

RISE OF THE PESHWAS: BALAJI VISHWANATH

Unit Structure :

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Rise of Balaji Vishwanath (1662-1720)
- 1.3 Sanad from Mughal Emperor
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1.1 INTRODUCTION

Aurangzeb's wish to abolish Shivaji Maharaj's Swarajya was not fulfilled till the end. Azam Shah, who became emperor after the death of Aurangzeb released Shahu from the captivity of the Mughals on 18 May 1707. When Shahu came to Maharashtra he secured support from many distinguished chieftains. But in all this he was greatly helped by Balaji Vishwanath. The difficulties of Chhatrapati Shahu and the great political unrest of Maharashtra are the chief factors in the rise of the Peshwas. Their rise is neither phenomenal nor accidental. They gradually worked their way up from an ordinary position to the headship of the state and eventually became real ruler after the death of Shahu. Balaji Vishwanath was the founder of the House of the Peshwas.

1.2 RISE OF BALAJI VISHWANATH (1662-1720)

Balaji Vishwanath started his career as an ordinary revenue clerk under Ramchandra Pant Amatya. He belonged to Chitpavana Brahmin family of Shrivardhan. He was employed as a clerk in the salt pans there. From 1699 to 1708 he worked as Subhedar in Poona and Aurangbad. It was during this time that Balaji came in contact with Shahu who was still in captivity.

After Shahu's release Balaji Vishwanath supported his claims of kingship. He gathered support for Shahu. After the death of Aurangzeb, Shahu was released from his captivity. Tarabai, the widow of Rajaram who ruled in the name of her son Shivaji took the stand against Shahu. She was not ready to relinquish her authority. Tarabai sent Maratha general Dhanaji Jadhav to attack Shahu. Balaji Vishwanath was sent by Dhanaji Jadhav to

meet Shahu secretly and verify his honesty. Balaji convinced Dhanaji Jadhav that Shahu was no imposter and that he was the true heir to the throne. He also persuaded Dhanaji to support Shahu's work. Instead of attacking Shahu, Dhanaji Jadhav declared him the heir to the Maratha throne. Maharani Tarabai was defeated at the battle of Khed. During the period of civil war Balaji had shown great organizing and negotiating skills.

He provided great military and diplomatic help to Shahu especially through negotiations. He brought in Dhanaji Yadav, the first major leader to support Shahu. He led the military expedition against Dhanaji's son's revolt. After appointment as Peshwa, in 1713, it was Balaji Vishwanath who negotiated in the Konkan with Kanoji Angre, who was Tarabai's main supporter. When Angre switched sides, Tarabai's support collapsed and she was imprisoned. Balaji Vishwanath also led Shahu's army against the Mughal forces led by the Nizam, in 1713-15. Balaji Vishwanath diminished the importance of older Deshmukh families and paved way for the rise of new Maratha and Brahmin families for future administrative set up.

Role of Balaji Vishwanath in Civil War

During the civil war Balaji had shown great organizing capacity and negotiating skills. Therefore Shahu felt that Balaji alone could bring everything to order. After Dhanaji's death his son Chandrasen Jadhav was made the senapati. Chandrasen was found to be leaning towards Tarabai. Although Tarabai had been defeated at Khed, she was bent upon regaining her power and had established herself at Kolhapur. Shahu suspecting Chandrasen created the new office of Senakarte (organizer of the army) and appointed Balaji to it in 1712. Chandrasen Jadhav got the support of other important men and tried to create a serious threat to Shahu. Balaji borrowed large sums of money, recruited troops and defeated them. Meanwhile, Tarabai was removed from the scene by a political conspiracy. Rajasbai, Rajaram's second wife and her son Sambhaji II put Tarabai and her son Shivaji II in prison. Sambhaji II was put on the throne of Kolhapur in 1714.

1.3 SANAD FROM MUGHAL EMPEROR

By 1716 it was clear that Mughal troops in Maharashtra were not winning against the unifying Maratha sardars. The new Peshwa, Balaji Vishwanath, asked the Mughal Emperor for a sanad, granting Shahu the right to chauth and sardeshmukhi of the government revenue throughout the six Mughal subahs of the Deccan (Aurangabad, Berar, Bidar, Golconda, and Bijapur - including the whole of the Karnatak - and Khandesh). The demand also included chauth of Malwa and Gujarat, and recognition of swaraj (independence) in the Maharashtra. Recent conquests by Parsoji Bhonsle in Berar and Gondwana were to be confirmed and certain territories in the Karnatak were demanded in the name of Fateh Singh Bhonsle.

- 1) All the territories known as king Shivaji's Swarajya and taken away by Aurangzeb were to be returned to Shahu.
- 2) Right to collect Chauth and Sardeshmukhi throughout the six province of the Deccan i.e. Aurangabad, Berar, Khandesh Bidar, Golkonda, Bijapur, which included the whole of Karnatak and the tributary states of Mysore, Tanjore and Trichinopoly.
- 3) Balaji wanted the right to collect Chauth from Malwa and Gujarat.
- 4) In return Balaji agreed to maintain 15,000 troops to help the emperor and to pay Rs. 10 lakh per year Mughal emperor.

This proposal was immediately accepted with the exception of claims of Malwa and Gujarat. The Emperor comprehended the significance of this treaty. It practically meant complete loss of imperial authority in the Deccan on the one hand and strengthening the position of the Sayyids on the other hand. Therefore Farrukhsiyer refused to ratify this treaty. He prepared for a war against the Sayyid Brothers. Balaji joined Sayyid Brothers with the Maratha army against Farrukhsiyer. Balaji along with his son Baji Rao I marched to Delhi. On 27th February 1719, the Sayyid brothers surrounded the palace with their troops and seized the emperor. As soon as the Palace revolution was over, the Sayyid brothers ratified the treaty. The formal sanad, of swarajya, chauth was granted and Shahu's mother and other family members were released in March 1719.

Balaji returned to the Deccan in May 1719 where a grand welcome by Shahu awaited him. He had obtained recognition of the claims for which the Mughal Maratha struggle had continued for over two decades. The treaty was a triumph for Shahu and Balaji. Shahu's claim was recognized by the Mughals. It gave him a distinct advantage over his rival Sambhaji II and made the other Maratha chieftains look up to him as the fountain of authority. By this treaty Shahu's position as the sole sovereign of the Maratha power was established. However many historians have disagreed and stated that Shahu agreed to remain a vassal of the Mughal emperor instead of following King Chhatrapati Shivaji's policy of absolute independence. Some historian's state that while king Shivaji fought for an independent Maratha state, his grandson acting on the advice of the Peshwas threw away the jewel of liberty in exchange of accepting Mughal suzerainty. However it can be seen as a diplomatic move as Shahu and Balaji had to act accordingly to the need of the time. By tendering nominal obedience to the Emperor, they could extend their territory much further.

The grant of the right of collecting chauth and sardeshmukhi from the six subahs of the Deccan to the Marathas by the Mughals in 1719 also favoured the growth of the Maratha confederacy. The Marathas were given the right of collecting these and they were also required to maintain peace and order in their territories. Balaji divided the different part of the Deccan excluding Swarajya among the various Maratha sardars. Balaji himself was to collect chauth and sardeshmukhi from Khandesh and part of Balaghat. Gujarat was assigned to the senapati, Berar and Gondwana to the Bhonsle of Nagpur, Satara to the Pratinidhi, and Karnatak to

Fatehsingh Bhonsle. They were to collect Chauth and Sardeshmukhi from their territories. They administered their assigned territory and appropriated its revenue towards the maintenance of their troops. They also contributed a small share to the Royal treasury. This arrangement, however, left too much authority in the hands of these chiefs. It was under these circumstances that the state formed by Balaji Vishwanath was later on called Maratha confederacy which was responsible for the speedy expansion of the Maratha power and its rapid dissolution.

Admiral Angre Joined Shahu

According to G. A. Kincaid Balaji Vishwanath formed view that the royal government was no longer strong enough to follow King Shivaji's administrative system under which the king aided by eight ministers was the sole ruler in his dominions. He was of opinion that King should give his nobles grants of land instead of that and allow them within their confines to act as vassal princes. Shahu accepted his minister's advice regarding the change. Balaji invested with full powers and met Maratha admiral at Lonavla. The two had kindly feelings for each other from the days when Balaji Vishwanath lived in the Konkan. He was confirmed in the title of Sarkhel of the royal fleet and was allowed to retain Rajmachi and a number of lesser forts in the Konkan. At the same time Balaji joined his forces with Angre's and the combined armies invaded the Sidis possessions on the western coast. The Sidis were rapidly driven out of Shrivardhan, Balaji's birthplace, and several other points on the coast. Subsequently, Angre became an allied confederate of the king.

1.4 ABILITY OF BALAJI VISHWANATH

Balaji Vishwanath did great efforts for Maratha power. When he came to power, the Maratha state was suffering from a civil war. But he made it peaceful. He re-conquered Maratha territories from the Mughals without fighting and he influenced the Mughal power on the strength of the Maratha army. He strengthened Shahu's position on his throne. He won Shahu's confidence and people's respect with loyalty and honesty. Balaji Vishwanath fought hard for the Mughal grant of 1719 because it gave full legal status for revenue collection to Shahu's government in much of India south of the Narmada river. The grant represented moderate real assets and huge potential assets which could be dispensed to loyal followers. Conversely, it was only Shahu's government which could remove disloyal men from saranjams. Though the process was not completed until about 1740, the Peshwa, in the name of Shahu, managed to force all new and continued grants - saranjams, deshmukhi, patil, inam, and others - through the central Maratha government.

According to Stewart Gordon, Balaji Vishwanath patronized other Chitpavan Brahmins who formed the core of a rapidly expanding literate elite who filled jobs as tax collectors and administrators. Records-keeping was spotty before, but quickly regularized thereafter. This performance-based Brahmin elite was intermarried with and loyal to the peshwas and provided not just administrators, but a surprising number of military

leaders in the coming decades. The second requirement which Balaji Vishwanath brought to Shahu was banking and credit facilities. His two great diplomatic trials were the negotiations with Kanhoji Angre and the treaty of Delhi. It was his statesmanship, which brought order out of chaos and upheld the national interest and preserved the unity of Maratha state. Balaji Vishwanath may without any exaggeration be termed as the second founder of the Maratha Empire. Without his directing brain, Shahu would not have survived the civil war even for a year.

1.5 SUMMARY

Balaji Vishwanath provided great military and diplomatic help to Shahu especially through negotiations. He brought in Dhanaji Yadav, the first major leader to support Shahu. During the civil war Balaji had shown great organizing capacity and negotiating skills. Therefore Shahu felt that Balaji alone could bring everything to order. The grant of the right of collecting chauth and sardeshmukhi from the six subahs of the Deccan to the Marathas by the Mughals. They were given the right of collecting these and they were also required to maintain peace and order in their territories. Balaji divided the different part of the Deccan excluding Swarajya among the various Maratha sardars.

1.6 QUESTIONS

- 1) Evaluate the achievements of Peshwa Balaji Vishwanath in consolidating Maratha power
- 2) Draw life sketch of Peshwa Balaji Vishwanath.

1.7 REFERENCES

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PESHWA BAJIRAO FIRST

Unit structure :

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Rise of the Peshwa Bajirao first
- 2.3 Achievements of Peshwa
- 2.4 Expansion Policy of Bajirao
- 2.5 Conflict between Bajirao and Nizam
- 2.6 Battle of Palkhed
- 2.7 Campaign of Karnataka
- 2.8 Treaty of Varna
- 2.9 Campaign of Gujarat and Malwa
- 2.10 Attacks on Delhi
- 2.11 Battle of Bhopal
- 2.12 Campaign against Siddhi
- 2.13 Defeat of Portuguese
- 2.14 End of Bajirao
- 2.15 Achievements of Bajirao
- 2.16 Conclusion
- 2.17 Questions
- 2.18 References

2.0 OBJECTIVES

1. To study the rise and Mission of Bajirao first.
2. To sort the information about Bajirao first and Nizam relation.
3. To study the expansion of Bajirao first during his Reign.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the history of Maratha, the rise of Balaji Vishwanath was one of the important incidences as the position of Chhatrapati came to an end and the Peshwa became the ultimate power in Swaraj. Balaji Vishwanath became the first Peshwa, he played an important role to secure the position of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj and also played a key role in stabilizing the Maratha empire. He established the Maratha Mandal for the smooth functioning of the Maratha administration. He brought the Chauthai and Sardeshmukhi Sanad from the Mughals. He conquered many areas and expanded the Maratha empire. After the succession of Balaji Vishwanath, his elder son Bajirao First became the Peshwa of the Maratha empire. At the age of 20 Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj appointed him as Peshwa. Bajirao First is known for his bravery. Through this unit, we will understand his vision and mission for the expansion of Maratha's power.

2.2 THE RISE OF PESHWA BAJIRAO FIRST

Peshwa Bajirao First was born on 18th August 1700. He was known as Bajirao Ballal. He was the son of Balaji Vishwanath and Radhabai. Due to the early death of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj, All the power of Peshwa came under the control of Bajirao first. He was very much inspired by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and his Vision and Mission. The vision of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj was to expand the Swaraj beyond the river Narmada in the north. Bajirao First got success to expand the territory of Marathas beyond the river Narmada in the north. From his early childhood, he was very sharp and intelligent, he got military training from his father. He became a visionary leader at an early age. Bajirao conquered many parts and he won all the battles because of his own bravery and expanded Maratha Swaraj in the north. After the death of Balaji Vishwanath, an issue of the position of Peshwa was discussed in the court of Shahu Maharaj regarding who should be given the responsibility of Peshwa after the death of Balaji Vishwanath in his Court. Many strategists, Sardars were in court but he has chosen the young dynamic Bajirao First as Peshwa. The other Maratha Sardars like Shripad Pratinidhi, Sumanth, Nauroji, Khanderao Dhabhade, and Kanhoji Bhosle opposed Bajirao First in the court of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj. They gave various reasons to Shahu Maharaj that he is very arrogant and he has no patience to handle the position of Peshwa. Therefore, this responsibility should not be given to Bajirao First but Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj gave the responsibility to Bajirao First on 17th April 1720.

The Policy of Expansion:

Bajirao First had taken all the lessons of Administration and the training of the military from his father as he was involved in many campaigns with his father in his early childhood. He had been taught the Strategy of War by his father. After assuming the power of Peshwa he started the expansion of his Maratha Empire towards the north and targeted the Mughals. He knew that the Mughal Empire was in trouble and it was going to be an end he was also well aware of the Puppet position of the

Mughal Badshah. In the name of welfare lot of corruption was started in Mughal Army. In addition, because of the luxurious life of the Mughal emperor, the situation of the entire empire became worst. Instead of concentration on Chauthai and Sardeshmukhi he had changed his policy about the expansion of power through the attacking policy it came with more effective for the expansion of Maratha power Bajirao first decided that the Mughal Empire was going to be an end there for we have to take advantage to established the dominance of Maratha over the Mughal power his policy of expansion was not accepted by the other Maratha sardars in the court of Shahu Maharaj even though the Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj was closed to Mughals there for he was also not in favour of the attacking policy of Bajirao first on this issue the long discussion was held in the court of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj at Satara but Bajirao became success to explain how his policy is important for the expansion of Maratha power and it was agreed by Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj of Bajirao first won following battles.

1. 1723 Battle of Malwa
2. 1727 Battle of Dhar and Aurangabad
3. 1728 Battle of Palkhed
4. 1741 Battle of Ahmednagar
5. 1736 Battle of Udaipur
6. 1737 Battle of Peshawar, Kandahar- Kabul and Baluchistan
7. 1738 Battle of Bhopal
8. 1739 Battle of Bassain

Apart from the above important battles Bajirao conquered a total of 47 battles and he owned all the battles therefore, he is known as Ajinkya. He was never defeated in any battle.

2.5 THE CONFLICT BETWEEN BAJIRAO AND NIZAM

When Bajirao First came to power, he decided the policy that he had to expand his power toward the north and secure the empire in the South. In the South, the Nizam-ul- Mulk was trying to capture the Mughal territory and trying to dominate the south. When Bajirao was busy in the campaign of Karnataka in 1726, the Nizam of Hyderabad started to attack Kolhapur and captured the territory of the Marathas. The subjects of the Marathas suffered a lot due to the attack of Nizam in Maharashtra. When Bajirao first came back from the Karnataka campaign in Maharashtra then the situation rapidly changed. Bajirao start attack on the territory of Nizam in Marathwada.

2.7 CAMPAIGN OF KARNATAKA

Peshwa Bajirao First

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj was very much conscious about the security of Swarajya and peace in the neighborhood. Therefore, to the Swarajya. He decided to annex Karnataka. Accordingly, Shahu Maharaj decided to attack Karnataka, and the campaign was arranged under the supreme commander of Fatesingh Bhosale, Bajirao Peshwa, and other Maratha leaders. This campaign was started with a 50,000-thousand army. Bajirao captured the region of Karnataka along with the other Maratha sardars. When Bajirao was busy in the campaign of Karnataka at that time Nizam started to oppose the Marathas for their claim of Chouthai and Sardeshmukhi and also made a strategy against Shahu Maharaj and took help from his enemy. Nizam was successful in his strategy and brought together Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj second, the Chhatrapati of Kolhapur and Chandrasen Jadhav. Unitedly they attacked Pune. When Bajirao came to know about this attack he came back to Swaraj to the left halfway through the Karnataka campaign. This campaign did not get any success for Bajirao because he came back to Maharashtra to stop Nizam's attack on Swaraj. Bajirao first launched an attack on Nizam; he attacked Vaijapur near Aurangabad and looted Nizam's supply of grain even stopping the supply of water to Nizam's army. The Nizam faced a severe shortage of food grains and water. Bajirao and Nizam came in front of each other at Palkhed near Paithan in Aurangabad. On 15 February 1728, Bajirao defeated the Nizam in the battle of Palkhed near Paithan. Nizam surrendered to Bajirao therefore, on 6 March 1728, Nizam had to sign a treaty with Bajirao at Mungi -Shevgaon near Paithan and accepted all the conditions.

2.9 CAMPAIGN OF MALWA

Bajirao wanted to expand his empire towards Northern India therefore; he organized the campaign of Malwa in 1723 with the support of major Maratha sardars, including Ranoji Shinde, Malharrao Holkar, Udajirao Pawar, Tukojirao Pawar, and Jivajirao Pawar. These Maratha sardars have collected Chauthai from various parts of the Malwa province.

Malwa was under the control of the Mughals therefore, to counter the Maratha influences; the Mughal emperor appointed Girdhar Bahadur as governor of Malwa.

Bajirao wanted to capture Malwa and expand the Maratha Empire toward North India. Accordingly, he turned his attention towards Malwa and consigned a large army under the leadership of his younger brother Chimaji Appa along with trusted generals Udaji Pawar and Malharrao Holkar. On 24th November 1728, the Maratha forces reached the southern bank of the Narmada River and crossed the river, and encamped near Dharmapuri, on 27th November they crossed the Ghat near Manda and took a halt at Nalchik. The Mughal forces under the Girdhar Bahadur and his cousin Daya Bahadur prepared to oppose the Maratha army. According to the understanding of Girdhar Bahadur that the Maratha army will pass the ghats near Manda fort and climb the ghats near Ajmera; therefore, they

moved towards Ajmera and took up the strong position there. But as per their expectation, it has not happened. On 29th November Battle of Ajmera was fought between Marathas and the Mughals, Chimaji Appa the younger brother of Bajirao defeated the Mughals. Both Girdhar Bahadur and Daya Bahadur were killed, and the Mughal camp was plundered; 18 elephants, horses, drums, and other loot were taken by the Marathas. It was the big victory of the Marathas; this news reached to Bajirao who was visiting the King Chhatrasal of Bundelkhand.

Gujarat:

After capturing the Malwa, Bajirao concentrated his attention on the wealthy province of Gujarat. Accordingly, under the leadership of Chimaji Appa, the Maratha forces were sent to Gujarat in 1730 to assert the Maratha rights to collect taxes. The governor of Gujarat Sarbuland Khan ceded the right to collect Chauth to the Marathas. The ancestors of Trimbakrao Dabhade a commander-in-chief of Shahu Maharaj had raided Gujarat several times and asserted their right to collect taxes from the province. Bajirao wanted control over Gujarat which was challenged by two other Maratha nobles from Gujarat, Damaji Gaekwad, and Dabhade. Bajirao learned that Gaekwad and Dabhade were preparing for an open fight against Bajirao on the issue of the collection of Chauthai rights in Gujarat province. Dabhade was claiming that collecting Chauth from Gujarat was his hereditary right. Bajirao repeatedly sent messages to Dabhade and Gaekwad to resolve the dispute in a peaceful way in the court of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj. But Dabhade was stiff and stubborn, not responding to Bajirao's proposal, and started to organize a force of 40 thousand against Bajirao, and Bajirao's army was just 25 thousand. Bajirao became angry with Trimbakrao Dabhade because he joins to Mughal troops and dishonored Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj, therefore, Bajirao struck at the allied forces of Dabhade, Gaekwad, and Bande on April, 1, 1731 at Dabhoi. During the battle, a bullet pierced Trimbakrao Dabhade's head and he collapsed from the elephant and died on the spot. After the defeat, Bangash who led the Mughals had to retreat back to Delhi and Maratha forces captured the Malwa and Gujarat provinces.

Battle of Bundelkhand:

Bundelkhand was an independent kingdom of king Chhatrasal. It was one of the important kingdoms in central India. King Chhatrasal of Bundelkhand rebelled against the Mughal Empire and established his own kingdom. Therefore, Muhammad Khan Bangash led by Mughal forces attacked Bundelkhand in Dec. 1728. Chhatrasal, the King of Bundelkhand was in trouble, in such circumstances he sought assistance and help from Bajirao Peshwa to save his kingdom. During that period Peshwa Bajirao was busy with the campaign of Malwa. Raja Chhatrasal wrote a letter to Bajirao Peshwa in the following words: "Know you that I am in the same sad plight in which the famous elephant was when caught by the crocodile. My valiant race is on point of extinction. Come and save my honor, Oh, Bajirao". In this letter, he clearly mentioned his situation and

appealed to the Bajirao Peshwa to save his kingdom from the Mughal attack.

