

8.2. CHHATRAPATI SHIVAJI MAHARAJ

Why in News?

Celebrations marking the 350th anniversary of the coronation of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj began at the Raigad fort in Maharashtra.

About Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj (1627-1680)

- **Born:** At the Shivneri fort near Junnar in Pune district on 19th February 1630.
- **Mother:** Jijabai
- **Father:** Shahajiraje Bhosale
- At the time of Shivaji Maharaj's birth, **most of the territory** in Maharashtra was under the **possession of the Nizamshah of Ahmednagar** and the **Adilshah of Bijapur**.
- Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj **carved out a stable kingdom** with the support of **powerful warrior families (deshmukhs)**.
- **After Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's death**, effective power in the Maratha state was wielded by a **family of Chitpavan Brahmanas** who served Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's successors as **Peshwa** (or principal minister).

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj



Foundation of Swaraj

- Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj started the work of **founding the Swaraj in the Pune region** which is full of hills and valleys and is not easily accessible.
 - The **inhabitants of this region** are called the **Mavalas**.
- **Objective in founding the Swaraj** is clearly expressed in his official seal- that kingdom of Shivaji will always seek the **welfare of the people**.
- He **skillfully utilized the geographical features of Maval region** for the purpose of the foundation of the Swaraj.
- He **captured the forts** of Murumbdev (Rajgad), Torna, Kondhana, Purandar and **laid the foundation of the Swaraj**.
- **Swaraj comprised** of large areas of **Nashik, Pune, Satara, Sangli, Kolhapur, Sindhudurg, Ratnagiri, Raigad and Thane** districts of Maharashtra.

About the Coronation

- On **6th June 1674**, Shivaji Maharaj was **coronated at Raigad** and he became Chhatrapati of the Swaraj.
- As a symbol of sovereignty, **Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj instituted a new era** commencing from the date of his coronation. It is known as **Rajyabhisheka shaka**.
- **Special coins were minted**- a gold coin called hon and a copper coin called shivrai **with the legend Shri Raja Shivachhatrapati** inscribed on them.

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- It also included parts of Belgaum, Karwar and Dharwad districts of Karnataka and Jinjee, Vellore and their neighbouring areas in Tamil Nadu.

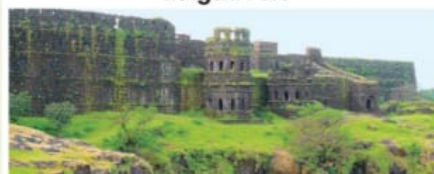
Administrative structure of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj

- The king was at the helm of affairs. To assist the king, there was a **council of state ministers known as ashtapradhan** including:
 - **Peshwa** (Prime Minister), **Mazumdar** (accountant), **Wakenavis** (intelligence, posts and household affairs), **Dabir** (Foreign secretary and ceremonies), **Senapati**, **Nyayadhis** and **Panditrao** (in charge of charitable grants) etc.
- Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj **preferred to give cash salaries** to the regular soldiers, though **sometimes chiefs received revenue grants** (saranjam).
 - **Mirasdars** (those with hereditary rights in land) were **strictly supervised**.
- Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj **supplemented his income by levying a contribution** on neighbouring Mughal territories. This contribution **began to be called Chauth** (one-fourth of land revenue).

Military Organisation of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj

- Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj maintained light cavalry and light infantry trained in guerilla and hilly warfare.
 - The **Mevalis** and the **Hetkaris** were his most excellent troopers.
- **Establishment of Maratha Navy**
 - To protect his own territory from the Sidi's depredations, to protect the merchant ships and ports in order to secure and enhance revenue incomes derived from maritime trade and customs duty, he concentrated on building the Navy.
 - There were four hundred ships of various kinds in the Navy. They included battleships like Gurab, Galbat and Pal.
- **Forts found the prime place in Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj scheme** of military organisation. During his life, Shivaji constructed around **250 forts**.
 - **No single officer was entrusted sole charge of a fort**. Instead, in every fort there were-a havildar (incharge of the keys), a sabnis (for muster-roll and government correspondences) and a sarnobat (incharge of the garrison).
 - He also built **Sea forts** that would provide **protection to the navy and keep in check the Sidi of Janjira and the Portuguese**.
 - ✓ He built **Suvarnadurg**. In 1664 he commenced the construction of **Sindhudurg at Malvan**. About the same time he strengthened a fort named **Vijaydurg**.
 - ✓ He also built a fort named **Padmadurg** on a small island in front of Rajpuri to counter the Sidi power.

Raigad Fort



- Raigad is a **hill fort situated in the Sahyadri Mountain ranges** or the Western Ghats.
 - **Fort was known** to early Europeans as the **Gibraltar of the East**.
- Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj **won this fort in 1656 in a battle with Chandrarao More**, a feudal lord ruling a part of the Western Ghats.
- Due to the **fort's massive size, steep slopes and easy communication with the mainland and the sea**, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj chose this fort as his **capital in 1662**.
- **Famous structures at fort:** Maha Darwaja, Hirani Buruj, King's Darbar etc.
 - The **fort also overlooks** an artificial lake known as the '**Ganga Sagar Lake**'.
- **Other famous forts in raigad district:** Kolaba Fort, Sudhagad Fort, Murud-Janjira Fort etc.

About Sidis

- **Sidis were Abyssinians** who had settled at Janjira in the 15th century.
- They got **Danda-Rajpuri from Ahmednagar rulers** and later acted independently.
- Majority of them were **brought to the Indian subcontinent as slaves, bodyguards and soldiers** during the time of the **Delhi Sultanate**.
- Sidis **fought many fierce sea battles** with the Dutch, Portuguese, French, British, Mughals, and the Marathas but remained undefeated.
- Sidi prowess **reached its peak under their ruler Surul Khan** (1706-1732 CE)

Conflict with the Mughals

- **Aurangzeb appointed Shaista khan**, to the viceroyalty of the Deccan, ordering him to invade and annex Shivaji Maharaj's dominions.
 - In **1663**, Shivaji Maharaj **raided Lal Mahal and successfully attacked Shaista khan**.
- **Later in 1664**, Aurangzeb sent Jaisingh of Ambar to crush growing power of Shivaji Maharaj.
 - **Treaty of Purandar was signed** between Jaisingh and Maharaj in 1665.
- In **1670**, Shivaji Maharaj followed an **offensive policy** against the Mughals.

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