



# Maratha Empire

## From Swarajya to Supremacy

### ORIGIN AND RISE OF THE MARATHAS

- ◆ The **Marathas emerged as a formidable power** in the 17th century in the Deccan region (modern-day Maharashtra).
- ◆ **Founder:** Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj (1630–1680), who established **Hindavi Swarajya** by challenging Mughal and Bijapur rule.
- ◆ **Geographical Extent:** Initially centered in Maharashtra, the Maratha influence expanded to parts of Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, and beyond.
- ◆ **Coronation & Title:** Shivaji assumed the title **Chhatrapati in 1674 at Raigad Fort**, marking the formal establishment of the Maratha Empire.







## PROMINENT RULERS AND THE PESHWA ERA

### Shivaji Maharaj (1630-1680)

- ◆ **Founder** of the Maratha Empire; coronated as **Chhatrapati** in 1674 at Raigad Fort.
- ◆ **Military Strategy:** Guerrilla warfare (**Ganimi Kava**), strong navy under **Kanhoji Angre**.
- ◆ **Administration:**
  - **Ashtapradhan Council** (Eight Ministers) for governance.
  - **Revenue System:** Ryotwari-based, levies like **Chauth** (25% tax) and **Sardeshmukhi** (10% tax).
- ◆ **Key Events:**
  - **Battle of Pratapgarh (1659):** Defeated Afzal Khan of Bijapur.
  - **Treaty of Purandar (1665):** Signed with Raja Jai Singh of Amber.
  - **Escape from Agra (1666):** Outwitted Aurangzeb after being imprisoned.






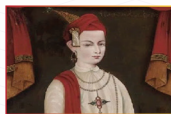


### Prominent Maratha Rulers After Shivaji

Ruler	Reign	Key Contributions
<b>Sambhaji</b> 	1681-1689	Son of <b>Shivaji</b> , known for resisting the <b>Mughal invasion</b> . - Captured and <b>brutally executed by Aurangzeb</b> (1689).
<b>Rajaram</b> 	1689-1700	Fled to <b>Gingee Fort (Tamil Nadu)</b> and continued <b>guerrilla warfare</b> against the Mughals. - Introduced <b>Hukumat Panth</b> , a decentralized administration system.
<b>Tarabai</b> 	1700-1714	- <b>Widow of Rajaram</b> , acted as <b>regent</b> for her minor son <b>Shivaji II</b> . - Led <b>strong resistance</b> against the <b>Mughals</b> and expanded <b>Maratha influence</b> .
<b>Shahu Maharaj</b> 	1707-1749	Released by <b>Bahadur Shah I</b> (Aurangzeb's successor). - Emerged victorious in a <b>succession struggle</b> against <b>Tarabai</b> . - <b>Shifted power to Peshwas</b> , appointing <b>Balaji Vishwanath (1713)</b> as Peshwa, marking the rise of <b>Peshwa dominance</b> .

### The Peshwa Era (1713-1818):

- ◆ **Rise of Peshwaship:**
  - The Peshwas became the **de facto rulers**, overshadowing the Chhatrapati.
  - Expanded Maratha influence through **military campaigns and diplomacy**.

