

Maratha

Rise of Marathas under Shivaji:

Introduction:

- Various factors contributed to the rise of Marathas in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.
- The physical environment of the Maratha country shaped certain peculiar qualities among the Marathas.
- The mountainous region and dense forests made them brave soldiers and adopt guerilla tactics.
- They built a number of formidable forts on the mountains.
- The spread of the Bhakti movement in Maharashtra inculcated a spirit of religious unity among them.
- The Marathas held important positions in the administrative and military systems of Deccan Sultanates of Bijapur and Ahmadnagar.
- But the credit of establishing a powerful Maratha state goes to **Shahji Bhonsle and his son Shivaji**.
- The political unity was rendered by Shivaji Maharaj.
- Shivaji was born at Shivner in 1627.
- His father was Shahji Bhonsle and mother Jija Bai.
- He inherited the jagir of Poona from his father in 1637.

Achievements of Chhatrapati Shivaji:

Initial phase:

- He first conquered Raigarh, Kondana and Torna from the ruler of Bijapur.
- After the death of his guardian, Dadaji Kondadev in 1647, Shivaji assumed full charge of his jagir.
- He captured Javli from a Maratha chief, Chanda Rao More.
- This made him the master of Mavala region.
- In 1657, he attacked the Bijapur kingdom and captured a number of hill forts in the Konkan region.
- The Sultan of Bijapur sent Afzal Khan against Shivaji. But Afzal Khan was murdered by Shivaji in 1659 in a daring manner.

Military Conquests of Shivaji:

- Shivaji's military conquests made him a legendary figure in the Maratha region.
- The Mughal emperor Aurangzeb was anxiously watching the rise of Maratha power under Shivaji.
- Aurangzeb sent the Mughal governor of the Deccan, Shaista Khan against Shivaji.
- Shivaji suffered a defeat at the hands of the Mughal forces and lost Poona.
- But Shivaji once again made a bold attack on Shaista Khan's military camp at Poona in 1663, killed his son and wounded Khan.
- In 1664, Shivaji attacked Surat, the chief port of the Mughals and plundered it.
- A second attempt was made by Aurangzeb to defeat Shivaji by sending Raja Jai Singh of Amber.
- He succeeded in besieging the **fort of Purander**.

Treaty of Purander 1665:

- According to the treaty, Shivaji had to surrender 23 forts to the Mughals out of 35 forts held by him.
- The remaining 12 forts were to be left to Shivaji on condition of service and loyalty to Mughal empire.
- On the other hand, the Mughals recognized the right of Shivaji to hold certain parts of the Bijapur kingdom.

Renewed war against Mughals:

- Surat was plundered by him for the second time in 1670.
- He also captured all his lost territories by his conquests.
- In 1674 Shivaji crowned himself at Raigarh and assumed the **title Chatrapathi**.

Shivaji's policy and Expansion of Marathas:**Administrative Policies:**

- He laid the foundations of a sound system of administration.
- The king was the pivot of the government.

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- He was assisted by a council of ministers called **Ashtapradhan**.
 - Peshwa – Finance and general administration. Later he became the prime minister
 - Sar-i-Naubat or Senapati – Military commander, a honorary post.
 - Amatya – Accountant General.
 - Waqenavis – Intelligence, posts and household affairs.
 - Sachiv – Correspondence.
 - Sumanta – Master of ceremonies
 - Nyayadish – Justice.
 - Panditarao – Charities and religious administration.

Revenue Policies:

- **Lands** were measured by using the measuring rod called **kathi**.
- Lands were also classified into three categories – paddy fields, garden lands and hilly tracks.
- **Taxes: Chauth and sardeshmukhi** were the taxes collected not in the Maratha kingdom but in the neighbouring territories of the Mughal empire or Deccan sultanates.
- Chauth was one fourth of the land revenue paid to the Marathas in order to avoid the Maratha raids.
- Sardeshmukhi was an additional levy of ten percent on those lands which the Marathas claimed hereditary rights.