Peshwa Bajirao First

Peshwa Bajirao accepted his request and responded to Raja Chhatrasal in March 1729, and marched towards Bundelkhand along with 25,000 army and his lieutenants Pilajirao Jadhav, Tukoji Pawar, Naro Shankar, and Dawalji Somwanshi. When the Maratha forces reached Bundelkhand, Raja Chhatrasal escaped from the capture by the Mughal army and joined the Maratha force. Maratha forces surrounded Muhammad Khan Bangash and cut his supply and communication lines. Muhammad Khan launched a counterattack against Bajirao but Maratha forces defeated Muhammad Khan and his son and forced them to sign an agreement that “he would never attack Bundelkhand again” with the help of Bajirao Peshwa Raja Chhatrasal restored his position as a king of Bundelkhand. In gratitude, King Chhatrasal offered Mastani’s hand to Bajirao and also granted an amount to a third of his kingdom along with a large Jahagir of Jhansi, Sagar, and Kalpi. King of Bundelkhand, Chhatrasal died in Dec. 1731, but before his death, he ceded one-third of his territories to the Marathas. Hence, the Maratha Empire reached up to Doab and Agra.

2.11 BATTLE OF BHOPAL

Battle of Bhopal was one of the important Battle fought between Marathas and Nizam, supporters of the Mughals in 1737. Already Bajirao was declared the expansion policy of Marathas towards north India; therefore, he was marching towards Delhi. The Mughal emperor Muhammad Shah came to know that the Marathas are coming towards Delhi therefore, he sought assistance from the Nizam. Nizam was supported by the Mughals and deployed an army to fight against Bajirao. The Maratha forces were marching towards Delhi but Bajirao came to know that Nizam is preparing to attack the Marathas and sought support from Nasir Jung, he crossed the Narmada in early Dec. 1737 but Maratha forces under Chimaji Appa block the aid to Mughals from the south. Nizam decided to take refuge in Bhopal for his safety because it was a walled town with a lake in its rear to protect its soldiers and artillery. Bajirao planned to cut the outside supplies of Nizam from their allied forces. The Marathas maintained their distance and tormented their lines to protect themselves from the artillery of Nizam. The strategy of the Marathas was to prevent the supplies of aid, food, and artillery to Nizam from the outsiders and they became successful in their strategy as enemy army and their animals were starving. Nizam was unable to hold out the attack of Marathas. Therefore, he decided to surrender and agreed to sign a peace treaty at Doraha-Sarai with the Marathas in January 1739. Nizam-ul-Mulk agreed to hand over the entire Malwa, including all Jagirs to the Peshwa, as well as procure fifty lakhs in war expenditures for the Bajirao Peshwa and also accepted other humiliating and insulting conditions to sign the treaty. It was a great victory for the Marathas and the popularity of the Peshwa Bajirao first increased he became famous throughout the whole country for this victory.

Bajirao's Attack on Delhi:

After the great victory over the Nizam at Bhopal, the Maratha troops under the leadership of Bajirao First marched towards Delhi. In the first week of April 1737, the Maratha cavalry without any warning appeared outside Delhi. Bajirao decided to dash to Delhi in 1737 so suddenly that panic gripped the city. The Mughal emperor Muhammad Shah came to know that the Marathas reached Delhi and he will be captured in their attack, therefore, boats were kept ready for the escape of the Mughal emperor to save his life from the Marathas, Nearly 4000 troops were left to guard the Emperor with arrangements made for a quick getaway. On 9th April 1737, Bajirao and his troops had camped near Talkatora. On the midnight of 9/10 April 1737, the Mughal troops led by Amir Khan began entrancing themselves from the gates of the city towards the Talkatora grove. Guns were placed at regular intervals to lend strength to the defences. By dawn, the Mughals were ready to receive the Maratha attack. But they did not come forward; Maratha's cavalry had already withdrawn southwards. The Mughal commander Amir Khan was quite content to remain defensive. Bajirao was waiting for them to come within the range of his light swivel guns that discharged arrows and ordered the Maratha troops to retreat. When Mughal forces came under their range towards Talkatora, suddenly Maratha forces turned back and fell on the Mughals with their lances and straight swords. In this attack, the casualties from the Maratha side were only one officer being slightly wounded and from the Mughal side, 12 Mughal nobles were killed and over 600 Mughal soldiers lost their lives. In this battle, Bajirao collected a war booty of 2000 horses, one elephant, and several firearms. It was a big victory for Bajirao. The intention of Bajirao to attack Delhi capital of the Mughals was not only to capture it but just to create fear among the Mughals.

2.12 CAMPAIGN AGAINST SIDDHIS OF JANJIRA

Janjira was the only sea fort in the western coast which was remained unconquered by the Marathas, Britishers, and Dutch and Portuguese powers. Till the death of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in 1680, the Siddhis of Janjira controlled up to the Janjira but later on, they started to expand their power to the central and northern Konkan area under the strong leadership of Yakut Khan, the chief of Siddhis. But after the death of Yakut Khan in 1733, a conflict was started for succession among his son. Abdul Rehman, one of his sons approached Bajirao first and sought his help. Accordingly, Bajirao sent Maratha force under the leadership of Shekhoji Angre who was a son of Kanhoji Angre. The Maratha forces regained control of several portions of Konkan and besieged Janjira. Unfortunately, in August 1733 Shekhoji Angre died and Maratha's position became weak. Therefore, Bajirao signed a peace treaty with Siddhi subject to the condition that he should be allowed to accept Abdul Rehman as the ruler; and Bajirao also allowed Siddhi to retain control over Janjira, Anjanvel, Gowalkot, and Underi. But Siddhis of Janjira was not satisfied with the treaty. Soon after the Peshwa Bajirao returned to Satara, Siddhi started to recapture their lost territories. Therefore, Bajirao first

launched a campaign against the Siddhis of Janjira in the year 1736 under the leadership of Chimaji Appa. The Maratha warrior Chimaji Appa was a younger brother of Bajirao first who attacked Siddhis near Rewas in April 1736. When the battle ended around 1500 soldiers of Siddhis including their leader Siddhi Sat were killed in the attack of Marathas again in June 1736 Bajirao first dispatched additional forces towards Janjira under Yesaji Gaikwad, Dhanaji Thorat, and Sidoji Barge to get control over Anjanvel, Gawalkot, and surrounding area. Again on September 25, 1736, the Siddhis of Janjira signed a peace treaty with Bajirao which confined them to Janjira, Gawalkot, and Anjanvel. However, the Maratha did not have control over the Janjira fort, though they captured nearby and surrounding areas of Janjira.

Bajirao's attack on Portuguese:

In the 18th century, the Mughals were becoming weak and Marathas were rising in Deccan. They had a powerful Navy under Admiral Kanhoji Angre, who had gone against every colonial navy in India and came out undefeated. During the reign of Bajirao, he attacked the Portuguese and compelled them to the treaty. According to the treaty, the Portuguese gave Marathas 240 villages, 8 cities, 20 ports, and two famous places of Thane and Basin. The defeat of the Portuguese was a great setback to the Britishers and they were afraid and made a treaty with Marathas because of the domination of Bajirao and his army power. Accordingly, the sovereignty of Marathas established on the western coast. The Maratha army general Chimaji Appa a younger brother of Bajirao Peshwa laid siege to Bassein. The outpost around it, like Dharavi, was taken and overland supply lines were cut off. Finally, in May 1739 under the Maratha army General Chimaji Appa attacked from their north camp and blocked Crick of Bassein, Portuguese decided to defend against the Maratha attack and they took advantage of Bassein fort which was surrounded by sea water from three sides and one side land as a safe place to defend Maratha attack. The mines detonated and Marathas poured into the fort. The Portuguese fought valiantly and had the advantage of better arms. The Marathas surrounded the fort on 16th May 1739, and made a strong attack on the fort, Portuguese tried to retaliate but when the tower of Saint Sebastian exploded then they lost their morals. All the top generals of the Portuguese died in the Maratha attack. The Portuguese captain signed a treaty. This victory was cherished by Marathas for a long time. The Maratha General, Chimaji Appa gave eight days' time for the Portuguese to leave Bassein. Finally, The Marathas captured the territories of the Portuguese, and Chimaji Appa made a significant role in the campaign of Basin. Usually, historians talk about the defeats of Indian powers by the colonial Europeans. But the real history is complex, The Marathas and other Indian powers defeated colonial powers many times in the 18th century. The area of Vasai under the Marathas was finally ceded to Britishers after the third battle of the Anglo-Maratha war and the treaty of Bassein signed by Bajirao II.

2.14 END OF BAJIRAO FIRST

Bajirao was famous for his war tactics and military campaign aggressively. His twenty years tenure was engaged with various war campaigns which he never defeated. Due to ceaseless wars and various military campaigns, his body was exhausted. He caught a virulent fever while being encamped and died on 28th April 1740 in Raverkhedi on the bank of river Narmada near Indore in Madhya Pradesh. He was cremated at Raverkhedi on the bank of river Narmada on the same day. When Bajirao realized that now his life will be ended soon at that time, he ordered Ranoji Shinde to build a Chhatra as a memorial. The memorial of Bajirao at Raverkhedi is enclosed by Dharamshala. The compound of Dharamshala has two temples, dedicated to Nilkanteshwar Mahadev and Rameshwar which are located on the bank of river Narmada.

The ability of Bajirao First:

Bajirao Ballal or Bajirao first was one of the great warriors in the history of the Marathas. In his career of 20 years, he never defeated in any battle fought against his enemy in north, south and central India. He was a general and Statesman of the Maratha empire and served as the Peshwa in the 8 Ministers Council of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj.

Bajirao First was a trained warrior and diplomat. At an early age, he learned the Sanskrit language through a Sanskrit expert. At a very tender age, Bajirao was inclined toward the military and joint to his father on military campaigns against the enemies of the Marathas. When he was 17-19 years old, he went to the Delhi campaign along with his father where he came to know that the Mughal empire is on the verge of breaking up and won't be able to reverse the expansion of Marathas in the north. In the year 1720 after the death of his father Balaji Vishwanath, the Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj had shown trust in young Bajirao First and appointed him as the Peshwa at the age of 20 years in his court.

After taking over the charge of Peshwa, he convinced the Shahu Maharaj to take advantage of the poor and weak military condition of the Mughal Empire through an aggressive policy.

Bajirao first was a brave warrior and diplomat. He did not make it late, for the fight at the time of battle. But whenever he found that his troops are not getting success in battle at that time, he made a treaty and insulted the enemy. He helped the Chhatrasal of Bundelkhand against the Mughals to insult his enemy Mughal emperor. Then he attacked the Mughals with the help of Chhatrasal. This is the best example of his diplomacy.

The scholars like H.N. Sinha wrote about him, "The best in braves, the most beautiful Bajirao died like an attractive person in a love story."

It is said about him – "He had a mind for thinking and hands of working".

Thus, it seems that Peshwa Baji Rao I was a great soldier, and he was also not lacking the virtue of a great emperor.

2.16 CONCLUSION

Bajirao first changed the political topography of India entirely during his short career of just twenty years. He will be an inspiration for the new generations. Therefore, a notable historian Dr. Uday Kulkarni wrote that the “18th century was the period when the Maratha Empire spread to the four corners of India. This unit is highlighted on the major campaigns of Bajirao first during his tenure and how he successfully won all the battles in the south and north.

2.17 QUESTIONS

1. Highlight the major achievements of Bajirao first during his tenure?
2. Evaluate the expansion policy of Bajirao first in the north?
3. Describe the career and achievements of Bajirao first.

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MARATHA CONFEDERACY

Unit Structure :

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Beginning of the Maratha confederacy
- 3.3 Some influential members of Maratha Confederacy
- 3.4 Objectives of the Confederacy
- 3.5 Nature of the Maratha Confederacy
- 3.6 Summary
- 3.7 Questions
- 3.8 References

3.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit the student will be able to :

- 1) Understand beginning of the Maratha confederacy
- 2) Grasp objectives and Nature of Maratha confederacy
- 3) Grasp the significance of Maratha confederacy in Maratha Empire
- 4) To judge role of members of Maratha confederacy

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Maratha confederacy was the organization of Maratha nobles. After the Mughal retreat from the Deccan the Marathas expanded and evolved as a loose association or confederacy of military leaders who were temporary assignments of land revenue. It must be conceded that in the granting of lands instead of salaries to the king's officers. Balaji Vishwanath found it difficult to offer cash salaries as it was given under of king Shivaji. Instead of that Maratha Sardars were given right to establish their political influence on conquered areas and to collected taxes in form of chauth and sardeshmukhi. Such a confederacy had the seeds of weakness and other political problems. Nonetheless, as M. G. Ranade has observed, it made its power felt all over India and endured for more than a hundred years.

3.2 BEGINNING OF THE MARATHA CONFEDERACY

The grant of the right of collecting chauth and sardeshmukhi from the six subahs (provinces) of the Deccan to the Marathas by the Mughals in 1719 favoured the growth of the Maratha confederacy. The Marathas were given the right of collecting these and they were also required to maintain peace and order in their territories. Balaji divided the different part of the Deccan excluding Swarajya among the various Maratha Sardars (chiefs or nobles). Balaji himself was to collect chauth and sardeshmukhi from Khandesh and part of Balaghat. Gujarat was assigned to the senapati Dabhade, Berar and Gondwana to the Bhonsle of Nagpur, Satara to the Pratinidhi, Mawals to the Sachiv and Karnatak to Fatehsingh Bhonsle. They were to collect Chauth and Sardeshmukhi from their territories. They administered their assigned territory and appropriated its revenue towards the maintainance of their troops. They also contributed a small share to the Royal treasury. This arrangement, however, left too much authority in the hands of these chiefs. It was under these circumstances that the state formed by Balaji Vishwanath was later on called Maratha confederacy which was responsible for the speedy expansion of the Maratha power and its rapid dissolution.

A battle of Panipat was responsible for the death of many able and experienced leading personalities in Maratha history. Madhavrao managed to raise a new generation of capable leaders like Mahadji Shinde, Ahilyabai, Tukoji Holkar and the Patwardhans in short time. Chhatrapati Shahu provided letters of authority to his numerous Maratha Sardars in order to collect taxes, which is how this relationship began. The Marathas utilized this power to consolidate their authority over various regions of India, eventually establishing their own semi-independent states under the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi confederation. Chhatrapati Shahu provided letters of authority to his numerous Maratha Sardars in order to collect taxes. This was the beginning of Maratha confederacy.

Peshwa granted tracts of land to the Maratha Sardars for their maintenance in those remote locations in order to expand Maratha territory and also to generate interest in their various zones of influence. Chhatrapati Shahu's death that year inaugurated a new monarchy in the Maratha Empire, with the Peshwa taking authority for all elements of governance, while Maratha Chiefs retained their positions as long as they pledged allegiance to the Peshwa's dynasty. Malhar Rao Holkar and Ranoji Shinde established semi-independent states in central India, with their capitals in Indore and Gwalior respectively during the turbulence of the Maratha confederacy's last years. Sydney Owen, on the other hand, argues that under the leadership of Balaji Bajirao, the Maratha monarchy was changed into a Maratha confederacy. The Peshwa has been confirmed as the confederacy's enduring and customary president. Even though the Maratha leaders fought the Peshwa's rule and were unwilling to obey his orders, he was the practical superior of the Maratha Chiefs in all. The five important states that comprised the Maratha confederacy are listed here.

3.3 SOME INFLUENTIAL MEMBERS OF CONFEDERACY

Peshwa of Poona :

The Peshwa was the Maratha confederacy's chief member. He became the genuine leader of the Maratha Confederacy and Poona became the Maratha empire's military and political capital very soon. Bajirao I began to construct his dream residence which came to be known as Shaniwarwada. This was the real beginning of the development of Poona as an urban center.

Gayakwad of Baroda :

The Gayakwad rule of Baroda began when the Maratha general Pilaji Rao Gayakwad conquered the city from the Mughal Empire in 1721. The Gayakwads were granted the city as a Jagir by Chhatrapati Shahu I. In their early years, the Gayakwads served as subordinates of the Dabhade family, who were the Maratha chiefs of Gujarat and holders of the senapati title. When Umabai Dabhade joined Tarabai's side against Balaji Baji Rao, Pilaji's son Damaji Rao Gayakwad commanded the Dabhade force. He was defeated, and remained under Peshwa's arrest from May 1751 to March 1752. In 1752, he was released after agreeing to abandon the Dabhades and accept the Peshwa's suzerainty. In return, Damaji was made the Maratha chief of Gujarat, and the Peshwa helped him expel the Mughals from Gujarat. After the Maratha defeat at Panipat, the central rule of the Peshwas was weakened. As a result, the Gayakwad along with several other powerful Maratha clans established themselves as virtually independent rulers, while recognizing the nominal authority of the Peshwas and suzerainty of the Bhonsle Maharaja of Satara.

Holkar of Indore :

Malhar Rao Holkar, founder of the dynasty, rose from peasant origins by his own ability. In 1724 Baji Rao I, the Peshwa (prime minister) of the Maratha state gave him command of 500 horses, and he soon became the Peshwa's chief general in Malwa, with headquarters at Maheshwar and Indore. At his death (1766) he was the virtual ruler of Malwa. After death of Malhar Rao Holkar, Ahalya Bai became ruler of Indore whose domain covered the southernmost part of Malwa from 1700 to the 1709 till her death.

Shinde of Gwalior:

Shinde was another important member of the Maratha confederacy. The regime of Ranoji Shinde, a close confidant of Peshwa included eastern Malwa, the territories west of Yamuna and the Upper Ganga. Under Mahadaji Shinde, Gwalior state became a leading power in Central India and dominated the north Indian politics. Mahadaji Shinde was the chief military supporter of the Barbhais. Mahadaji Shinde played an important role in the 1st Anglo-Maratha war from December 1773 to May 1782. Successor of Mahadaji Shinde, Daulat Rao lacked Mahadaji's wisdom. He

immediately became involved in the intrigues and counter-intrigues in the Peshwa's Poona Durbar after assuming power. He attempted to establish power in Poona but encountered significant opposition from Yaswant Rao Holkar. The British exploited the serious disagreements between these two great Maratha Sardars, defeating them one by one in the second and third Maratha wars and cementing their control in India.

Bhonsle of Nagpur :

The first chauth taxes, made in the north-east, independent of the Peshwa, were those made by Parsoji Bhonsle, a descendant of a family of village headmen from Poona district. One of the first sardars to join Shahu when he returned from the Mughal court in 1707, Shahu recognized his Berar conquests and Balaji Vishwanath too sanctioned his exclusive right to Berar. After the death of MurshidQulikhan in 1727, Raghuji Bhosale successfully used the conditions in Orissa and some parts of Bengal and took permanent control. The Nawab of Bengal sanctioned Rs 12 lakh tax to the Marathas and Rs 20 lakh to Bengal (including both West Bengal and Bangladesh) and Rs 12 lakh for Bihar (including Jharkhand) for the region up to the Subarnarekha river. Thus, Raghuji Bhosle's domain extended from Nagpur to Cuttack.

3.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE CONFEDERACY

The primary objective of the Maratha alliance was to unite the Marathas under the leadership of Peshwa and to seek his advice in administrative and political matters. Their main duty was to collect Chauth from the regions they controlled, but they were required to seek consent from the Peshwa on all other matters, political or financial, as he was the state's ultimate authority. The grant of the right of collecting chauth and sardeshmukhi from the six subahs of the Deccan to the Marathas by the Mughals in 1719 also favoured the growth of the Maratha confederacy. The Marathas were given the right of collecting these and they were also required to maintain peace and order in their territories. Balaji divided the different part of the Deccan excluding Swarajya among the various Maratha sardars. As a result, office of Peshwa became the supreme power in the Maratha Kingdom, and no Maratha chief was permitted to act without the assent of the Peshwa. He was considered as the leader of all Martha Sardars.

3.5 NATURE OF THE MARATHA CONFEDERACY

The Maratha Sardars in their different territories gradually ceased expressing their allegiance to Satara's seat of power under Chhatrapati. Martha Sardars accepted the Peshwa's sovereignty to some extent. As previously stated, Mahadaji Sindhia acquired the title of 'Wakil-i-Mutliq' from the Mughal Emperor not in his own name but in the name of Chhatrapati and Peshwa. This indicates the Peshwa's importance to the confederacy's Maratha chiefs. The Peshwa's power over the Maratha confederacy's chiefs was a defining element of the Maratha confederacy. The Maratha Confederacy's was strong and powerful the members used to

work in co-operation in the time of need. Therefore, in the eighteenth century, the rulers of Gwalior, Baroda, Indore, Berar, and Poona were referred to as the nominal they owed confederacy, as Maratha allegiance to the Peshwa of Poona.

Baji Rao's Role in Maratha confederacy :

Due to the prolific efforts of the Maratha confederacy, the Maratha state expanded to remote portions of India. The Maratha Chiefs maintained a healthy rivalry for territory expansion at the expense of neighboring states. The Peshwa personally attacked Mysore and the Karnatak. In 1760, he defeated Salabat Jung and Nizam Ali, the son of Nizam-I-Mulk, at Udagir, compelling them to relinquish control of the Marathas' forts of Asirgarh, Daulatabad, and Bijapur. Maratha Confederacy remained completely under Peshwa rule. In the third battle of Panipat in 1761, many Maratha Sardars fought under the Peshwa's leadership. Due to the united efforts of the Maratha confederacy's members, the Maratha Kingdom grew from Chambal and the Yamuna to the Godavari, from the Arabian Sea to the Bay of Bengal, and the Marathas were able to charge Chauth over the entire nation from the Indus to the Southern Frontier of Mysore. The Mughal Emperor became nominal head as real power in central and north India was in Maratha Sardar's hands. Under Sawai Madhav Rao, the Maratha Confederacy remained completely under Peshwa rule. Madhav Rao deserves credit for keep this unity intact following the third Battle of Panipat in 1761. Mahadaji Shinde established Maratha Supremacy in the North.

Decline of Maratha confederacy :

After Madhav Rao Peshwa's death in 1773, the confederacy witnessed downfall. After Madhav Rao's death no other Peshwa could provide necessary leadership and devotion to the confederacy. The various members of the Maratha confederacy started fighting against each other. Powers was shared by many Maratha chief and most important of them were Holkar, Shinde, Bhosle and Gaikwad. It is true that nominally the Peshwa was the head of the Maratha confederacy but, as a matter of fact, he had no substantial control over the various Maratha chiefs. Every one of them was independent in their own territory and did whatever he pleased. They did not hesitate to intrigue against one another. It was not a happy phenomenon to see Holkar, Shinde or Bhosle helping another power against one another. Evidently, there was no discipline and solidarity among the Marathas. They were not brought together even by a national emergency. They failed to help one another against their common enemies and the result was that all of them were defeated one by one by the English East India Company.

