

## MARATHAS

### Role of Bhakti Movement

The spread of the Bhakti movement in Maharashtra inculcated a spirit of religious unity among Marathas. The spiritual leaders like Tukaram, Ramdas, Vaman Pandit, and Eknath fostered social unity. Shivaji conferred the political unity to Marathas.

The Marathas held important positions in the administrative and military systems of Deccan Sultanates of Bijapur and Ahmednagar.

### Shivaji (c. 1630–1680)

- Born at Shivneri (Present day Pune District, Maharashtra) to Shahaji Bhonsle and Jijabai Jadhav.
- Shahaji Bhonsle was a maratha general who served the Deccan Sultanates.
- He inherited the jagir of Poona from his father in 1637.
- His guru, Samarth Ramdas, motivated him for “Swaraj” or Self rule.
- His guardian, Dadoji Konddeo, taught him Guerilla warfare.
- AD 1656 marked beginning of his conquests, when he conquered Javali from Maratha Chief Chandra Rao More.
- In 1657, he attacked the Bijapur Kingdom and captured a number of hill forts in the Konkan region (coastal Maharashtra and Goa).
- The Sultan of Bijapur sent Afzal Khan against Shivaji. Afzal Khan was killed at a meeting with Shivaji by Shivaji’s lieutenant Sambhaji Kavji.
- In the year 1660, Shaista Khan was sent to fight against Shivaji. However, he was defeated in a surprise attack and lost one of his sons. He then left Pune and shifted his camp to Aurangabad.
- In 1663, Mughal emperor, anxiously watching the rise of Maratha power under Shivaji, sent the Mughal governor of the Deccan, Shaista Khan against Shivaji. He regained control over Poona, after being defeated earlier.
- In 1664, Shivaji plundered Surat, the chief port of the Mughals.
- 1665, Treaty of Purandar—Aurangzeb sent Raja Jai Singh of Amber to fight against Shivaji. He succeeded in besieging the Purandar fort where Shivaji lodged his family and treasure. Shivaji opened negotiations with Jai Singh. According to the Treaty of Purandar:
  - Shivaji had to surrender 23 forts to the Mughals out of 35 forts held by him.
  - The remaining 12 forts were left to Shivaji on condition of service and loyalty to Mughal Empire.
  - The Mughals recognized the right of Shivaji to hold certain parts of the Bijapur Kingdom.
  - Shivaji’s minor son Sambhaji became a mughal sardar and was granted a mansab of 5000.
- In 1666, Shivaji, along with his son, visited Agra as per the requirement of the treaty, but they were imprisoned there. However, they managed to escape from prison.
- Surat was plundered by him for the second time in 1670. Surat lost its importance and Bombay rose to prominence.
- In 1674, Shivaji crowned himself at Raigad and assumed the title of Chhatrapati.
- Shivaji also took the title “Haindava Dharmodharak,” i.e., protector of the Hindu faith.
- In the Carnatic region, he captured Jinji and Vellore.
- In 1680, Shivaji died of fever and dysentery.

## Administration

- His administration was influenced by famous wazir of Ahmednagar, Malik Ambar.
- The king was the pivot of the government. He was assisted by a council of eight ministers called Ashtapradhan.
- Each minister was directly responsible to Shivaji.
  - **Peshwa:** General administration and welfare of people. Later, he became the prime minister.
  - **Sar-i-Naubat** or *Senapati*: Military commander.
  - *Amatya* or *Majumdar*: Accountant General and Finance.
  - *Waq-i-navis*: Intelligence, and household affairs.
  - *Sachiva* or *Surnavis*: Correspondence, internal affairs.
  - *Sumant* or *Dabir*: External affairs.
  - *Nyayadhisht*: Justice.
  - *Panditrao* or *Sadar*: Charities and religious administration.

## Revenue Administration

- Kathi was the yardstick for measuring the land, first introduced by Malik Ambar.
- *Chauth* and *Sardeshmukhi* were the taxes collected not only in the Maratha Kingdom but in the neighboring 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 one tenth on those lands over which the Marathas claimed hereditary rights. Sardeshmukhi is derived from the word 'Sardeshmukh', meaning overlord.
- The revenue collection officials were called karkuns.