Military Policies:

- Shivaji was a man of military genius and his army was well organized.
- The regular army consisted of about 30000 to 40000 cavalry supervised by **havaldars**. They were given fixed salaries.
- There were two divisions in the Maratha cavalry –
 1. **Bargirs**, equipped and paid by the state;
 2. **Silahdars**, maintained by the nobles.
- In the infantry, the **Mavli** foot soldiers played an important role.
- Shivaji also maintained a navy.

- **The forts** played an important role in the military operations of the Marathas.
- By the end of his reign, Shivaji had about 240 forts.
- Each fort was put under the charge of three officers of equal rank as a precaution against treachery.
- The above conquests and policies of Shivaji was the major reason for Maratha stronghold in the region against Mughals.
- They became a formidable enemy of neighboring kings.

Marathas after Shivaji:

- The Maratha kingdom was, however, certainly weakened at the start of 18th century due to various internal and external factors.
- A full-scale civil war broke out between the forces of Shahu (grandson of Shivaji) and those of Tarabai (Rajaram's widow).
- The loyalty of Maratha sardars and Deshmukhs kept on shifting from one block to another.
- Since the time of Balaji Viswanath, the office of the Peshwa became powerful.
- He died in 1720 and was succeeded by his son Baji Rao, who was in power till 1740.
- After the death of Baji Rao in 1740, Shahu appointed his son Balaji Bajirao (1740-1761) as Peshwa.
- This was indeed the peak period of Maratha glory.
- In 1761, after the third battle of Panipat Madhav Rao became the Peshwa.
- In 1772, Madhav Rao died of consumption.
- After the death of Madhav Rao, the struggle for power occurred between Raghunath Rao and Narayan Rao.
- In 1773 Narayan Rao was killed.
- Madhav Rao Narayan succeeded his father Narayan Rao.
- Raghunath Rao tried to capture power with the help of British.
- This led to the 1st Anglo- Maratha war.
- Madhav Rao died in 1794.

- Baji Rao II, son of Raghunath Rao succeeded Madhav Rao.
- At the end of 3rd Anglo- Maratha war Peshwa was dethroned and pensioned off while other Maratha states remained as subsidiary states.

3rd Battle of Panipat:

- The Third battle of Panipat was fought between the Marathas, led by Sadashivrao Bhau and Durranis of Afghanistan, by Ahmed Shah Abdali in 1761.
- The Third Battle of Panipat changed the power equations in India, the Afghans could hardly rule any further, but paved **the way for British Rule in India.**

The main reasons for the battle

- The weakness of Mughal emperors and the division of the nobility in contending groups.
- The ambition of the Marathas to gain influence in the North and, for that purpose, their promise, of support to the Mughal emperor.
- Lastly, the ambition of Abdali to capture Kashmir, Multan and Punjab and, for that purpose, his support to the Turani group of nobility.

Outcomes of the battle:

- The third battle ended the Maratha attempt to succeed the Mughals as rulers of India and marked the virtual end of the Mughal empire.
- The Maratha army, under the Bhaosahib, uncle of the peshwa (chief minister), was trapped and destroyed by the Afghan chief Ahmad Shah Durrani.
- This began 40 years of anarchy in north-western India and cleared the way for later British supremacy.

18th Century:

- The 18th century was a period of profound change in the Indian subcontinent as the Mughal Empire gave way to regional powers, many of whom, like the Marathas, aspired to, and almost achieved, imperial status.

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- The century saw an array of social movements organised around religion viz. **Bhakti Movement**, community articulations, and agrarian expansion, often crystallising into coherent political entities.
- It was a period made for political adventurism, with shifting alliances making any political calculation virtually impossible.
- In this cauldron was a heady mix of religious invocation that did not always correspond to the cleavages that we assume to exist between Hindus and Muslims.
- Durrani chief was able to enlist the support of several malcontents (the Rohilla chief, the Nawab of Awadh) and most impressively, of the warrior ascetics, the Naga sanyasis and Gosains.
- Thus, we can see that there were mostly political undertones than religious undertones.

