

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, Wars & Conquests, Administration

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Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's path to establishing an independent Maratha empire was deeply intertwined with the political landscape of **17th-century India**. Born into the esteemed Bhonsle family, he witnessed the decline of the **Nizamshahi dynasty** and the encroaching influence of both the Bijapur Sultanate and the Mughal Empire.

Chhatrapati Shivaji showed great political skill throughout his reign by combining bold actions against powerful adversaries with strategic diplomacy. His legacy includes administrative reforms, a strong military system, and the revival of Hindu traditions, establishing him as a skilled ruler and a symbol of Maratha pride.

About Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj (1630-1680)

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj was born on **February 19, 1630**, to **Shahaji Bhosle** and **Jijabai** at **Shivneri Fort**, located in the Pune district of Maharashtra. Shivaji established his independent kingdom by breaking away from the **Sultanate of Bijapur** which marked the beginning of the Maratha Confederacy.

Chhatrapati Shivaji established a strong and efficient government after taking power, supported by a well-trained army and a well-organized administrative system.

- In **1674**, **Shivaji** was formally recognized as **Chhatrapati** of his kingdom at **Raigad Fort**.
- Chhatrapati Shivaji, known as the **Father of the Indian Navy**, was the first to recognize the significance of a naval force and built forts to defend the Konkan region of Maharashtra.
- He was referred to as the '**Mountain Rat**' and gained widespread recognition for his guerrilla warfare methods.
- Chhatrapati Shivaji, known for his **honorable treatment of women**, welcomed individuals from **diverse castes** and **religions** into his administration and armed forces, including both Muslims and Europeans.
- **Early Life:** Chhatrapati Shivaji's formative years were significantly shaped by his mother, **Jijabai**, and his guardian, **Dadoji Kondadeo**.
 - **Jijabai's influence cultivated in him a strong sense of religious and cultural identity.**
 - **Dadaji Kondadev**, entrusted with Shivaji's upbringing, oversaw his education in administration, military strategy, and the intricacies of revenue systems.
 - Chhatrapati Shivaji's paternal grandfather, **Maloji (1552-1597)**, served as a distinguished general in the **Ahmadnagar Sultanate** and received the honorific title of "**Raja**".
 - **Maloji** received **Deshmukh rights** for Pune, Supe, Chakan, and Indapur to support military expenses. Around 1590, he was awarded **Fort Shivneri** to serve as his family's residence.

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Wars and Conquests

When Chhatrapati Shivaji was born, the **Deccan region** was divided among **three Muslim kingdoms: Bijapur, Ahmednagar, and Golkonda**, as well as the **Mughal Empire**.

- He began his campaign against the Bijapur Sultanate in 1645 by capturing **Torna Fort** in **1646** at the age of 16.
- Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, after the **Battle of Purandar (1665)**, became a vassal of the Mughal Empire and briefly participated in military campaigns on their behalf.
- Shivaji became an expert in **guerrilla warfare**, known as "**Ganimi Kawa**" in Marathi. His tactics constantly surprised and defeated the armies sent against him.

Conflict with Bijapur Sultanate

Chhatrapati Shivaji's father, **Shahaji**, was a rebel against the Mughal Empire who sought opportunities for land grants in the Bijapur Sultanate.

- **Background and Context:** Chhatrapati Shivaji was born during a period of instability and frequent relocation due to his father's conflicts with the Mughals. In **1636**, the **Adil Shahi Sultanate of Bijapur** launched an invasion of the southern kingdoms, aided by **Shahaji**.
 - **Shahaji**, who had received **Poona as a grant**, placed **Dadoji Kondadeo** in charge of its administration.
 - He was deployed to **Bangalore** by Bijapur Sultanate Adil Shah while Chhatrapati Shivaji and his mother, Jijabai, settled in Poona.
 - After Kondadeo died in 1647, **Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj took control of Poona**. One of his first actions was to oppose the Bijapur government directly.

