



IASBABA'S PRELIMS EXCLUSIVE PROGRAM (PEP) 2022

MEDIEVAL HISTORY HANDOUTS



HISTORY – SAMPLE

MARATHAS

Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The emergence and growth of the Maratha state during the 17th century was an important episode in the history of India. • The Territory which includes modern state of Bombay Konkan, Kandesh, Berar, part of Madhya Pradesh, and part of Hyderabad state was Maratha state. • The physical environment of the Maratha country shaped certain peculiar qualities among the Marathas. The mountainous region and dense forests made them brave soldiers and adopt guerilla tactics. The Marathas built a number of forts on the mountains. • The spread of the Bhakti movement in Maharashtra inculcated a spirit of religious unity among them. The spiritual leaders like Tukaram, Ramdas, Vaman Pandit and Eknath fostered social unity. • The political unity was conferred by Shivaji. The Marathas held important positions in the administrative and military systems of Deccan Sultanates of Bijapur and Ahmadnagar. There were a number of influential Maratha families such as the Mores and Nimbalkers. But the credit of establishing a powerful Maratha state goes to Shahji Bhonsle and his son Shivaji.
Shivaji	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shivaji was born at Shivneri in 1627. • His father was Shahji Bhonsle and mother Jija Bai. • He inherited the jagir of Poona from his father in 1637. • After the death of his guardian, Dadaji Kondadev in 1647, Shivaji assumed full charge of his jagir. Even before that he conquered Raigarh, Kondana and Torna from the ruler of Bijapur. • He captured Javli from a Maratha chief, Chanda Rao More. This made him the master of Mavala region. • In 1657, he attacked the Bijapur kingdom and captured a number of hill forts in the Konkan region. • The Sultan of Bijapur sent Afzal Khan against Shivaji, but Afzal Khan was murdered by Shivaji in 1659 in a daring manner. • The Mughal emperor Aurangzeb sent the Mughal governor of the Deccan, Shaista Khan against Shivaji. Shivaji suffered a defeat at the hands of the Mughal forces and lost Poona. But Shivaji once again made a bold attack on Shaista Khan's military camp at Poona in 1663, killed his son and wounded Khan. This daring attack affected the prestige of Khan and he was recalled by Aurangzeb.

- In 1664, Shivaji attacked Surat, the chief port of the Mughals and plundered it. This time Aurangzeb sent Raja Jai Singh of Amber to fight against Shivaji. He made elaborate preparations and succeeded in besieging the Purander fort where Shivaji lodged his family and treasure.
- Shivaji opened negotiations with Jai Singh and the Treaty of Purander was signed in 1665. According to the treaty, Shivaji had to surrender 23 forts to the Mughals out of 35 forts held by him. The remaining 12 forts were to be left to Shivaji on condition of service and loyalty to Mughal empire.
- On the other hand, the Mughals recognized the right of Shivaji to hold certain parts of the Bijapur kingdom. As Shivaji asked to exempt him from personal service to the Mughals, his minor son Shambaji was granted a mansab of 5000.
- Shivaji visited Agra in 1666 but he was imprisoned there, but, he managed to escape from prison and made military preparations and renewed his wars against the Mughals.
- Surat was plundered by him for the second time in 1670. He also captured all his lost territories by his conquests.
- In 1674 Shivaji crowned himself at Raigarh and assumed the title Chatrapathi.
- He led an expedition into the Carnatic region and captured Ginjee and Vellore. After his return from this expedition, Shivaji died in 1680.

Shivaji's administration

- Shivaji had laid the foundation of a sound system of administration and his administrative system was largely borrowed from the administrative practices of the Deccan state.
- Like all other medieval rulers, Shivaji was a despot with all powers concentrated in his hands. He possessed all executive and legislative power.
- Shivaji was a great organizer and constructive civilian administrator. The one of the novelties of Shivaji's administration was the introduction of Maratha language as the state language.

Central Administration

- The king was at the helm of the affairs.
- The administration was divided into eight departments headed by ministers who are sometimes called Ashtapradhan.
- The eight ministers were:
 1. Peshwa who looked after the finances and general administration.
 2. Sari-Naubat who was the Senapati.
 3. Majumdar looked after the accounts.

4. Waqai navis looked after the intelligence, post and household affairs.
5. Surnavis or Chitnis looked after official correspondence.
6. Dabir looked after foreign affairs.
7. Nyayadhish looked after justice.
8. Pandit Rao looked after ecclesiastical affairs.

- The ashtapradhan was not a creation of Shivaji and many of these officers like Peshwa, Majumdar, Waqai navis, Dabir and Surnavis had existed under the Deccani rulers also.
- All the members of the ashtapradhan except Pandit Rao and Nyayadhish were asked to lead military campaigns.
- Under Shivaji these offices were neither hereditary nor permanent and held the office at the pleasure of the king. They were also frequently transferred.
- Each of the ashtapradhan was assisted by eight assistants diwan, Majumdar, Fadnis, Sabnis; Karkhanis, Chitnis, Jamadar and Potnis. Chitnis dealt with all diplomatic correspondences and wrote all royal letters.
- The Fadnis used to respond to the letters of commanders of the forts.
- The Potnis looked after the income and expenditure of the royal treasury.

