



SALTORA NETAJI CENTENARY COLLEGE
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

SEMESTER –IV

COURSE CODE: AHHST 402 C-9

COURSE TITLE: HISTORY OF MEDIEVAL INDIA
(C.1526 AD – C.1757AD)

TOPIC: SHIVAJI'S CIVIL ADMINISTRATION

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Central Government

Shivaji was not merely a successful conqueror but also a great organiser and administrator. His government though autocratic was efficient as well enlightened. It was purely Hindu in spirit. The king was the supreme head of the State and all authority was concentrated in his hands. He was assisted by a council of eight ministers known as the astha pradhan. The chief minister or Mukhya Pradhan was called the Peshwa. The other ministers held department charges such as finance, correspondence, foreign affairs, the army and so forth. All the ministers, except the Nyayadhisha or the Chief Justice and Pandit Rao or the Almoner, usually held military commands besides their civil duties.

Central Government

During their absence on military duty, their civil functions were performed by their deputies. The council of ministers could not initiate policy, its function being purely advisory. To prevent the growth of independent jurisdictions dangerous to the authority of the king, Shivaji did not allow the high offices to become hereditary. He took away the hereditary jurisdiction of the Deshmukhs in the districts and replaced them by State officials appointed by himself and holding office during good behaviour. He thus de-feudalized his administration and thereby checked the prevailing tendency to disintegration.

Provincial government

Shivaji divided the territory directly under his rule, the Swaraj territory as it was called, into three provinces, each under a viceroy. These viceroys held office at the king's pleasure. The provinces were organized on the model of the central government, each viceroy being assisted by a staff of eight chief ministers. For fiscal purposes as also administrative convenience, he divided his kingdom into a number of prants or provinces each of which was subdivided into parganas and tarafs. The lowest unit was the village and each village had its headman or Patel.

Shivaji's Revenue System

Shivaji established an excellent revenue system based upon the principles laid down by Todar Mall and Malik Ambar. The assessment was made after a careful survey and classification of the lands according to their quality and yield. The share of the State was fixed at two-fifths of the gross produce. Besides the land revenue, he had also sources of income of which the most important were the chauth and sardeshmuki. These were in the nature of blackmail exacted by Shivaji from regions outside his kingdom, which sought exemption from the plundering raids of the Marathas. The chauth amounted to one-fourth of the standard revenue assessment of the place, while the sardeshmukhi was an additional levy of ten per cent, which Shivaji demanded because he claimed to be the hereditary Sardeshmukh (chief headman) of the Maratha country.

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THANK YOU