

Maratha

The rise of the Marathas in the seventeenth century is an important and fascinating event in the history of India. This rise is primarily due to Shivaji and the circumstances that shaped his character and that of his followers. Shivaji welded the Marathas into a superb mobile fighting force. The Marathas fought for the defence of their religion and territory against Mughal rulers.

Following were the important factors responsible for the phenomenal rise of the Marathas :

1. Inspirational influence of religious and social leaders :-

Several prominent leaders in the religious and social fields of Maharashtra inspired the people to unite by preaching faith and Bhakti in one God and by condemning the caste system which had divided the society. The most famous of these reformers were: **Tuka Ram, Ram Das, Vaman Pandit and Eknath**. Guru Ram Das exercised a tremendous influence by underlying the philosophy of '**Karma**' (action) in his famous book '**Das Bodh**'.

2. Love for the motherland :

Swami Ram Das's message to the Marathas was, "Mother and mother country are dearer than heaven itself. Gods and cows, Brahmans and the faith, these are to be protected. Therefore, God has raised you up; when faith is dead, death is better than life: why live when religion has vanished? Gather ye, therefore, the Marathas together; make the dharma live again! For otherwise our forefathers will laugh at us from heaven."

3. Character of the Marathas :

Elphinstone has observed in this regard. "They (Marathas) are all active, laborious hardy and preserving. If they have none of the pride and dignity of the Rajput's, they have none of their indolence or want of worldly wisdom too. And all these traits were due to the peculiar physical features of their country." Shivaji made the best use of these characteristics of the Marathas.

4. Ready-made and easily defensible rock forts :

The broken ranges of the hills provided natural forts and the people were inspired to regard these forts as their mother-the seats of their protection.

5. Influence of language and literature:

Eknath taught the Marathas to take pride in their mother tongue which helped in bringing about a sense of commonness and unity among the Marathas. As remarked by J.N. Sarkar, "A remarkable community of language, creed and life was attained in Maharashtra in the 17th century even before political unity was conferred by Shivaji".

6. The geographical conditions:

The location of Maharashtra and its physical features helped in the rise of Maratha power. The large part of Maratha land is a plateau where the Marathas had to struggle hard for their existence. This made the Marathas courageous and hard working.

7. Economic equality:

The Marathas did not suffer much from economic inequality, as there were not many people to be accepted as rich. There was no class of economic exploiters. This gave the Marathas a spirit of self-respect and unity.

8. Guerilla warfare:

The mountainous areas made it possible for the Marathas to adopt guerilla warfare very successfully. The scattered areas in the villages provided provision for soldiers. The invaders were prone to sudden attacks from forts located on the tops of hills. Means of communications for the large armies to move freely were not easily available. This obstructed the deployment of large armies by the outside rulers.

9. Training in the art of administration:

Even prior to the rise of Shivaji, the Marathas had acquired experience and training in the art of administration. There were a number of Marathas employed in various departments and especially in the revenue department of the Muslim rulers of the Deccan. The Maratha Jagirdars were playing an important role in the political affairs of the states of Bijapur, Ahmednagar, Berar and Golkunda etc. Several departments were virtually controlled by Maratha statesmen and warriors.

10. Unstable political condition of the South:-

The Muslim kingdoms in the South were in the process of disintegration. The political situation was quite favourable for the rise of the Marathas.

11. Charismatic personality of Shivaji :- J.N. Sarkar has described the influence of Shivaji in the rise of the Marathas in these words, *"Before his rise, the Maratha race was scattered like atoms through many Deccan kingdoms. He welded them into a mighty nation and he achieved this in the teeth of the opposition of four mighty powers like Mughal empire, Bijapur, Portuguese India and the Abyssinians of Janjira. No other Hindu has shown such capacity in modern times. He was not only the maker of the Maratha nation, but also the greatest constructive genius of medieval India and the memory of a true hero as king like Shivaji remains imperishable historical legacy for the human race."*

Shivaji formed a small kingdom on the Western Ghats, a region which experienced relatively less interference from the Mughal. The Maratha was perhaps the only successor state with potential to establish an All-India empire & filling the vacuum of the declining Mughal Empire. The merger of Ahmednagar by Mughals was the immediate political reason of rise of Maratha Empire. It was **Jahangir**, who recognised the importance of Marathas for first time & kept them in Mughal Army. Malik Amber of Ahmednagar used Maratha talent in administration & war. Father of Shivaji, **Shah ji Bhonsle** was in service of **Ahmednagar**, but later he went in the service of **Bijapur**, where he received huge estate in Karnataka region.