## Military Administration

- There were two divisions in the Maratha cavalry:
  1. **Bargirs:** Equipped and paid by the state, i.e., standing or permanent army.
  2. **Shiledars:** Maintained by the nobles.
- In the infantry, the Mavli foot soldiers played an important role. Mavli foot soldiers belonged to Mavla area. This area became part of Shivaji territory after he acquired Javali.
- Shivaji also maintained a navy.

## Sambhaji (1680–1689)

- He was the eldest son of Shivaji.
- He gave shelter to Akbar (son of Aurangzeb), who had revolted against Aurangzeb.
- He was killed by Aurangzeb on the banks of Bhima River in 1689.
- His son Shahu and wife were deported to Agra.

## Rajaram (1689–1700)

- He was the second son of Shivaji.
- He introduced a new office of Pratinidhi, thus, making Ashtapradhans as Navpradhans (nine ministers). The office of Peshwa was made next to that of Pratinidhi.
- He took shelter in Jinji fort (in modern-day Tamil Nadu) for 8 years.
- He was killed by Aurangzeb in 1700.

### **Tarabai (1700–1709)**

- She was the widow of Rajaram and most popular woman leader of Marathas.
- Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah I released Sahu in 1707.
- On his return, Shahu defeated Tarabai in Battle of Khed (in present-day Ratnagiri district, Maharashtra) with support of Balaji Vishwanath.
- Maratha state was divided into two parts—(i) Sahu became Chhatrapati at Satara and (ii) Tarabai (and her son Shivaji II) remained powerful at Kolhapur.
- Tarabai was deposed by another widow of Rajaram, Rajabai, who put her own son, Sambhaji II, on the throne. Tarabai and her son were imprisoned by Sambhaji II. Shivaji II died in 1726. Tarabai afterwards reconciled with Shahu and went on to live without any political power.

### **THE AGE OF PESHWAS (1713-1818)**

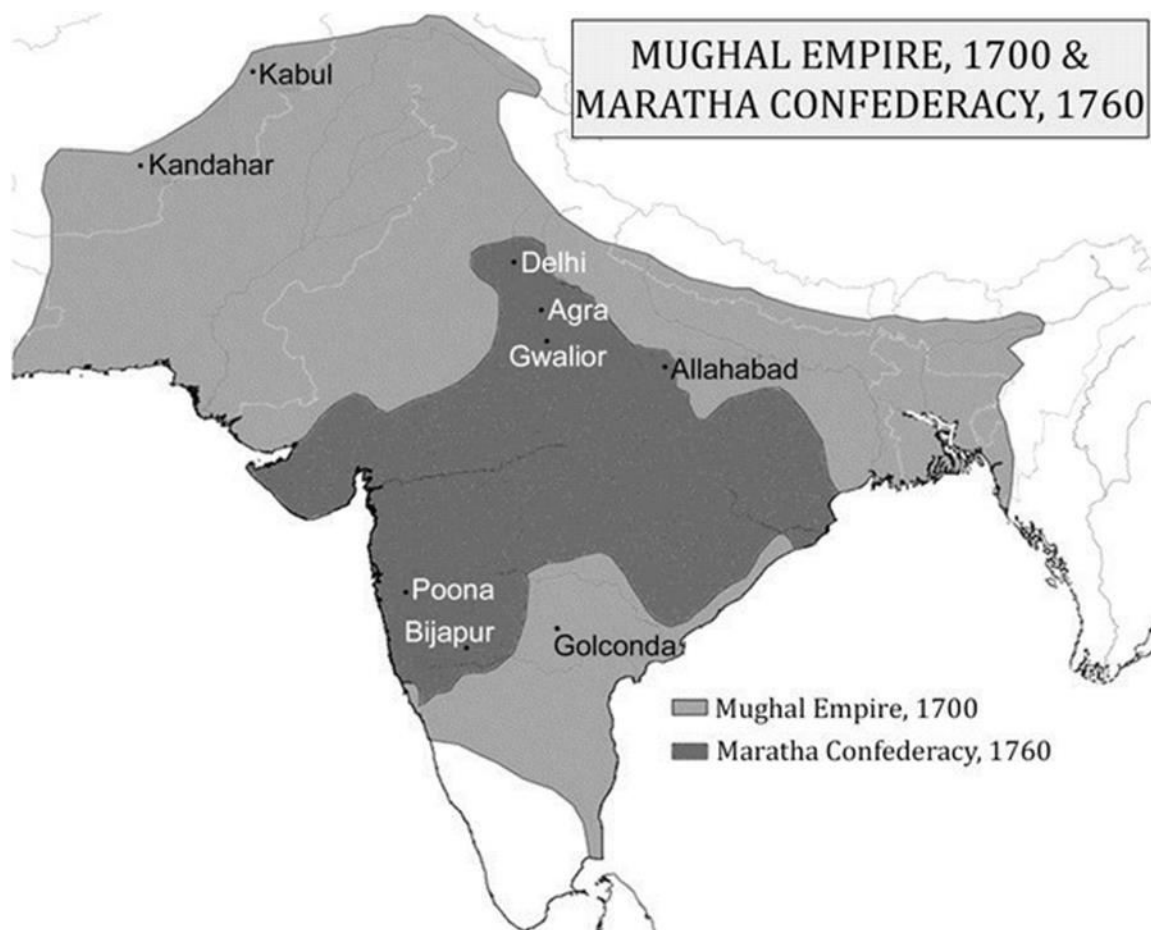
It refers to the time period corresponding to the powerful rise of Peshwas in Maratha history. A Peshwa was the equivalent of a modern Prime Minister in the Maratha Empire. Originally, the Peshwas served as subordinate to the Chhatrapati (the Maratha king), but later, they became the de facto leaders of the Marathas, and the Chhatrapati was reduced to a nominal ruler.