Impact of the battle:

- Setback to expansionist policy of Maratha and rise of Sikh in Punjab.
- The fragility of alliances and the overriding greed for immediate gain undercut possibilities of any long-term balancing of imperial aspirations with those of local powerholders.
- The precarity of hastily conceived alliances, the extreme cynicism that accompanied all political and diplomatic engagements, blurred distinctions between friend and foe.
- It was certain then that the Battle of Panipat temporarily halted the Maratha advance, and enabled the East India Company to maintain a low profile for a while, consolidate its early gains in Bengal, and subsequently make a strong bid for supremacy in the subcontinent.

Anglo Maratha War:

War & Year	Reason & Course of Events	Maratha & British Leaders	Result
I (1775-82)	British support to Raghunath Rao & signing of Treaty of	Raghunath Rao, Nana Phadnavis & Warren	Treaty of Salbai peace of 2 decades.

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	<p>Surat with him angered Nana Phadnavis.</p> <p>Nana Phadnavis signed Treaty of Purandar with british.</p> <p>Sheltering Raghunath Rao angered Maratha leaders leading to series of Conflicts</p>	Hastings	
II (1803-06)	<p>Internal conflicts within Marathas;</p> <p>Scindia & Peshwa Killed Vithoji Rao Holkar & as a result of which Yeshwant Rao Holkar attacked Poona.</p> <p>Baji Rao II took refuge with British & signed Subsidiary alliance.</p>	<p>Scindia, Bhonsle, Yeshwantrao Holkar & Wellesley</p>	<p>Treaty of Bassein</p> <p>Delhi acquired from Scindhia</p>
III (1817-18)	<p>Interference of British Resident & it started as a war to end Pindaris.</p> <p>Later Maratha sardars also openly supported Pindaris & joined the war as a last attempt to restore the lost glory</p>	<p>Bajirao-II Appasaheb, Madhavrao Holkar & Lord Hastings</p>	<p>End of Maratha Challenge.</p> <p>Peshwa was pensioned off & sent to a small estate near Kanpur.</p>

Reasons for fall of Marathas:

War of Succession:

- There ensued a war of succession after the death of Shivaji between his sons, Shambaji and Rajaram. Shambaji emerged victorious but later he was captured and executed by the Mughals.
- Rajaram succeeded the throne but the Mughals made him to flee to the Ginjee fort.

Political structure:

Divisions within:

- The other reason for downfall of Maratha empire was its own structure.
- Its nature was that of a confederacy where power was shared among the chiefs or sardars (Bhonsle, Holker etc).

Weak Revenue Administration:

- Marathas depended on the collection of Chauth and Sardeshmukhi and on their exploits from plunder and loot.
- They failed to develop an efficient system of revenue administration.
- New territories were conquered but much less focus was on the administration.
- Rulers were mainly interested in raising revenue from peasantry through taxation.

Weak Diplomacy:

- Marathas did not take the trouble to find out what was happening elsewhere and what their enemies were doing.
- There was no far-sighted statesmanship or effective strategy.
- They failed to cultivate alliances with forces around them.

Anglo-Maratha Wars and Subsidiary Alliance:

- In 1802, Peshwa Baji Rao II accepted subsidiary alliance by signing Treaty of Bassein.
- This marked the downfall of Maratha empire.

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- By 1818 the Maratha power was finally crushed and the great chiefs that represented it in central India submitted and accepted the over lordship of the East India Company.
- Shivaji was really a constructive genius and nation-builder.
- His rise from jagirdar to Chatrapathi was spectacular.
- He unified the Marathas and remained a great enemy of the Mughal empire.
- He was a daring soldier and a brilliant administrator.
- Post his rule, infighting, disunity amongst Maratha confederacy became the major reason for their downfall.

