

# HIERARCHICAL CLASSIFICATION OF WARRIORS (HUMAN RESOURCES) IN MAHABHARAT WAR

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*Abstract: The war of the Mahabharata was as destructive, the mysterious for today's generation is also a matter of research even after years, and how that battle was fought without the latest technical resources? But it was Yogiraj Lord Yuyutsu, who can be called the father of modern SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT, fought a war on behalf of Pandavas and judiciously utilized available resources. Krishna's diplomacy that even a relatively small group of less warriors in this crusade demonstrated vitality in front of the more powerful warriors. Today in the war, armies want to avoid fighting face to face, because Massacre is fixed. Nowadays, there are battalions, regiments, squadrons in every country's army, in the same way, in the Mahabharata period; "Akshauhini" was assessed by the army. Akshauhini was called a complete unit of the army. It had four integral components, i.e. foot soldiers, the cavalry i.e. on Elephant, the warrior rider and the charioteer, the warrior rider that was called a smart army. Akshauhini used to be the measure of army in ancient India. This is the Sanskrit word. There are some differences in its number from different sources. According to the Mahabharata, there were 21,870 chariots, 21,870 elephants, 65,610 horsemen and 1,09,350 infantry soldiers. According to them, their ratios were 1 chariot: 1 Elephant : 3 horsemen: 5 were infantry soldiers. The total deposits of the digits of the number of each of its part are 18. A rider will be sitting on a horse, an elephant must have at least two persons, one is yellow and the other fighting warrior, so in a chariot two humans and four horses will be, thus the number of humans in the Mahabharata army At least 46,81,920 and number of horses, 27,15,620 people engaged in chariots, in this number, the main warrior of both sides did not only came together in the field of Kurukshetra but also killed.*

**In the war of Mahabharata, 18 Akshauhini army was destroyed.**

- Padatik- Infantry Men.
- Ashvarohi – Horseman. One Ashvarohi = 12 Infantrymen.
- Gaja – Soldier on an Elephant. One Gaja = 12 Ashvarohi.
- ArdhaRathi – A soldier on a chariot who is considered equal to one Gaja.
- Rathi- A warrior who is considered equal to 12 Ardharathis
- AtiRathi – A warrior who is considered equal to 12 Rathis
- Maharathi – A warrior who is considered equal to 12 Atirathis
- Ati-Maharathi – A warrior who is considered equal to 12 Maharathis.
- Mahamaharathis – A warrior who is considered equal to 24 Ati-Maharathis.

The above ranks are not just a reflection of skill or mastery of a weapon. It also includes knowledge of battle formations, strategic skill set, tactical knowledge, past experience, ability to crack "battle traps" and so on. Simply because an archer rode a chariot did not make him a Rathi – the warrior needed to have some fearsome reputation and class battle experience too.

For Example Yudhishthir and Bheema both are considered Rathis but their respective sons – Prativindhya and Sutasoma are Atirathis. Everyone may wonder why is that when both Yudhishthir and Bheema are more experienced than their sons? The reason is – Prativindhya and Sutasoma were highly skilled in battle plans, strategies, forming bottlenecks and tackling different battle formations ("Vyuhas"). They also had mastery of all forms of weapons which includes bows and arrows, mace, sword and spear.

Again, Abhimanyu – the youngest son of Pandava family is a Maharathi. This is because he had knowledge of cracking Chakravyuha and knew how to move the fastest in the battlefield. Only Abhimanyu and Arjuna had the mettle of tackling Drona, Bheesma, Aswaththama and other Maharathis from Kaurava side.

So one Abhimanyu (Maharathi) is equal to  $12 \times 12 = 144$  Yudhishthirs.

Please also note that just because a warrior has a higher rank, that doesn't mean a warrior from a lower rank cannot beat or kill him. Example – Shikhandi was only a Rathi but he ended up killing Bheesma – a Maharathi.

Now coming to the warriors who were considered fit for each rank.

## **Maha-Maharathis**

No Warrior in Mahabharata held this rank because of their Versatility.

Shiva and Kali are said to be the ultimate Mahamaharathis who held the power of destroying the whole universe in one blink of an eye.

The only person who was capable of becoming a MahaMahaRathi was Aswaththama but there was a condition – he had to be extremely angry and excited to unleash his full potential (which he himself did not know). Aswaththama had this potential because he descended as an avatar of Rudra (Shiva), which is Shiva himself.

Only Drona, Bheesma and Krishna knew the true potential of an angry Aswaththama but they never revealed this to anyone. Aswaththama was also one of the Chiranjivis and is supposed to live as an immortal, superceding the "Ichhamrityu" of Bheesma. Vyasa is of the opinion that Shiva was a silent observer of the whole ordeal (in the form of Aswaththama) and would have taken steps to destroy the whole humankind, if Krishna failed to preserve Dharma before Kali Yuga prevailed.