Shivaji brought political consciousness & feeling of independence in Marathas. He adopted '**Hindu Padshahi**', pledged for the protection of Cow & Brahmins, & held the title of '**Hindu Dharmodhharak**'.

Shivaji (1627-1680)

Shivaji was born in the **Fort of Shivneri** on **20th April, 1627** (19 Feb, 1630 according to some historians) to Shahji Bhonsle & Jijabai. Later Shahji abandoned Jijabai & married to Tukabai Mohite, they have a son, Vyankoji, who became successor of his estates of Mysore & Eastern Karnataka. **Dadaji Kondadev** was Shivaji's guardian & **Guru Ram Das** was his spiritual teacher. At the age of 12 years, he received his father's jagir of Poona. He married to Sai Bai Nimbalkar in 1641.

His early conquests – The serious illness of the Sultan of Bijapur in 1646 & the consequent disorders in his kingdom gave Shivaji much desired opportunity & he captured the fort of Torna. He then raided the Fort of Raigarh. In 1657, on the death of Dadaji Kondadev, Shivaji became the virtual master of his Father's western jagirs. He captured forts of **Sinhagarh of Bijapur, Purandar fort from Nilaji Nilkanth**, fort of Chakan, Kondana & secured his jagirs in South. The Sultan of Bijapur put his Father under arrest. For this reason Shivaji suspended his military raids & opened negotiations with Prince Murad & also expressed his desire to join the imperial service. In 1649, the Sultan of Bijapur released his Father on the condition of Shivaji's good behaviour. In 1656, Shivaji regained his conquests & conquered Javali by murdering its ruler, Chandra Rao. In 1656, Adil Shah died & the problem of succession provided an opportunity for Mughal intervention. Prince Aurangzeb advanced against Bijapur. This gave a good opportunity to Shivaji & he raided the Mughal territory of Ahmednagar & Junnar.

The increasing power of Shivaji was a threat to Bijapur, therefore, Bijapur sent a military troop in leadership of **Afzal Khan** to bring back Shivaji dead or alive. Afzal Khan knew that it would be very tough to defeat Shivaji in battle therefore he planned a trap & sent a Brahman officer, Krishnaji Bhaskar with a letter full of tempting offers. But Krishna Bhaskar revealed the truth to Shivaji & informed him about the plan of Afzal Khan. During the meeting, Shivaji killed Afzal Khan & the Maratha army secured a large booty consisting of ammunition, money, horses etc. After the death of Afzal Khan, Shivaji invaded Konkan & the Kolhapur region & seized the **Fort of Panhala**. However, in 1660, Ali Adil Shah sent troops & Shivaji was compelled by the Bijapur army to evacuate the fort of Panhala.

In 1660, Aurangzeb appointed **Shaysta Khan** as the Governor of Deccan, ordered him to kill Shivaji. On 15 April 1663, in midnight Shivaji raided the residence of Shayasta Khan (Laal Mahal) in Poona. Before he could strike, Shivaji cut off his thumb. Shayasta Khan very narrowly escaped his death. The night attack was a complete success & restored the prestige of Shivaji. In January, 1664, Shivaji attacked & sacked Surat. He left Surat carrying away gold, silver, diamonds & pearls. The Mughal officer Inayat Khan eloped from Surat.

