

Maharana Pratap

Pratap Singh, popularly known as the Maharana Pratap, was the 13th Maharana of Mewar known for his valiant and spirited defence against the Mughal Empire.

This article will give details about Maharana Pratap within the context of the civil services examination.

Early Life of Maharana Pratap

Maharana Pratap belonged to the Sisodia clan of the Rajputs of Mewar. He was born on 9th May 1540 to Udai Singh II and Jaiwanta Bai. His younger brothers were Shakti Singh, Vikram Singh and Jagmal Singh. Maharana Pratap was married to Ajabde Punwar of Bijolia.

Upon the death of Udai Singh in 1572 there was a brief tussle over who would succeed the throne of Mewar. Maharana Pratap had other stepbrothers who were also vying for the throne of Mewar. However, the senior nobles in his father's court wanted Pratap Singh to succeed as he was the eldest son of Udai Singh II, thus he ascended to the throne of Mewar on 1st March 1572

Battle of Haldighati

During the reign of Udai Singh II, the siege of Chittorgarh had led to the loss of the fertile eastern half of Mewar to the expansionist Mughal Empire. Yet the western half of Mewar which consisted of the wooded and hilly terrain near the Aravalli range was firmly under the control of the Sisodia Rajputs.

Mughal Emperor Akbar was intent on securing the rest of Mewar in order to secure a stable route to the economic powerhouse of Gujarat. Upon the ascension of Maharana Pratap in 1572, Mughal Emperor Akbar sent many diplomatic missions to convince him to become a vassal of the Mughal Empire like the other Rajput rulers in the region had done so as Maharana Pratap refused to submit in person to Akbar, thus ensuring that war would be inevitable.

The forces of Mewar and the Mughal Empire met at the narrow mountain passes of Haldighati near modern-day Rajsamand in Rajasthan. As per the contemporary historians, the Army of Mewar of 3000 cavalry and 400 Bhil archers faced a Mughal Army numbering between 5000 and 1000 consisting of elephants and musketeers. The Battle of Haldighati lasted for six hours which led to the defeat of Maharana Pratap. However, he beat a tactical retreat due to the sacrifice of his commanders and lived to fight another day.

The battle of Haldighati was a futile victory for the Mughals as they were unable to capture Maharana Pratap or his immediate family members. When the Mughal Army shifted its focus towards the North-Western regions of India, Maharana Pratap launched a campaign to take back the western regions of Mewar.

Reconquest of Mewar

Due to rebellions in Bengal and Punjab, the Mughal Army had shifted its focus towards these regions. In 1582, Maharana Pratap attacked and took the Mughal post at Dawar. This led to a lightning campaign which saw the fall of all 36 Mughal outposts in Mewar. This led to Emperor Akbar in

suspending any further campaigns against Mewar for the time being as he felt the Mughal Army was better put to better use elsewhere. The Emperor moved to Lahore and remained there for the next 12 years in order to maintain the situation in the north-western borders of his empire.

Since no further expeditions were carried out in Mewar by the Mughals, Maharana Pratap undertook further campaigns of reconquest which saw the recovery of Kumbhalgarh, Udaipur and Gogunda. He constructed a new capital, Chavand, near modern Dungarpur.

Legacy of Maharana Pratap

Maharana Pratap passed away on 19 January 1597 aged 56. He was succeeded by his eldest son Amar Singh I. Notable historians such as Satish Chandra have said that Maharana Pratap's struggle against the Mughal empire almost alone and unaided by other Rajput states signify the best of Rajput valour and the spirit of self-sacrifice. Furthermore, his method of guerrilla warfare would be further improved and emulated by none other than Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj (Born on [February 16, 1509](#)) himself.