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SOLUTIONS BOOK

CLASS 8

Social Science · Exploring Society

CHAPTER 3

The Rise of the Marathas

Complete Questions and Activities Solutions

In-text Questions

Questions and Activities

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Every question is followed by its answer. Question numbers above are clickable and the PDF bookmarks panel lets you jump to any exercise set or question. Figures are reproduced from the NCERT textbook (© NCERT) for educational use.

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3.1

CLASS 8 SOCIAL SCIENCE · CHAPTER 3

In-text Questions

Solutions · 9 questions

Directions (Questions 1–9): These are the questions that appear inside the chapter (The Big Questions, Think About It and Let's Explore), numbered in the order in which they appear. Many are open-ended or activity questions; model answers based on the chapter are given.

QUESTION 1 *The Big Questions · p. 61*

Who were the Marathas? How did they manage to become the largest pan-Indian power before the British took over?

ANSWER

The Marathas are people native to the Deccan plateau (present-day Maharashtra), identified with the Marathi language. Under Chhatrapati Shivaji they formed a kingdom, and in the 18th century they grew into the largest Indian power before the British.

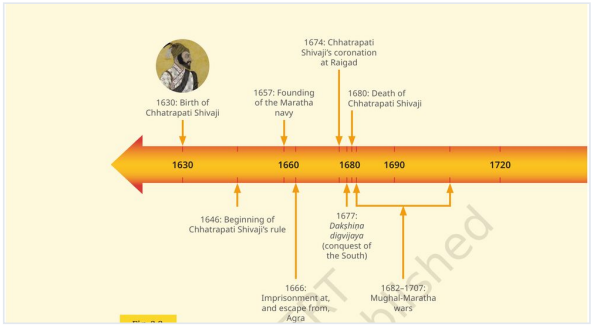


Fig. 3.2. Timeline (1630–1720)

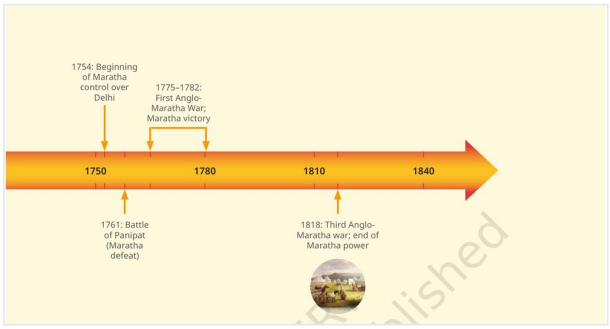


Fig. 3.2. Timeline (1750–1840)

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a Who were the Marathas?

- A group of people native to the Deccan plateau, more specifically present-day Maharashtra, identified with the language Marathi, which has had a rich literary history since the 12th century.
- In the 13th century the Yadava dynasty (capital Devagiri) ruled most of Maharashtra; it was overcome by the Khilji Sultanate in the early 14th century.
- Bhakti saints such as Dnyaneshwar, Namdev, Tukaram and Ramdas gave society a solid cultural foundation, which later helped the Marathas organise into a political power.

b Rise under Chhatrapati Shivaji

- Born in 1630 in the Bhonsle clan, he began military campaigns at 16, capturing forts in the Pune region, with the vision of *Swarājya*.
- He founded a navy (1657), used guerrilla warfare, killed Afzal Khan, raided Shaista Khan's camp, sacked Surat and escaped from Agra (1666).
- He was crowned at Raigad in 1674, marking the formal beginning of the Maratha Empire, and conquered parts of the South (1677).

c Becoming the largest pan-Indian power

- After Shivaji's death (1680), decades of Mughal–Maratha wars (1682–1707) left Aurangzeb unable to subdue them; under Tarabai the Marathas made large-scale inroads into Mughal territory.
- Under the Peshwas (Bajirao I, Nanasaheb) they expanded across India and briefly controlled Lahore, Attock and Peshawar.
- After the defeat at Panipat (1761) they recovered; Mahadji Shinde recaptured Delhi in 1771.
- Their decades-long resistance to the Mughals, and the experience it gave, helped their pan-Indian expansion.

Therefore, the Marathas were people of the Deccan who, through Shivaji's leadership and later expansion, built the largest Indian empire before the British.