### Notable Peshwas and Their Contributions

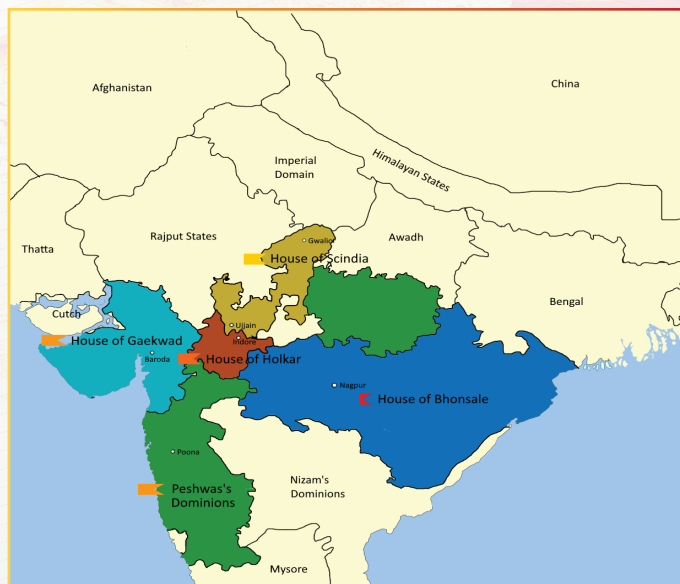
Peshwa	Reign	Key Contributions
<b>Balaji Vishwanath</b> 	1713-1720	Secured <b>Shahu Maharaj's release</b> from Mughal captivity, established <b>hereditary Peshwaship</b> , and strengthened <b>Maratha treasury</b> through diplomacy.
<b>Baji Rao I</b> 	1720-1740	Expanded <b>Maratha power in North India</b> , defeated <b>Mughals &amp; Nizam</b> , and mastered <b>rapid cavalry warfare</b> .
<b>Balaji Baji Rao (Nana Saheb)</b> 	1740-1761	<b>Treaty of Sangola (1750)</b> made the Peshwa supreme. Led Marathas in <b>Third Battle of Panipat (1761)</b> ; <b>Sadashiv Rao Bhau was commander-in-chief</b> , and <b>Vishwas Rao was nominal head</b> but died in battle.
<b>Madhav Rao I</b> 	1761-1772	Revived Marathas <b>post-Panipat</b> , reorganized administration, and defeated <b>Hyder Ali of Mysore</b> .
<b>Nana Phadnavis (Regent)</b> 	1761-1800	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Acted as a <b>chief strategist</b>.</li> <li>- <b>Treaty of Salbai (1782)</b> ensured peace with the <b>British</b> and stabilized Maratha power.</li> <li>- Managed <b>internal conflicts</b> and British expansion.</li> </ul>
<b>Baji Rao II</b> 	1796-1818	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Weak ruler</b>; lost the <b>Second &amp; Third Anglo-Maratha Wars (1802-1818)</b>.</li> <li>- Signed the <b>Treaty of Bassein (1802)</b>, leading to <b>British control over Marathas</b> and eventual annexation.</li> </ul>








## MARATHA CONFEDERACY



- ◆ A **loose confederation of semi-autonomous states** under **Chhatrapati Shahu** and later the **Peshwas**.
- ◆ Though the **Peshwa was the de facto leader**, these regional chiefs exercised **considerable autonomy** while acknowledging the Peshwa's supremacy.
- ◆ The **confederacy played a crucial role** in expanding and defending **Maratha influence** against the **Mughals, British**, and other regional powers.



## KEY MARATHA FAMILIES & THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS

Dynasty	Region	Prominent Personality	Key Contributions
Scindias	Gwalior	Mahadji Scindia 	<p><b>Revived Maratha power post-Third Battle of Panipat (1761).</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Played a key role in <b>Treaty of Salbai (1782)</b> with the British.</li> </ul>
Holkars	Indore	<b>Malhar Rao Holkar</b>  	<p><b>Malhar Rao Holkar:</b> General of <b>Baji Rao I</b>, expanded <b>Maratha rule in Malwa</b>, and founded <b>Holkar dynasty in Indore</b>.</p> <p><b>- Ahilyabai Holkar:</b> Ruled for nearly <b>three decades</b>, British historian <b>John Keyas</b> hailed Ahilyabai as "<b>The Philosopher Queen</b>", recognizing her <b>political acumen and leadership</b>. Her reign was a <b>golden era of public welfare and temple restoration</b>.</p> <p><b>- Key Temple Contributions:</b> Kashi Vishwanath (Varanasi), Old Somnath temple (Gujarat), Vishnupad (Gaya) and Maheshwar Temples (Madhya Pradesh).</p>
Gaekwads	Baroda	Damaji Gaekwad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Played an important role in Maratha expansion in <b>Gujarat</b>.</li> <li>- Established <b>Baroda as a strong Maratha state</b>.</li> </ul>
Bhonsles	Nagpur	Raghoji Bhonsle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expanded <b>Maratha influence in Central &amp; Eastern India</b>.</li> <li>- Led Maratha campaigns in <b>Bengal and Odisha</b>.</li> </ul>

