that of Jullundur, on the South by the Sutlej and on the West by the Beas. The second largest part of the state was the area of Phagwara, which had an area of 118 square miles, and was surrounded by the Jullundur district on all sides, except for the North-East, where it adjoined the district of Hoshiarpur. The third and smallest section was the area of Bunga which had an area of 24 square miles.<sup>32</sup>

Thus, it had a total area of 652 square miles. According to the statistics of 1901-02, the total population of the state was 3,14,351 and revenue was about Rs. 13,00,000; besides, the state derived an income of Rs. 8,00,000 from Awadh estates extending over an area of 700 square miles of which the Kapurthala chief had taluqedari rights.<sup>33</sup> Jassa Singh was a good administrator, and he ruled the Kapurthala with great competence, but he passed away in 1783 without any male issue. In that condition, the throne of Kapurthala passed to his second cousin Bhag Singh. Fateh Singh and then Nihal Singh succeeded Bhag Singh.<sup>34</sup>

Raja Nihal Singh had died on 13 September, 1852. About two months before his death, he executed a 'Will' in which it was desired that after his death, his eldest son, Kanwar Randhir Singh, will become the ruler of state. Therefore, after Nihal Singh, Randhir Singh became the next successor to the throne.<sup>35</sup> After the death of Randhir Singh, his son Kharak Singh got the power in 1870. The British assumed the administration of the Kapurthala state in 1875, following the alleged mental ailment of Raja Kharak Singh. When Raja Kharak Singh

died in 1877, the Lieutenant Governor Punjab announced Jagatjit Singh as the chief of state. Jagatjit Singh, at the time of succession of the throne was immature and just a child of five years. During his minor age, English Superintendents that included Lebel Griffin, Rivaz Napier, W. Mackworth, F. Frayer, F.C. Cunningham, Danzil Ibbeston and Major Mass administrated the state. Jagatjit Singh was invested with full powers of administration in November 1890.<sup>36</sup>

He was given honors with the title of 'Maharaja' in the year of 1911. On the lapse of British paramountcy in August 1947, the princely state of Kapurthala decided to join the Indian dominion on the eve of independence. On the formation of Patiala and East Punjab States Union (PEPSU), Kapurthala became one of its constituents and Maharaja Jagatjit Singh was appointed as the Up-rajpramukh of the newly formed state.<sup>37</sup>

### **The Princely State of Faridkot:**

The princely state of Faridkot was laid in the South of the Ferozpur district between 30<sup>0</sup>-13', and 30<sup>0</sup>-50' North latitude, and 74<sup>0</sup>-31' and 75<sup>0</sup>-5' East longitude, with an area of 633 square miles. The Ferozpur district, Moga tehsil laid on the East, Ferozpur on the North and North-West, and Mukatsar on the West, encircled it. On the South, it touched the territory of Patiala State. Faridkot, forms a strip of terrain 34 miles wide and 40 miles long, laid North-West and South-East, and divided into two parganas, Faridkot comprised its North and Kotakpura its Southern section. It had a population (1901) of 1,24,912 persons.<sup>38</sup>

In the 12<sup>th</sup> Century, the Chauhan Rajputs of Ajmer emerged as an important power in Northern India. They overwhelmed the 'Tomars' of Delhi and the 'Pratiharas' of the Eastern sections of Punjab. Therefore, when the Turks of Ghor under the leadership of Shahab-ud-Din made their appearance, almost the whole Cis-Sutlej division of Punjab was under the regime of 'Chauhans'. With the victory of 'Ghurids' over the Rajputs at the 'Second Battle of Tarain (1193 A.D.)', the region passed under 'Turkish' control for centuries to come.<sup>39</sup>

The story goes like that the Punwar Rajputs, who held it for a significant age formally ruled the area of which Faridkot now forms a part. When their power turn down the Bhattis under Rai Hem Hel, period from their ancient seats by aspiration, efficiently attacked the Punwars and occupied the country South of Mukatsar. Hem Hel had a son named Jundhar and from him was descended Rai Achal. Raja Manj, one of the Achal's descendants, ruled over the Northern part of the modern region of Faridkot, and his descendants were rulers of the state towards the North. His grandson, Mokalsi founded Mokal Har and constructed a fort there. When this fort was under creation Shaikh Baba Farid was forced to work on a construction site as a labourer, but being observed to possess surprising powers, he was permitted to leave, and the name of this place was changed to Faridkot. The respective city remained the capital during the period of Mokalsi's sons Jairsi and Wairisi.<sup>40</sup>