- **Conflict: Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj** began his rise to power by capturing **Torna Fort in 1646** amidst the turmoil in the Bijapur court.
 - He continued his expansion by capturing key forts and towns near Pune including **Purandar, Kondhana, and Chakan**.
 - Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj established his **headquarters at Rajgad**.
 - The Bijapur government, alarmed by his growing power, imprisoned his father, Shahaji **on July 25, 1648**.
 - Following Shahaji's release in **1649**, Chhatrapati Shivaji resumed his raids.
 - He killed **Chandra Rao More**, a fellow **Maratha vassal of Bijapur**, which facilitated further conquests.
 - To consolidate his power, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj brought several powerful families under his control through various strategies such as **marriage alliances**, direct dealings with village leaders, and force.
 - However, **after the death of Shahaji** around 1664-1665, the **Bijapur government**, dissatisfied with the losses to Shivaji's forces, sent **Afzal Khan** to arrest him in **1657**.
- **Battle of Pratapgarh (1659)**: The Battle of Pratapgarh occurred on **November 10, 1659**, at Pratapgarh Fort in Satara. The battle took place between **Chhatrapati Shivaji's Maratha army** and the **Bijapur forces** commanded by **General Afzal Khan**.
 - The Marathas secured a decisive victory, marking their first major military success against a prominent regional power.
- **Capture of Panhala Fort**: After overcoming Bijapuri forces in 1659, Chhatrapati Shivaji advanced to the Konkan coast and Kolhapur, capturing Panhala Fort.
 - In **1660, Siddi Jauhar, a general of Adilshah**, besieged Panhala with the support of the Mughals.
 - After months of siege, Chhatrapati Shivaji surrendered the Panhala fort on September 22, 1660.
 - He then moved to Vishalgad and **later recaptured Panhala in 1673**.
- **Battle of Pavan Khind (1660)**: The Battle of Pavan Khind occurred on **July 13, 1660**, with **Maratha leaders** facing Siddi Masud of the **Bijapur Sultanate**.
 - The battle resulted in the **defeat of the Marathas** but the Bijapur Sultanate did not accomplish its overall objectives.
 - **Ghod Khind** was later referred to as **Paavan Khind**.

Conflict With Mughal Empire

Chhatrapati Shivaji initially allied with the Mughals but later rebelled and attacked Mughal territory in 1657. In response, Aurangzeb sent **Nasiri Khan** against **Chhatrapati Shivaji**, but his efforts were hindered by the rainy season and conflict over the throne.

- **Battle of Chakan (1660)**: The Battle of Chakan in 1660 occurred between **Mughal forces under Shaista Khan** and **Maratha troops under Firangoji Narsala** at Chakan in Maharashtra which ultimately forced Maratha commander Firangoji to capitulate.
- **Battle of Surat (1664)**: Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj attacked Shaista Khan's camp in **1663**, injuring Khan and forcing him to flee.

- In retaliation, Chhatrapati Shivaji raided **Surat in 1664** and Basrur in 1665.
- **Treaty of Purandar (1665)**: Aurangzeb was infuriated by Chhatrapati Shivaji's assaults on Shaista Khan and Surat. To counter this, he dispatched **Jai Singh** along with an army to defeat Shivaji.
 - Shivaji, facing a formidable Mughal army, negotiated and signed the **Treaty of Purandar in 1665**.
 - As part of the treaty, Shivaji agreed to Mughal authority and sent his son **Sambhaji to serve as a mansabdar** in the Mughal court.
- **Shivaji's Detention in Agra and Escape**: Aurangzeb called Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and his son Sambhaji to his court in **Agra in 1666**. During the proceedings, Chhatrapati Shivaji was dishonored and subsequently placed under house arrest.
 - However, **on August 17, 1666**, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj escaped with his son Sambhaji.
- **Peace with Mughals**: Following Chhatrapati Shivaji's departure from Agra, tensions with the Mughals eased. **Jaswant Singh** served as a **mediator** for peace between Chhatrapati **Shivaji** and **Aurangzeb**.
 - **Aurangzeb** bestowed the title of **raja upon Chhatrapati Shivaji** and reinstated **Sambhaji as a Mughal mansabdar** between 1666 and 1668.
- **Battle of Sinhagad or Kondhana (1670)**: The Battle of Sinhagad was fought between Marathas led by **Tanaji** and **Mughals** near Pune in Maharashtra. Chhatrapati Shivaji took back **Sinhagad fort from the Mughals**.
- **Battle of Salher (1672)**: The **Battle of Salher** took place between **the Marathas and the Mughals** near Salher Fort in Nashik district in **1672**. The battle is considered important as it marked the **first major victory** for the Marathas against the Mughal Empire.