3.6 SUMMARY

By the second decade of the 18th century the Maratha powers under Peshwa Baji Rao I were striking out against the Mughals in the Deccan and in central India. Yet, even in the 1780s treaties between the Mughals

and the Marathas, the Mughal emperor continued to be recognized as the first among all the kings and chiefs of India. Significantly it was the levying of chauth under the sanction, or the pretended sanction of the Mughal Emperor that was the usual prelude for establishment of Maratha sovereignty.

3.7 QUESTIONS

- 1) Enumerate the beginning and working of Maratha confederacy.
- 2) Who were influential members of the Maratha confederacy?
- 3) What were the nature and objective of the Maratha confederacy.

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PESHTWA BALAJI BAJIRAO (NANASAHEB)

Unit Structure :

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Consolidation of Power
- 4.3 Maratha Paramountcy in North India through Campaigns: 1740-1748
- 4.4 Balaji Bajirao and third battle of Panipat
- 4.5 Summary
- 4.6 Questions
- 4.7 References

4.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit the student will be able to :

- 1) Understand Consolidation of power under Nanasaheb Peshwa
- 2) Know establishment of Maratha Paramountcy in North India
- 3) Balaji Bajirao's role in third battle of Panipat

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Peshwa Balaji Bajirao was the son of Peshwa Bajirao I and he was only nineteen years of age when he became Peshwa. Balaji had been given training in administration by his uncle Chimnaji Appa. He was a good administrator and a diplomat yet lacked military skill. He had a cool temperament and a very commanding personality, which brought him success in every task he undertook. Due to these qualities, Shahu did not take much time to decide that Balaji Bajirao should be the next Peshwa.

4.2 CONSOLIDATION OF POWER

Nanasaheb Peshwahad to tackle the problem of finance. Peshwa Balaji Bajirao administered the affairs of the Maratha state and its expanding empire from 1740 to 1761. The Maratha finances were in a bad condition at that time. Therefore, he took steps to increase the state revenue and he personally travelled all over the kingdom in order to inspect the accounts. Once the financial condition was stabilized, he decided to plan expedition to northern India. For this purpose his uncle Chimnaji Appa was deputed,

unfortunately Chimnaji Appa died before anything could be done but the Marathas were successful in getting possession of Malwa from the Mughal Emperor. According to the terms of grant of Malwa to the Marathas, the Marathas had to promise that they will not capture any other territories of Mughals in the future, and they were supposed to station 500 soldiers in Delhi for the service of the Mughals. This is important because the Marathas accepted the responsibility of protecting the Mughal Emperor in Delhi. This increased the prestige of the Marathas. In 1749 Shahu died. Chhatrapati Shahu left a will according to which entire authority was entrusted to the Peshwa. He became the real head of the Marathas from 1749 to 1818. Balaji Bajirao was determined to expand the Maratha state and influence in other part of India

During the period of Bajirao I, Infantry force had a lot of importance. Balaji Bajirao gave importance to cavalry and at the same time, he tried to introduce western methods of warfare with which the Marathas were not familiar. He started employing non-Marathas in his army. That means the Maratha army lost its national character. First bajirao Peshwa dreamed of establishing a Hindu Empire, which would bring all Hindus under one flag. However, Balaji Bajirao lost the support of the Rajputs and many other Hindu chiefs of north India due to their harsh treatment while collecting chauth and sardeshmukhi. The most disastrous effect of this policy was seen in the third Battle of Panipat.

Karnataka Expedition :

Karnatak was a very fertile and rich land. There was a lot of political confusion during this period because it was divided among number of local chiefmen. They were under the control of the Nizam. There were number of other Maratha chiefs and to add to the confusion the French and the English were interested in Karnatak. The Maratha interest in Karnatak was very old so Peshwa decided to send the son of Chimnaji Appa, Sadashivrao Bhau in 1746. During the course of one-year campaign with a force of 16 thousand soldiers, he was able to defeat Nawab of Karnatak and he firmly established the position of the Marathas in that region. From 1753 to 1760 the Peshwa conducted a number of campaigns in Karnatak to establish Maratha supremacy and to secure a regular flow of money by way of tribute.

Conflict with Admiral Tulaji Angry :

Shivaji Maharaj was farsighted leader. He understood the importance of navy as a strategic part to protect and enhanceswaraja. Hence he established Marth navy under Kanhoji Angre. However the successor of kahhojo, Tulaji Angre was not on good terms with the Peshwa. Peshwa therefore sought the help of the English to destroy his power which was a great mistake. Tulaji had defied western powers on the seas and checked their ambition and aggression all these years. But he was defeated by combined forces of Marathas and English in 1748. Vijaydurg was taken possession of by the English. Balaji destroyed the naval power of Tulaji

Angre with the help of the English. This move proved fatal mistake as Peshwa could not develop naval power in future.

4.3 Maratha Paramountcy in North India through Campaigns: 1740-1748

Balaji Bajirao organized four expeditions to the north between 1740 and 1748. The second expedition was from 1741 to 1743. Peshwa wanted to establish the Maratha claim of chauth and sardeshmukhi over Bihar and Bengal. Raghuji Bhonsle claimed the province as his sphere of influence. Alivardi Khan, the Mughal Subhedar sought the help of the Peshwa against Raghuji Bhonsle. Raghuji appealed to Shahu. Shahu divided the spheres of the Peshwa and Raghuji. On 31st August 1743 on his return from Bengal the Peshwa defeated Rajas of Bundelkhand. The third expedition was undertaken in 1744-1745. In this expedition Bhilsa was captured. The fourth expedition was undertaken in 1747. Balaji went to the north on 6th December 1747. One of Balaji's objects was to help the Emperor against Ahmad Shah Abdali who invaded India in 1747. The other was to settle the affairs in Rajasthan and to secure the Maratha claims. Abdali was defeated by the Emperor's forces and the Peshwa was not required to proceed further.

The results of these expeditions were not decisive enough to establish Maratha paramountcy in north India. The Rajput princes, who had welcomed the Marathas to fight against the Mughals and to settle their internal disputes, now become hostile to them. A case to the point is the mean treatment meted out to Ishwari Singh, Raja of Jaipur. The ruler of Amber, Raja Jaisingh was a very good friend of Marathas and he died in 1743, which led to a war of succession between his two son, Madho Singh and Ishwar Singh. Madho Singh attacked on his brother Ishwar Singh, who sought the help of the Marathas. Ishwar Singh promised the Marathas three lakh Rupees. The two Maratha chiefs Shinde and Holkar interfered in this matter. Both of them decided to help the Singh brothers separately. Madho Singh decided to give 65 lacks of Rupees to Holkar. This led to the quarrel between the two. Peshwa Balaji Bajirao decided to go personally to Rajputana in 1747 to settle the conflict between Holkar and Shinde. In the mean time in 1751 out of desperation, Ishwar Singh committed suicide. Madho Singh occupied the throne, but instead of keeping his word he tried to destroy his allies by treacherous attacks. In this entire episode, the Marathas unnecessarily involved themselves and the relations between the Marathas and Rajputs were strained. The Rajputs refused to help the Marathas in third battle of Panipat.

Encounter with Nizam :

Nizam was traditional enemy of Marathas. He died in 1748 and there was a war of succession between his two sons namely Ghaziud-din Khan and Salabat Jung. The Marathas supported Ghazi-uddin Khan while the French supported Salabat Jung. On 16th October 1752 Gazi-ud-din died. Salabat Jung made peace with the Peshwa. There was no war between the Nizam and the Marathas till 1756. In 1759 Balaji decided to crush the Nizam

finally. The campaign of Udgir took place from October 1759 to February 1760. SadashivraoBhau conducted the campaign and led Maratha forces to victory. The Nizam proposed peace. Sixty lakhs worth of territory, Asirgad, Daulatabadfort, Bijapur and Burhanpur were ceded to the Peshwa. But battle of Panipat prevented him from taking full advantage of his victory.

4.4 BALAJI BAJIRAO AND THIRD BATTLE OF PANIPAT

Ahmad Shah Abdali of Afghanistan invaded Punjab in 1747 and captured Lahore and Sirhind. His second invasion occurred in 1748. The Subhedar of Lahore granted Abdali the revenues of four provinces after which he retired. The third invasion took place in 1751, Muin-ul-Mulk, the governor of Punjab surrendered to Abdali. Thus the Punjab was lost to Ahmad Shah Durrani. After the third invasion of Abdali, the vazirSafdar Jung persuaded the emperor to enter into an agreement with the Marathas in May 1752, for undertaking the duty of defending the empire against Abdali. The fourth invasion of Abdali took place in November 1756.

On this occasion there was no opposition to him till he reached Delhi. Delhi, Mathura and Vrindavan were looted. He appointed Imad-ul-mulkVazir and Najib-ud-Daulah, Mir Bakshi, making the latter real master of the Mughal government. After Abdali'sdeparture the Marathas again came and established their supremacy at Delhi and ousted Najib-ud-Daulah. As the emperor was eager to regain Punjab, he encouraged Raghunathrao to proceed to Lahore. The Marathas seized Sarhind and Lahore in March 1758 and extended their authority up to Attock. The danger to the Maratha power lay in not staying in the Punjab in sufficient strength and consolidating their conquests. Sabaji Shinde was appointed the governor of Lahore, but when Abdali came back at the head of large army, he could not resist him and decided to fall back on Delhi. Peshwa appointed DattajiShinde to manage the affairs of the Marathas. He marched toward Punjab and brought it under control.

Najib Khan had invited Abdali and was organizing a secret alliance of the Mughal nobles and Afghan in order to drive away the Marathas from the north. DattajiShinde, therefore, decided to crush him. But Najib had already taken an unassailable position at Shukratal. In November Maratha troops of the Punjab were defeated by the Abdali. Dattaji raised the siege, as he had to meet the new Afghan danger. A battle took place at BuradiGhat on 10 January, 1760 in which Dattaji was killed. MalharraoHolkar was defeated at Sikandarbad in March, 1760. Abdali did not return to his country after this, but remained in the Doab at the request of Najib to meet the new Maratha menace coming from the Deccan to avenge the disaster at BuradiGhat. SadashivraoBhau, the victor of Udgir, was appointed to lead the expedition to retrieve the Maratha fortunes in the north. He captured Delhi on 2nd August 1760.

The Battle of Panipat :

On 14th January, 1761 the third battle of Panipat started. Maratha fought bravely. Ibrahim Khan Gardi and other Maratha Sardars distinguished themselves as they smashed up the rank of Abdali's right and center. Just when the Maratha Soldiers were getting tired, Abdali choose to throw in the reserve force into the battle. Marathas were routed and defeated completely. The Marathas lost heavily in men, money, military power and political prestige by this defeat.

Nanasaheb's death :

Peshwas came to know late that Maratha army was in trouble in Panipat. He was worried as the news from the north stopped coming while on the way. The news of Panipat's defeat came on January 24 while he was staying at Bhelsa. In the code letter they received, there was a message that two pearls were swallowed, 27 mohoras were lost, there was no count of how many silver and copper coins had gone. The death of his brother, son and many relatives shocked Nanasaheb, his peace of mind was destroyed. Nanasaheb became disillusioned and his health deteriorated. In the meantime, he died on June 23, 1761, and the Marathas suffered another setback.

4.5 SUMMARY

Balaji bajirao succeeded first Bajirao Peshwa in 1740. He consolidate his position by various expedition. Balaji Bajirao organised four expeditions to the north between 1740 and 1748. In south Maratha had struggle with Nizam. Yet, it was battle of Panipat that was the mark of his reign. Najib Khan had invited Abdali and was organizing a secret alliance of the Mughal nobles and Afghan in order to drive away the Marathas from the north. As the Mughal rulers were weak it was the responsibility of Marathas to oust him. Nanasaheb deputed army under sadashivrao Bhau and Dattajishinde. The Marathas lost heavily in men, money, military power and political prestige by the defeat in third battle of Panipat.

4.6 QUESTIONS

- 1) Which expedition were led by Nanasaheb Peshwa?
- 2) Briefly describe the Karnataka campaign and campaign in North
- 3) What were the difficulties faced by Peshwa Balaji Bajirao after becoming Peshwa and how did overcome it?

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Peshwa Balaji Bajirao
(Nanasaheb)



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THIRD BATTLE OF PANIPAT: CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

Unit Structure :

- 5.0 Objectives
- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Event Before the battle of Panipat
- 5.3 Causes of the third battle of Panipat
- 5.4 Third Battle of Panipat
- 5.5 Consequences of third battle of Panipat
- 5.6 Summary
- 5.7 Questions
- 5.8 References

5.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit the student will be able to :

- 1) Understand Event Before the battle of Panipat
- 2) Know causes and consequences of the third battle of Panipat
- 3) Grasp the events in third battle of Panipat

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The third battle of Panipat is considered as one of the major and important war events fought in the eighteenth century. On January 14, 1761, at Panipat, about 97 km north of Delhi, the war broke out during a northern expedition of the Maratha Empire. This war took place with the Marathas under the leadership of Abdali and Najibud Daula of Afghanistan to maintain the fall of Delhi. The battle had adverse impact on the expansion of Marathas in the north. This battle proved fruitful neither to Marathas nor to Abdali. With the loss of the power of the Abdalis, Mughals and Marathas, the British got a free hand to establish political power in India.

5.2 EVENT BEFORE THE BATTLE OF PANIPAT

Ahmad Shah Abdali of Afghanistan invaded Punjab in 1747 and captured Lahore and Sirhind. His second invasion occurred in 1748. The Subhedar of Lahore granted Abdali the revenues of four provinces after which he retired. The third invasion took place in 1751, Muin-ul-Mulk, the governor of Punjab surrendered to Abdali. This campaign alarmed Emperor so much that he invited Saladarjung to save the situation. But before Safadarjung could reach the capital, the Emperor made agreement made by Muin-ul-Mulk. Consequently, Punjab was lost to Abdali. As a result of the arrangement made during this campaign Abdali was assured of an income from Punjab of 50 lakh rupees a year. After this invasion Wazir Safadarjung convinced the Emperor to sign an agreement with the Marathas for their help against Abdali. This historical agreement was signed in 1752. Terms were as follows:

- 1) That the Peshwa should defend the Emperor from his internal as well as external enemies.
- 2) That the Emperor should pay 50 lakhs to the Marathas for their help of which 30 lakhs was to be on account of Abdali and 20 lakhs on account of the Indian Pathans.
- 3) The Peshwa was given right to collect chauth for the Punjab Sind and Daob.
- 4) The Peshwa was to be granted the Subhedarship of Agra and Ajmer.

Next invasion of Abdali took place in November 1756. On this occasion there was no opposition to him till he reached Delhi. Delhi, Mathura and Vrindavan were plundered. He appointed Imad-ul-mulk Vazir and Najib-ud-Daulah, Mir Bakshi, making the latter real master of the Mughal government. After Abdali's departure the Marathas again came and established their supremacy at Delhi and ousted Najib-ud-Daulah. As the emperor was eager to regain Punjab, he encouraged Raghunathrao to proceed to Lahore. The Marathas seized Sarhind and Lahore in March 1758 and extended their authority up to Attack. Sabaji Shinde was appointed the governor of Lahore, but when Abdali came back at the head of large army, he could not resist him and decided to fall back on Delhi. Peshwa appointed Dattaji Shinde to manage the affairs of the Marathas. He marched toward Punjab and brought it under control.

5.3 CAUSES OF THE THIRD BATTLE OF PANIPAT

Maratha's responsibility of protecting Mughal Empire :

Maratha has accepted the responsibility of protecting Mughal Empire. Autaji Mankeshwar was posted as commander of the Maratha force stationed at Delhi. Marathas were also given the Subah of Ajmer and Agra which were under Rajputs and Jats. This created resentment between them and the Marathas. This agreement was very important from Maratha point of view as Maratha now took responsibility of protecting Mughal Empire

from internal and external force. It established supremacy of Marathas in the politics of India. Meanwhile Abdali sent his agent to Delhi demanding the tribute of 50 lakhs. The Wazir realizing the danger asked Peshwa for armed help. Raghunathrao was sent on this campaign with Shinde and Holkar.

Weakness of Mughal rulers :

Ahmedsha Abdali repetitively invaded north India. He had come determined to occupy Delhi and was accompanied by his son Timur Shab. Lahore and Sarhind were occupied. There was no opposition to him till he reached Delhi, Delhi was looted and ravaged systematically. Before he left Delhi, he compelled the Emperor to cede to him Kashmir, Lahore, Sarhind and Multan. He appointed his son Timur Shah to supervise the government of these provinces. Najib Khan Rohila was appointed as Mir Bakshi and he continued to hold the capital as an agent of Abdali. Anataji Mankeshwar the Maratha agent stationed at Delhi to send reports to the Peshwa. Nanasaheb deputed Raghunathrao, Sakharam Bapu, Malharrao Holkar and others to Delhi in November 1756. Sakharam Bapu entered the Doab to drive out Najib's agent from there.

Raghunathrao's inadequate efforts :

Raghunathrao proceeded from Rajputana to Delhi. He had to realize from the Emperor the annual grant of 13 lakhs of rupees and past arrears for the maintenance of 5000 troops for the imperial service. Raghunathrao attacked Delhi in August 1757. Najib Khan had to sue for peace. Malharrao was on good terms with Najib therefore, he was of opinion that Najib should not be annoyed and should be allowed his post of Mir Bakshi. But, Najib Khan was deprived of his post As Emperor was eager to rear Punjab he encouraged Raghunathrao to proceed to Lahore. The Maratha seized Sarhind and Lahore in March-April 1758 and extended their authority upto Attock. He failed to implement stern administrative measures to establish peace and stability in that region.

Abdali's Ambition :

But the condition of 1758 was favourable to the Marathas as Abdali was threatened by the Persia from the west and was facing danger of revolt within his Empire. By the summer of 1759 Abdali was able to overcome his internal problems and decided to lead a fifth invasion into India especially to remove the Maratha danger once for all. He sent his General Jahan Khan. After the death of Adina Beg in 1758, Sabaji Shinde was appointed as governor of Lahore, Jahan Khan was defected by Sabaji but when Abdali came up at the head of a large army, he could not resist him and decided to fall back. Nanasaheb decided to send Sadashivrao Bhau to handle the situation in the North. Peshwa Nanasaheb's son Vishwasrao and many other Maratha Sardars of repute joined this campaign. Thirty thousand select and well-armed troops with the best Military equipment and the finest artillery were placed under the command of Sadashivrao Bhau. Jankoji Shinde, Malharrao Holkar, Govind Ballal and other Maratha

sardars in the North were directed to act under the command of the Sadashivrao Bhau.

Najib Khan's invitation to Abdali :

Nanasaheb had appointed Dattaji Shinde to manage the affairs of the Maratha. He adopted stronger policy towards Delhi. Najib was responsible for inviting Abdali against the Maratha. Dattaji therefore decided to crush him. But Najib Khan had taken an unassailable position at Shukratal. Dattaji's position at Shukratal became untenable. Sabaji Shinde and Maratha troops of Punjab reached camp hotly pursued by Abdali. A battle took place between Abdali and Dattaji Shinde at Buradi Ghat on 10th January 1760 in which Dattaji was killed. Malhar Rao who came to help was also defeated at Sikandarabad March 1760. Najib Khan requested Abdali to remain in Doab to meet the Maratha army coming from the Deccan to avenge the disaster of Buradi Ghat.

5.4 THIRD BATTLE OF PANIPAT

News of Dattaji Shinde's death greatly shocked the Maratha state and they decided to take revenge of this death. The fight started on 14th March 1760. Bhau Saheb reached Narmada on 12th April, crossed it at Handia and proceeded straight North via Sihore and Sironj. He requested all chiefs of North India to join him to drive out foreigner but Rajput princes were either hostile or neutral. Only Surajmal Jat came forward to help the Maratha. Because of heavy rains the Maratha army could not cross river Yamuna. It was therefore decided to move towards Delhi and capture it from Abdali's agent Yakub Ali Khan. On 2nd August 1760 the Maratha captured Delhi. Maratha occupation of Delhi raised their credit in the eyes of the people. Soon after the capture of Delhi, Surajmal Jat demanded that he should be put in charge of the government. But as Delhi essentially belonged to the Emperor, Surajmal's demand was rejected by Bhau Saheb. This strained the relationship between the Marathas and Surajmal Jat and he went back to his capital Bharatpur.

For next two months Marathas stayed at Delhi and practically consumed the entire food supply of the city. No supplies could come from outside. Govindpant Bundela was unable to send revenue from the Doab region. Meanwhile negotiations which had been going on with Abdali did not prove successful. Financial difficulties forced Marathas out of the capital. Bhau Saheb decided to move toward Kunjpers. So as to cut off Abdali's communication and to capture his provisions stored there. On 16th October, Holkar and Shinde arrived before Kunjpura and same day the place was captured. It was the highest triumph for the Marathas. They secured 50,000 rupees and ten lakhs worth of arms and ammunition including five guns and three thousand horses. Capture of Kunjpura by the Marathas enraged Abdali. He crossed Yamuna at Baghpat on the east bank of the river and reached Panipat on 1st November 1760. Bhau Saheb started towards Delhi and reached Panipat on 29th October 1760. Bhau Saheb had decided on the advice of Ibrahim Khan Gardi to entrench himself on the plain with the town of Panipat north and remained on the

defensive until the enemy got weakened by starvation. So as to combine guerilla tactics with the use of infantry and artillery. But Abdali cut off Maratha communication with Delhi and the Deccan. Abdali's army was able to dominate Maratha soldiers and their horses were starving and supply of ammunition was exhausted. For the next two months the fighting was confined to mere skirmishes. During this period the position of the Marathas continued to deteriorate. The Marathas remained entrenched in this camp and lost whatever chance they had to achieve success.