In 1665, Aurangzeb sent Raja Jai Singh & Diler Khan to deal with Shivaji. The Mughal army marched against Marathas & killed Murarji Deshpande. Purandar fort was captured by Mughal force & then they marched towards Raigarh fort, the capital of Maratha power. Ultimately, Shivaji was compelled to sign the **treaty of Purandar** with Jai Singh in June 1665. The clauses of treaty were –

- ❖ Shivaji was to surrender 23 forts yielding an annual revenue of 4 lakhs of Huns & to retain only 12 forts for himself.
- ❖ His son Shambhaji was to be enrolled as Mansabdar of 5000.
- ❖ He promised to give military assistance to Mughals against Bijapur.

Jai Singh Persuaded Shivaji to go to Agra & enter into a permanent alliance with the Emperor. Shivaji, along with his son Shambhaji, reached Agra on 9th May, 1666. But Shivaji was deeply hurt at the cold reception by Aurangzeb. At the Mughal Court, he was made to stand in the ranks of 5000 Mansabdars & the Emperor took no notice of him. Shivaji protested against such treatment, but he was arrested & imprisoned in Jaipur Palace of Agra. Later Shivaji managed to escape wisely.

During 1668-69, Shivaji remained quite & focused on reorganization of the internal administration. On the persuasion of Prince Muazzam & Jai Singh, the title of 'Raja' was conferred upon Shivaji & his son Shambhaji was made a mansabdar of 5000. In 1670, Shivaji resumed warfare. He captured the forts of Kondana, Purandar, Mabuli & Nanded. Surat was looted for second time & Shivaji secured a booty of 66 lakhs. From 1670 to 1674, some Mughal expeditions were sent against Shivaji but they were defeated successfully.

On 16th June, 1674, Shivaji observed his coronation ceremony amidst pomp & splendor at Raigarh fort. His coronation ceremony was performed according to the shastras by Vishweshwar, also called Gaga Bhatta, of Varanasi. Shivaji adopted the title of '**Chhatrapati**' or paramount sovereign.

During 1674 to 1680, Shivaji conquered more territories. He captured Jinji, Vellore, & the adjoining territories. He was able to bring under his control a vast territory in Madras, Carnatic & the Mysore region yielding annual revenue of 20 lakh huns. His career of conquest was cut-short by his death. He died in 1680 in Raigarh fort.

Administration of Shivaji – Shivaji was not only a great general & statesman but also an able administrator of great merit. Like other medieval rulers, Shivaji was an autocrat with all powers concentrated in his hands but he was a benevolent despot sincerely desired to promote the welfare of his subjects. He was assisted by a Council of eight ministers called, Ashta Pradhan. It was only an advisory board.

The ministers were:

- ❖ **Peshwa (Prime Minister)** – He looked after the general administration & welfare of the state. He also represented the King in his absence.
- ❖ **Amatya (Finance Minister)** – He used to check the income & expenditure of the state.
- ❖ **Mantri (The Chronicler)** – He was responsible for the personal safety of the King, supervised the daily routine work & recorded everything that happened at the court.
- ❖ **Sachiva (The Home Secretary)** – He was in charge of all correspondence of the King. He supervised the official documents & the draft of letters & put his seal on them.
- ❖ **Sumant (Foreign Secretary)** – He advised the King regarding questions of war & peace with foreign powers.

- ❖ **Senapati (Commander-in-chief)** - He was in charge of recruitment, organization, discipline, & training of the soldiers & arranging their suppliers.
- ❖ **Danadhyaksha or Sadar Muhatasib or Pandit Rao** - He looked after the religious grants & religious ceremonies. He also decided theological disputes & questions relating to customs.
- ❖ **Nyayadhisha (Chief Justice)** - He was the highest judicial authority in the Kingdom & looked after the judicial system of the state. All the Ministers of the Council except the Nyayadhisha & danadhyaksha were military officers & were expected to command the army if needed.

Provincial Administration - Shivaji had divided his kingdom into 4 provinces. Each province was placed under a Viceroy or Governor & he was responsible to the King.