**Ati-Maharathi**

No warrior in Mahabharata war held this rank. Vyasa was of the opinion that Krishna is the only Atimaharathi after Parashurama, because of his Sudarshan Chakra which is deadlier than Bhrahmashtra, Pashupatashtra and all divine weapons combined.

Apart from Parashurama and Krishna, Ravana's son Indrajit was considered to be an Ati-Maharathi.

**Maharathi**

Bheesma, Drona, Arjuna, Karna, Ashwathama, Abhimanyu, Drupada, Virata, Vrishasena (Karna's son), Dhrishtaketu, JaraSandha, Bhagadatta, Narakasura, Balarama.

According to Vyasa – Bheesma, Karna and Arjuna were equal to 2 Maharathis but not Drona.

This is because Drona is a Brahmin and he does not have Khastriya blood while the other three were princes of royal clan and had that legacy with them. Karna, although a "Soot putra" to the society is actually a prince and belongs to the prestigious "Khastriya" class, having obtained mastery of all weapons, battle formations from Parashurama, is considered equal to 2 Maharathis.

**Atirathi**

Kripacharya, Kritvarma, Yuyutsu, Drishtadyumna, Satyaki, Shishupala, Bhurisarava, All son's of Draupadi, Shalya, Kuntibhoja, Ghatotkacha.

Vyasa considers both Duryodhana and Bheema have the talent of an Atirathi but since both are weak in strategy and tactical thinking, they are slightly lesser than an Atirathi but higher than Rathis. Bheema and Duryodhana are considered equal to 8 Rathis.

**Rathi**

Duryodhana, Bheema, Nakul, Sahadev, Yudhisthir, Shikhandi, Drupad's son, 99 Kaurava brothers (except Yuyutsu who is an Atirathi), Uttar, Shakuni, Jayadratha.

Here is the hierarchical chart of different warriors.

Shiva and Kali		MahaMahaRathi
Indra, Brahmna, Soorya, Pavan, Yama, Ganesha and Other Gods		Lower Maha Maharathi
Parashurama, Krishna, Indrajit		Ati Maharathi
Arjuna	Bheesma, Karna	Double Maharathi
Abhimanyu	Drona	Upper Maharathi
Drupada, Virata, Dhrishtaketu	Ashwathama, Vrishasena, Bhagdatta	Lower Maharathi
Yuyutsu, Drishtadyumna, Satyaki Kuntibhoja, Ghatotkacha, Prativindhya, Sutasoma, Satanika, Shrutasena, Shrutakarma	Kripacharya, Kritvarma, Bhurisarava, Shalya	Atirathi
Bheema	Duryodhana	Upper Rathi (8 Rathis)
Yudhisthir, Nakul, Sahadev, Shikhandi, Uttar, Sons of Drupad	Shakuni, 98 Kaurava Brothers, Jayadratha, Sudakshina,	Rathi

Ardharathi, Gaja, Ashvarohi and Padatik composed of ordinary soldiers.

**Skilled Units on Both Sides**

If we consider Rathi as one unit,

- 1 Rathi = 1 Unit
- 1 AtiRathi = 12 X Rathis = 12 Units
- 1 MahaRathi = 12 Atirathis = 12 X 12 = 144 Units

Kaurava side:

- Bheesma = Double Maharathi = 2 X Maharathi = 2 X 12 Atirathis = 2 X 12 X 12 Rathis = 288
- Karna = Double Maharathi = 2 X 144 = 288
- Drona = Maharathi = 12 Atirathi = 12 X 12 Rathis = 144
- Aswathamma = Maharathi = 144
- Vrishasena = Maharathi = 144
- Bhagdatta = Maharathi = 144
- Kripacharya = Atirathi = 12 X Rathis = 12
- Kritvarma = Atirathi = 12
- Bhurisarava = Atirathi = 12
- Shalya = Atirathi = 12

- Duryodhana = 8 Rathis = 8
- Shakuni = Rathi = 1
- JayaDratha = Rathi = 1
- Sudakshina = Rathi = 1
- 98 Kaurava brothers = Rathi =  $98 \times 1 = 98$

Total unit count = 1021 ( I have counted Bheesma and Karna only once since they did not fight the war at a time, one replaced the other)

Pandava Side

- Arjuna = Double Maharathi = 288
- Abhimanyu = Maharathi = 144
- Drupada = Maharathi = 144
- Virata = Maharathi = 144
- Dhristaketu = 144
- Yuyutsu = Atirathi = 12
- Dhriyadhuma = Atirathi = 12
- Satyaki = Atirathi = 12
- Kuntibhoja = Atirathi = 12
- Ghatokacha = Atirathi = 12
- Prativindhya = Atirathi = 12
- Sutasoma = Atirathi = 12
- Satanika = Atirathi = 12
- Shrtsena = Atirathi = 12
- Shrutkarma = Atirathi = 12
- Bheema = 8 Rathis = 8
- Yudhisthir = Rathi = 1
- Nakul = Rathi = 1
- Sahadeva = Rathi = 1
- Shikhandi = Rathi = 1
- Uttar = Rathi = 1
- Sons of Drupad (9) = 9

Total Unit Count = 994.

