

Maratha Empire

The Maratha Empire (also called Mahratta), or the **Maratha Confederacy**. It is a Hindu state situated in modern-day India. During the flourishing period, the territories of the empire stretched over 250 million acres (1 million km²), or probably one-third of South Asia. The state was controlled by a set of Prime Ministers who were supervised and advised by a special council of eight. The East India Company British expanded their areas of control in India, and the Marathas aimed at causing threats to their territorial ambitions.

- After engaging in immense warfare British defeated Marathas in 1818. Not only this, under British suzerainty, several princely states were disintegrated. However, the Maratha Empire's legacy prevailed in India as the so-called "Great Nation". It was created in 1960 and was recognized as a Marathi-speaking state.
- The rituals and traditions like social mobility irrespective of religious pluralism and caste shaped the lives of the people in this state. The Maratha empire was in opposition to the Muslim Mughal Empire for many years, it was signified by a policy that talked about religious tolerance. This was one of the main belief of Shivaji Maharaj.

The world is divided on the basis of religion and class so this is considered as a story of a polity where if you're talented, then you'll surely succeed, and will have the liberty to practice your faiths without discrimination, plus your needs will be heard. By setting aside the intolerant societies and religious issues prevailing earlier, the balanced history of people can be viewed properly.

Maratha History

The origins of the Maratha Empire can be studied by analysing the series of rebellions carried out by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, who stood against the Bijapur Sultanate and the Mughal Empire. The basis of his principle was Hindawi Swarajya. Shivaji Maharaj formed an independent **Maratha kingdom**, with a capital state named Raigad.

- During the 8 Years' of war, Shambhu Raje (born on 14 May 1657) stood against Aurangzeb in the Deccan region. In 1689, Sambhaji was mousetrapped by the Mughal ruler during his journey to meet the commanders at Sangameshwar. He was kept in prison and later beheaded by Aurangzeb for sending back the Maratha forces.
- Later, Aurangzeb aimed at occupying the capital of Raigad and kidnapped the family of Chhatrapati Shivaji. In 1690, the half-brother of Sambhaji- Rajaram sat on the throne of Chhatrapati. His coronation ceremony took place at Jinji fort (present-day Tamil Nadu).

- The Mughal emperor Aurangzeb laid a series of rebellions against Marathas. Chhatrapati Rajaram moved to Berar and probably died at Sinhagad in Pune in 1700.

Rise of Maratha Empire

In 1674, Shivaji was honoured with the title of Chhatrapati (meaning sovereign) of the newly formed Maratha Kingdom after bravely winning over the Mughals. During his final years, the Maratha kingdom was fortified with huge forts and other naval establishments.

- In the early 18th century, during the reign of his grandson, the Maratha empire grew exponentially in terms of size and flourished in other areas as well.
- In 1681, the eldest son of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj named Sambhaji (Shambhu Raje) ruled the Maratha empire. He strictly followed the policy of expansion which was led by Shivaji and he defeated the Portuguese and Chikka Deva Raya of Mysore.
- It helped to extend their areas of control. Such developments triggered the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb to outrage an expedition against the Marathas.

Maratha Confederacy

In the 18th century, the Maratha Confederacy came into existence marked by the disintegration of Maharashtra state in western India under the leadership of Shivaji due to the atrocities of the Mughals.

- After the demise of the Mughal ruler - Aurangzeb in 1707, the grandson of Shivaji -Shahu tried to restore peace and sovereignty.
- His authority was delegated to the hands of the Brahman Bhat family, who were recognized as hereditary pesewas or chief ministers.
- Every well-known family along with a chief was given a zone by the Maratha confederacy. The aim was to capture and control the site, in the name of their ruler- Shahu.
- Some prominent Maratha families who gained immense popularity in the later phases were The Bhonsle of Nagpur, the Gaekwad of Baroda, the Sindhias of Gwalior, the Holkars of Indore, and the Peshwa of Poona.

- The Maratha empire carried forward excellently during the years of Bajirao I to Madhavrao I. Unfortunately, the Third Battle of Panipat in 1761 changed the existing scenario.

Administration Under Shivaji Maharaj

The Maratha kingdom was divided into many administrations and provinces. The following points mentioned below analyse the administration in detail. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj had an influential administration system and appointed a council of ministers known as Asthpradhan.

- Shivaji himself supervised these ministers who were answerable to him only.
- He categorised the Maratha territory into three main provinces under the leadership of a viceroy.
- These Provinces were further divided into various small districts with subdivisions named Parganas.
- The lowermost unit was a village ruled by Patel.

The ministers in Shivaji's council of ministers:

- **Peshwa:** In the initial years, he looked over the general and finance administration. Later, recognized as prime minister.
- **Sar-i-Naubat or Senapati:** He was a Military commander.
- **Majumdar(Amatya):** He managed the Revenue and accounts.
- **Waqenavis(Mantri):** Official related to Intelligence, post, and home affairs.
- **Surnavis (Sachiv):** He is the Head of Royal correspondence.
- **Sumant(Dabir):** Involved in the master of ceremonies.
- **Nyayadhish:** Delivered justice.
- **Pandit Rao(Sadar):** He is the Religious administrator.

Leaders of Maratha Kingdom

The well-renowned leaders of the Maratha kingdom are as illustrated here in the table. Check here the list of the leaders of the Maratha empire and their accomplishments.

(c. 1627-1680)	Shri Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj	He was the founder of the Maratha kingdom. He was a member of the Bhonsale Maratha clan. He is considered the great warrior of his time.
(c. 1681-1689)	Sambhaji (Sambhaji)	He was the second Chhatrapati of the Maratha empire. He was the eldest son of Shivaji Maharaj.
(c. 1689-1707)	Tarabai and Rajaram	She was the queen of Rajaram Bhosale and the daughter-in-law of Shivaji. Rajaram was the third Chhatrapati of the Maratha empire. He ruled from 1689 to 1700.
(c. 1707-1749)	Shahu	He was a social reformer and a true democrat. He was also the first maharaja of Kohlapur.
(1650-1716)	Bawdekar, Amatya Ramchandra Pant	He served as the finance minister to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj during his tenure from 1674 to 1680. He was also a warrior as he was a statesman then.
(1720-1740)	Peshwa Baji Rao	As a Peshwa, Baji Rao defeated the Mughals and their vassal Nizam-ul-Mulk during his 20-year tenure. He fought many battles like the Battle of Delhi and more.
(1740-1761)	Baji Rao, Peshwa Balaji	The 20-year-old Baji Rao was appointed as Peshwa after the death of Balaji Vishwanath in 1720, though the chieftains were in opposition to this decision.