Military Administration - Shivaji maintained a regular standing army provided with regular salaries throughout the year. There was regular gradation of officers in the army. The cavalry was divided into 2 classes- the Bargis & the Shiledars. The Bargis were supplied with horses & weapons by the state while the Shiledars had to bring their own horses & weapons. The lowest unit in the cavalry consisted of 25 troopers & it was placed under a Havaldar. Five Havaldar formed one Jumla under a Jumladar. Ten Jumladars were placed under a Hazari, five Hazaris were under the Panjhazari. The Panjhazaris were under the command of Sar-i-nobat who was the supreme commander of the cavalry.

The army of Shivaji was disciplined & it consisted of both Hindus & Muslims. The soldiers & officers were paid in cash. Shivaji also maintained a navy consisting of 400 ships of different kinds.

Revenue Administration - Shivaji had abolished the jagir system & also confiscated the lands given to religious institutions. He completely reorganized the land revenue system. He abolished the farming system & introduced direct management. The officers appointed by Shivaji collected revenues from the Ryots or cultivators. His revenue system was based on the Ryotwari system of Malik Amber of Ahmednagar.

The land under cultivation was surveyed & measured with the half of a Kathi or measuring rod. 20 kathis was equal to one beegha & 120 beegha constituted one Chanwar. The share of the state was first fixed at 30% but later on it was raised to 40% of the produce when other taxes & cesses were abolished by Shivaji. The revenue was collected both in cash & in kind. Agriculture was encouraged & the state used to advance loans to the peasants in times of famine & this amount was realized in installments according to the means of the debtor. Shivaji's revenue administration was beneficial to the peasants.

Besides land revenue, Shivaji collected Chauth & Sardeshmukhi from the territory which was either under his own control or under his enemies.

- ❑ **Chauth** - There is a great divergence of opinion among the scholars regarding levy of Chauth. However it is generally accepted that Chauth was a military contribution which was 1/4th of the standard revenue of the country & it was paid to ward off the attack of Marathas.

❑ **Sardeshmukhi** – It was an additional charge of 10% which Shivaji demanded on the basis of his claim as the hereditary Sardeshmukh (headman) of his country.

Administration of Justice – The administration of justice was of a primitive type. In the villages, the elders settled the cases in the Panchayats. The criminal cases were tried by Patel. Appeals in civil & criminal cases were entertained by the Nyayadhisha whose decisions were based upon ancient Smritis. The Hazir Majlis was the final court of appeal.

Sambhaji (1680-89)

Sambhaji was born in 1657 to Shivaji's first wife Saibai at Purandar fort. He was brought up by his grandmother Jijabai. He was married to Yesubai. Sambhaji's behaviour, including alleged irresponsibility & addiction to sensual pleasures led Shivaji to imprison him at Panhala fort. When Shivaji died in 1680, Sambhaji was still held captive in the Panhala fort. Shivaji's another wife, Soyarabai, wanted to crown her son Rajaram as heir to the Maratha kingdom & he was throned to the Maratha kingdom in 1680. On knowing this, Sambhaji escaped from Panhala fort & ascended the throne on 20th July, 1680. He gave shelter to Akbar, the rebellious son of Aurangzeb. Sambhaji & 25 of his advisors, including his friend & poet **Kavi Kalash**, were captured by the Mughal forces of Muqarrab Khan at Sangameshwar in 1689. After arrest, he was ordered to bow before Aurangzeb & convert to Islam & on refusing to do so, Sambhaji & Kavi Kalash were tortured to death on 11th March, 1689. Sambhaji's wife Yesubai & son Shahu were captured at Raigarh fort.

Rajaram (1669-1700)

When, Sambhaji was captured by Mughals in 1689, the ministers of Maratha empire declared Rajaram as the new Chhatrapati of Maratha empire. He was crowned in Raigarh on 12th March, 1689. He escaped to Jinji on the fear of Mughal attack on Raigarh. Jinji was the Capital of Maratha empire till 1689. Later on, Satara became the capital of Marathas in 1699. Rajaram ruled as a representative of Sambhaji's son Shahu. After death of Sambhaji, Maratha freedom struggle started under leadership of Rajaram & ended in 1707, on recognition of Shahu as the Maratha Chhatrapati by Mughals.