Bhau Saheb made last effort to negotiate peace with Abdali and offered to pay him a heavy fine for being allowed to withdraw and retire to the Deccan. But Najib Khan Rohila gave cry of Jihad or holy war against infidel. Thereafter Marathas decided that they would rather die fighting with the enemy than perish through starvation. Strategy for the battle was planned by Ibrahim Khan Gardi. The whole army was to move slowly in a square formation. The ladies and non-combatants to be put in the center. All the four sides were to be protected by heavy artillery. The whole army was to move in a block under the protection of Ibrahim Khan's Cannon. Abdali organised his army in a long and well-arranged line. The original plan of mass movement of Maratha army could not be carried out.

Bhau Saheb rearranged his men in long similar to that of the enemy, so as to fight them out and obtain a passage. The main object was an escape, rather than annihilate the opponents. Sudden change plan created confusion among the Maratha ranks. Bhau Saheb with his Huzzurat troops took the central position. On his right Antaji Mankeshwar and Satvaji Jadhav were placed. On the extreme end Yashwantrao Pawar, Jankoji Shinde and Malharrao Holkar were posted. As whole camp was to force a passage through the Afghan Army, no reserve force was kept. On 14th January 1761 at about nine o'clock in the morning the third battle of Panipat started. In the first stage the Marathas fought vigorously Ibrahim Khan Gardi and the personnel followers of Bhau Saheb particularly themselves and they smashed up the ranks of Abdali's right and entered when the Maratha soldiers were getting tired, Abdali chose to bring the reserve force into the battle. Sadashivrao Bhau, Vishwasrao, Tukoji Shinde and Jaswantrao Pawar were killed. A small proportion of the Maratha army escaped. The situation was dreadful and as Jadunath Sarkar has said a generation of leaders was wiped out at one stroke.

5.5 CONSEQUENCES OF THIRD BATTLE OF PANIPAT

Battlefield of Panipat has unique importance in the history of India. The victor of all three battles fought here were foreigners. The third battle was fought to determine who was to rule over India. The battle field and the ditch around to Marathas camp were full of dead bodies. Sadashivrao Bhau Vishwasrao and many prominent Maratha sardars lost their life. This loss had been indicated by metaphors relating to jewelry, which says "Two pearls dissolved, twenty five gold Mohurs have been lost and of the silver and copper total cannot be cost up." The Marathas lost money, manpower and prestige. Though the Marathas were defeated, the

victorious Abdali didn't occupy the throne of Delhi. After Panipat, he never again interfered in the politics of India.

Third Battle of Panipat:
Causes and Consequences

The plight of the Marathas :

The third Battle of Panipat proved to be a decisive and had far-reaching effect on the history of India. The Peshwa and his Maratha kingdom were never recovered from the shock of this defeat. The next day of battle, Anupgir Gosavi and Kashiraj visited the battlefield. Then they saw 32 piles of dead bodies. There were 28,000 corpses in it, there were corpses in the distance. In this battle, 90,000 women and children were enslaved. Bhausaheb, Vishwasrao, Ibrahim Khan, Yashwantrao Pawar, Tukoji Shinde, Jankoji Shinde were killed. The warrior generation of the Marathas was destroyed in this battle.

Nanasaheb's death :

When Nanasaheb Peshwa came to know that their brothers were in trouble in Panipat, he prepared to go to the north. Nanasaheb was worried as the news from the north stopped coming while on the way. The news of Panipat's defeat came on January 24 while he was staying at Bhilsa. In the letter he received message about loss of lives in subsequent words that two pearls were swallowed, 27 mohoras were lost, there was no count of how many silver and copper coins had gone. The death of his brother, son and many relatives shocked Nanasaheb, his peace of mind was destroyed. He became disillusioned and his health deteriorated. In the meantime, he died on June 23, 1761, and the Marathas suffered another setback.

Trouble for the Mughals :

The battle practically ended the Mughal rule in India. The position of the Emperor had become so hopeless and pitiable that he could not come to the capital Delhi for a period of 11 years until Mahadji Shinde restored him under the Maratha protection in 1772. After the victory of Panipat, Abdali took control of Delhi. Mughal emperor Shah Alam had fled Delhi and had taken shelter in Allahabad. The destruction of the protecting Marathas dealt a severe blow to the Mughal power. Najib Khan took over the power of Delhi after Abdali left for home. Although the Mughal Empire came back to power during the time of Madhavrao, it was only nominal.

Rise of the British Power :

During the reign of Nanasaheb Peshwa, while the Marathas were ruling the whole of Hindustan, the British were exercising the kingdom with their wisdom and courage in the Bengal subha, which was rich in the Mughal empire. The battle of Panipat weakened the Maratha and Muslim power and benefitted emerging English power. The defeat of the Marathas created a big political vacuum in northern Hindustan, which was filled by English power.

Emergence of Sikh Power :

Before the battle of Panipat, there was an intense power struggle between the Mughals, Marathas, Abdalis and Sikhs in Punjab. Although the original owners of Punjab were Sikhs, Punjab could not be owned by them. Sometimes it was under the control of the Mughals, sometimes by Abdali and sometimes by the Marathas. Being a border region, the Sikhs were constantly facing their atrocities because of the constant threat of foreign invasion. The Panipat war changed this situation. The Marathas were defeated and Abdali also left for Afghanistan, so the Sikhs could establish power in the Punjab.

Rise of Hyder Ali :

The defeat of Panipat uprooted the base of the Marathas from Karnataka. Earlier Marathas had completely conquered the territory of Karnataka. The defeat of Panipat did not allow them to pay attention to Karnataka for some time to come. Taking advantage of this, the ambitious and courageous Hyder Ali established his power by destroying the power of the Hindu king of Mysore. The rise of Hyder Ali led to the growth of another enemy among the enemies of the Marathas. Hyder Ali continued to trouble the Marathas throughout his life.

The Rise of Madhavrao Peshwa :

Madhavrao Peshwa the second son of Nana Saheb Peshwa became the Peshwa. He was wise and able ruler. He wiped out the stigma of defeat of Panipat and made Maratha power shining again.

5.6 SUMMARY

The result of the battle was an adverse impact on the expansion of Marathas in the north. Later, when Peshwa Madhavrao's rule came, the Maratha Empire came into existence again. Many prominent Maratha sardars like Sadashivrao Bhau, Vishwasrao, and Dattaji Shinde lost their lives in this battle. The battle practically ended the Mughal rule in India. The position of the Emperor had become so hopeless and pitiable. Panipat also indirectly ushered in a new participant that is the English in the struggle for India's supremacy. This marks a turning point in the history of India. The battle had adverse impact on the expansion of Marathas in the north. This battle proved fruitful neither to Maratha nor to Abdali. With the loss of the power of the Abdalis, Mughals and Marathas, the British got a free hand to establish power in India.

5.7 QUESTIONS

- 1) Narrate the events that led to the third battle of Panipat.
- 2) Account for the success of the Afghans in the battle.
- 3) Trace the causes of and the defeat of the Marathas in the Third Battle of Panipat
- 4) What were the consequences of third Battle of Panipat?

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DEFEAT OF THE MARATHAS AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE THIRD BATTLE OF PANIPAT

Unit Structure :

- 6.0 Objectives
- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Review of Battle of Panipat in Historical sources
- 6.3 The main causes of the Maratha defeat at Panipat are as follows
- 6.4 Significance of the third battle of Panipat
- 6.5 Summary
- 6.6 Questions
- 6.7 References

6.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit the student will be able to :

- 1) Understand causes of defeat of Maratha in battle of Panipat.
- 2) Grasp the significance of the Third Battle of Panipat.
- 3) To judge role Maratha Sardars in battle.

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The third battle of Panipat is regarded as one of the most important events in the history of the India. The Marathas lost Peshwa's eldest son Vishwasrao, his cousin Sadashivrao Bhau, Tukoji Shinde, Jankoji Shinde and many other prominent generals. The third battle of Panipat was fought by the Marathas and it has made a permanent mark in the history of India. Patient and critical enquiry is still being persistently carried on by writers and students each trying in his own way to assign praise and blame. It is necessary to take review of the whole struggle which proved so fatal to the Marathas at Panipat, and properly assess the responsibility for that momentous result.

6.2 REVIEW OF BATTLE OF PANIPAT IN HISTORICAL SOURCES

Defeat of the Marathas
and Significance of the
Third Battle of Panipat

Many historians have expressed their views of the third battle of Panipat. The two valuable documents known as Bhau Saheb's Kaifiyat and Bhau Saheb's Bakhar are possibly the result of such an enquiry instituted for the edification of the future administrators. These two tracts practically summarize all the salient features eloquently expressed for the appreciation of an average reader. They are evidently based on original materials. Recent research has brought to light a large quantity of literature in Marathi and Persian particularly the three volumes 2, 21 and 27 of the P. D. Selections and the Purandare Daftar volume 1, the excellent Persian accounts of Kashiraj and Nuruddin Hussain, letters in Rajwade Volumes 1 and 6, along with the clear reasoned analysis presented by Sir Jadunath Sarkar in his Fall of the Mughal Empire. These will be found of immense help in revealing the subject.

According to G. S. Sardesai, Maratha affairs in the north came to be mishandled by Raghunathrao, who could not compose the growing differences between the two leading chiefs Shinde and Holkar." Sadashivrao was mainly sent to set right past abuses, a task which he quickly and effectively executed. He was doubtless the fittest leader that the Maratha nation then possessed. He was respected and feared, and possessed unflinching courage.

Malharrao Holkar and others had suggested to Bhau Saheb to keep the women and the non-combatants behind somewhere near the Chambal or near Mathura: the rejection of this precaution proved disastrous. He encumbered himself with an unnecessarily large number of non-combatants at least three times that of the actual fighters. If he had not been so hard pressed to feed this large number, the starvation would not have been so acute. There are many other causes responsible for the defeat of Marathas.

6.3 THE MAIN CAUSES OF THE MARATHA DEFEAT AT PANIPAT ARE AS FOLLOWS

- 1) Raghunathrao's failure to maintain administrative measures and discipline among in the north. The Peshwa himself never went to the north after the death of Shahu. He could easily have gone there during 1759, when there was no major issue in the Deccan to occupy his attention
- 2) The failure of Holkar to check Najib Khan from doing mischief and Peshwa's failure to go to the north and solve matters when it was yet time to mend them.
- 3) The failure of Bhau Saheb with Dattaji Shinde's example to keep women and non-combatants behind at Bharatpur even at Delhi, at the time when he left that place to advance upon Kunjpura;

- 4) As soon as the two armies came face to face about the last day of October, Bhau Saheb should have atonce attacked Abdali and maintained communications with his base at Delhi. He wasted two and a half months on the defensive in a besieged camp until starvation compelled him to make the last desperate effort for escape. But we have now no means of knowing why Bhau Saheb waited so long.
- 5) Bhausaheb greatly depended on his powerful under commanded by Ibrahim Khan Gardi. But later event shows that this move proved a handicap because the heavy guns took time to be brought in proper position, while the Maratha army was on the move. The lone cannons could not be used effectively in the close combat. Algan army on other hand had about two thousand light guns which proved dangerous.
- 6) One serious handicap from which the Marathas suffered may be noticed in passing. The strength of the Maratha fighter was in his horse. It was his horse that gave the strength of mobility to the Maratha army. Bhau Saheb commanded at Panipat a large body of the finest troops that ever went out from the south. But during the months of starvation in his besieged camp, most of the horses died, compelling all troopers to play the role of infantry for which they were not trained. This drawback could not be remedied.
- 7) Non-cooperation of Jat and Rajput

The Maratha's unrealistic demand for tribute from Jat and Rajput chiefs and interference in succession issue of Rajput state made Jat and Rajput their enemies and they commanded no love or respect among the people in the North. Maratha waged a war against the Surajmal Jat before the battle of Panipat. After a bitter conflict which lasted for four months, Surajmal agreed to pay 30 lakhs in three yearly instalments. Raghunathrao during the campaign of nearly two years (1753-1755) did nothing important but left behind the worst legacy of hostility between the Maratha and the Rajputs. Thus they failed to secure the support of their own countrymen in their own homeland which weakened the Marathas financial resources and military strength. While by giving call of Jihad (holy war) Najib Khan Rohila was able to get support of Muslim Nawabs. Shuja-Ud-Daula's large army and funds greatly helped Abdali. From Attock to the Bay of Bengal stretches a vast land unimpeded by any natural obstacle, except the numerous rivers which could be easily crossed in the summer. Special arrangement required to be made at Attock or Lahore to check invaders. The Maratha failed to make proper provision for protecting Punjab from Abdali's repeated invasions. This proved to be the weakest link in the Maratha policy. No strong Maratha leader of prestige was posted to protect Northwest frontier. Abdali struck at this weak link.

- 8) Traditional method of guerilla warfare was of little use in Plain region

One school of critics argue that the Marathas lost the day at Panipat because they gave up their traditional method of guerilla warfare. But

such a view has no basis. It is doubtless true that it was this method which enabled the Maratha nation in the last century to rise above others. But this warfare was suited only to the hilly regions of the Deccan plateau; it could not be effective in the vast plains of northern India, where not a single natural barrier exists from the Indus to the Bay of Bengal. Nor were the Marathas at home in these foreign regions, the inhabitants of which were not only strangers but positively hostile to them. To obviate these defects Bhau Saheb equipped himself with an efficient artillery, with which he reduced Delhi and Kunjpura. The situation so changed on the last day at Panipat that the same artillery proved an encumbrance.

- 9) Leadership of Abdali Shah Abdali, who had possessed matchless experience of warfare in central Asia, having received his training under Nadir Shah. This is well illustrated by the cool and patient manner in which Abdali managed every detail of this campaign, and the way in which he soon dexterously turned a critical situation against his opponents. He took possession of the Jamuna and assured for his army plentiful supplies from the country beyond, having cleverly succeeded in besieging the Marathas in their entrenched camp. Abdali's army was superior both in number and quality. His forces of 40,000 cavalry and 40,000 infantry whereas Marathas' army consisted of 55,000 cavalry and 15,000 infantry which included 9,000 disciplined under Ibrahim Khan Gardi. Selected force of six thousand of his personal body guards with fine young horses were kept in reserve by Abdali. He allowed the Marathas to exhaust themselves completely and then brought fresh reserve force into action. The shortsighted policy of the Marathas also proved disastrous to their cause.

6.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE THIRD BATTLE OF PANIPAT

G. S. Sardesai is of view that it is wrong to suppose that the third battle of Panipat destroyed the Maratha power in the north or that it essentially shook the Maratha Empire of India. Notwithstanding the terrible losses in man power suffered on that field by the Marathas, the disaster decided nothing. In fact it pushed forward in the distant sequel two prominent members of the dominant race, Nana Phadnis and Mahadji Shinde, both miraculously escaping death on that fatal day, who resuscitated that power to its former glory. Not long after the battle of Panipat the Maratha power began to prosper again as before and continued to do so for forty years, until the death of Mahadji Shinde or until British supremacy was established early in the 19th century by the second Maratha War (1803).

The first set back the Maratha power received was by the premature death of their greatest Peshwa Madhavrao, which enabled the British power to come forward so easily on the stage of history and dispute Indian supremacy with the Marathas for a quarter of a century. The disaster of Panipat was indeed like a natural visitation destroying life, but leading to no decisive political consequences. To maintain that the disaster of Panipat put an end to the dreams of supremacy cherished by the

Marathas, is to misunderstand the situation as recorded in contemporary documents. The fall of the Angre (1756) and the disaster of Panipat paved the way for emerging British political influence in India. This is indeed the indirect but important consequence of the Maratha disaster. Bhau's courage inspired every soul to supreme exertion, and even after the final rout, people wrote and spoke of the event as if they were heroes. The Marathas have been a practical people possessing a temperament which never was over enthused under victory or crushed under disasters. Writes Maj. Evans Bell, "The battle of Panipat was a triumph and a glory for the Marathas. They fought in the cause of "India for the Indians." Though the Marathas were defeated, the victorious Afghans retired and never again interfered in the affairs of India.

It is significant that while the two combatants, the Marathas and the Afghans, were locked in a deadly combat on the field of ancient Kurukshetra. Robert Clive the founder of the British Empire in India, was on his way to England to explain the feasibility of his dreams of an Indian empire to the Great Commoner Lord Chatham, then the Prime Minister. Panipat indirectly ushered in a new participant in the struggle for Indian supremacy. This is indeed the direct outcome of that historical event, which on that account marks a turning point in the history of India. Oppressed by the Wazir Ghazi-ud-din's vulgar ambition and relentless ferocity, the Crown Prince Ali Gauhar was compelled to flee from Delhi in May 1758 and seek safety in exile.

The English merchants were thus enabled to make a successful bid for the position of King-makers in Bengal and Bihar, and to use the power thus acquired to cleverly throw their net of supremacy over the whole land. The ignorant and mutually quarrelling Indian chiefs failed to realize the significance of these British activities and the meaning of their political and territorial ambition. Ali Gauhar, Shuja-ud-daula,

Surajmal, Ghazi-ud-din, Najib Khan, Raghunathrao and Malharrao Holkar could not appreciate the trend of the epoch-making events that were happening in Bengal and in the Karnatak. They all wasted their energies in personal squabbles at Delhi. The battle of Panipat was fought on 14th January 1761. The very next day the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam in his effort to recover Bengal sustained a severe defeat on the river Son at the hands of the British forces led by Major Carnac. Shah Alam's French officers were taken prisoners and he had to throw himself on the British protection. The day after this event that is on the 16th January Pondicherry, the rival of Madras, fell into British hands, thereby smashing the French power in India. These three days proved momentous in determining the future fate of this country. The tone of British behavior and correspondence markedly changed from the days of the Peshwa Bajirao I to those of Madhavrao, as the missions of Gordon and Price amply testify. The rise of Haidar Ali in the South was also the direct result of the Maratha defeat at Panipat. If these broad political issues of the Indian situation are kept out of sight, Panipat in itself brought to the Marathas a unique experience in politics and war, and heightened their national pride and sentiment, as nothing else could have done. The disaster

instead of damping their spirits, made them shine higher as, when a nation is on the path of advancement and progress, such ups and downs are inevitable. Such valiant soldiers as Dattaji, Jankoji, Ibrahim Khan, Sadashivrao and Vishvasrao did not die in vain. They left their mark on the fortunes of their nation and prepared it for a greater effort such as the young Peshwa Madhavrao actually put forth. Out of death cometh life, is only too true. Although one generation, the older one, was cut off, the younger generation soon rose to take its place and perform the nation's service as before. The disaster was felt as personal by almost every home in Maharashtra.

6.5 SUMMARY

The third battle of Panipat had decisive effect on political future of India. The Marathas and the Muslims weakened each other in that deadly conflict, facilitating the aims of the English for Indian supremacy. The defeat of Maratha was downfall of one of the strongest native power in India. Soon the British became powerful enough to interfere into native administrative and political affairs. Although Abdali had a great victory in this battle, it cannot be said that he had a great advantage.

6.6 QUESTIONS

- 1) Explain the factors that were responsible for causes of the Maratha defeat at Panipat.
- 2) Narrate the causes of and the defeat of the Marathas in the third Battle of Panipat.
- 3) What is the significance of the third Battle of Panipat.

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PESHTWA MADHAVRAO I

Unit Structure :

- 7.0 Objectives
- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 Nizam invades Poona
- 7.3 Revolt of Raghunathrao
- 7.4 Battle of Rakshasbhuvan
- 7.5 Karnatak Expeditions
- 7.6 Raghunathrao finally overcome
- 7.7 Peshwa Madhavrao and Janoji Bhonsle
- 7.8 Revival of Maratha Power in the North
- 7.9 Estimate
- 7.10 Summary
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7.0 OBJECTIVES

1. To study the revival of Maratha Power following the disaster of Panipat.
2. To understand the role played by Peshwa Madhavrao I in restoring the lost prestige and power of the Marathas.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The third battle of Panipat is regarded as one of the most important landmark in the history of the Marathas. The Marathas lost Peshwa's eldest son Vishwasrao, his cousin Sadashivrao Bhau, Tukoji Shinde, Jankoji Shinde and many other prominent generals. The news of this unexpected disaster reached Peshwa Balaji Bajirao, then on his way to the North at Bhilsa on January 24th, 1762. The Peshwa gave up his plan of going to the assistance of an army that was no more and slowly retreated towards Poona, where he succumbed to his illness on June 23rd, 1762. In this unprecedented crisis Madhavrao, the second son of the late Peshwa, then in his seventeenth year became the Peshwa with the approval of the king of Satara. Raghunathrao was his Regent. For the

time being it appeared that the Marathas were determined to close their ranks and make an honest effort recover their power and political prestige. Unfortunately Raghunath's ambition coupled with the weakness of his character and his incurable tendency to be guided by the advice of others stood in the way of this happy consummation. Soon Raghunathrao began to ignore the young Peshwa and conduct every matter of administration himself. Thus arose an unpleasant position in which the Peshwa's mother and her partisans ranged themselves in a strong party opposing Raghunathrao's measures. This afforded the Nizam an opportunity to profit at the expense of the Marathas.

7.2 NIZAM ALI INVADES POONA

The Nizam was the first to take advantage of the Maratha disaster at Panipat. He found in it a golden chance to wipe out the ignominy of his defeat at Udgir. In October Nizam marched directly upon Poona at the head of a powerful army of sixty thousand men. He was determined to capture Poona. Fire and desolation marked the trail of Nizam's invading forces. The Marathas tried to prevent his advance and skirmishes followed. Nizam destroyed the Hindu temples at Toka, a village on the banks of Godavari and plundered Pravara sangam. It deprived him of the services of Maratha chiefs like Ram Chandra Jadhav, who refused to tolerate this insult on their religion and joined the Peshwa. He dug up Shinde's palaces at Srigonda in search of hidden treasure. Early in December Nizam came near Poona. Peshwa's family and some of the general populace removed themselves for safety to Lohgad, Purandhar, Sinhagad and other places. Good care was taken to keep the King well guarded in the fort of Satara.

At this trying moment Madhavrao and his uncle sent urgent call to Janoji Bhonsle and other sardars to join the Peshwa with their troops. With 70,000 troops they at once moved to oppose the enemy and bring him to submission. Avoiding open war they harassed the enemy at every turn and wore down his spirit in several skirmishes which took place at Ahmadnagar, Srigonda, Hivre and Bhuleshvar on the enemy's route toward Poona. Nizam's destruction of the religious places had estranged his Maratha sardars who were easily won over by the Peshwa. Ramchandra Jadhav and Mir Mugal Nizam's brother deserted him and came over to the Peshwa. This time Nizam's advance was halted at Uruli where he was surrounded by the Maratha army. He was compelled to beg for terms to secure his retreat.