In 1807, Maharaja Ranjit Singh invaded Faridkot and acquired this land, but it was restored to Sardar Gulab Singh in 1809, because of the Maharaja's accord with British. Sardar Gulab Singh was assassinated in 1826 and was succeeded by his son, Atar Singh, who died soon afterward in August 1827. After the death of Atar Singh, Sardar Pahar Singh was considered as the reasonable descendant to the throne of Faridkot. Pahar Singh was one of the principal followers of British. During the Anglo-Sikh War of 1845-46, as he gave immense support to the British and his services were rewarded with the title of 'Raja', and a grant of the area and some kinds of other favours. His son Wazir Singh, who like other chiefs provided assistance to British in

course of the rebellion of 1857, succeeded Pahar Singh. Then, Bikram Singh, Balbir Singh and Barjinder Singh ruled the Faridkot at different times.<sup>41</sup> Barjinder Singh died in 1918, then his son Harinder Singh was selected as 'Maharaja' at the age of three years. During his period of infancy, a council of administration supervised the kingdom for over 15 years. Harinder Singh was invested with ruling powers on the date of October 17, 1934. On the announcement of the freedom of India in 1947, Faridkot agreed to join the Union of India, and after some time, it joined the PEPSU in 1948.<sup>42</sup>

### **The Princely State of Kalsia:**

The lands of the Sardars of Kalsia were a group of enclaves in British territory. The Ambala district at that time was mostly encircled by these speckled realms, from which they were not obviously distinguished by any perceptible characteristic of soil or climate. Of twenty separate territorial units, only one was out of Ambala portion. The princely state of Kalsia laid between 30<sup>0</sup>-17' and 30<sup>0</sup>-25' North, and 77<sup>0</sup>-2' and 77<sup>0</sup>-35' East, the total area of the state was 176 square miles, which included 189 estates, and nourished a population of 67,000.<sup>43</sup> Kalsia state, though formerly incorporated in the 'Punjab Hill States Agency' had nothing in common with the hill states. Much of its area was neighbouring to the princely state of Patiala and Ambala district of British Punjab.<sup>44</sup>

Among the Sikh equestrians, who crossed the Sutlej River and got the possessions for themselves in the majestic Sirkari of Sirhind area in 1760 A.D. was one Gurbaksh Singh, who was a Sidhu Jat of the family of Sardars of Chachrauli and the state had derived its name from his birthplace. The segment of the 'Krora Singhia Misl' to which he belonged had established its headquarter in Ladda. On the death of Gurbaksh Singh at Bambeli in 1775, his son Jodh Singh got the power of state. He was a bold soldier, contrived to make himself greater than his neighbors, and to build up possessions most of which now form the state of Kalsia.<sup>45</sup>

The state came under the British protection, according to a treaty which was signed between Cis-Sutlej chiefs in 1809. Sardar Jodh Singh passed away in 1818 due to the injuries that he got on the battleground. His successor, Sobha Singh, who was a child at the time of his father's death, remained under the protection of Maharaja Karam Singh of Patiala for some time. Sobha Singh ruled the Kalsia state for forty years and died in 1858, and after him; Lehna Singh became the next king of the state. His son Bishan Singh followed Lehna Singh in swift succession and then his grandson Jagjit Singh succeeded him. After the death of Jagjit Singh in 1886, his younger brother, Ranjit Singh became the king who died in July 1908, leaving an infant son, Ravi Sher Singh, who became the next descendant to the throne. Raja Ravi Sher Singh died on 4 January, 1947, and he was succeeded by Raja Karan Sher Singh, who was the last king of the princely state of Kalsia, and experienced the lapse of the British rule in India as well as the formation of PEPSU in 1948.<sup>46</sup>

### **The Princely State of Nalagarh:**

The next state that became the part of PEPSU was the princely state of Nalagarh. Nalagarh was by far the oldest state in the Union. This state was recognized by the name of 'Hindur' that concerned about Handu, a Brahman, who established his power over the local chiefs and made Hindur. The state was laid between 30<sup>0</sup>-54'

and 31<sup>0</sup>-14' North, and 76<sup>0</sup>-39' and 76<sup>0</sup>-56' East, with an area of 256 square miles. Bilaspur state and Hoshiarpur bound it on the North, on the East by Mahlog and Baghal states, on the South by Patiala and Kharar tehsil of Ambala district, and on the West by the Ropar tehsil of Ambala district.<sup>47</sup>