QUESTION 2 *The Big Questions · p. 61*

What were some features of their governance?

ANSWER

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The Maratha state combined a centralised administration under Chhatrapati Shivaji with a strong army, forts, a navy, a moderate judicial system and encouragement of trade and culture.

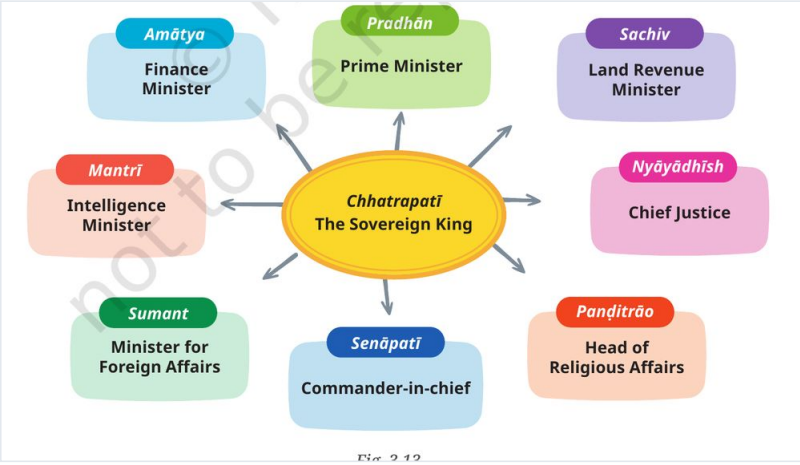


Fig. 3.13. Council of eight ministers (aṣhṭa pradhāna manḍala)

a Civilian administration

- Shivaji abolished hereditary posts and land assignments and paid every official a salary from the state treasury; officials were transferred periodically.
- Pensions were given to widows of soldiers, with military posts for their sons.
- He had an *aṣhṭa pradhāna manḍala*, a council of eight ministers.
- The Marathas levied *chauth* (25 per cent) and *sardeshmukhi* (an additional 10 per cent) on provinces not directly under them, and in return protected those provinces.

b Council of eight ministers

Title	Role
Pradhān	Prime Minister
Amātya	Finance Minister
Sachiv	Land Revenue Minister
Mantrī	Intelligence Minister
Sumant	Minister for Foreign Affairs
Senāpatī	Commander-in-chief
Paṇḍitrāo	Head of Religious Affairs
Nyāyādhīsh	Chief Justice

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c Military, judicial and economic features

- **Army:** infantry, cavalry (*bārgīrs* equipped by the state, *shiledārs* by themselves) and navy; swords, lances, guns and rockets; forts were the core of the state.
- **Justice:** the *panchāyat* delivered justice, appeals could go to a Maratha chief, a *kotwāl* kept order in cities, and capital punishment was used with moderation.
- **Trade:** Shivaji encouraged trade and sent ships to Mocha, Muscat and Malacca; roads, ferries and bridges were built.
- **Later:** the state became more decentralised, with the Peshwa and chiefs holding great influence.

Therefore, Maratha governance was marked by salaried officials, a council of ministers, a strong military and a moderate justice system.

QUESTION 3 *The Big Questions · p. 61*

What impact did the Maratha Empire leave in Indian history?

ANSWER

The chapter's 'Maratha legacy' summarises their impact: political, administrative and cultural.

a Political impact

- They challenged Mughal dominance and established the largest Indian empire before the British took over, controlling much of central and northern India.
- They were the chief rivals of the British in the latter half of the 18th century; the British effectively took India from the Marathas more than from any other power.

b Administrative and cultural impact

- They set up a new way of governing with an efficient administration.
- They revived local Hindu traditions without religious discrimination.
- Thanjavur Marathas patronised arts; modern Carnatic music took shape and the early stages of Bharatanatyam appeared under Serfoji II.
- Shivaji promoted Marathi and Sanskrit, and inspired others, such as Chhatrasal who created an independent Bundelkhand.

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c Inspiration

Their fight against oppressive rule and foreign power was driven by the ideal of *Swarājya*, which later inspired many Indians to believe they could govern themselves, planting early seeds for India's freedom movement.