The treaty that the Nizam was forced to sign might have been more favourable to the Marathas but Raghunathrao wanted to secure a potential ally in his struggle for power at Poona and tried to conciliate the Nizam by undeserved leniency. Raghunathrao imposed very mild terms on him. He was asked to surrender territory worth forty lakhs. This behaviour of Raghunathrao was resented by most of the prominent Maratha sardars who had assembled at Uruli, such as Gopalrao Patwardhan, Trimbakrao Pethe, Janoji Bhonsle and others, who

considered it a splendid opportunity of humbling the troublesome Nizam Ali.

7.3 REVOLT OF RAGHUNATHRAO

After the conclusion of Peace with Nizam the Peshwa accompanied his uncle in an expedition to the Karnatak against Haidar Ali of Mysore. On the way the differences between the two assumed such proportion that Raghunathrao returned to Poona in resentment. Madhavrao alone proceeded with Trimbakrao Pethe toward the Tungabhadra. After returning from the Karnataka campaign, Madhavrao started asserting himself and demanded full control of the administration. Raghunathrao took offence at this demand and he and his partisans resigned from their respective position. Madhavrao immediately took up the responsibility of the whole government and Trimbakrao Pethe was appointed Diwan in Place of Sakharam Bapu. Madhavrao anxious to live in amity with his uncle pleaded for his co-operation but his appeal fell on deaf ears. Raghunathrao openly demand that a separate *Jagir* yielding an annual income of ten Lakh Rupees in addition to five important forts. The Peshwa could not tolerate such a rival power and opposed the demand. Under such tension there was rumour that the Peshwa contemplated the seizure of his uncle to keep him in confinement. Alarmed by such fears Raghunathrao suddenly left Poona and went to Vinchur near Nasik. Aba Purandare, Naro Shankar, Bahiro Anant Partisans of Raghunathrao prepared to fight the Peshwa's party. They secretly arranged to secure the support of Janoji Bhosle and the Nizam.

Madhavrao was supported by Trimbakrao, Gopalrao Patwardhan and Anandrao Raste. The challenge was accepted by Peshwa Madhavrao, who left Poona to check the rival army on 7th November 1762 on the bank of river Ghod, where a skirmish took place. The result seemed to have been unfavourable to the Peshwa for he retreated and came to Alegaon on November 12. Here Raghunathrao's forces now joined by Nizam soon came in pursuit and defeated Peshwa. At this crisis the young Peshwa with remarkable foresight and decision immediately surrender himself as the only means of preventing a complete division in the state which would have benefited the enemies of the Marathas. Madhavrao

was put in confinement with guard of 2000 men to watch him. The activities of Gopikabai, mother of Madhavrao at Poona were similarly confined and a strict was kept on her residence at the Shaniwarwada. Raghunathrao then took over the administration of the Maratha state and made new appointments to the government posts, Trimbakrao Pethe and Baburao Phadnis were removed from their office. Sakharam Bapu and Nilkantha Mahadev Purandare were appointed principal Ministers. The former received the fort of Sinhagad and a *Jagir* of nine lakhs while the latter received the fort of Purandhar. In the mean while Nizam had arrived and as the price of his alliance Raghunathrao had promised to cede to him territories yielding an annual revenue

of 51 Lakhs, including the forts of Daulatabad, Shivneri, Asirgarh and Ahmednagar.

Peshwa Madhavrao I

Ragunath's next victim was Gopalrao Patwardhan of Miraj, who had taken a prominent part in the struggle against him. Raghunath asked him to surrender his Jagir. He refused and strongly defended the fort but finally had to surrender it on 3rd December 1763. From Miraj Raghunathrao moved southward to

put down aggression of a Haider Ali, but soon reports reached him of a coalition being formed between Nizam and Janoji Bhonsle with Maratha sardars like the Patwardhans and the Pratinidhi who had suffered at Raghunathrao's hand and had deprived of their patrimony and dignity

7.4 BATTLE OF RAKSHASBHUVAN

Internal divisions within the Maratha camp soon provided another opportunity to the Nizam to play his old game. The Maratha sardars did not consider it unpatriotic to invoke the Muslim ruler's assistance. Vithal Sundar, Nizam's Diwan, served as the intermediary in these negotiations. Gopalrao Patwardhan, Bhawan Rao Pratinidhi, Piraji Naik Nimbalkar, Ramchandra Jadhav and Gamaji Yamaji were the Chief allies of Nizam and they were soon joined by Janoji Bhonsle. In February, 1763 an agreement was concluded. Janoji was to be made regent of the King of Satara, all *Jagirs* taken from the allied sardars by Raghunath were to be restored. In return Nizam was to get back all territories on his side of the river Bhima.

When all arrangements were complete, Nizam proceeded along the banks of the Bhima towards the Sholapur district. He sent to the Peshwa a list of his demands as follows: 1) Restoration of all territories on the other side of the Bhima 2) Restoration of *Jagirs* to sardar's who were his allies and 3) acceptance of his own nominee as the *Diwan* and be guided by his advice in all concerns of the Maratha State.

The situation thus became most dangerous to the Maratha state, threatening its independence. The treasury of Poona was empty, the army already depleted by desertions and lack of equipment. But such a critical moment, however, served to unite the divergent elements and the common danger induced the various parties in the Peshwa's Darbar to lay aside their differences and join in repelling the hostile combination.

The crisis was serious indeed. Nizam was supported by Janoji Bhosale and some powerful Maratha sardars. Marathas lacked the means to face the enemy's powerful artillery in an open action. Avoiding a close open engagement, they decided to wear out the enemy by plundering the territories of the Nizam and Bhonsale and keeping them on the run. As the combined armies of Janoji and Nizam Ali moved along the Bhima ravaging the Peshwa's territory, the Marathas similarly began to ravage the Nizam's territory and early in March attacked Aurangabad

but failed to make any impact on the town which was defended by Murad Khan. In order to save the city, Murad Khan paid 2 Lakhs. Malharrao Holkar. He joined the Peshwa's army near Aurangabad and Marathas started divasting the Bhonsle's territory. For a month the Marathas and Nizam were destroying each other's territories. When the Marathas entered the Berar, Nizam pursued them but the Marathas fled towards Sholapur and Naldurg. Nizam then changed his tactics. Finding it impossible to pursue Marathas with his heavy artillery he decided to enter Peshwa's territory. Nizam's army ravaged the rich towns of Nasik, Junnar and Sangamner. Nizam attacked Poona, major portion of which was completely burnt down. The Peshwa's family and the State papers were sent to the fort of Sinhagarh. The idols of the temple on the Parvati hills were broken and desecrated. Meanwhile Marathas plundered Hyderabad and burnt Bidar. An angry Nizam destroyed many buildings and temples. Nizam then proceeded towards Purandhar and ravaged the country as far as the Bhima. Raghunathrao was extremely angry when he heard of the plunder of Poona and wanted to give an open fight. All sardars, including Sakharam Bapu protested against such risky venture. They argued that the Nizam's success was due to the support of the Maratha sardars like Janoji Bhonsle, Gopalrao Patwardhan, Piraji Nimbalkar and others. It was therefore considered necessary to take measures for winning them back. Janoji Bhonsle was the first Maratha chief to listen to these proposals. He found that he had gained nothing from his alliance with the Nizam. His territories had been plundered. At the Peshwa's summons Mahadji Shinde marched upon Ujjain to attack the northern parts of the Bhonsle's territories. The Peshwa offered Bhonsle's gadi to Mudhoji Bhonsle. Confronted by dangers on all sides, he informed Malharrao Holkar that he was prepared to desert the Nizam if a jagir worth 32 lakhs was given to him. Bhawan Rao Pratinidhi was assured that his Jagir would be restored. Gopalrao Patwardhan was promised the restoration of Miraj. Inducement was offered to Nizam's brother Basalatjung and he came over to the Peshwa's side. Nizam then saw his position deteriorating.

The rainy season had already begun and it was difficult for both parties to move their troops. Nizam pursued his route towards Aurangabad and Peshwa's army followed him. On arriving at the bank of the Godavari Nizam crossed the flooded Godavari, leaving behind at Rakshasbhuvan his main army and the artillery under the command of Vithal Sundar. The Peshwa's army made a rapid march and attacked Vithal Sundar.

This was the famous battle of Rakshasbhuvan (August 10th, 1763) Vithal Sundar was severely defeated and killed. Madhavrao moved through the ranks and encouraged the troops. Grand Duff rightly says that he "Particularly distinguished himself both by personal energy and the judicious support which he sent to different points of the attack".

Raghunathrao wrote to Gopikabai "He surprised me. He had never before seen a fight. I have confidence in his future management of

responsibility". Thus the battle of Rakshasbhuvan was won mainly through Madhavrao's own initiative and energy exhibited throughout the campaign. It was due to his careful planning and disposition of the troops at every stage that the day was won.

The treaty of Aurangabad was signed on 25th September 1763. Nizam agreed to surrender territory worth 60 lakhs that had been already surrendered after the battle of Udgir, but which Raghunath rao had given back at Uruli and to cede new territories worth 22 lakhs. Bhonsale received territory worth 32 lakhs and Miraj was given back to Gopalrao Patwardhan. Bhavanrao was restored to the office of Pratinidhi. Balaji Janardan was appointed to the office of Phadnis and came to be known hence forward as Nana Phadnis.

The treaty deserves was a landmark in the history of the Marathas. It proved that the disaster of Panipat had not crushed the Maratha power and that they still possessed energy to conquer parts of India. The generation that Panipat had destroyed, was again thus quickly replaced by another no less worthy. Rakshasbhuvan proved the beginning of this national revival. Finally, this victory brought about a very significant change in the domestic affairs of the Maratha Empire. It closed the period of Raghunathrao's regency and marked the beginning of Madhavrao's independent career. It became clear to all that in spite of his lack of experience, this young ruler was great in war and in diplomacy and possessed to the fullest degree those qualities of leadership which his uncle totally lacked.

7.5 KARNATAK EXPEDITIONS

The defeat of Marathas at Panipat and the hostilities of the Marathas with the Nizam during the years 1760-63 contributed to the rise of Haidar Ali in Mysore. Haidar Ali pushed back the Maratha power from the Tungabhadra to almost the banks of the Krishna. During 1763 when the Peshwa was busy fighting Nizam, Haidar Ali conquered Bednur, established his hold upon the Nawabs of Savanur, Karnool and Kadappa who had long ago been subjugated by the Marathas. Haidar Ali seized the territory of Murarrao Ghorpade. His aggression deprived the Maratha State of tribute worth of 50 lakh rupees. It became necessary to restrain the aggressive activities of Haidar Ali and to reestablish Maratha supremacy over Karnatak. Madhavrao personally assumed charge of the expedition and Sakharam Bapu accompanied him as chief advisor.

Haidar Ali was not unaware of the Peshwa's progress. He collected troops and tried to form an alliance with Nizam but did not succeed in obtaining any thing from him beyond hollow promises. Haidar Ali marched to the vicinity of Savanur where he prepared to meet the advancing Marathas in an open engagement. Gopalrao Patwardhan was immediately sent with two thousand select troops in advance to hold up Haidar's march and defend the Nawab. The Peshwa invited Murarrao Ghorpade, won him over to his cause and secured his help in the forthcoming contest with Haidar Ali. There were skirmishes, moves and counter moves between the

Marathas and Haidar Ali. In May Haidar Ali was surrounded and defeated losing a thousand men. He took shelter in the forest. He was convinced that it was impossible to defeat Marathas in open warfare. Peshwa Madhavrao captured Dharward fort, the Principal station commanding the northern region of the Karnatak. On 1st December, 1764 a decisive battle was fought in which 1200 soldiers of Haidar Ali were killed. Haidar Ali took shelter in the forest of Bednur and continued guerilla warfare, prolonging the war till the rainy season.

In August Haidar began negotiation for peace. The Peshwa was also in difficulties. The English factors of Bombay created troubles on the Konkan coast and troops had to be dispatched there. Nizam Ali's troop plundered Maratha territory. In the meanwhile the Peshwa learnt about the intrigues of his uncle. Fearing that Ragunathrao would again revolt Madhavrao invited him to his camp to advise him on the operation against Haidar Ali. The Peshwa, the Patwardhans, Murrarao, Navab of Savanur wanted to impose such term on enemy as to finish him. However Raghunathrao considered Haidar as a potential friend against Madhavrao and imposed moderate terms to Haidar. The treaty of Anantapur was signed on 30th March, 1765. The terms of the treaty were as follows.

- 1) Haidar Ali agreed to pay 30 lakhs as expenses
- 2) He agreed to cede all the territory to the North of Tungabhadra
- 3) Haidar Ali agreed to leave Murrarao Ghorpade and the Nawab of Savanur as Maratha vassals.

Thus once more Raghunathrao was responsible for saving an enemy of the Marathas. Peshwa Madhavrao appointed Murrarao Ghorpade, Gopalrao Patwardhan and Rastes to defend the newly acquired territory in the South.

The next campaign against Haidar Ali was an outcome of Anti-Maratha activities like collecting tributes from the Maratha territory in Karnatak. During 1766 Madhavrao made friends with Nizam so as to prevent him from joining either Raghunathrao or Haidar Ali. Towards the end of 1766, he first dispatched Gopalrao Patwardhan to the Karnatak and himself followed him soon after by the eastern route, capturing Surapur, Raichur and Mudgal. In February 1767 he captured the strong fort of Shira from Haidar Ali's possession. The fort of Madgiri was captured and the Rani of Bednur was released from Haidar's prison. Meanwhile the Nizam too was marching against Haidar. Now only two places, Srirangapattan and Bednur remained in Haidar Ali's possession to which the Peshwa next directed his attention. Haidar was thus constrained to come to terms. He sued for peace and treaty was signed in May 1767, by which he agreed to surrender all the territory in the Karnatak that he had captured. About this time Raghunathrao had again started trouble at Poona which obliged the Peshwa Madhavrao to return, accepting the terms offered by Haidar Ali, instead of finishing him completely.

During 1767 to 1769 Peshwa Madhavrao was involved in struggle against Raghunathrao and Janoji Bhonsale. This provided an opportunity for Haidar to recover much of the lost territory and resume authority over some of the chiefs, who had previously, become Maratha vassals. Therefore Peshwa Madhavrao led his

last campaign against Haidar Ali. He himself marched against Srirangapattana though he succeeded this time capturing several important places, his failing health made him leave the campaign half way leaving further operations to Trimbakrao Pethe, who relentlessly pressed the campaign against Haidar and inflicted upon him a crushing defeat in a battle of Moti Talav near Srirangapattana on 5th March, 1771. Haidar Ali escaped and reached Srirangapattana. Trimbakrao tried to capture the fort by laying siege to it but scarcity of other provisions forced him to give up the siege. Financial constraints and the Peshwa's illness forced Trimbakrao to conclude peace with Haidar Ali. Haidar agreed to pay 31 lakhs in cash and jewellery. The Marathas retained Sira, Madgira, Gorurkonda, Kolar and Hoskote. In spite of the three campaigns against Haidar Ali Marathas were not able to destroy his over grown power.

7.6 RAGHUNATHRAO FINALLY OVERCOME

Since the Peshwa's success at Rakshasbhuvan Raghunathrao had realized that he was eclipsed by Madhavrao's increasing Prestige and moral greatness. Raghunathrao again started showing signs of treachery and intrigue. In 1765 he demanded that the Maratha Empire should be divided into two parts. The Peshwa was always willing to give a *Jagir* worth 12 lakhs and two forts but it did not satisfy Raghunathrao's ambition. The Peshwa naturally refused to accept this demand. After his failure in northern expedition Raghunathrao returned to Nasik in June 1767 and started preparing for a renewal of civil war. The Peshwa demanded complete surrender from Raghunathrao. Raghunathrao agreed to retire on condition that his debt of 25 lakhs incurred in the northern expedition should be paid off and he be given a *Jagir*. Madhavrao accepted the demand. Raghunathrao was dissatisfied but his military inferiority compelled him to keep silent.

Raghunathrao soon began his intrigues and opened negotiation with Haidar Ali, Nizam, Janoji Bhonsale and Damaji Gaikwad. He collected troops. But the Peshwa defeated him in a

decisive battle at Dhodap. Raghunathrao took shelter in the fort of Dhodap. The Peshwa now demanded Raghunathrao's unconditional surrender. Raghunathrao surrendered and was confined in the Shaniwarwada at Poona.

7.7 PESHWA MADHAVRAO AND JANOJI BHONSLE

The Bhonsle family of Nagpur from the beginning showed an unwillingness to submit to the Peshwa's authority. They were often

disloyal to the Peshwa. He belonged to the Raghunathrao's party and was ever ready to take advantage of the Peshwa's difficulties. In 1768 Madhavrao organized a strong expedition against Janoji Bhonsale. In response to the Peshwa's request for military help Nizam dispatched his forces. The combined army entered Berar. Janoji marched toward Poona but he was pursued by the Maratha army. Janoji was surrounded on all sides by the Peshwa's army. The exhaustion of both parties induced them to seek peace. A treaty of mutual friendship was concluded at Kanakpur. By this treaty Janoji accepted the authority of Peshwa as the head of the Maratha state. He agreed that he would not increase the prescribed number of his army and that he would not intrigue against state with any foreign power. He also agreed to pay a tribute of five lakhs yearly.

7.8 REVIVAL OF MARATHA POWER IN THE NORTH

The disaster at Panipat led to the eclipse of the Maratha Power in the north. Bundelkhand, Rajputana, Malwa revolted against Marathas. Many parts of the Doab were plundered and ravaged by bold Zamindars. Bundela chiefs renounced Maratha allegiance. In Rajputana all the princes turned against the Marathas. For some years the Marathas found it impossible to resume their activities in the North. The invasions of Nizam, the intrigues and rebellions of Raghunathrao and Janoji Bhonsle and the long struggle with Haidar Ali kept the Marathas away from the North.

Among northern opponents of the Marathas, the Rajputs were the most powerful with Madhosingh of Jaipur as their head. Malharrao Holkar defeated him and his confederates at Mangrol near Kota on 30th November 1761. Holkar was however called to the South. Mahadji Shinde was busy with the question of succession. It therefore took several years for the Maratha power to regain its pre-panipat position in the North. The result was rise of English power in Bengal and Bihar. Their successes at Plassey and Buxar made them all the more bold. After Buxar Shuja-ud-Daula protected Nawab Mir qasim thereupon Major Fletcher marched against Shuja-ud-Daula who turned to Malharrao Holkar for help.

However he was defeated at the battle of Kora by the English. In July 1765, Mahadji Shinde collected tribute from Udaipur, Shahpura and Rupnagar.

Towards the end of 1765, Raghunathrao made preparation for leading an expedition to the North. He advanced to Malwa, collected tribute from Bhopal and was joined by Malharrao Holkar and Mahadji Shinde. Malharrao died a month later. Rana of Gohad and Jat Raja Jawahirsingh of Bharatpur formed a strong anti Maratha coalition which Raghunathrao found it necessary to put down. Gohad was besieged but no progress was made for several months. Holkar and Gaikwad left him in disgust as their troops had received no pay for several months. Several surprise attacks launched against Gohad ended in failure. The situation

was saved by the mediation of Mahadji Shinde who arranged peace talk with the Rana on 2nd January 1767. The Rana agreed to pay 15 lakhs to the Marathas and the siege was raised. Raghunathrao then proceeded to Dholpur against Jat King Jawahir Singh, who, however, concluded peace. Meanwhile Ahmed Shah Abdali appeared in the Punjab and Raghunathrao hurriedly left the North and proceeded to Indore. His motive in going to Indore was to settle the question of succession to Malharrao Holkar's state. Malharrao's successor Malerao died in March 1767 without leaving any issue. Raghunathrao decided to take advantage of the situation by seizing the hoarded wealth of Ahilyabai on the pretext that the Holkar state was heirless and deserved to be confiscated. The spirited daughter-in-law of Malharrao Holkar prepared to defend Indore received full sympathy and support from all Maratha sardars. The whole incident proved humiliating and he had to call upon Ahilyabai for a condolence visit without any armed following. The question of choosing an heir for the state of Indore was referred by Ahilyabai to the Peshwa and decision was in favour of Ahilyabai.

The failure of Raghunathrao in North had a disastrous effect upon the Maratha prestige in the North. The Jats occupied Maratha and Bundelkhand right up to Kalpi. The Maratha army under Ramchandra Ganesh and Visaji Krishna was sent by Peshwa to the North. The Mughal emperor at Allahabad promised to pay 50 lakhs if the Marathas would put down the Jat rebels. The civil war between Jawahir Singh's brothers Nawal Singh and Ranjit Singh had reduced the strength of Jats. The Marathas supported Ranjit Singh and defeated Naval Singh in April 1770. The Marathas occupied Agra and Mathura. The Maratha army decided to secure Maratha Jagirs usurped by the Rohillas and Bangash after Panipat. They entered the territory of Ahmed Khan Bangash and established their camp at Ramghat. Najib Khan joined hand with Ahmad Khan Bangash and surrounded to the Marathas. Marathas slowly retired to safer position on the bank of Jamuna. Najib Khan died on 31st October 1770 and his son Zabeta Khan became Mir Bakshi.

Ramchandra, Ganesh and Mahadji defeated Bangash and Rohilas and captured Etawa and Farrukhabad. Ahmad Khan Bangash ceded to the Marathas all the territory that they had possessed before Panipat. The former Maratha position was completely regained. Marathas now decided to occupy Delhi. After the battle of Buxar, the British had kept Emperor Shah Alam under their control at Allahabad. He wanted to return to Delhi. He decided to seek the protection of the Marathas. Mahadji Shinde marched toward Delhi and Emperor Shah Alam made a formal entry in the capital on 6th January 1772. The Marathas thus regained the position which was lost by the disaster of Panipat.

7.9 ESTIMATE

Peshwa Madhavrao I died in November 18th, 1772 at the age of 28 after a successful rule of eleven years. "The plains of Panipat were not

more fatal to the Maratha Empire”, wrote Grant duff, “than the early end of this excellent Prince”. Of all the Peshwas Madhavrao stands as the greatest. He possessed the statesmanship of Balaji Vishwanath, valour of Bajirao I. He wiped off the disgrace which the Marathas had suffered on account of the disaster at Panipat and restored the Maratha fortunes to such a glory and it is rightly said that the premature death of this young Peshwa was a greater blow to the Maratha State than the disaster of Panipat. He reestablished the prestige of the Marathas in the North. Emperor Shah Alam was restored to the Mughal throne. The Maratha confederacy was consolidated once again. When the battle of Panipat carried away leading personalities in Maratha history, Madhavrao in short time managed to raise a new generation of capable leaders like Mahadji Shinde, Ahilyabai, Tukoji Holkar and the Patwardhans.