So we can see that skill wise, both the sides were nearly equal in terms of unit count

Please note: There are other warriors whom I have missed, it is impossible to list each and every warrior because there were hundreds of other kingdoms who participated in the war. Most of these warriors were “Rathis” and not well known.

Military Units on Both Sides

**From Kaurava side:-**

**Rathis**

- Sudakshina, the ruler of the Kambojas
- Duryodhana's son Lakshmana and the son of Dussasana
- Jayadratha, the king of the Sindhu and brother in law of Kauravas
- All 99 brothers of Duryodhana including Dushasan are single Rathis
- Duryodhana an excellent mace fighter, was classified as a warrior equal to 8 Rathis.

**Atirathis**

- Bhoja chief Kritavarma
- The ruler of the Madra, Shalya
- Bhurisravas, the son of Somadatta
- Kripa, also known as Kripacharya, the son of Saradwata

**Maharathis**

- The ruler of Pragjyotisha, the brave Bhagadatta
- Guru Drona
- Ashwathama, the son of Guru Drona, one of the eight chiranjeevi
- Karna, is equal to 2 Maharathi warriors.

**From Pandava side:**

**Rathis**

- Uttamauja and Yudhamanyu Sons of Drupada
- Shikhandi, the son of the King Drupada of the Panchala
- Yudhishtira the son of Pandu and Kunti

- Nakul and Sahadeva are single Rathis
- Bhima is classified as a warrior equal to 8 Rathis

#### Atirathis

- Satyaki of the Vrishni race,
- Dhrishtadyumna the son of Drupada
- Kuntibhoja, the maternal uncle of Pandavas
- All the sons of Draupadi, the Upapandavas
- Ghatotkacha, prince of Rakshasas and master of all illusions, son Bhima and Hidimba.

#### Maharathis

- Virata King of Virata Kingdom
- Drupada, King of Panchalas
- Dhrishtaketu, the son of Shishupala, the king of the Chedis
- Abhimanyu, the son of Arjuna
- Arjuna was equal to 2 maharathi warriors

The measure of the army that fought in Mahabharata war was measured in “Akshauhini”. The ratio was 7:11 i.e 7 Akshauhini units on Pandava side while 11 Akshauhini units on Kaurava side.

By calculation, One Akshauni division contains 21,870 elephants, 21,870 chariots, 65,610 Horses, and 109,350 infantry men.

In total, there were 18 Akshauhini units which means the total combined strength of the army on both sides is

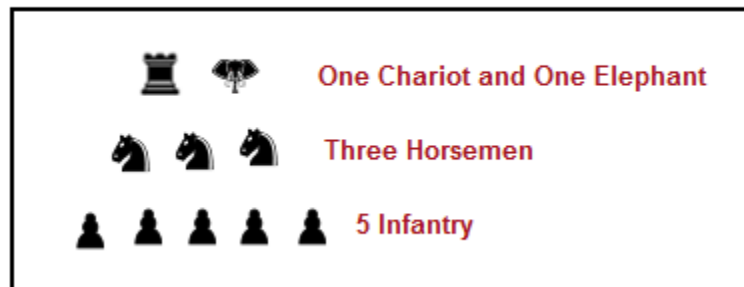
- 1968300 Infantrymen
- 393660 Elephants
- 1180980 Horses
- 393660 chariots

This has a sharp co-relation with the game of Chess (“Chaturanga”) which was invented in ancient India.

- Infantrymen = Pawn
- Elephant = Bishop
- Horses = Knight
- Chariot = Rook

A fundamental army unit was called “Patti”, which contained 5 infantry men, 3 horsemen, 1 Elephant and 1 Chariot.

## Patti



- Three pattis made one “Sena-mukha”
- Three sena-mukhas made one Gulma
- Three gulmas made one Gana
- Three ganas made one Vahini
- Three vahinis together are called a Pritana
- Three pritanas formed a Chamu
- Three chamus formed one Anikini
- Ten Anikinis formed one Akshauhini

#### CONCLUSION

Most of new theories in recent days are not given between 10<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries, Many theories, concepts are given in ancient India. The present Hierarchy System in Militaries is not a new concept, it is centuries old & applied concept. Ancient India has contributed a lot to Civilization like Management, Engineering, Technologies.

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