## IMPORTANT BATTLES IN MARATHA HISTORY



Battle	Year	Outcome & Significance
<b>Battle of Pratapgarh</b>	1659	Shivaji defeated Afzal Khan (Adilshahi), marking the rise of Maratha power.
<b>Battle of Purandar</b>	1665	Treaty with Mughals; Shivaji surrendered 23 forts but later regained prominence.
<b>Battle of Sinhagad (Kondana Fort)</b>	1670	Marathas, led by <b>Tanaji Malusare</b> , recaptured the fort from Mughals. <b>Tanaji sacrificed his life</b> , and the fort was renamed Sinhagad.
<b>Battle of Salher</b>	1672	<b>First major open-field victory</b> of Marathas over the Mughals in North India.
<b>Battles of Sambhaji Maharaj</b>	1681-1689	<b>Burhanpur (1681)</b> – Plundered Mughal trade hub. <b>Wai (1687)</b> – Fought against Mughals but retreated. <b>Sangameshwar (1689)</b> – Captured & executed by Aurangzeb.
<b>Battle of Khed</b>	1707	<b>Shahu vs. Tarabai</b> for succession; Shahu emerged victorious.
<b>Battle of Palkhed</b>	1728	<b>Baji Rao I</b> decisively defeated the <b>Nizam of Hyderabad</b> , showcasing superior military strategy.
<b>Battle of Vasai</b>	1739	Marathas <b>defeated the Portuguese</b> and captured Vasai Fort, expanding control over the western coast.
<b>Third Battle of Panipat</b>	1761	<b>Ahmad Shah Abdali</b> defeated the Marathas.
<b>Battle of Wadgaon</b>	1779	<b>Marathas defeated the British</b> ; led to the <b>Treaty of Wadgaon</b> , one of the rare British defeats in India.
<b>First Anglo-Maratha War</b>	1775-1782	<b>Treaty of Salbai (1782)</b> – Maintained status quo between Marathas & British.
<b>Second Anglo-Maratha War</b>	1803-1805	<b>British victory</b> ; <b>Treaty of Bassein (1802)</b> weakened Maratha sovereignty.
<b>Third Anglo-Maratha War</b>	1817-1818	<b>British completely defeated the Marathas</b> ; Peshwa <b>Baji Rao II</b> was <b>exiled</b> , marking the end of Maratha rule.

## DECLINE OF MARATHA POWER

The decline of the Marathas was a result of multiple internal weaknesses and external pressures. **Key reasons include:**

- ♦ **Weak Leadership:** After **Madhav Rao I's death (1772)**, ineffective rulers like **Baji Rao II** failed to maintain administrative and political stability.
- ♦ **Lack of All-India Vision:** Unlike the **Mughals or the British**, the Marathas did not establish a centralized empire. They focused on **plunder-based expansion** rather than long-term governance, administration, or cultural integration.



- ◆ **Internal Rivalries:** The **Maratha Confederacy** (Scindias, Holkars, Gaekwads, Bhonsles) lacked unity, with frequent power struggles between the Peshwas and regional chiefs.
- ◆ **Hostile Neighbors & Lack of Political Alliances:** The Marathas had **few stable allies** and were constantly at war with the **Nizam, Mysore, Rohillas, and British**, stretching their resources. Unlike the Mughals, they failed to build a broad coalition of support.
- ◆ **Economic Decline:** Continuous wars drained resources, while loss of fertile territories (Malwa, Gujarat, Bengal) reduced revenue. Excessive taxation led to local discontent.
- ◆ **Failure to Modernize:** The Marathas relied on **traditional cavalry warfare**, while the British had advanced artillery, modern infantry, and better logistics.
- ◆ **Decline of Naval Power:** The once-powerful **Maratha Navy (Kanhoji Angre)** declined, allowing the British to dominate Indian coasts.
- ◆ **Military Setback (1761): The Third Battle of Panipat** inflicted heavy losses on the Marathas, weakening their military strength and leadership.
- ◆ **British Supremacy:** The British exploited **Maratha infighting**, had superior military technology, disciplined forces, and a strong financial system. **The Anglo-Maratha Wars (1775-1818)** ultimately ended Maratha rule.



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