### **Balaji Vishwanath (1713–1720)**

- He was an accountant in the court of Dhanaji Jadhav. He has served as chief of Maratha army.
- For his help in battle against Tarabai, Shahu made him Peshwa in AD 1713.
- The office of Peshwa was made hereditary on his request.
- He revived the Saranjama system under which powerful Maratha sardars (*Mokasadors*) who collected the taxes were granted *jagirs* (or part of tax collected) which they used for maintaining their troops for the Chhatrapati. This levy was called *mokasa*.
- Balaji struck a treaty with Sayyid Brothers representing Mughal Emperor, Farukh Siyar. This treaty is called Delhi Treaty.
  - Under this treaty, Mughal emperor recognized Shahu as the Maratha King.
  - Marathas were to maintain law and order in Deccan.
  - Marathas could collect *Chauth* in six Mughals subas in Deccan.
  - Yesubai mother of Shahu, was released from Agra under this treaty.

### **Baji Rao I (1720–1740)**

- The Maratha power reached its zenith under him.
- He conquered Bassein and Salsette from the Portuguese in 1739.
- He initiated the system of confederacy among the Maratha chiefs. Under this system, each Maratha chief was assigned a territory, which was administered autonomously resulting into rule of:
  1. Peshwas of Pune
  2. Bhonsles of Nagpur
  3. Scindias of Gwalior
  4. Holkars of Indore
  5. Gaikwads of Baroda



### Balaji Baji Rao (1740–1761)

- The Maratha King Shahu died in 1749 without any heir. His nominated successor Rajaram II Bhonsle, also known as Ramaraja, was imprisoned by the Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao at Satara. Thus, the total control of the Maratha Kingdom came under the Peshwa.
- Peshwa entered into an agreement with the Mughal Emperor in 1752. According to which
  - The Peshwa would protect the Mughal Empire from internal and external enemies.
  - For this purpose, *Chauth* of the Northwest provinces and the total revenue of the Agra and Ajmer provinces would be collected by the Marathas.
- In 1761, when Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded India, it became the responsibility of the Marathas to protect India. The Marathas fought bravely but lost to Ahmad Shah Abdali in the third Battle of Panipat in 1761.
- The Maratha forces under Sadashiv Rao Bhau were routed by Abdali and this marked the beginning of the decline of Maratha power. Sadashiv was son of Chimaji Appa and the nephew of Peshwa Bajirao I.
- Balaji Baji Rao died on hearing the sad end of this battle.
- Thereafter, the Maratha confederacy weakened due to internal conflicts among the Maratha chiefs.