Therefore, the Marathas challenged the Mughals, built a large empire, revived culture and inspired the idea of self-rule.

QUESTION 4 *Let's Explore · p. 63*

Have you ever heard the term 'bhakti'? What does it mean to you? Choose a bhakti saint from any part of India and learn about their life, their teachings, and the message they shared. You can also find one of their poems or bhajans and share it with your classmates.

ANSWER

Bhakti means devotion to the divine or to a particular deity. This is an activity; a model answer is given.



Figs. 3.3 and 3.4. Sant Ramdas and a postal stamp showing Sant Tukaram

a Meaning (from the chapter)

- Between the 7th and 17th centuries, saints and seekers from several parts of India preferred the path of bhakti to merely external ritualism.
- They came from diverse sections of society and composed devotional songs and poetry in the languages of the masses, so their messages travelled far and wide.

b Model: Sant Tukaram (Maharashtra)

- One of the saints who gained popularity in Maharashtra (the chapter shows a postage stamp, Fig. 3.4).

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- He composed devotional poems in Marathi, accessible to ordinary people (details such as his *abhangas* are beyond the chapter; check your reference).
- Message: devotion, humility and honest living.

c How to present

Write the saint's name, region and period; the main teaching; one poem or bhajan; and what it means to you. Share it with classmates.

Therefore, bhakti is devotion expressed in simple language, and saints carried this message across society.

QUESTION 5 *Think About It · p. 65*

If you could time-travel and meet Chhatrapati Shivaji, what three questions would you ask him and why?

ANSWER

This is an open-ended question. Model questions based on the chapter are given.



Fig. 3.5. A painting of Chhatrapati Shivaji made in the 1680s (British Museum)

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a Three model questions

Question to ask	Why
What inspired you to begin your campaigns at the age of 16?	To understand the influence of Jijabai, his education and the hardship of people in the Pune region
How did you plan your escape from Agra?	To learn about his courage, planning and quick thinking
How did you ensure that your officials did not harass the people?	To understand his values and the rules he set for governance

Therefore, good questions seek to understand Shivaji's inspiration, strategies and values.

QUESTION 6 *Let's Explore · p. 66*

Try to find out more about guerrilla warfare. Which other countries in the world adopted this method? What geographical advantages did they utilise for this? Discuss your findings in groups.

ANSWER

Guerrilla warfare uses small groups in a focused way, with speed, surprise and knowledge of the terrain to defeat bigger armies. Other countries used it too, using their own geography.



Fig. 3.7. Wāgh nakh or the 'tiger's claw'

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a Examples (beyond the chapter; verify in your sources)

Country / conflict	Geographical advantage used
Vietnam (against foreign forces in the 20th century)	Dense jungles, rivers and tunnels for hiding and surprise attacks
Afghanistan	Rugged mountains and difficult passes
Spain (against Napoleon’s army, early 19th century)	Mountainous terrain and local knowledge
Cuba (1950s)	The Sierra Maestra mountains as a base

b In the Maratha case

Shivaji used forests and mountains: at Pratapgad, hidden in the mountains, the Marathas routed Afzal Khan’s army with guerrilla attacks.

Therefore, guerrilla warfare succeeds where terrain such as mountains, forests and jungles helps the smaller force.

QUESTION 7 *Let’s Explore · p. 69*

Pick an event from Chhatrapati Shivaji’s life and, with your classmates, stage it as a play.

ANSWER

This is an activity. A model outline of a play on **Shivaji’s escape from Agra (1666)** is given; you may choose another event.



Fig. 3.8. A court scene with Chhatrapati Shivaji on his throne (panel in Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Park, Mumbai)

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a Scenes

Scene	Characters	What happens
1. The Mughal court	Shivaji, Aurangzeb, Jai Singh, courtiers	Persuaded by Jai Singh, Shivaji visits the court at Agra; he is made to stand with a Mughal general he had defeated, and storms out in anger
2. House arrest	Shivaji, Sambhaji, guards	Aurangzeb puts him under house arrest; Shivaji plans an escape
3. The baskets	Shivaji, Sambhaji, guards, holy men	He sends baskets of fruits and sweets as gifts; guards stop checking them
4. The escape	Shivaji, Sambhaji	Shivaji and Sambhaji hide in the baskets and escape; Aurangzeb never captures him again

b Preparation

- Divide roles (actors, narrator, props, costumes).
- Write short dialogues and rehearse; end with a message about courage and planning.