The history of the ruling family of the state of 'Hindur' or 'Nalagarh' incorporated in that of Bilaspur state, where the kings or Hindur, descendants of the elder branch, originally came. Ajai Chand, the eldest son of Kahn Chand, Raja of Bilaspur lost his birthright on the succession of his younger brother, Ajit Chand to that state in 1100 A.D., and he resolved to carve out a principality for himself. Having raised a force in his father's kingdom, he had attacked in the state of Handu, the Brahman Thakur of Hindur. Handu's brutal and inequitable rule had alienated the likings of his subjects, and they greeted Ajai Chand as a rescuer. Handu was completely beaten and lost his life in the encounter with Ajai Chand.<sup>48</sup>

Ajai Chand took over the administration of state. The state was ruled by the same house for next many centuries. The most renowned ruler of the line was Raja Ram Saran Singh, who remained in power for 60 years and died in 1849. Then his son, Raja Bije Singh became the ruler, who was succeeded by his younger brother Raja Agar Singh, after the death of Bije Singh in 1857. Raja Agar Singh's succession was held in abeyance for a period of three years during which period the British directly ruled the state. Maharaja Narinder Singh of Patiala took the accountability on his shoulders to bring justice to a brother ruler in suffering, that the throne was over again restored to the ruling house of Nalagarh. Finally, the ruling powers of Nalagarh came at the hands of Raja Agar Singh, but he did not prove to be a capable ruler. Then, the administration of state was delegated to a council. After that the ruling powers were shifted to the hands of Israi Singh. On the death of Isari Singh in 1911, his brother, Raja Joginder Singh got the throne and administered the Nalagarh state with a great sense of enthusiasm and ability.<sup>49</sup>

His son Surinder Singh, with the permission of the British government, entered into a treaty with the Patiala state; consequently, Nalagarh was jointly administered by the Patiala state. During the small period of his regime, he managed the affairs of the state admirably. Like the other East Punjab States, Nalagarh also joined the Indian Union after the lapse of British Raj. It was the only state of hill tracts which joined the union of East Punjab States in 1948.<sup>50</sup>

Along with many other princely states of India, these eight states accepted the supremacy of Indian Government after the independence, and in July 1948 with the collaboration of these princely states, a new Indian State under the title of 'Patiala and East Punjab States Union' (PEPSU) had come into existence.

However, the formation of PEPSU was not an easy job and there were faced many problems, but Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel (the Home Minister and Deputy Prime Minister of India) crossed all obstacles, and the State of Patiala was recognised as a separate feasible unit with the integration of Patiala, Nabha, Jind, Malerkotla, Faridkot, Kapurthala, Nalagarh, and Kalsia.<sup>51</sup> The rulers signed the agreement on the formation of the Union on the date of May 5, 1948, and all accepted the tentative name of Patiala and East Punjab States Union (PEPSU).<sup>52</sup>



As regards its geographical location PEPSU covered an area of 10,119 square miles which situated between 27°-75' and 31°-75' degree North and 74°-5' and 77°-25' degree East. The state was divided into eight districts; Patiala, Barnala, Bathinda, Fatehgarh Sahib, Mohinderagarh, Sangrur, Kapurthala and Kandaghat. There were four sub-divisions, i.e., Nabha, Malerkotla, Faridkot and Nalagarh, which contained to exist within the districts of Patiala, Barnala and Bathinda, respectively. The districts were further divided into 24 tehsils and 5 sub-tehsils. The total number of villages in the state was 5,369.<sup>53</sup>

Maharaja of Patiala, Yadavindra Singh, volunteered to work as Rajpramukh for the newly formed Union. Then, the Union Government of India appointed Maharaja Yadavindra Singh as Rajpramukh of PEPSU. He played a prominent role in the achievement of integration of Indian states with the Indian Union after Independence.<sup>54</sup>

Maharaja Jagatjit Singh of Kapurthala was appointed Up-rajpramukh of the respective state, which position he held till his death on June 19, 1949. After his death, he was succeeded by his son Maharaja Paramjit Singh, who died after the six years in July 1955. Maharaja Sukhjit Singh, who became the next Up-rajpramukh remained on that position till the merger of PEPSU in Punjab.<sup>55</sup>

With the establishment of PEPSU; independent identity of these states was lapsed. The PEPSU state was not existed for a long time and on the date of November 1, 1956, it was come to an end and most of princely states were merged into Punjab state following the 'States Reorganization Act' (except Nalagarh, this state was merged in Himachal Pradesh).<sup>56</sup>

The princely rulers of these states, however, enjoyed some privileges after the reorganization, but the identity of independent states was completely descend and the saga of the existence of these princely states just remained become a part of the pages of history.

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