Provincial and Local Administration

- The provincial administration was also organized on the Deccani and Mughal system.
- All the provincial units already existed under the Deccani rulers. Shivaji reorganized and in certain cases renamed them.
- The provinces were known as Prants. The Prants were under the charge of Subedar.
- Over a number of Subedar there were Sarsubedar to control and supervise the work of Subedar.
- Smaller than Prant were Tarfs which were headed by a Havaladar.
- Under Tarfs there were Mauzas or villages which were the lowest unit of administration.
- At the level of village, Kulkarni used to keep accounts and maintained records while Patil had legal and policing power.
- At the level of Pargana, Deshpande used to keep account and maintain records while Deshmukh had legal and policing powers.
- The Police officer in rural area was called Faujdar and in urban area was called Kotwal.
- The Maratha polity did not have unified civilian-cum-military rank.
- Under the Marathas performance-based Brahmin elites manned the central bureaucracy and the local administration. In this capacity they

were called Kamvisdhar who enjoyed wide powers of tax assessment and collection. They adjudicated cases, provided information about local conditions and kept records. Later on, the British District collector was modelled on this Maratha officer only.

Army

- Cavalry and infantry constituted the primary part of the army.
- The Paga cavalymen were called the Bargirs. They were provided horses by the state while the Silahdars purchased their armies and horses themselves.
- The Paga cavalry was well organized. Twenty-five horsemen formed a unit which was placed under a Havildar.
- Shivaji preferred to give cash salaries to the regular soldiers, though some time the chief received revenue grants.
- Strict discipline was maintained in the army. The plunder taken by each soldier during campaign was strictly accounted for in the army organization of Shivaji.
- Shivaji maintained a navy as well. The navy was divided into two parts and each part was commanded by Darive Nayak and Mai Nayak respectively.

Finance and Revenue

- The revenue system seems to have been patterned on the system of Malik Ambar land revenue; Trade Tax etc. were the primary source of the fixed income of Shivaji.
- But income from these sources was not sufficient to meet the expenditure of the state. Therefore, Shivaji collected the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi from the territory which was either under his enemies or under his own influence.
- The chauth was 1/4 part of the income of the particular territory while the Sardeshmukhi was 1/10. Shivaji collected these taxes simply by force of his army. These taxes constituted primary source of the income of Shivaji and after wards helped in the extension of the power and territory of the Marathas.
- The revenue system of Shivaji was Rytowari in which the state kept direct contact with peasants.
- Shivaji mostly avoided the system of assigning Jagir to his officers and whenever he assigned Jagir to them, the right of collecting the revenue was kept with state officials.

Successors of Shivaji

- There ensued a war of succession after the death of Shivaji between his sons, Shambaji and Rajaram and Shambaji emerged victorious but later

	<p>he was captured and executed by the Mughals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rajaram succeeded the throne but the Mughals made him to flee to the Ginjee fort. He died at Satara. • Rajaram was succeeded by his minor son Shivaji II with his mother Tara Bai as regent. • The next ruler was Shahu in whose reign the Peshwas rose to power.
Peshwas	<p>Balaji Viswanath (1713-1720)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balaji Viswanath began his career as a small revenue official and became Peshwa in 1713. • As Peshwa, he made his position the most important and powerful as well as hereditary. • He played a crucial role in the civil war and finally made Shahu as the Maratha ruler. • He sought the support of all Maratha leaders for Shahu. • In 1719, Balaji Viswanath got certain rights from the then Mughal emperor, Farukh Siyar. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. First, the Mughal emperor recognized Shahu as the Maratha king. 2. Second, he allowed Shahu to collect Chauth and Sardeshmukhi from the six Mughal provinces of the Deccan including the Carnatic and Mysore. <p>Baji Rao I (1720-1740)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baji Rao was the eldest son of Balaji Viswanath and he succeeded his father as Peshwa at the age young of twenty. • The Maratha power reached its zenith under him. • He initiated the system of confederacy among the Maratha chiefs. Under this system, each Maratha chief was assigned a territory which could be administered autonomously. • As a result, many Maratha families became prominent and established their authority in different parts of India. • They were the Gaekwad at Baroda, the Bhonsle at Nagpur, the Holkars at Indore, the Scindias at Gwalior, and the Peshwas at Poona. <p>Balaji Baji Rao (1740-1761)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balaji Baji Rao succeeded his father as Peshwa at the young age of nineteen. • The Maratha king Shahu died in 1749 without issue. His nominated successor Ramraja was imprisoned by the Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao at Satara. • The full control of the Maratha kingdom came under the Peshwa. • Peshwa entered into an agreement with the Mughal Emperor in 1752. According to it, the Peshwa gave assurance to the Mughal Emperor that he would protect the Mughal Empire from internal and external enemies

for which the Chauth of the northwest provinces and the total revenue of the Agra and Ajmer provinces would be collected by the Marathas.