Therefore, a play needs a clear event, characters, scenes and a message.

QUESTION 8 *Think About It · p. 72*

Chhatrapati Shivaji issued strict instructions to his officials not to mistreat the subjects or to forcefully grab even a blade of grass from them. In one of the letters issued to his officials, Chhatrapati Shivaji says: “Wood from big trees like teak is required for the Navy. If needed, secure permission for cutting the trees from the forest and then proceed. Other trees like the mango and jackfruit are also useful, but do not touch them. Because such trees take many years to mature, and the people look after them like their children. If you cut them, will their sorrow ever end? If you accomplish something by oppressing others, it perishes soon, along with the oppressor. There is harm in the absence of such trees as well. Therefore, do not use force in any circumstances.” Based on Chhatrapati Shivaji’s letter, what can you tell about his values as a ruler?

ANSWER

The letter shows a ruler who cared for his subjects, respected nature and rejected force and oppression.

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a Values shown in the letter

- **Concern for subjects:** he forbids mistreating people or taking anything by force.
- **Empathy:** he understands that people look after trees like their children and would suffer if they were cut.
- **Respect for nature and foresight:** trees take many years to mature; he notes harm in their absence.
- **Rule of law and restraint:** teak for the Navy may be cut only with permission.
- **Justice:** gains through oppression perish along with the oppressor, so force must never be used.

Therefore, Shivaji valued justice, compassion for his people and responsible use of nature.

QUESTION 9 *Let's Explore · p. 79*

Have you heard of the dance form 'Bharatnatyam'? Did you know that this dance form has a deep connection with the Marathas? Can you find out what this connection was?

ANSWER

The connection lies in Thanjavur, where Maratha rulers patronised the arts.



Fig. 3.21. Thanjavur style painting

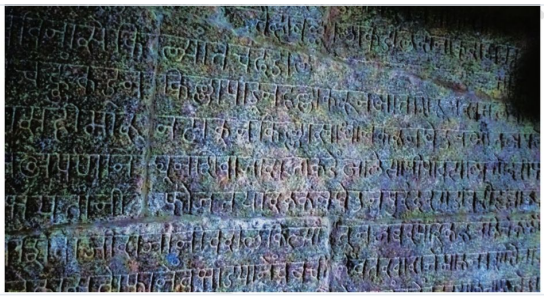


Fig. 3.22. Marathi inscription, Brihadishwara temple

a The connection

- Ekoji, Shivaji's half-brother, conquered the Thanjavur region (present-day Tamil Nadu) in the late 17th century, beginning Maratha rule there.
- The Thanjavur Marathas were great patrons of the arts, and many rulers were poets and dramatists.

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- Under Serfoji II, who patronised many talented musicians, modern Carnatic music took shape, as did the early stages of Bharatanatyam.

b More on Serfoji II

- He knew many Indian and European languages and wrote the Marathi play *Devendra Kuravanji*.
- He started a printing press and the Dhanwantari Mahal, a medical centre offering free treatment.

Therefore, the early development of Bharatanatyam is linked to the patronage of the Maratha rulers of Thanjavur, especially Serfoji II.

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CLASS 8 SOCIAL SCIENCE · CHAPTER 3

3.2 Questions and Activities

Solutions · 8 questions

Directions (Questions 1–8): These are the Questions and activities at the end of the chapter (page 81). Answer each in your own words using the points given.

QUESTION 1

Analyse how geography (particularly mountains and coastlines) guided Maratha military strategy and state formation.

ANSWER

Mountains and coastlines shaped how the Marathas fought and where their state grew.

