

## Twitter Thread by Vibhu Vashisth



**Vibhu Vashisth**  
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**Did you know?**

**Ahilyabai Holkar was one of India's  
greatest women rulers of all time.**

**Ahilyabai was Born on May 31,1725 in the village of Chondi,Jamkhed  
distt,Maharashtra to a man named Mankoji Shinde,who was the Patil(Chief) of a  
village and a member of proud Dhangar Community.**



Despite the fact that girls' education was a farther dream in those days, Ahilyabai was homeschooled by her father. Ahilya didn't belong to any royal family but in a twist of fate she is still remembered as one of the most revered Queen in the history.



## MAHARANI AHILYABAI HOLKAR

(31 MAY 1725 – 13 AUGUST 1795)

A **brave** queen, a **proficient** ruler  
and an **erudite** politician.



While they were living their humdrum lives, one day Malhar Rao Holkar, commander of the Peshwa Bajirao & Lord of the Malwa stopped in Chondi on his way to Pune, where he couldn't help but notice a young 8yrs old Ahilyabai in the temple service feeding the poor & hungry.

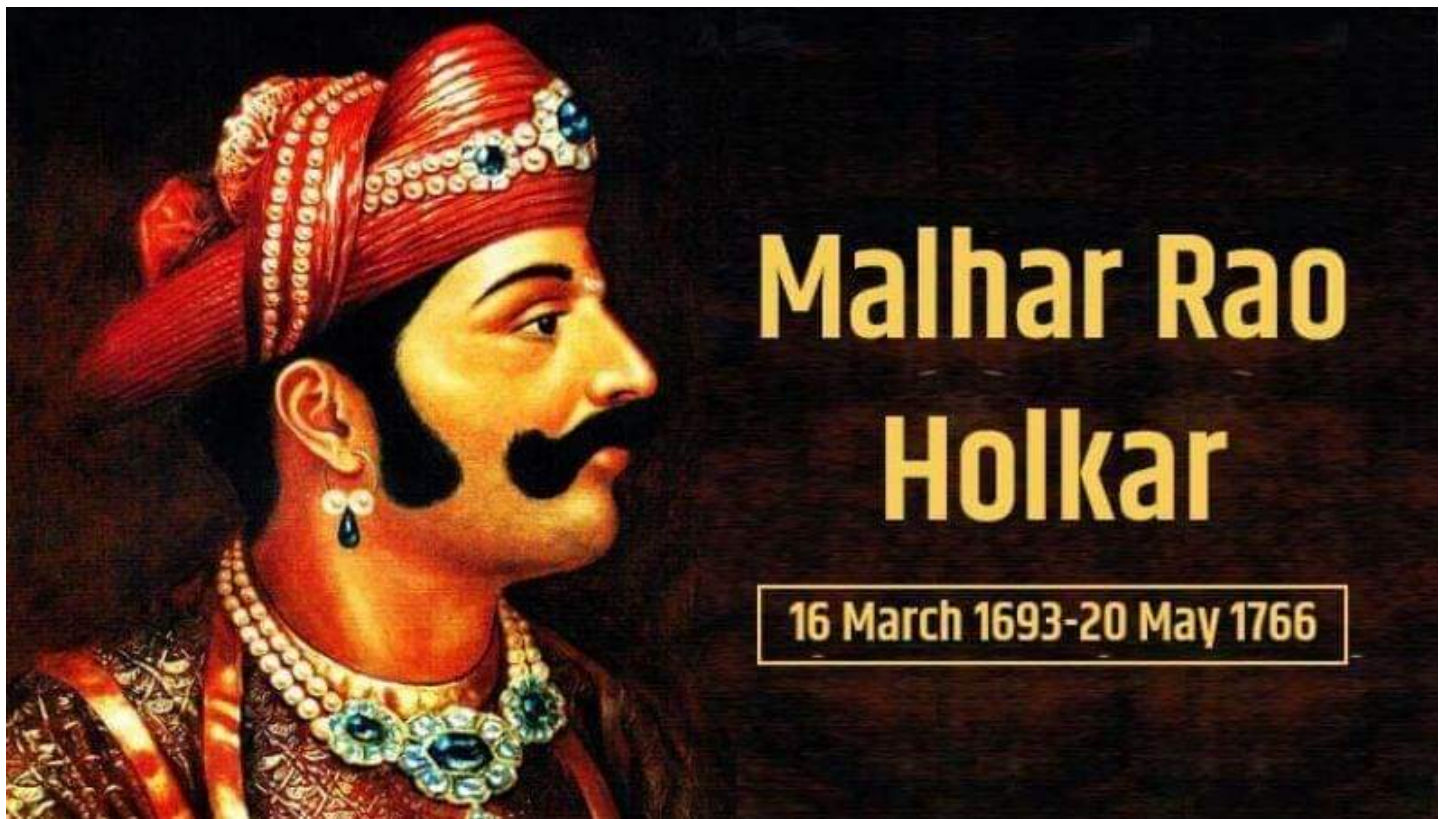
He was so impressed by the sheer innocence&beauty with simplicity character of Ahilyabai dat he asked her hand in marriage for his son Khanderao Holkar. Just like that she got married to Khanderao in 1733 at a tender age of 8&became a bride of esteemed Maratha community of Holkars