Madhavrao was an able administrator. He took strong measures against corruption. The judiciary began to function efficiently under the eminent judge Ram Shastri. The system of *veth* or forced labour was entirely abolished. He was always careful about the interest of the people. He ordered that *ryot* should not be harmed by the marching troops. Remission of revenue was granted when there were political disturbances or failure of rain. The Peshwa Madhavrao's private life was blameless and offers a striking contrast to that of his contemporaries. Judged by all standards, he was undoubtedly the greatest of all Peshwas, as administrator and statesman certainly and not the less as a soldier.

7.10 SUMMARY

Within a brief period of less than eleven years Madhavrao succeeded in extending his authority from Delhi to Srirangapattan. And these exploits were accompanied by the suppression of internal revolts and minute supervision of administrative affairs.

7.11 QUESTIONS

- 1) Account for the revival of the Maratha power under Peshwa Madhavrao I.
- 1) Explain the reconstruction of the Maratha power in Norther India under Peshwa Madhavrao I.
- 2) Form an estimate of the military and diplomatic achievements of Peshwa Madhavrao I.

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BARBHAI COUNCIL

Unit Structure :

- 8.0 Objectives
- 8.1 Introduction
- 8.2 The Barbhai Council
- 8.3 Treaty of Surat
- 8.4 Treaty of Purandar
- 8.5 Battle of Talegoan
- 8.6 Anti-English Confederacy
- 8.7 Treaty of Salbai
- 8.8 Summary
- 8.9 Questions
- 8.10 References

8.0 OBJECTIVES

- 1) To study the formation and working of the Barbhai Council
- 2) To review the events leading to the First-Anglo Maratha war.
- 3) To study the role played by Nana Phadnis and Mahadji Shinde.
- 4) To understand the relations of Marathas with Nizam Ali and Tipu Sultan.

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Peshwa Madhavrao I died on 18th November 1772 after having nominated his young brother Narayanrao to the Peshwa ship and advised him to conduct the administration by the advice of Sakharam Bapu and Nana Phadnis, the two ablest and most experienced servants of the state. Narayanrao was immature, fickle minded lad just turned seventeen. Soon he had to face many problems. The first was his empty treasury. The situation became aggravated by the Gardi sepoys who demanded arrears of their pay. Another source of anxiety was external forces. As soon as Madhavrao died, the English became active against the Marathas. They claimed Thane, Bassein, Vijaydurg and Ratnagiri. Siddi of Janjira was also creating trouble. Narayanrao took prompt action to defend Maratha territory.

The death of Madhavrao did not improve Raghunathrao's prospect of being Peshwa. Blinded by personal ambition, he could not reconcile himself to a subordinate position. He was waiting for an opportunity to depose Narayanrao and seize power. A plot was arranged by Raghunathrao with the Sumersingh Gardi. A cash award of three lakhs was promised to him for capturing Narayanrao and to placing Raghunathrao as the Peshwa. A written order by Raghunathrao was given that the Peshwa should be seized. This word came to be later scratched and replaced by the word 'slain' by Anandibai, says the Peshwa-Bakhar but who indeed made this change has ever remained an unsolved mystery. On 30th August 1773, Narayanrao was brutally murdered by the gardis. Raghunathrao became the Peshwa. However, Sakharam Bapu, Nana Phadnis, Haripant Phadke, the Patwardhan, the Rastes and others did not to Join Raghunathrao if the inquiry which Ram Shastri was conducting, proved him guilty. Raghunathrao obtained the robes of Peshwaship from *Chhatrapati*. After six weeks of investigation, Ramshastri declared Raghunathrao as guilty of murder of Narayanrao. Taking advantage of the disorder in the Marathas, Nizam and Haidar Ali started creating trouble. Raghunathrao organized an expedition and marched against them.

8.2 THE BARBHAJ COUNCIL

When Ramshastri declared Raghunathrao guilty of the murder of Narayanrao, it proved an indirect call to the various opponents of Raghunathrao to rally around Narayanrao's widow Gangabai, who was now in an advanced stage of pregnancy. Sakharam Bapu took initiative in organizing a Regency Council that later became famous as *Barbhai* Council, as twelve members participated in it. Nana Phadnis, Haripant Phadke, Sakharam Bapu, Trimbakrao Pethe, Moraba Phadnis, Babaji Naik, Maloji Ghorpade, Bhavanrao Pratinidhi, Raste, Patwardhan, Mahadji Shinde and Tukoji Holkar were the original members of the Council. Most of them were only nominal agents. Sakharam Bapu, Nana Phadnis and Moraba Phadnis were active members. It was decided that if a male child was born to Gangabai, he will be nominated as the Peshwa in place of Raghunathrao. Thus the '*Barbhai* Council' vowed to keep Raghunath out of the Peshwaship. They sent a force in Pursuit of Raghunathrao. In hopes of winning support from Shinde and Holkar Raghunathrao fled to Indore, but having failed there he concluded a treaty with the English.

The birth of Sawai Madhavrao, the posthumous son of Narayanrao, threw Raghunathrao into political limbo. The *Barbhai* secured the robes of Peshwaship for the child. In despair Raghunathrao tried to secure the military assistance of the East India Company. The English were waiting for such an opportunity; they readily agreed to support him against *Barbhai*.

8.3 TREATY OF SURAT

Raghunathrao and the EnglishBritish signed the treaty of Surat on 6th March 1775, the terms of which were as follows:

- 1) A military contingent of 2500 men should be placed at the disposal of Raghunathrao, of which at least 700 were to be Europeans with sufficient artillery.
- 2) For the expenses of the troops a sum of one and half lakhs was to be paid every month by Raghunathrao.
- 3) Six lakh rupees or an equivalent in jewellery should be deposited with the English.
- 4) In addition Raghunathrao was to cede to the English Thane, Bassein, Salsette and the Talukas of Jambusar and Olpad near Surat.

The English force with Raghunathrao left Surat. The Maratha army resorted to guerilla tactics and harassed the English.

8.4 TREATY OF PURANDAR

Warren Hastings, the Governor General did not approve the involvement of the Bombay Government in the war. He deputed Colonel Upton to Poona. Upton demanded the permanent cession of Bassein, Salsette and Broach before consenting to withdraw his support to Raghunathrao. The *Barbhai* Council refused this offer. They on the contrary demanded the complete surrender of Raghunathrao. The negotiation came to a breaking point but internal problems compelled the *Barbhai* Council to conclude treaty of Purandar on 1st March 1776. According to this treaty

- 1) The fort of Thana with the island of salsette was to remain in English possession.
- 2) Twelve lakhs to be paid to the English in cash for expenses they had incurred on account of Raghunathrao.
- 3) Ragunathrao to receive an allowance of three lakhs and 15 thousand annually for his maintenance and to withdraw completely from the state affair.
- 4) The English to retain the territory they had conquered.

The Treaty of Purandar was not an agreement heartily accepted by either party. Raghunathrao refused to accept it. The Bombay Government disliked it as they gained nothing in return for all their expenditure during the last two years.

8.5 BATTLE OF TALEGAON

After treaty of Purandar Bombay Government sent a strong representation to the Home Government requesting orders to carry out the treaty of Surat. Meanwhile American colonies of England declared their independence which fired Hasting's ambition for retrieving the lost fortunes of England by creating a new empire in India. The combined forces of Raghunathrao and col. Egerton reached Khandala via Panvel in 1778. The Poona Government prepared to meet the attack by guerilla tactics. At Wadgaon English were completely surrounded on all sides. Their starving army was compelled to surrender by the convention of Wadgaon. They agreed to surrender Raghunathrao and to give up Thane, Salsette and the territory captured by them in Gujarat. The Treaty of Wadgaon was subject to ratification by the Governor General, who never ratified the treaty.

Governor-General Warren Hastings informed the Maratha court that the agreement of Wadgaon could not be ratified and that he had authorized Col. Goddard to negotiate a fresh treaty. Meanwhile Raghunathrao, who was in custody of Mahadji Shinde managed to escape and took shelter at Surat. Nana Phadnis demanded the surrender of Raghunathrao but the English declined to do so.

8.6 ANTI ENGLISH CONFEDERACY

To oppose the English in Gujarat where Maratha chief the Fatehsingh Gaikwad had joined them was no easy task for the Poona Government. Nana Phadnis worked the miracle by secretly organizing an All India Confederacy against the English power. The Peshwa, the Nizam of Hyderabad, Haidar Ali of Mysore and Bhonsales were the four members of the alliance. Hastings realized the danger of this strong Anti-English feeling. He restored Guntur district to Nizam, thereby detaching at least one member from Confederacy. Madhoji was won over by Warren Hastings by means of large subsidies and specious promises. Col. Goddard opened campaign first in Gujarat and then in North Konkan. The Marathas followed guerilla tactics and Goddard found it difficult to defeat Marathas. In the South, Haidar Ali defeated Britishers and the whole of Madras, Karnatak was held by him. Britishers capture Bassein in December 1781. Having secured Bassein they resolved to march once more on Poona through Borghat. Constant skirmishes continued for months and in end Goddard had to retreat to Bombay. Mahadji inflicted a severe defeat on Col. Muir near Sipri. Warren Hastings had grown extremely nervous about his situation and wished to close the Maratha war and concentrate his energies upon Haidar Ali. Both the parties wanted an honourable settlement.

8.7 TREATY OF SALBAI

After months of discussion and endless correspondence, a treaty was concluded and signed by Mahadji and Anderson at Salbai on 17th May 1782. Terms were as follows:

- 1) All places including Baassein taken by the English during the war shall be handed to the Peshwa.
- 2) The Island of Salsette and City of Broach was to remain with the English.
- 3) The territory conquered in Gujarat by the English would be restored to the Peshwa and the Gaikwad.
- 4) The English shall not support Raghunatrao. He should choose his residence and Rs. 25000 a month should be paid by the Peshwa for his maintenance.
- 5) The Peshwa agreed that Haidar Ali should be made to surrender the territory, he had recently seized.
- 6) The English were to enjoy the privileges of trade as before, but the Peshwa was not to allow support to any other European nation.

The treaty forms an important landmark in the political history of India. The fort of Thana and the fertile island of Salsette were finally lost by Marathas. Mahadji certainly raised his importance by accepting the guarantee for the proper observance of these terms. Before the first Anglo-Maratha war the de facto power of the Peshwa was supreme over a large part of India. However, now British started making a gradual ascendancy. According to V.A. Smith "The treaty marked the ascendancy of the English as the controlling, although not yet the Paramount power in India".

8.8 SUMMARY

Due to the internal dissensions of the Marathas, British got an occasion to interfere in Maratha politics. Though Nana and Mahadji differed from each other, they cooperated when Maratha integrity was endangered by foreign enemy.

8.9 QUESTIONS

- 1) What was Barbai Council?. Explain the working of Barbai Council.
- 2) Trace the course of events leading to the 1st Anglo-Maratha war.
- 3) Explain the role played by Nana Phadnis and Mahadji Shinde in the History of Marathas.
- 4) Write Short notes a) Barbai Council b) Nana Phadnis c) Mahadji Shinde

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DOWNFALL OF MARATHA POWER

Unit Structure :

- 9.0 Objectives
- 9.1 Introduction
- 9.2 Events that led to the Downfall of the Maratha Empire
- 9.3 Causes of the downfall of Maratha Empire
- 9.4 Summary
- 9.5 Questions
- 9.6 References

9.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit the student will be able to :

- 1) Understand Events that led to the Downfall of the Maratha Empire.
- 2) Grasp Causes of the downfall of Maratha Empire.
- 3) To judge role Maratha Sardars and Peshwa in downfall of Maratha Empire.

9.1 INTRODUCTION

Seventeenth century witnessed the rise of Maratha power under able leadership of Chhatrapati Shivaji. Peshwa further extended the boundaries of Swaraj in north India. But later decades of eighteenth centuries witnessed the downfall of Maratha Empire. The death of Madhavrao II activated evil forces inherent in the Maratha character, destroying the unity and cohesion and hastening the final ruin of the state in less than a quarter of a century. After Nana Phadnis's death in March 1800, Daulat Rao Shinde managed the Peshwa's administration, but his measures did not lead to any change. The wisdom, integrity and loyalty faded away and British took complete control of the Maratha Empire.

9.2 EVENTS THAT LED TO THE DOWNFALL OF THE MARATHA EMPIRE

Second Bajirao Peshwa's Incompetency :

Second Bajirao Peshwa was not able successor of earlier Peshwas who kept all Maratha Noble united. He was cruel towards who defied him. To acquire more resources Yashwant Holkar started campaign in North India

while Vithoji started this campaign in Peshwa's territories. Vithoji Holkar was captured alive by Bapu Gokhale, the commander of Peshwa and, tied to the foot of an elephant and killed with cruelty on 16th April 1801 when Yashwantrao was locked up in a deadly struggle with Shinde's troops on the Narmada. The Peshwa's karbharis had foolishly persuaded him to underrate the strength of Yashwantrao Holkar. On 8 October, 1802 Holkar's troops scattered the forces of the Peshwa at Baramati. This was followed by Yashwant's victory over Shinde's general Sadashiv Bhaskar in the plains of Hadapsar on 25th October 1802. The Peshwa fled from Poona took shelter under English.

Treaty of Vasai (Bassein) (1802) :

Lord Wellesley instructed the Resident to exploit the situation thoroughly to force the Peshwa to accept terms favourable to the British, The terms of the treaty were as follows:

- 1) They agreed that the friends and the enemies of the one should be treated as the friends and the enemies of the other.
- 2) The English should protect Bajirao's territory as if it was their own.
- 3) For this purpose a subsidiary force not less than 6000 regular infantry should be permanently stationed in Pune.
- 4) For the expense of this force Bajirao should cede to the British, districts yielding 26 lakhs of rupees a year.
- 5) The Peshwa was not to entertain in his service any European hostile to the English. The treaty at Bassein put an end to Maratha independence, gave the English the unquestionable supremacy over the Maratha state.

Second Anglo Maratha War (1803) :

Yashwantrao Holkar tried to form a coalition against British. As a diplomatic move British decided to appease Yashwantrao Holkar and Amritrao. They offered protection to Amritrao, along with a jagir at eight lakh rupees. Daulatrao was singled out by Lord Wellesley for the use of pressure tactics as he was convinced that the former alone possessed the means of offering any serious opposition to the English. It was also Wellesley's ambition to destroy the French party at Shinde's court. Daulatrao and Raghuji Bhosle tried to form a Maratha coalition. Daulatrao Shinde in order to gain support of Yashwantrao Holkar agreed to settle the differences through the mediation of Raghuji Bhosle. Bhosle's minister presented to Yashwant an order from Daulatrao releasing Holkar's territory in Malwa which Shinde had occupied after his victory at Indore. While their negotiations were proceeding at a slow pace, Lord Wellesley declared war on 7th August, 1803. Holkar did not join the coalition as he knew that Daulatrao's first object after reestablishing his influence at Poona would be a war of extermination against him. Arthur Wellesley, Stevenson and General Lake defeated Marathas.

Treaty of Deogaon (1803) :

Downfall of Maratha
Power

The battle at Laswari completed the destruction of Shinde's power. Hence Bhonsle and Shinde was obliged to come to terms.

- 1) Raghoji Bhosle II ceded to the English the province of Orissa including Balasore
- 2) Raghoji Bhonsle retained in his possession the two forts with district with revenue of four lakhs.
- 3) The province of western Berar up to the river Wardha was ceded to the Nizam.
- 4) Bhonsle was to respect all the treaties concluded with his feudatories by the English.
- 5) Non English subject, European or American, was to be entertained by him without their consent. Raghoji Bhonsle was to renounce adherence to the Maratha State and to recognize the treaty of Bassein.

The Third Anglo Maratha War (1817-1818) :

Elphinstone's settlement of the Peshwa's dispute with the Patwardhans, Rastes, Desais were highly displeased Peshwa. The treaty of Pandharpur, as the settlement was called on 19th July, 1812. According to the treaty, the Maratha Sardars obtained a pledge of personal security from the English government. The discussion of the Peshwa's claims on the Gaikwad of Baroda led to further deterioration in the Anglo-Maratha relations. Gangadhar Shastri, the Gaikwad's envoy who had come to Poona with English guarantee to discuss the Peshwa's financial claims over the Baroda State, was murdered at Pandharpur on 20th July 1815. Resident Elphinstone considered Trimbakji Denge to be responsible for the murder and demanded his surrender.

According to Sardesai the Pindari war was only a grand English plan for extinguishing all vestiges of the Maratha power and establishing their supremacy in India. The Pindari war gave the Peshwa, an opportunity to wipe out his disgrace and recover his possessions and to recruit a large army under pretence of helping the Company Government in suppressing the Pindaris. The relation between Elphinstone and the Peshwa became decidedly hostile. On 19th October on the Dassera day, Elphinstone was openly insulted by the Peshwa. Thus Bajirao II misjudged the political situation, played into Elphinstone's hands, and supplied him the necessary legal justification. The slowly growing resolution of the Peshwa ripened into action on 5 November, 1817, when Bapu Gokhale set fire to the Residency. Thus the 3rd Anglo-Maratha war started. Bapu Gokhale launched an unsuccessful attack on the small force led by Captain Burr on the plain extending from Chatusringi hill to Khadki near Pune. In the battle of Khadki the Marathas lost 500 soldiers. On 15th November, 1817 Bapu Gokhale was defeated in the battle of Yervada that forced the Peshwa to retreat to Purandar. On 17th November the British forces entered Poona

and replaced the Maratha flag with the Union Jack on the Delhi gate of the Shaniwarwada, thus ended the Maratha independence.

Bhonsale too rose in arms against the English, but was defeated on 27th November, 1817. Little flickers of sympathetic revolt burned in Indore. Holkar suffered a decisive defeat on 21 December, 1817 and had to sign the subsidiary treaty of Mandasor. Bapu Gokhale was killed at Ashta. Finally, Bajirao II surrendered to Malcolm at Mahu near Indore on 3rd June, 1818. His soldiers were disbanded. He was granted a pension of eight lakhs of rupees per annum and allowed to live at Bithur near Kanpur.

9.3 CAUSES OF THE DOWNFALL OF MARATHA EMPIRE

The thinkers and writers in modern Maharashtra have suggested different reasons in explaining the phenomenon. Rajwade and Khare, two eminent scholars of Maratha history have in particular profusely written on the subject. Khare has written an elaborate introduction to N. C. Kelkar's work '*The Marathas and the English*,' which appeared in 1918 for commemorating the centenary of the extinction of Maratha rule. N.C. Kelkar observes that absence of strong central government, feudalism, lack of trained army and artillery, lack of national spirit are the major responsible factors for downfall of Maratha power. V.K. Rajwade holds the view that it was negligence on the part of Marathas about scientific knowledge and study is responsible for their defeat. Jadunath Sarkar says that rift among Maratha sardars divided their strength and weakened them. For historian S.R. Sharma, defeat at Panipat, Raghoba's alliance with the English and treaty of Bassin (1802) led to degeneration of Maratha power. Shejwalkar says that wrong policies adopted and implemented by Peshwas were responsible for the downfall.

Khare in his essay scathingly criticized all the weaknesses and foibles inherent in the character of the average Maratha he cited few examples.

- (1) The Marathas possessed no national sentiment.
- (2) Internal jealousy and selfish treachery triumphed over the public interest.
- (3) While individually they were clever and brave, they totally lacked the corporate spirit so essential for national independence.
- (4) The scientific spirit of enquiry and improvement was entirely absent among them.
- (5) They neglected to develop artillery as the main support of defense.
- (6) The pernicious system of allotting lands in lieu of pay for military service proved ruinous.
- (7) After the death of the Peshwa Madhavrao I no capable leader appeared in Maharashtra.

(8) Marathas sadly lack the discipline.

(9) The British were past masters in the art of diplomacy.

1) Maratha Empire was a confederacy and lacked cohesive force :

Maratha Empire was a vast, but it was not well-knit. It was not a unitary state and all power was not in the hands of the Peshwa. Maratha state was gradually converted into a loose confederacy of ambitious feudal chiefs. In the last decade of the eighteenth century, like the Chhatrapati, the Peshwa too became the powerless head of the Maratha confederacy. Power was shared by many Maratha chiefs, most important of them were Holkar, Shinde, Bhonsle and Gaikwad. Each one of them was independent in their own territory and did whatever they pleased. They did not hesitate to intrigue against each other. Evidently, there was no discipline and solidarity among them. They were not brought together even by a national emergency. The result was that all of them were defeated one by one by the English East India Company.

2) Weakness in Finance :

The Marathas cared less about finance. Such a vital department was absolutely ignored with the result that the Marathas were always in need of money. In search of money they went on plundering the country. But such a system can hardly bring any credit to the government. Prinsep rightly pointed out that the army of Shinde and Holkar were the whole machinery of their government and were at all times kept in motion for the purpose of enforcing contributions from reluctant tributaries.

3) Lack of modern method of fighting :

Marathas were experts in guerilla warfare. They were not accustomed to pitched battles. However, guerilla tactics were not possible in northern plains of India. When they established their empire, it became necessary for them to protect the people from foreign invasion. Consequently, the Marathas were forced to give up their old method of fighting and that brought about their ruin.

4) Absence of proper geographical knowledge :

The Marathas were not good students of Geography. They did not bother to understand the geography of the country which was indispensable for the success of any military operations. On the other hand, English knew all about the Maratha territory. This knowledge helped them in their military operations.

5) Lack of organization or system :

The English had enormous resources at their disposal and the Marathas were no match for them. English were always careful to win over a section of the opponents. Lord Wellesley approached the Rajput chiefs, the Raja of Bharatpur in order to isolate Maratha chiefs.

