



7. The Administration of the *Swaraj*

Shivaji Maharaj founded *Swaraj*. He had himself crowned. After the coronation, Maharaj accomplished 'Dakshin Digvijay', the conquest of the South. The *Swaraj* expanded comprising large areas of Nashik, Pune, Satara, Sangli, Kolhapur, Sindhudurg, Ratnagiri, Raigad and Thane districts of Maharashtra. It also included parts Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu States. To ensure the smooth management of the affairs of the *Swaraj* and to ensure people's welfare, Shivaji Maharaj set up an efficient administration. We shall get some information about it in this chapter.

Ashtapradhan Mandal (Council of Eight Ministers) : At the time of his coronation, Shivaji Maharaj appointed a council of eight ministers. The administration was divided into eight departments. A Head was appointed for each department. These eight Heads of department constituted the Ashtapradhan Mandal. Maharaj alone had the power to appoint a minister or to remove him from

his position. The ministers were answerable to Maharaj for the administration of their respective departments.

Shivaji Maharaj selected the Council on the basis of their merit and achievements. He did not give them *jagirs*, *vatans* or gifts or fiefs. They were paid handsome salaries instead.

The policy regarding agriculture : Agriculture was the main occupation in villages. Maharaj knew the importance of agriculture. That was why he paid attention to the welfare of farmers. He entrusted the responsibility of organizing the land revenue system to his capable and experienced office bearer Annaji Datto. He warned the officers that they should not collect more revenue than the amount that was fixed. He encouraged peasants to bring uncultivated land under cultivation. If the crop was lost due to excessive rains or drought, or if an enemy army had devastated the area of the village, remissions were granted in land revenue and other

Ashtapradhan Mandal of Shivaji Maharaj

	Name of the Minister	Designation	Work
1.	Moro Trimbak Pingle	Pradhan	Running the administration and making arrangements for the conquered territories
2.	Ramchandra Nilkanth Muzumdar	Amatya	Keeping the accounts of the State
3.	Annaji Datto	Sachiv	Preparing royal edicts
4.	Dattaji Trimbak Waknis	Mantri	Correspondence
5.	Hambirrao Mohite	Senapati	Organisation of the Army and protection of the kingdom
6.	Ramchandra Trimbak Dabir	Sumant	Foreign relations
7.	Niraji Rawaji	Nyayadhish	Dispensing justice
8.	Moreswar Panditrao	Panditrao	Looking after religious matters

taxes. Maharaj had instructed his officers to provide peasants with bullocks, ploughs and good seeds for sowing.

Village economy of that period:

Agriculture was the backbone of the rural economy. In villages, many occupations developed to supplement agriculture. Artisans in the village produced goods and fulfilled the needs of the local people. In this sense, a village was a self-sufficient unit. Farmers gave a definite share from their produce to artisans. This share was called 'Baluta'.

Trade and business : Maharaj knew that a kingdom does not prosper without an increase in trade. Merchants bring novel goods as also certain necessities into a kingdom. Goods become available in plenty. Trade prospers adding to wealth. The view that Maharaj took of merchants is seen in the Ajnyapatra where merchants are described as follows: 'Merchants are the ornaments of the kingdom and the glory of the king.'

It was the policy of Maharaj to protect industries. An excellent example of this is the salt industry. He protected the salt industry in Konkan. At that time, traders imported salt from the Portuguese territory and sold in *Swaraj*. That affected the local trade in Konkan areas. So, Maharaj charged heavy duty on the salt imported into *Swaraj* from the Portuguese territory. The intention was that the salt imported from the Portuguese territory would then cost more and as a result, its import would decrease and the sale of the local salt would increase.

The Military Organisation : There were two main divisions of the army of Shivaji Maharaj : infantry and cavalry. In the infantry there were officers such as the *Havaldar*, *Jumledar*, etc. The chief of the infantry was called *Sarnobat*. He

was the highest officer in the infantry.

In the cavalry, there were two types of cavalymen, namely *Shiledars* and *Bargirs*. The *Shiledar* had his own horse and weapons. The *bargir* was provided with a horse and weapons by the State. In the cavalry, *bargirs* were more in number. The ranks of the cavalry officers were similar to those of the infantry officers. The highest officer in the cavalry was the *Sarnobat*. Netoji Palkar, Prataprao Gujar, Hambirrao Mohite were some of the famous *Sarnobats* of the cavalry.



Let's learn.

Obtain information about the Armed Forces of India.

- State the names of the three Armed Forces.
- What is the designation of the head of each Force?
- Who is the Head of all the three Forces?