- Thus, when Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded India, it became the responsibility of the Marathas to protect India. The Marathas fought very bravely against Ahmad Shah Abdali in the third Battle of Panipat in 1761. But they got defeated. Many Maratha leaders and thousands of soldiers died in this battle.
- Balaji Baji Rao also died on hearing the news of defeat at the battle of Panipat. Also, this battle gave a deadly blow to the Maratha power. Thereafter, the Maratha confederacy weakened due to internal conflicts among the Maratha chiefs.

The Bhonsles

- The line at Nagpur Bhonsles was subordinate to the Satara rulers.
- A crucial figure from this line was Raghuji Bhonsle (ruled 1727-55), who was responsible for the Maratha incursions on Bengal and Bihar in the 1740s and early 1750s.
- The relations of his successors, Janoji, Sabaji, and Mudhoji, with the Peshwas and the Satara line of Bhonsles were varying, and it is in this sense that these domains can be regarded as only loosely confederated, rather than tightly bound together.
- Other subordinate rulers who emerged under the overarching umbrella provided by the Satara ruler and his Peshwa were equally somewhat opportunistic in their use of politics.

The Gaikwads

- The Gaikwads, gathered prominence in the 1720. Initially they were subordinate not only to the Bhonsles but also to the powerful Dabhade family.
- However, it was only after the death of Sahu, when the power of the Peshwas was further enhanced, that the position of the Gaikwads truly improved.
- By the early 1750s, their rights on large portion of the revenues of Gujarat were recognized by the Peshwa.
- The expulsion of the Mughal governor of the Gujarat province from his capital of Ahmadabad in 1752 set the seal on the process.
- The Gaikwads preferred, however, to establish their capital in Baroda, causing realignment in the network of trade and consumption in the area.
- The rule at Baroda of Damaji (1768) was followed by a period of some turmoil.
- The Gaikwads still remained partly dependent on Pune and the Peshwa, especially to intervene in moments of succession crisis.

- The eventual successor of Damaji, Fateh Singh (ruled 1771- 89), did not remain allied to the Peshwa for long in the late 1770s and early 1780s, and chose to negotiate a settlement with the English East India Company, which eventually led to increased British interference in his affairs.
- By 1800, the British rather than the Peshwa were the final arbiters in determining succession among the Gaikwads, who became subordinate rulers under them in the nineteenth century.

The Holkars

- Initially the Holkars had very little political power. However, by 1730s their chief Malhar Rao Holkar consolidated his position. He was granted a large share of the chauth collection in Malwa, eastern Gujarat, and Khandesh.
- Within a few years, Malhar Rao consolidated his own principality at Indore, from which his successors controlled important trade routes as well as the crucial trading centre of Burhanpur.
- After Malhar Rao, control of the dynastic fortunes fell largely to his son's widow, Ahalya Bai, who ruled from 1765 to 1794 and brought Holkar power to great glory.

The Sindhias

- The Sindhias carved a prominent place for themselves in North Indian politics in the decades following the third battle of Panipat (1761).
- The Sindhias were based largely in central India, first at Ujjain, and later (from the last quarter of the 18th century) in Gwalior.
- During the long reign of Mahadaji Sindhia (1761-94) family's fortunes were truly consolidated.
- Mahadaji, proved an effective and innovative military commander. He employed a large number of European soldiers in his force. His power grew rapidly after 1770.
- He managed to make substantial inroads into North India that had been weakened by Afghan attacks.
- He intervened with some effect in the Mughal court during the reign of Shah Alam II. The Mughal king made him the "deputy regent" of his affairs in the mid-1780s.
- His shadow fell not only across the provinces of Delhi and Agra but also on Rajasthan and Gujarat, making him the most formidable Maratha leader of the era.
- The officials of the East India Company were very cautious in dealing with him. His relations with the acting Peshwa, Nana Fadnavis at Pune were fraught with tension.
- Eventually, the momentum generated by Mahadaji could not be

	<p>maintained by his successor Daulat Rao Sindhia (1794-1827), who was defeated by the British and forced by treaty in 1803 to surrender his territories both to the north and to the west.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The careers of some of these potentates, especially Mahadaji Sindhia, illustrate the potency of Mughal symbols even in the phase of Mughal decline. For instance, after recapturing Gwalior from the British, Mahadaji took care to have his control of the town sanctioned.
Decline	<p>After the decline of the Mughal Empire, the Marathas emerged as a great power in India but they could not succeed in preventing the establishment of British power in India. The important causes for the downfall were that there was lack of unity among the Maratha chiefs like Holkar, Scindia and Bhonsle. Also, the superiority of the British army and fighting methods ultimately won.</p>