

Mahadji Shinde

Srimanth Mahadji Shinde (also spelt as Mahadji Scindia) was a Maratha statesman known for his crucial role in resurrecting Maratha power following the disastrous Third Battle of Panipat in 1761.

Along with Peshwa Madhav Rao I and fellow statesman Nana Fadnavis, he was one of the three pillars of the Maratha Resurrection.

This article will give further details about Mahadji Shinde within the context of the Government Exams.

Background of Mahadji Shinde

Born on December 3 1730, Mahadji Shinde was the fifth son of Ranoji Rao Scindia, the founder of the Scindia Dynasty, who ruled Malwa when it was taken over by the Marathas from the Mughal Empire. From an early age he was given a military education.

He was only 12 when he undertook his first military campaign against the Nizam of Hyderabad at Berur in 1742. The campaign against the Nizam would be one of his success against many foes that would come his way,

Between 1742 and 1761 he would undertake many more campaigns in Northern India. These campaigns would bring regions such as Malwa, Rajputana, Rohilkhand, Bundelkhand etc under the Maratha Empire.

Mathura which was under Mughal rule was conquered by Mahadji in 1755 where he reconstructed various old temples and established a centre for Sanskrit learning. In January 1758, Mahadji established Gwalior as his headquarters.

He was involved in the Third Battle of Panipat in 1761. Despite his best efforts and that of other Maratha leaders, they were defeated by the Afghan forces led by Ahmed Shah Abdali. Mahadji Shinde was injured but managed to survive the battle. His survival would be crucial to the revival of Maratha fortunes in the years to come.

Maratha Resurrection

Mahadaji was instrumental in resurrecting Maratha power in North India after the Third Battle of Panipat, and rose to become a trusted lieutenant of the Peshwa Madhav Rao I.

After accompanying Shah Alam II in 1771 to Delhi, he restored the Mughals in Delhi and became the regent of the empire. This effectively made the Mughals, puppers of the Marathas.

He annihilated the power of Jats of Mathura and during 1772-73 he destroyed the power of Pashtun Rohillas in Rohilkhand and captured Najibabad. His role during the First Anglo-Maratha War was greatest from the Maratha side since he humbled the British in the Battle of Wadgaon which resulted in the Treaty of Wadgaon and then again in Central India he mediated between the Peshwa and the British.

After the British defeat, Warren Hastings proposed a new treaty, known as the Treaty of Salbai, between the Peshwa and the British that would recognize Shrimant Madhav Rao I as the Peshwa and grant his rival Raghunath Rao a pension and would not be supported by the British in his venture. The treaty also returned to Mahadji Shinde all his territories west of the Yamuna and so was made to withdraw to Ujjain

After the Treaty of Salbai in 1782, he invaded and overpowered the Rajput states, particularly Jodhpur and Jaipur through the Battle of Patan, the Battle of Merta. Ultimately his role extended to the Punjab as well where the Sikh sardars of the region paid tributes to him.

Later Years and Legacy

Mahadji became deputy regent of Mughal affairs, and the Mughals also gave him the title of Amir-ul-Umara (head of the amirs) in 1784.

Another achievement of Mahadji was his victory over the Nizam of Hyderabad's army in a battle. The Nizam state ceased to be a factor in north Indian politics after this battle and it generally confined itself in the Deccan afterwards.

Mahadji who was now at the zenith of his power, died at his camp at Wanwadi near Pune on 12 February 1794. He was succeeded by Daulat Rao Scindia.

Shinde Chhatri, located in Wanawadi, in Pune is a memorial dedicated to Mahadji Shinde. It is a hall that marks the spot of Mahadji Shinde's cremation on 12 February 1794. The three storied memorial in Rajput architectural style, is one of the most significant landmarks in the city

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