6) Neglecting artillery :

According to some Maratha scholars, the Marathas neglected to develop artillery as their main support of defence. But according to M. G. Ranade, the Marathas did not possess the required knowledge of scientific processes in the use and manufacture of superior arms. They were also not very skillful in plying long range guns, they lacked good gunners and artillerymen. They were handicapped by the absence of galloper guns. Elphinstone described the Maratha army as a “loose and straggling mass of camels, elephants, bullocks, fakeers and buffoons, lanceman and matchlockmen. The Maratha army was not homogeneous in its composition. The Maratha chiefs recruited the Arabs, the Sikhs, the Rajput, the Rohillas, the Pathans and Europeans in large number to strengthen their army. A nation’s liberty cannot be preserved only by foreign mercenaries. It is remarkable that there was not a single man of the Maratha race in Shinde’s infantry and artillery that fought at Laswari

7) Ddebauchery and Incapability of Bajirao II :

Bajirao II was unscrupulous and incapable. It is true that Yashwantrao Holkar tried his best to remove Bajirao and put in his place his brother Amritrao. Bajirao II did not trust those who had been brought up under the old regime and selected his advisers from menials, selfish priests or intriguing up-starts like Arajerao Ghate. Persons like Bajirao II surrounded by men of small minds and poor character could not hold their own against eminent personalities on the English side.

8) Superior diplomacy of the British :

British were the master in art of diplomacy. During the First Maratha War, the British had full and detailed information in their possession regarding the Maratha and their mutual relations and their family disputes. The British knew who could be won and who were loyal to the Peshwa. There were a large number of Englishmen who had learned Indian language and could freely speak the same. It is pointed out that even Nana Phadnavis was ignorant not only of the geography of the outside world but even of India. The maps used by him were fantastic, incorrect and unusable. Lord Wellesley and his two brothers Arthur Wellesley and Henry Wellesley were men of extraordinary capacity and talent. The same could be said about men like Elphinstone, Sir John Malcolm, Sir Barry Close, Col. Collins, Jonatham, Duncan and Sir Thomas Munro. Sardesai says that a nation possessing such able personalities for its agents is bound to win success at any time.

9) Lack of scientific study :

According to Rajwade, the absence of scientific study among the Marathas was the main cause of their failure. Sardesai believes that Marathas tried to preserve religion at the cost of science. According to Dr. Nadkarni, development of scientific knowledge is a result of higher social development. When progressive social forces begin to work, educational

and other developments are rapid. And as the Marathas were socially backward, the spirit of enquiry did not develop.

10) Untimely and unexpected death of able leaders :

According to Sardesai, the untimely and unexpected death of many of its great men at different times was responsible for the failure of the Marathas. The untimely death of Chhatrapati Shivaji brought the Mughal Emperor down upon Maharashtra. The untimely death of Bajirao I in 1740 freed the Nizam from extinction and made his dynasty permanent in the Deccan. The death of Peshwa Madhavrao let loose the latent dissolving forces upon Maharashtra and hastened its ruin. The death of Madhavrao II in 1795 brought to the Maratha leadership the evil genius of Bajirao II.

11) Caste system :

Another cause of Maratha downfall was the narrow conservatism in the traditional system of castism. The partiality towards Brahmins imposed a heavy burden upon the finances of the government. Caste jealousy did play a part in the conflict between the Angres and Peshwas. According to the British Resident at Poona, all members of the Brahmin caste were more or less benefited by the Peshwa regime which was after all a Brahmin Raj.

9.4 SUMMARY

The Maratha Empire was vast. They were great warriors and in fearlessness and bravery, they were second to none in the world. However, inspite of these qualities, the Marathas failed to hold their own against the English due to their internal dissensions. Bajirao II now followed the imbecile policy of making Shinde and Holkar dependent on the Poona Government by encouraging their friction in Malwa. Obviously, the Maratha State was rapidly heading for the crisis of 1802. After the death of the Peshwa Madhavrao I no capable leader appeared in Maharashtra. Ultimately, the British defeated all Maratha sardars and took control of their empire.

9.5 QUESTIONS

- 1) Discuss the events leading to the downfall of Maratha power.
- 2) Trace the course of events leading to the Second Anglo-Maratha war. What were its results?
- 3) Explain the Anglo-Maratha relations between 1802 and 1818.
- 4) Discuss the causes of the downfall of Maratha Power.

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PESHTWA ADMINISTRATION : CIVIL, REVENUE AND MILITARY

Unit Structure

- 10.0 Objectives
- 10.1 Introduction
- 10.2 Civil Administration
- 10.3 Revenue Administration
- 10.4 Military Administration
- 10.5 Summary
- 10.6 Questions
- 10.7 References

10.0 OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the administrative system during the Peshwa period.
2. To take an overview of the difference between the Royal and Peshwa administration.

10.1 INTRODUCTION

Chhatrapati Shahu ruled the Maratha Empire from 1707 to 1749. It was during this period that the real power was vested with the Peshwa leading to peshwaship becoming hereditary beginning with Balaji Vishwanath in 1713. However, the King was mere a nominal head. The dominant role of Peshwa and other Maratha Sardars that continued for nearly 100 years changed the history of Marathas. Their principles of the administration were derived from three different following sources. Firstly, the principles of ancient Indian polity, secondly, principles of Shivaji's administration system and thirdly, the changes which were introduced from time to time.

10.1 CIVIL ADMINISTRATION

The civil administration consisted of Central Government, provincial and village administration. The Peshwa headed the Central Government with the Secretarial at Poona called *Huzur Daftar*. It had several departments that dealt with revenue and expenditure of district, accounts and payments. Each department of the *Huzur Daftar* was headed by an official and it was sub divided into smaller departments. For smooth administration the

Dafter was divided into several departments. The *Chalte dafter* and the *Ek-Beriz-dafter* were of chief importance.

1. The *Chalte dafter* was directly supervised by *Fadnis*. The *Fad*, the *Beheda*, the *saranjam* etc. were its sub-departments..
 - a) *The Fad*: Clerks or *karkuns* in the department of *Fad* made or kept *Rozkirds* or daily transaction of all sorts. During Peshwa Bajirao II' time the *Fad* had employed 1,500 *karkuns*. Many of them began their career here and rose to prominent positions.
 - b) *The Beheda*: *Beheda* department prepared the *ajmas* (estimate) and *Beheda* (budget) in accordance with the previous year statement of account of the *talebands*. The *ajmas* included the heads of income and expenditure.
 - c) *Saranjams*: The *saranjam* department kept a record of account of all land grants such as military *jagirs*, *dumalla* lands, which was land under double authority.
2. *Ek-beriz dafter* was another important sub-division of *Huzur dafter*, permanently stationed at Poona. It maintained the records of all classified accounts of the department that were not under the *Chalte dafter*. It prepared the *tarjuma* or the balance sheet of the government for the year. It also maintained the *Khataunis* or the alphabetically arranged abstracts of all expenditure under their respective heads. Thus, the *dafter* officers successfully supervised and managed the work of the village and district administration.

10.2.1 Provincial Administration :

During the Peshwa period there were *prants* or *subahs* in the *Swarajya*. Each *prant* was under the *mamlatdar*. The highest officer in the district was the *Mamlatdar* who was assisted by another officer called *kamvisdar*. *Mamlatdar* was directly responsible to the Peshwa's secretariat or the *Huzur Daftar*. He was overall incharge of all matters-civil, criminal, judicial and economic. He had the authority to decide matters related to land revenue and its assessment. While assessing the taxes he was to consult the Patil of the village.

The *Mamlatdar* was to submit the actual statement of accounts to *Huzur Daftar* which was again tallied by the Peshwa's Secretariat with that of the *Deshmukhs* and *Deshpandes*. Hereditary officers, *Darakhdars* were appointed in the provinces who kept a check on the *Mamlatdar*. They were eight in number with defined functions such as diwan-deputy of *Mamlatdar*, *Muzumdar*-to check the accounts before submitting them to the registeror the *phadnis*. *Daftardar*-secretary, *Potnis*-treasurer, *Potdar*-clerk to examine the coins, *sabhasad*-petty registrar and *Chitins*-correspondence.

The provinces were further divided into districts or *Pargana*. *Kamvisdar* was appointed to govern a smaller *prant*. He had all the military and non-military powers of the district. *Kamvisdar* had to work under the *Mamlatdar* who was incharge of a large *prant*. Land revenue of his area was collected by the *Kamvisdar* according to the instructions of the *Mamlatdar* for which he received a share of 4 per cent of the revenue collected. The *Sarsubhedar* was another officer incharge of the *prant*. In 1773 Trimbak was the *Sarsubedar* of the Konkan *prant*. The three terms, *Mamlatdar*, *Kamavisdar* and *sarsubhedar* were often used synonymously.

10.2.2 Village Administration :

The administration of a village or a *mauze* was headed by a *Patil* or headman and was assisted by the village clerk called the *Kulkarni*. *Patil* was the chief officer in the village administrative set up. He was the chief revenue officer, chief police magistrate and also was the chief judicial officer. He was a link between the village and the government. He was an authorized representative of the village before the *Kamvisdar* or *Mamlatdar*. The *Patil* was not an elected or appointed officer but his post was hereditary which could be sold and purchased.

As a revenue officer he was consulted by the *Kamvisdar* while assessing the Land. In case the assessment was found to be too high the *Patil* had the right to protest and get the grievances redressed. As a judicial officer the *Patil's* duty was to settle the cases amicably but if failed in solving it he was to appoint a *Panchayat*. As a police officer he enquired into cases of theft and robbery with the help of the village watchmen.

The Kulkarni :

Kulkarni is next to *Patil* in rank. He was *Patil's* clerk and the village record keeper. During political disturbances the *Kulkarni* along with the *Patil* had to stand surety in support and loyalty of their co-villagers. Some rights and privileges were also enjoyed by the *Kulkarni* after the *Patil*.

The Chaugula :

The *Chaugula* assisted the *Patil* in his duties and also looked after *Kulkarni's* records.

The Mahar :

The *Mahar*, another village official was given the responsibility to maintain the security of the village as he was well versed with the boundaries of the individual cultivable lands. He helped the *Patil* in collecting the land revenue. He also held the office of the village watchman.

The Potdar :

The *Potdar* was the fifth in rank in the village administration hierarchy who was always a goldsmith by caste. He was responsible for testing the

genuineness of the coins by checking their prescribed weight and proportions of metals.

However, the village officials were not elected or appointed by the government and yet they had to obey the government orders. They were directly paid by the villagers and hence had moral influence of public opinion. There was also a *sabha* called *bara balutedars* or 12 hereditary village representative of all castes who rendered certain services to the villages and in return received a share of the produce from each village.

10.1 REVENUE ADMINISTRATION

The most important source of revenue during the Peshwa period was land revenue. The land was categorised as a agricultural land called *jirait* and the plantation called *bagait*. The Peshwas also had the land directly under them known as crown lands which was sub divided into four categories namely.

- I. *Sheri* – cultivable fields
- II. *Kurans* – grass land or pastoral land.
- III. *Bagh* – garden
- IV. *Amrai* – orchards

These were under the direct control of the district officer, *Mamlatadar* or the *Kamvisdar* and often sublet to *upri* tenants or lease holders.

10.3.1 Chauth and Sardeshmukhi :

These two important sources of revenue introduced by Shivaji continued even during the Peshwa period. During Shivaji's time both these taxes were deposited in the personal treasure of the king. But during the Peshwa rule some part of that income was given to the king and the rest was spend on the administration works.

Chauth – The Marathas obtained a legal right to levy *Chauth*, when the diplomacy of Balaji Vishwanath secured for Shahu an imperial recognition of right to realise *Chauth* from six province of Deccan. The *Chauth* collected was divided as follows: 25 per cent was *babti* that was given to the king. 66 per cent was *mokasa* given to the chiefs for maintaining the troops. 6 per cent was *sahotra* as the share of *pantsachiv*. 3 per cent was *nadgauda* that was the share given to other people according to the will of the king.

Sardeshmukh – Levied by Shivaji was entirely collected by the state. During the Peshwa's rule, this, too, was subdivided as there were many who staked a claim on a share of the *Sardeshmukhi*.

10.3.2 Land Revenue :

Land revenue was assessed and collected on the produce of lands directly under the Maratha rulers. The village land was divided among the *mirasdars* and *upris*. The *mirasdars* were the descendents of original settlers possessed proprietors right. They could not be denied the rights as they paid the revenues regularly. The *upris* were tenants at will. They paid

the rent and cultivated common land of the village as permitted by the government.

The assessment, fixation of land revenue was done based on the type of crop and irrigation facilities provided by the state. Additional revenue was charged on the cultivation of coconuts. All revenue was to be paid in cash or in kind. The farmers were helped with agricultural loans during the time of famine.

10.3.3 Other Taxes :

Taxes varied from district to district. These were tax on land irrigated by wells, house tax to be paid by all villagers except Brahmins and officers, annual tax for testing weights and measures, tax on marriage and remarriage of widows, taxes on sheep and the buffaloes. Tax levied on stamping of cloth was known as the *bat chhapai*. The custom duty paid by traders and professionals was known as *mohatarfa*.

Custom duties, income from forest, mints and from proceeds of justice are some of the other sources of income. M.G. Ranade remarks "The system of revenue management under Balaji Bajirao, Madhavrao I and Nana Phadnis was, on the whole, careful. New sources of revenue were developed, and the rate improved. Every care was taken to insist on the rights of government". The total revenue of the Peshwa government is estimated as 6 crores towards the close of 18th century. Elphinstone's estimated the revenue at Rs. 9,671,735.

10.1 MILITARY ADMINISTRATION

Shivaji's army was efficient and national in character. The Maratha army fought and sacrificed their lives for their motherland. However, the military organization underwent a radical change after Shivaji's death. Rajaram and Tarabai revived the distribution of land as *jagir* to the sardars which Shivaji had discouraged during his reign. The Peshwas mostly hired the non-Maratha soldiers who were mercenaries. The Peshwas dominated and the *Chhatrapati* remained a nominal head of the State. It was during Shahu's rule that the Peshwas became powerful and later the post was made hereditary. Balaji Vishwanath gave the newly conquered regions to the Maratha Sardars as their 'sphere of influence' who maintained their own armies. The army ranks became hereditary who were called as *Darakh-dars*. The sardars recruited local people as soldiers in the army from their own jagirs which led to declining national character and love for *Swarajya*.

10.5.1 Division of the Army :

The Peshwa military may be categorized into six units namely cavalry, infantry, artillery, elephants, forts and navy. The cavalry and infantry were important components of the army as during Shivaji's time. However, the emphasis was more on cavalry because it was of great use in the expeditions to the north.

1. Cavalry:

The cavalry had four divisions as follows:-

- a) *Bargirs* - They were soldiers to whom the State provided horses. They together were called as a *Paga* and the officer heading the *Paga* was *Pagya*. The page consisted of 10 to 700 horses.
- b) *Shiledars* - They were soldiers having their own horses and weapons. A group of *Shiledars* was called *Pathak*. Any *Shiledar* who appointed *Bargirs* under him was called *Rauts*. A feudal lord or a *Saranjam* was given a land grant by the Peshwa and a powerful *Saranjam* became a sardar.
- c) *Khasgi paga* - The *Bargirs* and *Shiledars* together were known as the *khasgi paga* and was directly maintained by the Peshwa. It was private and personal cavalry of the Peshwas stationed at Poona.
- d) *Ekandas* - They were soldiers who voluntarily joined the army with their own horses and equipments for a particular expedition only.

2. Infantry :

Maratha and the non-Maratha were recruited in the infantry. The soldiers from the north who were in large number in the Peshwa army were referred to as the *gardis*. They belonged to Rohillas, Pathans, Sikhs and other groups of the north. Besides this there were also the Siddis, Europeans and Anglo-Indians in the Peshwa army.

3. Artillery :

Open warfare was popular during the Peshwas and the guerilla tactics were discontinued. Strong artillery became the need of the times. Bajirao I personally worked for the development of the artillery in the army for the purpose of defense. However, during Peshwa Bajirao II artillery was used for aggression. Arms and ammunitions were generally purchased from the British and Portuguese.

4. The *Pindaris* :

They were free booters attached to the regular army. They made a living by looting and plundering the enemy and also their own territory. Many of them were Muslims and they accompanied the Maratha army on expeditions. Ghazi-ud-din was a *pindari* who served during Peshwa Bajirao I and his son Gardi Khan was associated With Malharao Holkar and also a part of the Maratha army during the third battle of Panipat. Their descendents served many Marathas for generations.

5. Navy :

The coastal region of the Maratha kingdom was protected by the strong naval force established by Shivaji. The naval spirit created by Shivaji did not die with him. The Angres were repud for growth of the navy and their control the west coast. The navy actively defended the coastal region

from foreign invasion, captured abandoned ships and also involved in trade activities. The Maratha merchants were settled in Arabian coastal towns such as Muscat and went up to China for trading. There are examples of Marathas such as Narottam Joshi who is described as a resident of Muscat and Asarav Vinayak as merchant of high position and his ships going to China. The Peshwas encouraged ship building activities too.

The Maratha fleet consisted of ships such as *galbats* and *machch was*. The naval chief was the admiral known as *subhedar*. *Bhandaris*, *Gaviths* and *Daldis* were the coastal communities known as *Khalasis* who worked on the ships. The Angre's conflict with the English continued till Peshwa Balaji Bajirao joined the English in crushing the Angrie power on land and sea in 1756.

During Balaji Bajirao the mercantile vessels that traded from port to port were put to use for defensive purposes. *Tandels* and *Sarangs* were enlisted in private employment when needed. However, this policy was not fruitful. Except for the protection of commerce and sometimes a check over the pirates, not much use was made of the navy. The Peshwas had reduced the importance of their navy.

10.6 SUMMARY

The Maratha administration set up by Shivaji went through changes during the Peshwa period. The policies changed with the changes in political conditions. With the expansion of the Maratha power in the north there emerged the need for changes in the administrative policy. New feudatory class of sardars emerged with their own troops which ended the centralized military leadership and therefore there was no homogeneity in the army. The administrative system of the Peshwas failed to consolidate their military gains.

10.7 QUESTIONS

- 1) Explain the civil and revenue administrative system under the Peshwas.
- 2) Describe the military and judicial administration during the Peshwa period.

10.8 REFERENCES

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SOCIETY UNDER PESHEWAS: RELIGION, CASTE AND POSITION OF WOMEN

Unit Structure :

- 11.0 Objectives
- 11.1 Introduction
- 11.2 Religion and Caste
- 11.3 Position of Women
- 11.4 Summary
- 11.5 Questions
- 11.6 References

11.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit the student will be able to

- 1) Understand the nature of society under the Peshwa period.
- 2) Grasp the religious condition in Peshwa period.
- 3) To judge position of women under the Peshwa Rule.

11.1 INTRODUCTION

The traditional caste system existed in Maratha society under the Peshwa rule. The society was divided into various castes and sub-castes. In the caste hierarchy, at the apex were the Brahmins and at the lowest were the Shudras or the untouchables. Professions were hereditary and based on caste. Those Marathas who were in the administration emerged as prominent groups. The Brahmins also acquired administrative and military skills. While studying the social life of the Maratha period aspects such as traditions, customs, caste system and other features will be dealt with.

11.2 RELIGION AND CASTE

Maratha society was follower of Hinduism. The Hindu religion was based on four purusharthas, particularly on the theory of Karma, Moksha, charity, merits incarnations, the doctrine of Bhakti and so on since the ages. The concept of Karma, sati and moksha dominated the religious practices of the period of Marathas. During this period, the caste became comparatively stable new subcastes emerged. It came to be organized into

close social units with fixed social status, which governed the nature and extent of inter-caste relationships.

Caste system:

The Maratha society was caste ridden. It had four main castes including Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. Shudras were divided into many sub-castes. Brahmins were at the top in hierarchy of the caste system. Kshatriya was a warrior class, second in a hierarchy to the Brahmins. Vaishyas mainly performed agricultural activities and very few were small traders. Although the Shudras, were made to away from the main village, some were enrolled in the army and village administration. For example, the Mahar helped the village Patil and Ramoshis were responsible for the security of the nearby regions of the forts. The caste system was very rigid and dominated by the higher castes. Dnyaneshwar, Eknath, Namdev, Ramdas and others became popular in society through their writings in the form of abhangs and ovis. They tried to offer spiritual emancipation to caste yet it could not achieve social mobility in their lives.

The rigidity and dominance of Brahmins reappeared in the Maratha society and religion with the rise of the Peshwas to power. They asserted their position socially and politically. During the reign of Peshwa Narayanrao, there arose conflicts between the Brahmins and the Prabhus which led to discontent among the Prabhus. The Peshwa rule witnessed rivalry between Konkanastha and Deshastha, Chitpavan - Karhade against Devrukh Brahmins. During Peshwa Bajirao I, Pratinidhi Shripatrao opposed important position being given to Chitpavan Brahmins. In the civil war between Raghunathrao, and Madhavrao the Deshastha supported Raghunathrao. However, all these conflicts seemed to be politically motivated. Besides the Brahmins, there also existed several other castes and sub-castes. Untouchables namely, Mahars, Mangs, Chambhars and others were also in quite a good number. These communities were segregated from the mainstream of society as the caste-based rules and regulations concerning customs and traditions were very rigid. People violating the rules had to face severe punishments and had to perform penance for their mistakes.

There were several commensal taboos during Peshwa period, but the most important were as under

- 1) Prohibition of acceptance of food
- 2) Prohibition of acceptance of water from the hands or a lower caste.
- 3) Prohibition to dine with a person of low ritual status. It is said that the degree of pollution involved in these cases was not the same. Except for the prohibition of acceptance of food from the lower castes, all others had laxity in certain degrees. Though it was observed that dining with the lower ritual status was permitted but it was said that it should not be insisted upon in case the person of higher ritual status was reluctant for doing the same.

- 4) Untouchability-pollution stigma: During this period, it was believed that pollution was carried through the bodily contact. Hence bodily contact was avoided during period of impurity. This impurity was caused due to death.

Superstitious in society:

Superstitious beliefs were part of their daily life and society was affected by it. For doing small things also believed in seeing the auspicious day and time. Widows were not allowed to attend auspicious functions such as naming ceremonies, marriages etc. They performed various pujas and hawans to ward off evil spirits.