### Why did Marathas failed in the third battle of Panipat?

- The forces of Abdali were larger in number than that of Marathas. Moreover, Abdali's forces possessed better equipment such as swivel guns (small cannons).
- The shortage of food created famine like conditions in the Maratha camp.
- The Maratha policy of indiscriminate plunder has earned them enemies such as Jats and

Rajputs.

- Mutual rivalries among the Maratha commanders weakened the Maratha side.

#### **Political significance of Third Battle of Panipat -**

- Maratha suffered heavy defeat and loss of prestige. The Maratha dream of larger empire was lost.
- However, Maratha power recovered thereafter, until British supremacy was established by the second Anglo-Maratha war (1803).

#### **Madhav Rao I (1761–1772)**

- Madhav Rao I was the fourth Peshwa of the Maratha Empire. He is one of the greatest Peshwas in Maratha history. During his tenure, the Maratha empire recovered from the losses suffered during the Third Battle of Panipat. This recovery is called Maratha Resurrection.
- After his death in 1772, faction fighting among Maratha leaders increased to seize political power. Son of Madhav Rao I, the sixteen-year-old Madhav Rao was made the next Peshwa of Maratha Empire. His father's brother Raghunath Rao was made regent.
- However, Raghunath Rao tried to seize power. He was opposed by other Maratha chiefs. Raghunath Rao went over to the British and tried to seize power with their help. This resulted in the First Anglo-Maratha war.

## Practice Questions

1. Ashtapradhan was a Council of Ministers

- (a) in the Gupta Administration
- (b) in the Chola Administration
- (c) in the Vijayanagar Administration
- (d) in the Maratha Administration

2. Assertion (A): Marathas emerged as the strongest native power in India after the decline of Mughal Empire.

Reason (R): Marathas were the first to have clear concept of a united Indian nation.

- (a) Both A and R are individually true and R is the correct explanation of A
- (b) Both A and R are individually true but R is NOT the correct explanation of A
- (c) A is true but R is false
- (d) A is false but R is true

3. Who among the following streamlined the Maratha administration after Sambhaji?

- (a) Raja Ram
- (b) Balaji Viswanath
- (c) Ganga Bai
- (d) Nanaji Deshmukh

4. The member of Shivaji's Ashtapradhana who looked after foreign affairs was

- (a) Peshwa
- (b) Sachiv
- (c) Pandit Rao
- (d) Sumant

5. Match List I with List II and select the correct answer using the codes given below the lists

List I	List II
1. 1556	A. Battle of Haldi Ghati
2. 1600	B. Nadir Shah's capture of Delhi
3. 1680	C. Death of Shivaji
4. 1739	D. Grant of Charter to East India Company
	E. Accession of Akbar

Codes:

- (a) 1-C, 2-D, 3-B, 4-A
- (b) 1-E, 2-D, 3-C, 4-B
- (c) 1-E, 2-B, 3-A, 4-D
- (d) 1-A, 2-E, 3-C, 4-B

6. Match List I with List II and select the correct answer using the codes given below the Lists

List I	List II
1. Iqta	A. Marathas
2. Jagir	B. Delhi Sultans
3. Amaram	C. Mughals

4. Mokasa	D. Vijayanagara
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Codes:

- (a) 1-C, 2-B, 3-A, 4-D
- (b) 1-B, 2-C, 3-D, 4-A
- (c) 1-B, 2-C, 3-A, 4-D
- (d) 1-C, 2-B, 3-D, 4-A

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## Answer Keys

### Practice Questions

1. (d)	2. (c)	3. (b)	4. (d)	5. (b)
6. (b)				

## Solutions

### Practice Questions

2. (c) Reason is incorrect: The regional kingdoms within confederacy enjoyed strong position. Each Maratha Chief was assigned a territory, which was administered autonomously. Thus, it is incorrect to say that they were the first to have clear concept of a united Indian nation. Marathas rose on decline of Mughal decline.



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