Shivaji second & Tarabai (1700-1707)

On Rajaram's death in 1700, his wife, Tarabai proclaimed her infant son, Shivaji II as Rajaram's successor & herself as the regent. She took in charge of the war against Aurangzeb's force & continued the insurgency against the Mughals. She captured the forts of Raigarh, Satara, Sinhagarh etc.

Shahuji (1707-49)

Shahu was held captive with his mother by the Mughals from the age of 7 years after the fall of Maratha capital of Raigarh fort in 1689. When the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb died in 1707, a war of succession started among his sons. At the instance of the Mughal General Zulfiqar Khan & Nusrat Jang, Shahu was freed from imprisonment by prince Azam Shah. But when Shahu reached Satara, his aunt already declared her son Shivaji II as the Chhatrapati. With the assistance of Dhanaji Jadhav, Balaji Vishwanath & Sardar Khanderao

Dabhade, Shahuji prevailed over Tarabai in battle of Kheda in 1707 & consolidated his powers in Satara in 1708. Tarabai then set up a rival court at Kolhapur.

The Maratha Empire was divided into 2 parts. Satara remained under control of Shahuji & Kolhapur under control of Shivaji II & Tarabai. She was deposed by Rajaram's second wife, Rajasbai, who put her own son, Sambhaji II, on the throne. The enmity of Satara & Kolhapur was ended through treaty of Warna in 1731. According to this treaty, Sambhaji II got the rights of ruling on the Southern Maratha Empire with Capital Kolhapur & Shahu ruled on the northern Maratha Empire with capital Satara.

Shahuji conferred the title of Sena-karte (organizer of forces) on Balaji Vishwanath & later elevated him to the post of Peshwa in 1713. Shahu declared the grandson of Tarabai, Rajaram II as his successor in 1749. By the Sangola Agreement, 1750 signed between Rajaram II & Balaji Bajirao mediated by Raghuji Bhonsle, Chhatrapati became only a figure-head & the post of Peshwa became hereditary. Peshwa emerged as the real & effective head of the Maratha Confederacy & Puna became the centre of all political activities.



Peshwa

Balaji Vishwanath (1713-20)

Balaji Vishwanath was born in 1660, in a Bhatt family of Chitpawan Brahmins of Konkan. Earlier, he was revenue officer. In 1713, Shahu appointed him as Peshwa. He settled permanent agreement between Mughals & Marathas in which the rights & authorities of both were described. In 1719, Balaji signed a treaty with Mughal Subedar Saiyyad Hussain, the terms of which were –

- ❖ The right of collecting revenue by Shahuji in his swaraj region was accepted.
- ❖ The right of Marathas to collect Chauth & Sardeshmukhi from Mysore, Trichnapalli & Tanjore alongwith 6 Mughal provinces of Deccan was approved.
- ❖ The right of Marathas over newly acquired regions of Gondawana, Baraar, Khandesh, Hyderabad & Karnataka was approved.
- ❖ The Mughal emperor will release Shahu's mother & other relatives.
- ❖ Shahu will keep an army of 15000 soldiers to help Mughals in lieu of the approval of Swaraj & to put check on decoties and thefts in Southern part against the collection of Chauthai and Sardeshmukhi.
- ❖ Marathas should give extortion of Rs.10 lakh every year to Mughal Emperor.

Emperor Faruqsiyar did not like the treaty of Saiyyad Hussain with Maratha. The emperor suspected this treaty between was a conspiracy against him. So, the emperor rejected the treaty and started preparations to wage a war against Syed Brothers.

After the Mughal-Maratha treaty of 1719, Balaji Vishwanath invaded Delhi to help Saiyyad Brothers in dethroning Emperor Faruqsiyar. It was the first time when Maratha army reached Delhi & witnessed the weakness of Mughals. Historian Richard Temple called the treaty of 1719 as the '**Magna-Carta of Maratha Empire**'. The biggest achievement of Balaji Vishwanath was the foundation of **Maratha Mandal** or union. He is famous as the **2nd founder** of Maratha empire. The post of Peshwa was made hereditary by him.