11.3 POSITION OF WOMEN

The position of women under the Peshwa rule can be ascertained with the help of the property rights they had. They were given no right to inherit the property of their father even in absence of any legal heir or their brothers. It means no married woman were entitled to any property share of their father, only unmarried daughters could claim a certain amount which was called patrimony and expenses required for their marriage. Women of this period could enjoy whatever their father, brothers or any member gave them in the form of gifts on various occasions and nothing more than that. On the other hand, the share of women in the property of their husbands was limited. The women used to claim their property right was only maintained by their husbands. Otherwise, the women were granted a divorce on account of their inability to provide maintenance to their wives. It is said that widows could succeed to their husband's property in case husbands separated from their joint family and died without any legal heirs. However, in such cases, not the widows only could succeed in the property but Government also claimed a certain share in that property, which varied from two-fifths to one-half of the property as well as it differed from property to property.

The women during the period of Marathas could hold the property independently and had absolute rights of either disposal or gift over the property, which came to be known as the Stridhan property. Vijnanesvara's text advocated an equal share of property to women to that of their sons. The same text says that stridhan means the property acquired by inheritance, purchase and partition for women, who had all rights of disposal over it. Some other sources say that stridhan means the only jewellery conferred on women before or after the marriage and they had all sorts of rights of disposal, gift enjoyment or partition as they wished. There are several references that even the Government helped them in receiving their ornaments from the custody of their mother-in-law to enable them to use as they liked. In this way, the property right of women to the property of husband and father was not considered during this period. They had absolute right to their ornaments only. But all women couldn't get such ornaments in their marriage. Therefore, they were to be dependent on father, husband and sons at a particular period of life respectively. Thus, women had secondary position in the matter of

property rights for which the Hindu laws based on religion were responsible.

Society Under Peshwas:
Religion, Caste and
Position of Women

Sir John Malcolm says that women from noble families were taught the art of horseriding and the use of arms like sword, dagger and lances. Women like Yamunabai Shindia, Laxmibai, Ahilyabai Jijabai of Karvir and Tarabai had led their armies on the battle field and fought several wars during their time.

Many women played a vital role in the political and cultural life of India such as Tulsabai and Ahilyabai Holkar, Umabai Dabhade, Laxmibai and Yamunabai Shinde the wives of Mahadji Shinde, Daryabai Bhosale, Tarabai, Jijabai, Radhabai, Gopikabai, Anandibai, Anubai Ghorpade. These and many other women of uncommon courage, political sagacity, administrative capacity or diplomatic skill and they had the caliber to be active in public life during their period. Although the names of above women flashed before our eyes due to their active role in the administration, several other women were capable for many roles but participated saliently and held the positions of Patil, Deshmukh, Deshpande very efficiently. These women acted as regents to their minor sons, transacted daily business, audited accounts, carried on daily correspondence and gave a good audience to various deputations from within and outside their rule. James Forbes in his account says that Maratha women did not observe parda, they were bold enough and participated in public life as men. He further says that the wife of Hiranand Diwan of Fatesing Gaikwad of Baroda, carried out the administration very efficiently in absence of her husband. Despite, that the society being conservative and religious minded, continuance of socio-economic customs and practices, certain women got opportunities to save the interest of their sons and husbands in the competition of their opponents. They observed such situations very closely and minutely, they became very conversant with such situations and tackled them very efficiently. Thus, the Maratha women from noble and aristocratic families did every task as perfectly as men and proved themselves equal to men.

The general outlook and the social institutions of the Hindu society had not developed to the extent that they could encourage a liberal outlook toward women. The birth of a girl child was not an occasion of celebration. However, in the 17th and 18th century, Maharashtra several women had strongly influenced the socio-cultural and political scenario. Jijabai moulded Chhatrapati Shivaji's character from his childhood and encouraged him founding the Swarajya. Yesubai and Tarabai were also strong in their own ways. After the death of King Rajaram, Tarabai kept the war of independence going, proving herself as an able administrator and a brave warrior and a woman with confidence. With the Peshwas rising to prominence in the 18th century, their wives too played an important role in political affairs. Gopikabai, wife of Peshwa Nanasahab actively participated in state affairs. Ahilyabai Holkar was one of the able and efficient administrators who made a mark in Maratha history.

Family:

Family during the period of Peshwas served as an excellent school for training the child in social etiquettes like social stratas, politeness, hierarchical calibration of action, inculcating virtues of self-discipline, self-sacrifice, obedience and service of elders and abidance by the precepts of religion. Although, these virtues were needed to anyone to possess, they were much more and harsh in case of girl child. They had to greet every elders on their arrival in her room and stand up as long as they remained in the room, do not chew pan and avoid using bolsters in presence of the elders. They inculcated in girl child utmost obedience to one's elders and superiors and respectful acceptance of their authority, which they regard as the highest virtues essential for potential survival. They imbibed that the girls should not disrespect the wishes or orders of their elders as well as not to remonstrate against them even if they scolded or punished. It is very clear from these evidences that all bondages and barriers were entailed on the girl child only. They were trained to ride a horse.

Marriage:

The family during the Peshwas period formed a patriarchal group, recognizing patriarchal descent. It was a joint family in which all members like brothers, even stepbrothers, sons, sisters, and others relatives like widowed aunts, their children and orphans. Lived together with father the eldest member at the head. In such family all decisions and circumstances went against the woman and she was proved insignificant. Marriages in joint families were contractual and arranged at an early age by the elders without any consideration of the marrying parties. Without any alternatives, these young daughters-in-law became victims of the torture of their in-laws and committed suicide. Thus, the marriage system had some predominant and outstanding features which influenced and affected the position of women if they operated concurrently, the effects were utterly disastrous.

System of Dowry:

Marriages under the Peshwa period were fixed by the families and elderly persons, the parties concerned were given no say about the choice of marriage partners. The factors that mattered in the selection were the compatibility of horoscopes, family background, caste, suitability of gotras and dowry. There are several references regarding dowry transactions during the Peshwa period. When the marriage malady like dowry was practiced and the brides or their parents were forced to pay such amount in the marriage.

Child Marriage:

This was one of the sorrowful feature of the marriage system under Peshwa rule. Hindu law makers and Dharma Shastras strongly recommended child marriages or pre-puberty marriages and advised that parents who failed to marry away their daughters in the pre-puberty age

incurred a huge sin. Peshwas considered themselves the custodians of Hindu law and religion and paid strict attention to the observance of the marriage laws. Peshwas even released prisoners on several occasions to enable them to marry their daughters at the pre-puberty age. Peshwa Bajirao II had issued orders to all Brahmins to get their daughters married before the age of nine. Generally, girls were married before the age of ten. In certain unavoidable circumstances, when marriage of a girl was delayed, eleven, was considered the maximum limit on the marriageable age. If somebody could not marry his daughter within the age of eleven, he was ex-communicated or outcasted by the people. Although, there was an upper limit of the marriageable age of girls but there was no mention of the minimum age of marriage for males. When the marriageable age of girls was below ten, a life of such newly married girl was quite deplorable and full of miseries.

Polygamy:

This was one more characteristic of the marriage life of people under the Peshwa period. Although there was an upper age limit for the girls for marriage, there was no such limit for men. They were able to marry number of times at any advanced age in life. It means men used to practice polygamy without any hesitation and nobody raised any objection on this system for a long. Men could contract as many marriages as they desired. Thomas Coat reports that polygamy was prevalent under the Marathas for the obvious reason of economic benefits. Among of highly privileged people, who had more wives were Nana Fadnavis, Peshwa Basirao II and Mahadaji Shindia. Thus, Polygamy was practiced at every level, which indicated the position of a woman during the period of Marathas.

Prohibition on Widow Remarriage:

Widowhood was looked upon as a curse and remarriage was considered a sin. Widows were forced lead a life of asceticism and devotion. Brahmin and other high-caste widows were not allowed to remarry and therefore their condition was tragic. They lived under severe restrictions as far as their dress and appearance was concerned. Some British reports say that re-marriage of widow was permitted among the economically weaker sections and humbler castes but it was prohibited among the upper castes. Widow re-marriage was allowed in the economically humbler class as well as whose husband was not heard for considerable period, but such woman was not permitted to re-marry before the prescribed period of waiting, which varied from five to twelve years. On the other hand, there was no such waiting period for males belonging to any caste or class. It is enough transparent to understand the position of a woman of this period.

Divorce:

This was also one of the important issues that helped determine the position of women in society. Although, divorce was sanctioned among lower castes, some castes never liked to sanction divorce in their caste to compete with Brahmins and claim some sort of higher ritual status. Brahmins never sanctioned divorce because marriage was considered very

sacred tie and it was irrevocable in any case. But the marriage was revoked when it was proved that the marriage was concluded hastily and without proper rites and rituals.

Sati:

The practice of sati, a woman burning herself on the funeral pyre of her husband prevailed among all castes. It was looked upon as a noble act of sacrifice by a widow and by doing so she would open the gates of heaven for all her family members. Ramabai performed sati on the death of Peshwa Madhavrao. However, most of the Peshwa's wives remained widows throughout their life. It was practiced among upper castes such as Brahmins, Marathas and warrior classes during this period. There are several references of not only wives but also concubines and female slaves burnt themselves with the dead bodies of their master. The main reason behind committing sati by widows was that status or the abject conditions to which the widows were reduced after the death of their husbands. Widows were pushed to such status that they were tortured and separated from the mainstream of life. Naturally, they took the painful decision of committing sati. Malharrao Holkar did not allow Ahilyabai Holkar, the widow of Tukoji Holkar to perform sati. The position of women from the nobility and the upper class was better than those of the middle and lower classes.

11.4 SUMMARY

Women under the Peshwarule could enjoy whatever their father, brothers or any member gave them in the form of gifts on various occasions and nothing more than that. On the other hand, the share of women in the property of their husbands was limited. Maratha society was a caste-ridden society. The caste system was very rigid and dominated by the higher castes. Women were subject to suffer from many social problems such as child marriage, widowhood, sati and divorce. Widows were reduced to the status of dependence, in significance and infamy for the remainder of their whole life which led them to die after the death of husbands.

11.5 QUESTIONS

- 1) Write a detailed note on position of women during the Peshwa period.
- 2) Describe the social conditions under the Peshwarule.
- 3) Discuss the social condition during the Peshwa period.

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Society Under Peshewas:
Religion, Caste and
Position of Women



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CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT: LITERATURE, ARTS AND ARCHITECTURE

Unit Structure :

- 12.0 Objectives
- 12.1 Introduction
- 12.2 Traditional literature
- 12.3 Art during the Peshwa period
- 12.4 Development of Architecture
- 12.5 Summary
- 12.6 Questions
- 12.7 References

12.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit the student will be able to

1. Understand the development of literature under the Peshwa rule.
2. Grasp the art and architecture in Peshwa rule.
3. To judge importance of forts and gadhis in Maratha period under the Peshwa Rule.

12.1 INTRODUCTION

Marathas under the Peshwa rule were prominently more involved in the political developments. Never the less, the temples, dharmashalas and ghats constructed by Maratha sardars trace the literature, art and architecture. Saint poets such as Tukaram and Ramdas through their literary works inspired the people. The traditional education system also existed. The saints such as Chakradhar, Namdev, Dnyaneshwar, Eknath, especially Tukaram and Ramdas inspired the people during the Peshwa period. However, during the Peshwa rule the Islamic customs, dress and language, came to have a remarkable influence on the social life.

12.2 TRADITIONAL LITERATURE

The Warkari style of bhajan became popular during this time. Consequently, the literature also entered a new phase. Bhajans, kirtans and poetry were composed during this time. Waman Pandit introduced commentary of the Bhagwat Gita in the form of Yatharth Deepika. A new

class of writers composing padas appeared on the scene in this period. They wrote short and melodious devotional poems to be sung in Kirtana. Trimbak alias Madhavamuni (1731) was well known for his padas. Amritrai, the disciple of Madhavamuni, surpassed his guru by his melodious compositions (padas). Shreedhar, one of the popular poets wrote Harivijay, Ramvijay and Pandavpratap. The new tradition of the padas included Abhangas, Aratis, Stotras, Ashtakas, Bhupalis, Prabhatagitas (song of dawn). Though the writing of biographies began in the initial stages of Marathi literature, the eighteenth century saw a rise of the biographers who established a regular biographical tradition in Marathi. The most important contribution in this field came from Mahipatbova. His biographical work on saints became much more popular. Some of the prominent books were Bhaktivijay, Santalilamrita. Moropant (1729-94) was the most luminous star in the galaxy of narrative poets. He wrote Mahabharata, Sankrina Ramayan, and Bhagavata Purana into Marathi. Another popular form of literature was poetry sung in the form of abhangs, padas, stotra, ashtaka and bhupalya. Aratis praising various Gods were popular during the Peshwa period.

Shahir Poets:

Ballads and Lavani were the literary forms and oral literature of passion and pathos, developed by the Shahir poets. Following are some of the important Shahir poets who lived in the second half of the eighteenth century.

Parshuram:

He was born and brought up in Ahmednagar district. Although, he had the profession of a tailor, devoted much more time in composing ballads on various subjects well-known during that period as Raghunathrao, Bajirao-Mastani, Shamsheer Bahadur and Bajirao II.

Honaji Balawas born and brought up in the family of Shahir in Poona. Although he belonged to Gavali community, he knew Sanskrit language very well. Honaji Bala sang on the pilgrim places like Pandharpur and Jejuri. His most popular composition Bhupali, which was addressed to Lord Krishna became the song of every household of the Maratha period.

Ram Joshi was the most sophisticated Shahir poet, was born in a Brahmin family of Solapur. He composed several lavanis and ballads, which he sang and danced. He excelled in the Chekpanhuti, a literary form, that required much wit and skill to use words of double meaning.

Prabhakar was born and brought up in a Brahmin family of Poona. He was one of the witnesses of the last years of Peshwai. He wrote on the reign of Sawai Mahahavrao and the decline of Maratha power in 1818.

AnantFandiwas the most popular shahir poet of Sangamner, district Ahmednagar. He was very much an expert in composing lavani and powadas. He used to sing for hours together on shringar rasa. When he

met Ahilyabai, the queen of Indore; Ahilyabai advised him to sing songs of bhakti, then he turned towards bhakti rasas.

Saganbhau was from Jejuri a pilgrimage near Poona. He was born in Muslim family that was involved in making weapons of war for Marathas. Although he was a Muslim, he was well-versed and well-acquainted with the Hindu religious tradition of bhakti. He composed ballads on Raghunathrao and Bajirao II.

Bakhars and Historical Letters:

During Peshwa period prose literature mainly consisted of Bakhars. Sabhasad Bakhar was the oldest one. Some of the other important Bakhars are Harivanshanchi Bakhar (dynastic), Panipat Bakhar, Khadyachiladhai (Bakhars on wars), Shiv chhatrapati Sapta on events in life of King Shivaji. Small Bakhars written in 1817 included the ancestral history of Bhonsles beginning from Babaji to Pratapsingh. It also included the existing social and political conditions in the Maratha Kingdom. Though there are various drawbacks to the Bakhars are the earliest sources of Maratha history. Historical letters of communication are also important documents of the period. There are about 1000 letters dealing with the political development in the region. The letters were written by Balaji Avaji Chitnis, Mahadev and Bapu Hingne, Antaji Mankeshwar, Govind Pant Bundela is available for references. K.N. Sane, V.V. Khare, V.K. Rajwade, G.S. Sardesai have published a number of historical official letters. Ramchandrapant Amatya's Agnyapatre gives information on the administration of the Marathas. Besides this there are number of works yet unexplored

12.3 ART DURING THE PESHWA PERIOD

During the Peshwa rule, entertainment through music was in the form of celebrations in the king's durbar. Singers were invited to perform in the durbar during Ganesh festival. Peshwa Bajirao I and Raghunathrao had court singers. Lezim, bhalri or girls performing ghumba were primary style of dance in the Maratha society. Drama in the form of bharud, tamasha, lalite and dashavtari were prevalent in society. Tamasha form was just in its initial stages.

Painting:

The wall paintings at Shaniwarwada were encouraged by Peshwa Bajirao I and artists like Ragho, Tanaji and Anuprao were employed to do some paintings. Nana Phadnis patronized many painters at the Maratha court. Mankoji, a painter was popular in the court of Peshwa Madhavrao. The Peshwa purchased series of 36 ragmala paintings to decorate the hall of the wada. Paintings on the wall and ceiling were found in wadas at Poona, Satara, Wai, Nashik, Chandwad, etc. Similarly, temples at Pandeshwar, Moregaon, Benwadi and Pashan had paintings that exhibited the main theme titled Dashavataara. The paintings found in the wadas at Wai, the Rastewada and Satara were in good conditions. The artists were invited from Jaipur. Peshwas availed the services of English artists also. James

Well's painting showing Peshwa Madhavrao II, Nana Phadnis and MahadjiShinde together adorns the walls of Government House at Ganeshkhind in Poona. Huge walls had paintings depicting the events from the Epics.

At many places, paintings exhibited Lord Ganesha, Riddhi Siddhi, Lord Shiva and other gods and goddesses. A collection of about 700 to 800 paintings from the Maratha period is preserved at the Bhartiya Itihas Samshodhan Mandal. Painting as a profession was not taken up by many people therefore only wall paintings were popular in palaces of the Maratha period. Illustrative manuscripts and handwritten books were preserved in the Mathas or became private collections. Miniature painting was popular art of medieval times and this style was developed from illustrating handwritten books.

Sculptures:

The Maratha rulers were constantly in conflict with the Mughals, Nizam or the English and therefore encourage the art of sculpture. The sculptures in the temples were similar to those of Yadava period. Several temples were built during the period of Ahilyabai Holkar. The entrances of the temples had statues of the Maratha Sardars in sitting and standing positions. Besides this, there were sculptures of female dancers and some musical instruments also. At Toke in Ahmednagar district, there are two statues of elephants in the temple of Siddheshwar.

12.4 DEVELOPMENT OF ARCHITECTURE

Town Planning:

The existing towns of Maharashtra and the old ruined towns speak the history of town planning during the Maratha period. Poona initially was a small village. Kumari, Kasari and Poona together formed Pune city. Further, the Peshwas expanded Poona by adding many other small villages. In 1748-49, Shukrawarpeth was established. Naik brothers, Ramaji and Balaji created the Budhwarpeth. During 1750-51 DayaramVallabhdas founded the Guruwarpeth. The Naigaon village was converted into Sadashivpeth and the people who came to settle were exempted from paying jakat (tax) for the first seven years. In 1762-63 Nizam's invasion of Poona led to a lot of destruction. Poona was then rebuilt with the efforts of Peshwa Madhavrao. He took a keen interest in the expansion of Nasik and Dharwad and to attract people introduced lot of facilities and relaxation. The village named Chavdas near Nasik was developed by Raghunathrao and named Anandvali after his wife Anandibai. She was very fond of this village. Similarly, various sardars created new villages and cities from their jagirs. Cities such as Madhavpur and Sangli were also built by the Marathas.

Buildings and Structures:

Wadas were constructed in the traditional style. They had huge chowks around it and also rooms and diwankhanas were constructed

around it. About two or three similar chowks were connected to each other. Wood carvings and colours were used for decorative purpose. Wadas such as Shanivarwada was six storied structure and Vishrambagwada was five storied building. Many wadas and rajwadas of the mid-eighteenth century have been mentioned in literary sources. However, some of the wadas are totally destroyed and some are on the verge of destruction. Some houses at Wai, Toke, Shrigonda and Pandharpur are standing even today. The houses of Peshwa period were either built of stone, bricks and mortar or burnt bricks. Wooden beams, tulia, paat were used in the constructing houses. Well-mixed lime stone powder (chuna) was used for plastering walls. The thickness of the walls was 3 feet or more with very few windows. Roofs were covered with tiles made of terracotta in different shapes.

Temple structures:

The important temples of the Peshwa period followed the Yadava or the Hemadpanti style which further evolved into a typical Maratha style. The temple plans were simple with a garbhagriha (sanctum) prefaced by a rectangular portico (entrance). The facade to the entrance was formed by a couple of pillars joined by arches. In some cases, a large timber hall called sabhamandap was built in front. The temples carved at the top also looked very impressive. Carvings of plants and flowers were seen at the entrance door. At the center was placed a wooden statue. Temples of Peshwa period at Pandharpur, Theur, Chinchwad, Gangapur, Alandi and others today stand as a symbol Maratha architecture. Several beautiful big and small temples were built in Maharashtra by many sardars, savkars, rich merchants and traders.

Forts:

Forts were created on the hills and were difficult to access. They were surrounded at the foot by deep ditches to keep the enemies away from the walls of the forts. The important forts had two or three lines of ramparts built of strong stones or bricks. Bastions were placed along the ramparts at regular intervals. Strong gates were made at the entrances with pointed arches. Thick timber was fixed with iron spikes. There were bastions on two sides of the gates and the inner side of the gate had a stone guard room. Parapets with embrasures were made above the gate for gunnery. Thus fort entrances made entries of enemies impossible. Basic amenities such as drinking water and food grains for the fort were very important. Water supply was taken care of at many forts.

Gadhi:

Gadhi was another form of military architecture that was smaller than the fort. Gadhies were used as residential houses by sardars. They also had defensive features. Some gadhies were similar to land forts. There were several gadhies built in Maharashtra in the seventeenth century. There was a square at the center of the gadhi and rooms were built around the square for residential purpose. There was also a small courtyard around the rooms.

Ghats:

The tradition of a holy dip in the river was popular among the Marathas along with performing religious ceremonies on the riverside. For this purpose ghats of many steps were constructed. For example cities and towns built on the banks of river at Nasik, Wai, Karad, Pandharpur and Paithan had ghats made of stones. One of the most admirable ghats was built in Toke at the confluence of rivers Godavari and Pravara. At pilgrim centers such as Maheshwar and Mandaleshwar Ahilyabai Holkar built huge and beautiful ghats.

12.5 SUMMARY

The contribution of Marathas during the Peshwa period in field of literature, education, art and architecture is noteworthy. Although, there were a number of scholar-poets during the period of Peshwas, following were eminent and popular, who had contributed much more to the literature of that period. A new class of patrons came into existence and also a private collection of the painting by various artists and painters was a status symbol amongst the rich during Peshwa period. The existing towns of Maharashtra and the old ruined towns speak the history of town planning during the Maratha period. Gadhi, forts and ghats are the best examples of the military architecture of the Marathas.

12.6 QUESTIONS

1. Describe the development of literature life during the Peshwa period.
2. Comment on the development of learning and literature under the Peshwarule.
3. Trace the growth of art and architecture during the Peshwa period.

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