
THE JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION OF SHIVAJI

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Abstract—

Chhatrapati Shivaji was the real founder of Maratha state. He was not only worrier but one of the good administrator. He was the head of all Departments including judiciary in swarajaya. we was the highest judicial authority we can discuss here bref history of judiciary institutions under shivaji.

In Maharashtra, from ancient times the system of trial by majlis was prevalent in villages and subdivisions of the provinces. The majlis was composed of the people (Gota) and government officers. During the sultanate period, the qazi acted as the agent between gota and the government in judicial matters. The majlises were the bodies where cases of a judicial nature were discussed and awards were given.

Keywords— Judicial Administration , history of judiciary , court of justice.

Introduction

These awards were known as mahzaras. The qazis generally gave decisions in accordance with the awards of the majlises. The sultan was the highest judicial authority in the state. He was assisted by a court of justice, selected from among the leading officers of the state. Next to him was the chief justice known as the sadra, under bahamanis, or chief qazi under the rulers of ahmadnagar And bijapur. At the lower level were the provincial and district authorities who also included the qazis, generally the awards of the Gotsabha or the majlis in cases under dispute were implemented by these authorities who or whose representatives attended the sittings of the majlises.

Shivaji during the early part of his life, being a jagirdar of the Bijapur government administered the country under his jurisdiction through the machinery. He perhaps had made some alterations in it during the process of his assumption of sovereignty. After his coronation in 1674 the administrative and judicial arrangements which he made were as follows:-

Rajmandal or the king and his court the concept of Raj mandal seems to have been born of Rakhtakhana of the presshivaji period. Shivaji as member of the rakhtakhana of the Bijapur government knew its composition and after coronation seems to have copied it with such alterations as suited his policy of establishing an independent Maratha Raj. He raised his comrades who previously sat with him in the Rakhtakhana to the ministership and membership of the Rajmandal.

The chief constituent parts of the Rajmandal were the king and his eight ministers. Later on during the reign of Rajaram the office of the pratinidhi or viceroy was added to it. It seems that the private secretaries (Darakdars) of the king also acted as the secretaries for the state or the Rajmandal and even sat in a majlis held to decide important suits, with the other members of the Rajmandal. Besides these there was a large staff of subordinate officers ('Mutaliqs' and dimmat Loka) and servants (sevak) attached to each department in addition, learned persons known as

‘sabhasads’ were maintained. Krishnaji Anant, the well Known biographer of Shivaji was the sabhasad of Rajaram’s Rajmandal.

All the high officers or the state, the ministers and other who thus formed the Rajmandal, were chosen by the king himself and they held their offices during his pleasure. Their salaries were fixed in money and payment through assignments of lands was strictly forbidden during the reigns of Shivaji and his son Sambhaji.

Rajmandal worked in a dual capacity as a council of administrators and a court of law for the king. In the former capacity it gave advice to the king, served as a check to his supreme powers and managed the administration of the kingdom. Its members, chiefly the ministers and the private secretaries of the Raja, were required to countersign the orders issued by the state. As a court of law it was styled as the Rajmudra or Rajsabha and formed a permanent body of the Huzur Hazir Majlis (Judicial assembly) summoned to decide the suits of high importance. Some of its (Rajmandal) members were also responsible for the local administration both fiscal and judicial of the districts entrusted to them.

This Rajmandal may be compared with the ‘concilium Regis’ and the ‘Curia Regis’ of the period of third Henry of England. But like the latter it was not a feudal body of the tenants of chief.

The Divisions of Ministers or Sarsubhas. Shivaji’s dominion was divided into two units, the one was a compact division and other was formed of scattered districts. The former was divided, for the purpose of administration, into three parts and each was placed under administration, into three parts and each was placed under the supervision of the Peshwa, the sachiv and the Mantri respectively. The Scattered districts in the south were grouped into separate subhas and were entrusted to Subhedars appointed from time to time.

The prant Rajmandal. The ministers were assisted by Sarsubhedars in the provincial administration. The Sarsubha was entrusted with a territory not more extensive than a modern district or two. His office seems to have known as the Prant Rajmandal. He was assisted in his work by a Karkun and orders were issued generally by them jointly as “sarsubha Mahalanihaye va Karkun”

In the absence of evidence it is not known whether there was a Majlis (court) attached to the division of Sarsubha.

The Subha (district). The Sarsubhas were further divided into Subhas and it was formed of the territory yielding income of about a lac or so. Thus paragana and Mamlas of the Sultanate period were transformed into Subhas under the Swaraj.

The DiwanSubha. The office of the Subha was known as the DiwaniSubha. The Subhedar was the chief officer and he carried the local administration with the help of the Mujumdar or Karkun, and the orders were issued in the name of both the Subhedar or deshadhikari and the Karkun or Deshalekhak. It is not known whether a staff of Darakdars similar to those of the Peshwa period was attached to the office of the Subha.

The gota of a Subha. The same as that of the paragana Gota under the Sultans of the Deccan.

The Subha-Majlis. It continued the work of the Paragana Majlis without any change. The term ‘Subha’ does not seem to have become so much popular during the period under review as the paragana.

The Tarf, Karyat or Sammat (taluka). The diwan Thana, the Gota of the Tarf and the Thana-Majlis, carried the local administration of the Tarf, as under the sultans of the Deccan.

All the officers of the local government, mentioned above were always subject to transfer from one place to another. There was also a descending gradation from the minister down to the Havaladar of a Tarf or Mahal. Their payment was fixed in money and the system of granting Mokasa of the Sultanate period was no longer continued. These three things are the marked features of the local government introduced by Shivaji and they led to the consolidation of the kingdom, newly founded.

The village. It was the last administrative unit. the Mokadam and the village Gota were free to manage village administration as before.

This is, in brief, the outline of the administrative machinery founded by Shivaji. To some extent its outward form remained unchanged upto the end of the Maratha Raj. The principles underlying the system were never followed by his successors except Sambhaji.

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