

Maratha Empire

Context- Babasaheb Purandare, eminent historian and author passed away due to old age ailments.

Babasaheb Purandare, a celebrated author and theatre personality, was known for his work on the history of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

In his prolific writing career, Purandare wrote several books, including a two-volume biography of the king "Raje Shivchhatrapati". His other prominent publications include "Maharaj", "Shelar Khind", "Gadkot Kille", "Agra", "Lal Mahal", "Purandar", "Rajgad", "Panhalgad", "Sinhagad", "Pratapgad", "Fulwanti", "Purandaryanchi Daulat", "Mujaryache Mankari", "Savitri" and "Kalawantinicha Sajja".

Maratha kingdom-

- The Maratha Empire (also transliterated, Mahratta), or the Maratha Confederacy, was a Hindu state located in present-day India. It existed from 1674 to 1818.
- The state was ruled by a series of Prime Ministers who were advised by a Council of eight.
- After a lifetime of exploits and guerrilla warfare with Adilshah of Bijapur and Mughal emperor Aurangzeb, the local lord Shivaji founded an independent Maratha nation in 1674, with Raigad as its capital.
- Shahu, a grandson of Shivaji, ruled as emperor until 1749. During his reign, Shahu appointed a Peshwa (prime minister) as head of government under certain conditions. After the death of Shahu, the Peshwas became the de facto leaders of the Empire from 1749 to 1761.
- The Maratha Empire was at its height in the eighteenth century, under Shahu and the Peshwa Baji Rao I.
- Losses at the Third Battle of Panipat, in 1761, suspended further expansion of the empire and reduced the power of the Peshwas.
- In 1761, after severe loss to Ahmad Shah Abdali in the Panipat war, the Peshwas lost control of the Kingdom. Many sardars like Shinde, Holkar, Gayakwad, PantPratinidhi, Bhosale of Nagpur, Pandit of Bhor, Patwardhan, and Newalkar became kings in their respective regions.

The empire gave way to a loose Confederacy, with political power resting in a “pentarchy” of five mostly Maratha dynasties: The Peshwas of Pune; the Sindhias (originally “Shindes”) of Malwa and Gwalior; the Holkars of Indore; the Bhonsles of Nagpur; and the Gaekwads of Baroda.

Maratha rulers-

- Chhatrapati Shivaji (1630-1680)
- Chhatrapati Sambhaji (1657-1689)
- Chhatrapati Rajaram (1670-1700)
- Chhatrapati Shahu (alias Shivaji II, Son of Chhatrapati Sambhaji)
- Chhatrapati Ramaraja (nominally, grandson of Chhatrapati Rajaram—Queen Tarabai))
- Queen Tarabai
- Maharani Soyarabai

Peshwa –

- Balaji Vishwanath (1713-1720)
- Baji Rao I (brother [[Chimnaji Appa) (1720-1740)
- Balaji Bajirao
- Madhavrao Peshwa
- Narayanrao Peshwa
- Raghunathrao Peshwa
- Sawai Madhavrao Peshwa
- Baji Rao II
- Nana Sahib Peshwa the second

Anglo maratha wars-

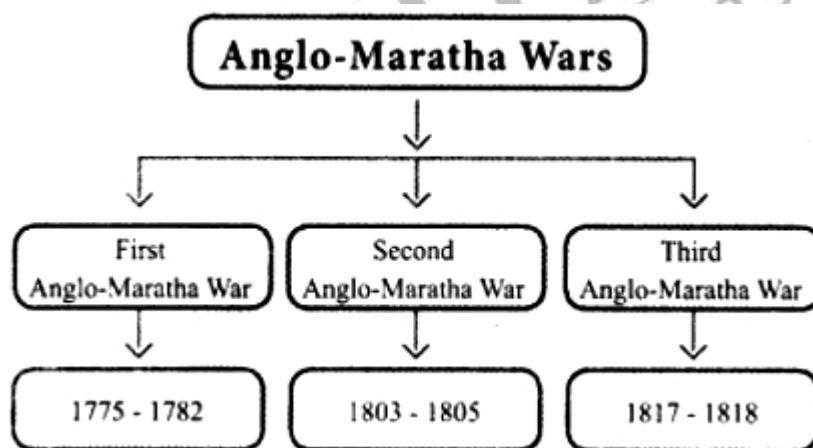
- **First Anglo Maratha war- (1775-1782)** The main cause of the first Maratha war was the increased interference of the British in the affairs, both internal and external, of the Marathas and also the struggle for power between Madhav Rao and Raghunath Rao. After the death of Peshwa Madhav Rao, his younger brother, Narain Rao succeeded him but it was his uncle, Raghunath Rao who wanted to become the Peshwa. And so he sought the help of the English to get him murdered .
- As per the Treaty of Salbai, all Maratha territories were returned. The British took control of Salsette but all the territories occupied by the British were given back to the Marathas.