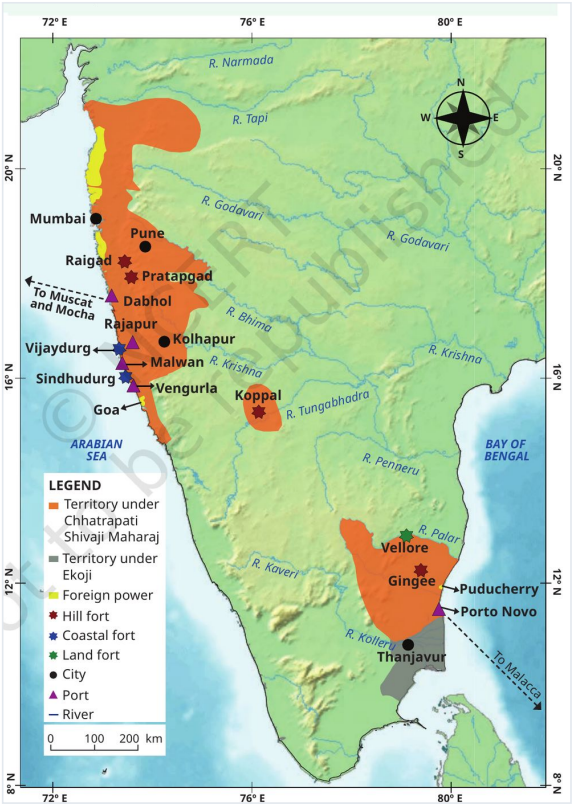


Fig. 3.9. Chhatrapati Shivaji's Kingdom about 1680

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Fig. 3.6. The Sindhudurg Fort, one of the Maratha naval fortifications

a Mountains

Feature	Effect on strategy and state
Hills and forests	Guerrilla warfare: small groups using speed, surprise and knowledge of the terrain; at Pratapgad the Marathas, hidden in the mountains, routed Afzal Khan's army
Mountain forts	Forts controlled important routes and sheltered the army; Raigad, a strong mountain fortress, was the coronation site and capital
Forts as core of state	The state grew from forts, starting with the Pune region

b Coastlines

- Shivaji's kingdom expanded to the west coast; to secure its resources he created a navy (a revolutionary step).
- Naval fortifications such as Sindhudurg protected the coast.
- In the 18th century Kanhoji Angre used geography and tactics to win naval battles, and the Marathas demanded trade passes from the Europeans.

c State formation

The southern conquest (*dakṣhiṇa-digvijaya*) gave strategic depth against the Mughals; Rajaram fled to the fortress of Gingee to continue resistance.

Therefore, mountains and coasts gave the Marathas forts, hiding places and naval bases which guided both their strategy and the shape of their state.

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QUESTION 2

Imagine you are creating a short biography of a Maratha leader for younger students. Choose one personality (Kanhoji Angre, Bajirao I, Mahadji Shinde, Ahilyabai Holkar or Tarabai) and write 3–4 paragraphs highlighting what makes them inspirational. Include at least one challenge they overcame.

ANSWER

A model biography of **Ahilyabai Holkar** is given, followed by points for the others.

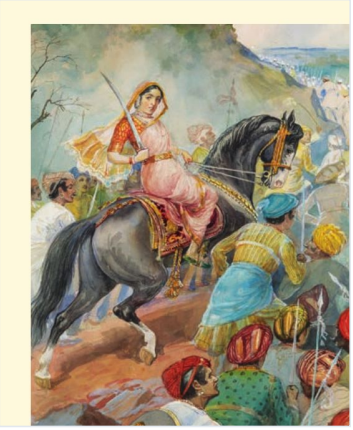


Fig. 3.18. Tarabai in battle (painting by M.V. Dhurandhar)

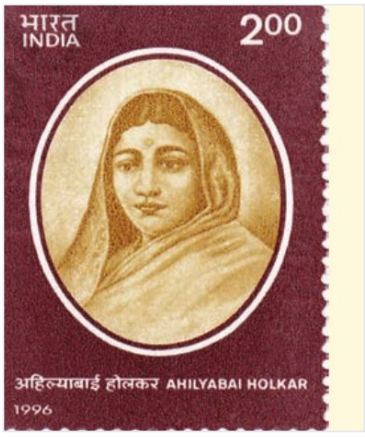


Fig. 3.19. A postage stamp commemorating Ahilyabai Holkar

a Model biography: Ahilyabai Holkar

Ahilyabai Holkar belonged to the Holkar dynasty, one of the chief families that helped the Marathas expand in north India. The Holkars ruled a large kingdom in central India, around present-day Indore.