Conquests in Southern India

Beginning in **1674**, Marathas attacked Khandesh and captured **Bijapuri Ponda, Karwar, and Kolhapur**. The Maratha navy clashed with the **Siddis of Janjira** but couldn't drive them out.

- After getting better from an illness and capitalizing on a civil war in Bijapur, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj campaigned against **Athani in April 1676**.
- **Chhatrapati Shivaji** urged the people of Southern India to unite against external threats, resulting in a successful treaty with the **Qutubshah of Golkonda in 1677**.

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Administration

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj was crowned in **1674** at the **Raigad Fort** in present-day Maharashtra, India. During this event, he established **a council of eight ministers** to assist in managing his new state, known as the **Ashta Pradhan**.

- **Ashta Pradhan**: The Ashta Pradhan, **a council of eight ministers**, served as the cabinet for the Maratha Confederacy. Each minister had specific responsibilities, including administration, finance, military, foreign affairs, justice, and religion.
 - The titles of the ministers were derived from the **Sanskrit language**.
 - While the **Panditrao and Nyayadhis** focused on religious and legal matters, the other ministers also had military roles.

- Their civil responsibilities were frequently handled by deputies.

Ashta Pradhan is noted for introducing **effective governance** in the Maratha region and for its role in the Marathas' military efforts against the Mughal Empire.

- **Advocacy of Marathi and Sanskrit:** Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj promoted Marathi as a formal language and appointed an official to compile a glossary to replace Persian and Arabic words with their Sanskrit equivalents.
 - Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj used **Sanskrit for his official seal**. Seal was used to validate documents.
- **Religious Policies:** Chhatrapati Shivaji promoted religious harmony and formed alliances with Muslim states.
 - Chhatrapati Shivaji's army included Muslim leaders, like **Darya Sarang**, a prominent commander.
 - Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj lived during the same time as **Samarth Ramdas**, a Brahmin teacher.

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Warfare Strategy

Aurangzeb and his generals referred to Chhatrapati Shivaji as a "**Mountain Rat**" because of his **guerrilla methods** of ambushing enemy forces and then retreating to his mountain forts. He took advantage of the local landscape and maintained a **small but effective army**, mainly made up of **peasants** from the **Maratha** and **Kunbi castes**.

- **Military:** Shivaji's military approach centered on employing his ground and naval forces, along with a network of forts throughout the region.
 - The Maval infantry formed the backbone of his ground forces and was accompanied by Maratha cavalry.
 - He had basic artillery and depended on European providers.
- **Hill Forts:** Hill forts were essential to Shivaji's strategy. He seized and constructed numerous forts, including Adilshahi forts at **Murambdev** (Rajgad), **Torna**, **Kondhana** (Sinhadgad), and **Purandar**.
 - Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj assigned three officers to oversee their security.
 - Chhatrapati Shivaji controlled approximately **240 to 280** forts by the time of his death.
- **Navy:** Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj recognized the need for **naval power** to control the **Konkan coast** and began building his navy by capturing and repairing coastal forts.
 - He recruited **lower-caste Hindus** skilled in naval operations, referred to as the "**Malabar pirates**," along with Muslim mercenaries.
 - He built his **first marine fort** at **Sindhudurg**, which became the **headquarters** of the Maratha navy.

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's Successors

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj had two sons, **Sambhaji** and **Rajaram**, who were half-brothers from different mothers. After **Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj died in 1681**, **Sambhaji inherited the throne** and continued pursuing his father's expansionist ambitions.

- **Sambhaji** was later captured and executed by the Mughals.

- **Rajaram** then took the throne but was forced to flee to Ginjee Fort by the Mughals. He later died at Satara.
- Rajaram's young son, **Shivaji II (Ramaraja)**, succeeded him with his mother, **Tara Bai**, as regent.
- The next ruler, **Shahu**, son of Sambaji saw the rise of the Peshwas to power.
- In 1713, Shahu designated **Balaji Vishwanath** as the **Peshwa**.

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