

## IMPACT OF SHIVAJI'S CONTRIBUTIONS IN THE GROWTH OF NATIONALISM IN INDIA

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### ABSTRACT

*Shivaji is one of the most important heroes of India. Shivaji dedicated his entire life in fights against the "foreigners". He was the man who fought for the rights of the Marathas. So he is considered probably the greatest hero in the Indian province of Maharashtra. All over India, Shivaji is recognized as a warrior legend. He is also considered as the man who gave birth to India's nationalism. Many historians prefer to believe that Shivaji was the root of India's self-pride and esteem. This research studies the reigning period of Shivaji. It is an applied or refinery study that tries to judge if this period can be called the golden era of Indian history or not in terms of growth of nationalism. While trying to do so this research took into account the success as well as the failures of Shivaji. Ruling period of any ruler is bound to have both success and failures. So this study was not about if there are failures in the reigning period of Shivaji or not. It explored about the heavier side i.e. whether success is heavier or failures and thus, made an attempt to reach the conclusion about if this period can be called the golden era or not regarding contributions of Shivaji towards the growth of nationalism in India.*

**Keywords:** Shivaji, India, nationalism, Marathas, Mughals.

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**INTRODUCTION**

The story of India's freedom struggle occupies some very important pages of history. There were many figures who contributed heavily towards the growth of nationalism that was driving this freedom struggle. There were personalities like Mangal Pandey, Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi and the other leaders of Indian National Congress that promoted India's sense of nationalistic feelings. None of their contributions and importance can be denied or should be denied. But in this context, there is something special about Shivaji. Shivaji was a historical personality who actually fought with arms against the so called foreign rulers of the country. He emerged victorious in his fights and thus achieved immortality in the minds of the Indians. It was a few centuries after his death that India and the world realized the contributions of Shivaji in the growth of nationalism in India. During India's freedom struggle Indian freedom fighters and revolutionaries realized the importance of keeping an Indian figure in front of them who fought against the foreigners and emerged victorious. They thought that an Indian figure would keep them motivated and united. Many historians have argued that Shivaji was targeting the establishment of his kingdom. In the process, he had to fight against the Sultanate of Bijapur and the Mughals. It was not his sole target to drive away the rulers of Bijapur and the Mughals from India. He freed the Deccan to a huge extent from their hands and established himself as a king. Such historians are opposed by others by saying that Shivaji was a man who dedicated his entire life in his fights against the foreign invaders. He never compromised with them. His indomitable spirit and his zeal to struggle are factors that keep him "alive" still now. And, it provides an excellent opportunity to research on his contributions in the growth of nationalism in India.

This research studies the reigning period of Shivaji. It is an applied or refinery study that tries to judge if this period can be called the golden era of Indian history or not in terms of growth of nationalism. While trying to do so this research took into account the success as well as the failures of Shivaji. Ruling period of any ruler is bound to have both success and failures. So this study was not about if there are failures in the reigning period of Shivaji or not. It explored about the heavier side i.e. whether success is heavier or failures and thus, made an attempt to reach the conclusion about if this period can be called the golden era or not regarding contributions of Shivaji towards the growth of nationalism in India.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

Pearson (1976) wrote that the decline of the Mughal Empire is believed to commence during the reign of Aurangzeb. One of the main reasons behind this was that the Mughals were unable to defeat their enemies of the south, particularly Shivaji. Consequently military performance declined further. Heavy bribes had to be given to the military generals to make the army move. The Mughal were finding it difficult to keep control of the disruptive forces of the Empire. Shivaji had an army who could move quickly. That caused a lot of devastation to the so called mighty Mughal Empire. In this writing the author proved that Shivaji played a crucial role in the decline of the Mughal Empire in India. An inclusion of conditions that led to the rise of Shivaji and the unrest in the Mughal Empire could have made this literature even more useful.

Gaikwad (2013) wrote that in the history of western India the establishment of a kingdom by Shivaji Maharaj is a very inspiring story. In the history of nationalism western historians see the rise of Shivaji as the revolt of a local power against the Empire. However, that is not the way Indian historians see Shivaji. They look at Shivaji as a nationalist leader, as a king and as a historical figure who fought against foreign domination. The author wrote that Shivaji remained the face of struggle of Indians in their attempt to remove the British from India. The author highlighted the efforts of great historians like S.N. Sen, Jadunath Sarkar, Shelwalkar etc. in studying the life of Shivaji. Dr. Ambedkar's effort to study the social struggle of Shivaji has also been mentioned here. This article is basically a collection of the efforts of eminent historians and scholars to study the life of Shivaji. To make this article even more interesting the author could have made a contrasting study of the opinions of western and Indian historians about Shivaji.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This is a research that explores the reigning period of Shivaji. It explores the successes and failures of Shivaji on grounds of his contributions to the growth of nationalism in India.

Before the arrival of Shivaji in the political history of India, there were many great rulers. They had ruled India or parts of it. They had risen to glory for various reasons. Emperor Asoka, Chandragupta Maurya and Harshavardhana are some of the most common names in that list. Asoka's rise to glory was his transformation from Chandasok to Dharmasok. He was the only emperor in the history of the world who left his conquests and success despite being

on the winning streak. Chandragupta Maurya's rise to glory was because of his conquests and formation of modern economic and administrative policies for the state. Harshavardhana's rise to glory was because of the quantum of his sacrifices for the wellbeing of his subjects and the world as a whole. But none of these great rulers rose to glory and got their names written in the pages of world history because of their contributions towards growth of nationalism in India. During their times none of these rulers had to face any such challenge. They were ruling during periods when India was never probably attacked by any foreign power. Shivaji's life was something totally different from those of whose names are mentioned here. It is mention worthy here that Shivaji was from a period when India was being ruled and controlled by the Mughals who came from Mongolia and were descendants of Ghengiz Khan. Shivaji spent almost his entire life fighting against these foreign rulers of India. And so, he is primarily remembered in history because of his struggles against the Mughals. He became the first Indian king to not accept the superiority of the so called foreign rulers and thus, he contributed towards the growth of nationalism in India.

His life, his ideas, his actions, his thoughts, his greatness, his glory and his contributions towards the growth of nationalism in India all became subjects of study, thought and discussion at a much later stage. It was due to leaders like Tilak that Shivaji's ideas were introduced to the Indians during India's freedom struggle. The life stories of Shivaji started to motivate the Indians to fight against the mighty British in a manner in which Shivaji had fought against the mighty Mughals. His life stories and stories of his contribution towards the growth of nationalism in India became subjects of national prestige and glory years after the demise of Shivaji. Today in India roads, railway stations, airports, schools, colleges and universities are named after this national hero. He is considered as a source of motivation. It is believed that he has inspired generations will continue to do so for generations to come.

## CONCLUSIONS

Shivaji was the first name in history to give rise to the concept of not accepting the supremacy established by the Mughals. He struggled throughout his life for the establishment of a Maratha kingdom with Indians. Thus, it can be said that he is the pioneer in contributing towards the growth of nationalism in India. The impact of Shivaji and his contributions in the growth of nationalism in this country (India) is so huge that nationalistic political parties even today use the image and legacy of Shivaji to draw crowds. He remains one of the most accepted and unquestionable figures of Indian history when it comes to nationalism even in this era.

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