Intelligence Department : It was necessary to protect the *Swaraj* from its enemies. For this, it was necessary to get precise and timely information about the movements of the enemy. It was the job of the intelligence department to obtain information about the movements of the enemies and submit it to Maharaj. The intelligence service of Maharaj was very efficient. Bahirji Naik was the Head of the intelligence department. He was extremely skilled in his job. He collected accurate and detailed information about Surat before the raid on Surat.

Forts : Forts were of great importance in the medieval age. Possession of a fort made it possible to keep an eye on the surrounding area. In case of foreign invasion it was possible to protect the people taking shelter in the fort. It was

possible to stock the fort with foodgrains, war materials, ammunition and military garrison. The importance of forts in the foundation of *Swaraj* is well stated in the *Ajnyapatra* : ‘This kingdom was created by the late revered and exalted Majesty forts alone.’



Do you know?

The description of the building of forts by Shivaji Maharaj in the treatise ‘*Budhabhusanam*’ composed by Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj is remarkable. It is as follows:

‘Shivaji Maharaj built many impenetrable forts on the ridge of plateaus in the Sahyadri mountain range, in many places from Karnataka up to Baglan. The intention behind it was to protect this earth. Under his successful leadership, these forts were built from the banks of the river Krishna up to the sea in all the four directions. In the Rayari fort, Raje Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj remained on the forefront among all kings and was victorious’.

There were about 300 forts in the *Swaraj*. Maharaj spent a considerable amount of money on the building and repairs of these forts. He built hill forts like Pratapgad, Pavangad and Rajgad. There was a *Killedar*, a *Sabnis* and a *Karkhanis* on every fort. The *Karkhanis* looked after the storage of foodgrains and the maintenance of war material on the fort.

Sea forts : Maharaj knew the importance of sea forts, too. One of the sea forts that he built was Sindhudurga at Malwan. It is an excellent sea fort. To give strength to the construction of the fort, five *khandis* of lead was poured into



Fort Padmadurg

its foundation. A sea fort called Padmadurga was built in front of Rajapuri in order to counter the Siddi power. About this fort, Maharaj has said in a letter that by constructing Padmadurga, he had set up ‘another Rajapuri to overshadow the Rajapuri of the Siddi.’

Navy : Enemies on the west coast of India, the Portuguese of Goa, the Siddi of Janjira and the British factors of Surat and Rajapur, created obstacles in the work of expanding the *Swaraj*. It was necessary to curb their activities and to protect the west coast. For this purpose, Maharaj raised a navy. He realised that the one who has a navy, controls the sea. Maharaj had great foresight.



Gurab



Galbat



Do this.

Obtain information about the warships in the Indian Navy and make a collection of the pictures of ships.

There were four hundred ships of various kinds in his navy. They included battle ships like the *gurab*, *galbat* and *pal*. Ships were built in the creek of Kalyan Bhivandi, Vijaydurga and Malvan. Maynak Bhandari and Daulatkhan were the chief naval Commanders.

Concern for the welfare of his subjects : Maharaj did not work only with the limited ambition of conquering enemy territories and establishing dominance like other things. His main

objective was to make his subjects independent. He was aware that if his subjects were to really get the joy of freedom, it was necessary to have a disciplined administration, take comprehensive care of people's welfare and protect the conquered territories.

Maharaj was not merely a ruler, he was a watchful administrator who cared for his people's welfare. This is clearly seen in his administration of the State.



Exercise

1. Can you tell?

- (1) A Council with eight departments –
- (2) Bahirj Naik was the Head of this department –
- (3) The sea fort built by Maharaj near Malvan –
- (4) He looked after the war materials on the fort –

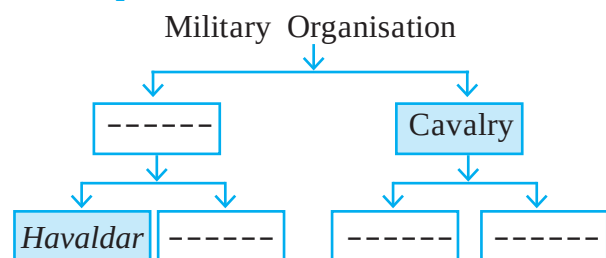
2. Write about it in your own words.

- (1) Shivaji Maharaj's policy regarding agriculture
- (2) Shivaji Maharaj – a ruler concerned about the welfare of his subjects.

3. Give reasons.

- (1) Shivaji Maharaj established the Council of Eight Ministers.
- (2) Shivaji Maharaj raised a navy.

4. Complete the chart.



Activities

- (1) Interview a person in your neighbourhood who has served in the armed forces.
- (2) Visit a market in your town. List the items prepared/grown in the neighbourhood and those that come from outside.



Fort Sindhudurg