Her life was full of loss: she lost her husband and her son. But she did not give up. She bravely governed the state for thirty years, ruling wisely and caring for the common people. This was her greatest challenge.

She was a devout person who built and restored hundreds of temples, ghats, wells and roads all over India, from Kedarnath to Rameswaram. She rebuilt the Kashi Vishwanath temple in Varanasi and the Somnath temple in Gujarat, and promoted the Maheshwar weaving industry.

Ahilyabai inspires us because she faced personal tragedy with courage and used her power to serve people.

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b Points for the others

Leader	What makes them inspirational	Challenge
Kanhoji Angre	Guided Marathas to naval victories; demanded passes from Europeans	Maratha ships were less advanced than European ones
Bajirao I	As Peshwa, instrumental in pan-Indian expansion	Managing a large, decentralised state
Mahadji Shinde	Recaptured Delhi (1771); had a large European-style army	Recovering after the defeat at Panipat (1761)
Tarabai	Warrior queen; architect of the northward expansion	Aurangzeb and the Mughal army in the Deccan

Therefore, a good biography states who the leader was, what they achieved and which challenge they overcame.

QUESTION 3

If you could visit one Maratha fort today (such as Raigad, Sindhudurg, Gingee, or Pratapgad), which would you choose and why? Research its history, architecture, and strategic importance. Present your findings as a digital presentation or a poster in class.

ANSWER

This is a research activity. A model for **Raigad** is given, using points from the chapter; add your own research.



Fig. 3.1. Raigad Fort, Maharashtra, with the grand entrance to the palace

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a Model choice: Raigad

Heading	Points
Why I chose it	Chhatrapati Shivaji was crowned here in 1674, marking the formal beginning of the Maratha Empire
History	Coronation with full Vedic rites; formal title ‘Shri Raja Shiva Chhatrapati’; later captured by Aurangzeb after Sambhaji’s execution
Architecture	A strong mountain fortress with a grand entrance to the palace (Fig. 3.1)
Strategic importance	Mountain forts controlled routes and sheltered the army; Raigad was the Maratha capital

b Presentation tips

- Use 5–6 slides or a poster: title, location, history, architecture, importance, photos.
- For Sindhudurg, Gingee or Pratapgad, follow the same headings (Sindhudurg: naval fortification; Gingee: refuge of Rajaram; Pratapgad: meeting with Afzal Khan).

Therefore, a good presentation covers the fort’s history, architecture and strategic importance with images.

QUESTION 4

The chapter states, “The British took India from the Marathas more than from the Mughals or any other power.” What do you think this means? What evidence from the chapter supports this idea?

ANSWER

It means that the Marathas, not the Mughals, were the main power the British had to defeat to gain control of India.



Fig. 3.11. A mural of a British officer surrendering before Nana Phadnavis and Mahadji Shinde after the first Anglo-Maratha war

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a Meaning

By the 18th century the Mughal Empire had declined, while the Marathas had become the largest Indian power, controlling much of central and northern India. When the British defeated the Marathas, they took over what had become the main centre of Indian power.

b Evidence from the chapter

- The Marathas established the largest Indian empire before the British took over.
- They were the chief rivals of the British in the latter half of the 18th century.
- Three Anglo–Maratha wars were fought between 1775 and 1818; the Marathas won the first (1775–1782) and Maratha power ended in 1818.
- The Marathas held Delhi until the British captured it three decades after 1771.
- Nana Phadnavis organised the first pan-Indian anti-British alliance.
- The Marathas lost because of internal disunity and the British’s superior organisation and technology.

Therefore, the British had to defeat the Marathas to become the supreme power in India.

QUESTION 5

Compare how Chhatrapati Shivaji and later Marathas treated religious places and people of different faiths. What evidence from the chapter shows their approach to religious diversity?

ANSWER

Both Shivaji and the later Marathas generally respected other faiths, and many later rulers supported temples and cultural traditions; the chapter also notes occasional indiscipline by some chiefs.