- **Second Anglo Maratha war-(1803-1805)**

Second Anglo-Maratha War was the second war fought between the British East India Company and the Maratha Empire between 1803 and 1805 in Central India. The main cause of the second Maratha war was the defeat of the peshwa Baji Rao II by the Holkars, one of the prominent Maratha clans, as a result of which he accepted British protection by signing the Treaty of Bassein in December 1802 he accepted British protection by signing the Treaty of Bassein in December 1802.

- **Third Anglo Maratha war-(1817-1818)**

The two main causes that led to the third and the final conflict between the British and the Marathas were (1) the growing desire of the Marathas to get back their lost territories and (2) excessive control over Maratha nobles and chiefs by the British. The war took place in Maharashtra and neighbouring areas in the year between 1817 and 1818.



- Religious tolerance and religious pluralism were important pillars of the nation-state since they were fundamental beliefs of Shivaji, the founder of the empire.
- The Maratha Empire was unique in that it did not adhere to the caste system. Here, the Brahmins (priestly class) were the prime ministers of the Kshatriya (warrior class) (Maratha) emperors and Kshatriya

Dhangar (Holkars) were the trusted generals of the Brahmin Peshwas.

- The empire also created a significant navy. At its height this was led by the legendary Kanhoji Angre.

Maratha's administration under Shivaji

- He assigned separate responsibilities to the ministers and each of them was made responsible for his work to him.
- He made no office hereditary.
- He established Ryotwari system in revenue administration. The state kept direct contact with the farmers.

Central administration-

- He had a council of ministers (Asht Pradhari) to advise him on the matters of the state but he was not bound by it. He could appoint or dismiss them. This appointment was subject to their efficiency. The Peshwa was the first among ministers. The word Peshwa stands for leader or senior one.

Provincial administration-

- Shivaji divided his kingdom into four provinces. Each province was under the head called Mamlatdar or Viceroy. Each province was divided into several districts and villages. The village was an organised institution.
- The chief of the village was called Deshpande or Patel.

Revenue system-

- Land in every village was measured and the produce was roughly assessed.
- Wherever possible, Shivaji abolished the jagirdari system.
- Shivaji introduced the collection of two taxes called the Chauth and 'Sardeshmukhi'.
- Chauth' was a military contribution paid toward off any attack of the Marathas. It was, in theory, $\frac{1}{4}$ of revenues of the district invaded but in practice it was sometimes much more than that. Sardeshmukhi was an additional tax of 10% which Shivaji claimed as the hereditary Sardeshmukhi or overlord of Maharashtra.

Judicial administration-

- The highest court was 'Hazar Majils' or the court of the king. The day-to-day administration was carried on by the village Panchayats and the village 'Patel' decided criminal cases.

ASHTAPRADHAN

Council of ministers is known as Ashtapradhan.
There are 8 members in Ashtapradhan.

Peshwa - Head of council
Senapati - Commander of Army
Nyayadhish - Justice
Majumdar - Finance
Pant Sachiv - G. Secretary
Manthri - Head of intelligence
Dandadhyaksha - Religious Matters

Sources-

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Histrydiscussion.net



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