

Rajputs

The Rajput Dynasty was founded by the founder of the city of Ajmer, Simharaj, at the start of the medieval period. The medieval period is divided into two stages: The early medieval period (8th to 12th century) and the Later Medieval period (12th-18th century).

The end of the rule of Harsha and Pulakesin II marks the beginning of the Rajput Dynasty in the early medieval period. They dominated the country for over 500 years and contributed to Indian history.

History and Origin of Rajputs

Origin of Rajputs is a questionable discussion. However, some historians have put certain theories for the origin of Rajputs in India. These include the Kshatriya Origin theory, Foreign Origin theory, Tribal Origin theory, Agni Kula theory, and mixed Origin theory. It is believed that the rule of Rajputs belonged to the early medieval period, i.e., from 647 A.D. to 1200 A.D. By the 12th century, the decline of their kingdom began after the death of Harsha.

The origin of Rajputs dates back to the time when India breakup into the northwestern and northern Indian subcontinent under the Hephthalites' impact from the mid-5th century CE. Following the event, the Gupta empire broke up in the 6th century. The empire was attacked by the invaders. Some of the invaders integrated with the existing society. However, the Tribals and the nobles were divided into Kshatriyas and Hindus, while their followers were considered the fourth order, including Ahirs, Gujars, and Jats. Along with this, some invader priests became Brahmans, and the rest attained Rajput status. The Rajput ancestry is divided into different groups Suryavanshi, Chandravanshi, and Agnikula. However, they gained political importance in the early 7th century.

State Formation under Rajputs

There were a total of 36 states under the Rajput dynasty in India. The major States among these clans are as follows:

- The Palas of Bengal
- The Chauhans of Delhi and Ajmer
- The Rathors of Kanauj
- The Guhilas or Sisodiyas of Mewar
- The Chandelles of Bundelkhand
- The Paramaras of Malwa
- The Senas of Bengal
- The Solankis of Gujarat

Pala Dynasty of Rajput Era

The Pala dynasty started in 765 AD and lasted till the 11th century. It was subdivided into the following-

- **Gopala:** Gopala is the founder of the Pala dynasty. Gopala started his rule in 765 AD over Northern and Eastern India. He had the vision to expand his kingdom, and during

his rule, he expanded his dynasty over Magadha. After his death, his successor, Dharmapala, became the Rajput ruler.

- **Dharmapala:** Dharmapala was the son of Gopala, who expanded his rule over Kanauj, Bihar, and Bengal. He became the master of Northern India after defeating the Pratiharas. He followed Buddhism and restored the Nalanda University, founding several monasteries and the Vikramasila University.
- **Devapala:** Devapala succeeded Dharmapala after his death. He ruled Northern India from 815-855 A.D. and captured Orissa and Assam. He was responsible for keeping the Pala territories intact.
- **Mahipala-** Mahipala ruled the Rajput dynasty from 998 to 1038 A.D. Under his rule, the Palas gained power. However, after his death, the Pala dynasty declined.
- **Govinda Pala-** The final and 18th Pala ruler was Madanapala. He was succeeded by Govindapala. According to historians, the successors of Govindapala were weak, thus pointing to the Pala dynasty's decline.

Rajput Dynasty: Chauhans of Delhi and Ajmer

The Chauhans were the feudatories of Gujara-Pratiharas. Ajmer was declared independent by the Chauhans in 1101 A.D. However, they captured Ujjain and Delhi from Paramaras at the start of the 12th century. After their capture, they shifted their capital to Delhi. Among all the Rajput rulers, the most important ruler of the Chauhans was Prithviraj Chauhan. But after his death, the dynasty of the Chauhans became weak.

Rathors of Kanauj in Rajput Empire

From 1090 to 1194 A.D., the Rathors established themselves as the rulers of Kanauj. The last greater ruler of this dynasty was Jaichand. He was killed by Muhammad of Ghori in 1194 A.D. during the battle of Chandwar.

Chandellas of Bundelkhand

The Chandela Dynasty was founded by Nannuk. Nannuk was a ruler of a small kingdom in India. Chandellas established themselves as the ruler of Bundelkhand in the 9th century and ruled central India between the 9th and 13th centuries for more than 500 years. During their rule, Bundelkhand was popular by the name of Jejakhukti.

Initially, Khajuraho was their capital state, but later, Mahoba became their capital state. The Chandellas of the Rajput dynasty became popular for building marvellous temples at Khajuraho. One of the famous temples among them was the Kandariya Mahadeva Temple. It was built in 1050. The dynasty has experienced many kings, but Maharaja Rao Vidhyadhara's rule made this dynasty popular in Indian History. He was a warrior who repulsed Mahmud of Ghazni's attack.

The rule of Chandellas ended after the defeat of the last ruler, Paramardi, by Qutb-ud-din Aibak at the start of the 13th century. His defeat weakened the Rajput dynasty. As a result, various new dynasties emerged from different regions, including Bagels in the Bandhavgarh region and Bundela in Orchha.

Rajput Rulers: Guhllas or Sisodiyas of Mewar

Guhila Dynasty was founded by Guhil. The Guhila Clan was initiated in Kashmir. Later in the 6th century, it was migrated to Gujarat. In the 7th century, it was again migrated to Mewar. Mewar is a region in south-central Rajasthan in western India. Guhilot, or Sisodiyas dynasty, was founded by Bappa Rawal in Mewar, and its capital was Chittor. His territory was invaded by Ala-ud-din Khilji in 1303 A.D. Rawal Ratan Singh, Maharana Pratap, and Rana Sangha fought with the Mughal ruler but was defeated terribly.

Paramaras of Malwa in the Rajput Dynasty

Apart from Chauhans, the Paramaras were the Pratihars' feudatories. In the 10th century, the Paramaras declared their independence. During this time, their capital was Dhara which was later moved to Mandap-Durg. In 1305, Ala ud din Khilji conquered Malwa and was defeated. One of the famous rulers of the Paramara dynasty was Raja Bhoja. He ruled from 1010 to 1055 A.D. He was an admirer of beauty and constructed a beautiful lake near Bhopal. Also, he is known for his contribution towards literature, as for the study of Sanskrit Literature, he established a college at Dhara.

Society under Rajputs

Rajputs, since the beginning, have been considered warriors who believed in protecting the women under their rule and the weaker section of society. The details of the society under the Rajput dynasty are as follows:

- **Religion** - The Rajputs were strong devotees of god and followed Hinduism. Along with Hindusim, they also followed Jainism and Buddhism. During Rajputana's rule, the Bhakti Cult started in India.
- **Major Literary Work** - The literature during the Rajput rule includes books, poems, astronomy etc. The significant literary work during this period includes Kalhana's Rajatarangin, Jayadeva's Gita Govindam, Somadeva's Kathasaritasagar, Siddhanta Shiromani, Siddhanta Shiromani (referring to Prithviraj Chauhan's military exploits), Balaramayana, Kavyamimamsa, and Karpuramanjari.
- **Government** - The organizational setup of the Rajput empire was Feudal, wherein each kingdom was separated into jagirs. Jagirdars were responsible for holding those jagirs.
- **Art and Architecture** - During the Rajput rule, art and architecture depicted their culture in the form of miniature and mural paintings. They build famous temples, including the Dilwara Temple at Mount Abu, the Sun Temple at Konark, Bhubaneshwar's Lingaraja Temple and Khajuraho's temples.