But destiny had something else in store for her as her husband died in the Battle of Kumbher in 1754 leaving her widow at 29. Distressed Ahilyabai was to commit Sati when her father-in-law Malhar Rao refused to let it happen.



Her Father-in-law instead introduced her to the administrative & military affairs of the state which she became very good at. Malhar Rao passed away in 1766, 12yrs after the death of his son and Ahilyabai could see the Kingdom fall apart in front of her eyes.





Ahilyabai's only son, Male Rao Holkar, who was minor at that time had to ascend the throne under Ahilyabai's regency. But the last and most severe blow came when Male Rao too died in 1767, just a few months into his rule. A woman who lost her husband, father-in-law and son...

...consecutively would be expected to break down completely but Ahilya emerged stronger for her Kingdom and her people. She petitioned the Peshwa and took administration in her own hands, ascended the throne and became the ruler of Indore in 1767.

A slight opposition was tackled by the Holkar Army who was very supportive of her leadership. Witnessing the tremendous support of the people of Malwa in favour of Ahilyabai, Peshwa granted her the power to lead the administration.

Ahilyabai appointed Tukoji Holkar( Adopted son of Malhar Rao Holkar) as her new military head.

Ahilyabai led the Army into several wars in which she also fought with great valour alongside the soldiers, being a great warrior and skilled archer, horserider herself.



The great Holkar Queen protected her Kingdom by the plundering invaders like Bhils, Gonds etc .

The Queen of Malwa slaughtered her enemies and invaders in the battles with four bows and quivers of arrows fitted to the corners of the howdah of her favourite elephant.

Apart from being a valiant Queen and ardent ruler, Rani Ahilyabai was also an incredible politician.

Rani Ahilyabai ruled Malwa in most enlightened manner. She never observed 'Purdah' and held daily Jansabha and was easily accessible to anyone in need.





She developed Indore from a small village to a magnificent city. She made Maheshwar on the banks of River Narmada, her capital. She built many forts & roads in Malwa & was a great patron of Arts and Hindu Temples. She built many temples, wells and ghats from Himalayas to South India.



## Ahilya Ghat by the Ganges in Varanasi. Source:

Bhartiya SanskritiKosh enlists many places which were developed by Rani Ahilyabai. Names of a few are Kashi, Gaya, Somnath, Ayodhya, Mathura, Hardwar, Dwarka, Rameshwaram, Jagannathpuri etc.

She worked for the welfare causes of people. She didn't support Sati & wanted widows to have a choice.



Ahilya Bai's Temple. Source: [Wikimedia](#)

Maheshwar was a flourishing literary, musical, artistic and industrial capital of Ahilyabai. She established a textile industry in the city of Maheshwar. Ahilyabai's legacy of good deeds, her dedication to religion and her policies enriched the cities of Maheshwar and Indore.





## The Royal Palace of Maheshwar. Source:

Ahilyabai's glorious rule ended with her death in 1795. Republic of India in her honor issued a commemorative stamp on 25 Aug 1996. Citizens of Indore instituted an award in her name in 1996, which is given annually to an outstanding person. First recipient of it was Nanaji Deshmukh.



Poet Joanna Baillie wrote a few lines in honour of one of the Greatest Woman Maratha rulers of Malwa. She writes:

"In latter days of Brahma came,  
To rule our land, a noble dame,  
Kind was her heart, bright her fame,  
Ahilya was her honoured name".

■■■