Bajirao I (1720-40)

After the death of Balaji Vishwanath in 1720, Shahu appointed Balaji's son Bajirao I as Peshwa. The Maratha empire reached its climax under the rule of Bajirao I. He adopted the policy of expanding the Maratha power to North & gave slogan of '**From Krishna to Attock**'. Due to his efforts, the Marathas became the number one power in India. He is called as the '**Fighter Peshwa**'. He was very well known to the decline of Mughal Empire. Sensing the declining fortune of the Mughals, he is reported to have said, "**Strike, strike at the trunk & the branches will fall off themselves**".

In 1728, Bajirao I defeated Nizam-ul-mulk in the **battle of Palkheda** & the **treaty of Mungi-Shivgao** was signed on 7 March, 1728, recognizing Shahu as the Chattrapati as well as the Maratha rights to collect taxes in Deccan. In December 1728, the brother of

Bajirao I, Chinmaji Appa defeated & killed the Mughal Subedar Girdhar Bahadur in the **battle of Amjhera** near Dhar & captured the **Malwa** region. In 1732, Bajirao also captured **Gujarat** from Mughals. During this time, the King of Jodhpur was the Governor of Gujarat who recognized the rights of Marathas of collecting taxes in Gujarat without struggle & returned to Jodhpur. In 1730, Bajirao I set free the Chatrasal Bundela from the imprisonment of Mughal Subedar Mohammad Khan Bangus & assisted him to restore his position as ruler of **Bundelkhand**. Chatrasal assigned a large jagir to Bajirao, & also married his daughter Mastani to him.

Through the treaty of Warna, 1731 Shambhaji II accepted the subjection or dependency of Shahu. In 1732, Bajirao prepared an agreement in which the regions under control of Malhar Rao Holkar, Ranoji Syndhia, Dutta ji Gaikwad & Raghu ji Bhonsle were arranged. This agreement led the foundation of the 4 future Maratha empires. Bajirao conquered against **Siddys of Zanjeera** in 1733 & evicted them. In 1737, Bajirao, alongwith 500 cavaliers, swiftly attacked on Delhi & reached the palace of Mughal emperor Mohammad Shah in just 2 days. After this, in July 1737, Mughal Emperor sent **Nizam** to fight against Marathas, but he was again defeated by Bajirao in **Battle of Bhopal**, which resulted in **treaty of Durai-Saray** on 17 January, 1738. Through this treaty, Nizam handed over the regions of Malwa, Gujarat & the regions from Narmada to Chambal to Marathas. In Northern India, Marathas first took over the Malwa region. In 1739, Bajirao captured **Salsit & Basin** from Portugese. Bajirao I presented the ideal of '**Hindupadshahi**'. His personal life was stressfull due to his mistress Mastani. Bajirao I is credited for foundation of large Maratha empire. Till 1750, the Maratha empire became a union of state in leadership of Peshwa Bajirao. The 5 states of Maratha union was –

- | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Peshwa of Pune | 2. Bhonsle of Nagpur | 3. Gaikwad of Baroda |
| 4. Sindhia of Gwalior | 5. Holkar of Indore | |

Balaji Bajirao (1740 – 1761)

After the death of Bajirao, his son Balaji Bajirao became the new Peshwa. He was famous as **Nana Sahab**, & was also called **Balaji II**. The Maratha power reached the zenith. In 1741, Mughal emperor Mohammad Shah granted the legality to Marathas' right over Malwa. In 1750, the **Treaty of Sangola** was signed between Rajaram & Peshwa by arbitration of Raghuji Bhonsle. By this treaty, the Chatrapati became a nominal king & remained as prisoner of Satara. Peshwa became the actual Maratha leader & now Pune became the centre of Maratha politics. In 1752, Peshwa signed a treaty with Mughal Emperor Ahmed Shah. By this treaty Mughal Emperor gave Marathas the rights to collect Chauth from all India.