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a Comparison

Chhatrapati Shivaji	Later Marathas
A devout Hindu who respected other religions while upholding his own	Revived local Hindu traditions without religious discrimination
At Surat he was careful not to attack religious places and spared the house of Mohandas Parekh	Ahilyabai Holkar rebuilt the Kashi Vishwanath and Somnath temples
Rebuilt desecrated temples and promoted religious institutions	The Bhonsles of Nagpur supported the revival of Jagannath worship at Puri
Forbade the Dutch from trading slaves, showing concern for his subjects	A Maratha rupee had inscriptions in both Devanagari and Persian; Thanjavur's culture mixed Tamil, Telugu and Marathi influences

b Note

The chapter also says that, as regional chiefs gained power, there was occasional indiscipline and abuse, in stark contrast with Shivaji's values.

Therefore, the Marathas generally showed respect for religious diversity, following the example of Shivaji.

QUESTION 6

The chapter describes how forts were 'the core of the state' for Marathas. Why were they so important? How did they help the Marathas survive against larger enemies?

ANSWER

According to Ramachandrapant Amatya, the Maratha kingdom was created from forts, and forts helped it survive.

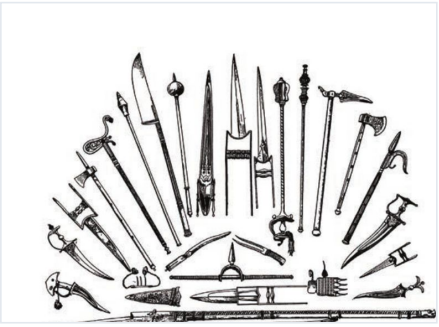


Fig. 3.15. Some of the weapons used by the Marathas

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a Why forts were important

- They helped strategically control important routes.
- They sheltered the army when engaging in guerrilla warfare.
- Without forts, a land gets devastated in the face of an invasion.
- Shivaji controlled and built a considerable number of forts; the Marathas controlled hundreds.

b How they helped against larger enemies

- Aurangzeb conquered Bijapur and Golconda, yet the Maratha state survived decades of onslaught because of its forts.
- The Marathas staunchly defended their fortresses and often had the upper hand over the Mughals; Rajaram continued the fight from Gingee.
- Naval forts such as Sindhudurg protected the coast.

Therefore, forts gave the Marathas protection, control of routes and bases for guerrilla warfare, helping them survive against larger enemies.

QUESTION 7

You have been appointed as the chief designer for Maratha coins. Design a coin that represents Maratha achievements and values. Explain the symbols you chose.

ANSWER

This is a design activity. A model design is described; you may draw it in your notebook.



Fig. 3.12. Shivaji's gold coins



Fig. 3.14. Gaṇapatī-Pantapradhān rupee

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a Model design

Part of the coin	Symbol	Meaning
Legend (writing)	Devanagari script	Cultural identity (Shivaji's coins used Devanagari)
Title	'Shri Raja Shiva Chhatrapati'	Sovereign authority and Swarājya
Centre	Fort outline	Forts as the core of the state
Border / side	Ship	The Maratha Navy and maritime trade
Other side	Saffron flag; sword and lance	The flag adopted by all Marathas; the preferred weapons
Invocation	Gaṇapati	Cultural tradition, as on the Gaṇapatī-Pantapradhān rupee

Therefore, a coin can show the Marathas' script, flag, forts, navy and values through its symbols.

QUESTION 8

After this introduction to the Maratha period, what do you think was their most important contribution to Indian history? Write a paragraph supporting your opinion with examples from the chapter. Then share and discuss your ideas with classmates.

ANSWER

This asks for your own opinion. A model paragraph is given; you may choose another contribution.

a Model paragraph

In my opinion, the Marathas' most important contribution was the idea of *Swarājya* and the confidence that Indians could govern themselves. Chhatrapati Shivaji showed that mighty kingdoms could be defeated by building a strong state with forts, a navy and an efficient administration. The Marathas later built the largest Indian empire before the British and were their chief rivals. Their fight for self-rule inspired many Indians to believe they could govern themselves, planting the early seeds for the freedom movement.

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b Other possible choices

- Cultural revival, such as the patronage of arts in Thanjavur and the promotion of Marathi and Sanskrit.
- Administration: salaried officials, a council of ministers and a moderate justice system.
- The Maratha Navy challenging European naval power.

Therefore, whichever contribution you choose, support it with examples from the chapter.

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