In 1754, Mrathas entered into Delhi in leadership of Raghunath Rao & dethroned Ahmedshah & declared **Alamgir II** as the new Mughal Emperor. Again in 1757, in leadership of Raghunath Rao, Marathas attacked on Delhi & removed the representative of Ahmed Shah Abdali, **Nazib-ud-Daula** from the post of Meer-Bakshi & appointed **Ahmed Shah Bangus** as the new **Meer-Bakshi**. In 1758, Raghunath Rao also captured **Sarhind & Lahore** & evicted the Subedar of Punjab **Taimur Kha** who was appointed by Ahmed Shah Abdali.

3rd Battle of Panipat (14th January, 1761) – The main reason of this battle was the diplomatic mistake of Raghunath Rao to expand Maratha influence to Attock because during that time, the Punjab region was in influence of Abdali & his men & he wanted to loot the India as Nadirshah did. Abdali attacked on India for 7 times from 1748 to 1761. Ruhela Sardar Nazib-ud-daula & Nawab of Oudh Shuja-ud-daula supported Ahmad Shah Abdali because they were earlier defeated by Marathas. Mughal Wazir **Imad-ul-Mulk** was the only one who supported Marathas.

In January 1760, a battle was fought between Abdali & Maratha Leader **Dattaji** at Loni near Delhi. On listening about the death of Dattaji, Peshwa sent a powerful army in leadership of his 17 yrs old son **Vishwas Rao Bhau** but the actual leader was his cousin **Sadashivrao Bhau** (son of younger brother of Bajirao I, Chinmaji Appa). Maratha army comprised an artillery led by **Ibrahim Gardi**. Ibrahim Kha Gardi was killed at warfield. Before 3rd battle of Panipat, Jat ruler of Bharatpur **Surajmal Jat** suggested Marathas to not take women & children alongwith them because it would affect their ability to fight & mobility. But Marathas denied his suggestion. Due to this denial, Jats remain neutral to this battle.

Marathas attacked at 9 AM on **14 January 1761**. **Malhar Rao Holkar** eloped from the battle field. Marathas were defeated badly. Around 28000 Maratha soldiers were killed including Vishwas Rao, Sadashiv Rao Bhau, Jaswant Rao Panwar, Tukoji Holkar, Jankoji Sindhia etc. It was 5th attack of Abdali over India. A trader gave information of the defeat of Marathas in Battle of Panipat to the Peshwa in a cryptic message as “**Two pearls have been dissolved, 27 gold coins have been lost & of the silver & copper the total cannot be cast up.**” The Peshwa never recovered from the shock of the total debacle at Panipat & he died on 23rd June 1761. **Kashiraj Pandit** was the eye-witness of the battle.

The main reason of the defeat of Marathas was the diplomatic infelicity of Sadashiv Rao Bhau & his weak generalship in comparison to Abdali. Besides, there were a large number of women and servants in the Maratha camp who were simply burden to the army. The effective fighting force of the Marathas numbered only 45,000 while the army of Abdali consisted of nearly 60,000 soldiers.

Bhau lost control over Doab and therefore, felt scarcity of supplies. He wasted three months by camping before Abdali at Panipat and engaged in battle when, from the last two months, the Maratha army was semi-starved. **The Marathas did not use their guerilla method of warfare.** Instead they depended too much on the artillery under Ibrahim Gardi and therefore, fought a defensive battle. Abdali had better cavalry than the Marathas. Bhau failed to get the support of the Rajputs and the Jats which also was a cause of their defeat. Therefore, conditions were such that the defeat of the Marathas was nearly a foregone conclusion.

Historians have differed regarding the results of this battle. **Sardesai** expressed the view that, certainly, the Marathas suffered loss of life but neither the power of the Marathas was destroyed nor any change came in their ideal. On the contrary, **Dr Jadunath Sarkar** has expressed the view that it was a very serious defeat of the Marathas.