

# Innovative techniques and transformational leadership qualities of Shivaji Maharaj for Swaraj and Surajya

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**Abstract:** Shivaji Maharaj was the first Chhatrapati and the most popular Maratha Empire on the Deccan Plateau in the 17th century and is the role model for the modern India to acquire his leadership qualities and management skills. Shivaji Maharaj at a young age had conflict with Deccan Sultanates and faced many critical situations in his career but won over all of them easily due to his excellent management techniques on the battle ground, religious policies, politics and administration. These management skills can be applicable to the people of modern India. He had the vision of surajya, that is the welfare of all people. He put more efforts on irrigation projects and strengthened his army and naval forces for subhiksha and peace to all his people which made him Pan-Indian fame. Many people declared him as an incarnation of Lord Shiva.

**Keywords:** Chatrapati Shivaji, Maratha Empire, Shahaji, Hindavi Swaraj, Surajya.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

When an empire of Indian culture was undergoing destruction by the cruel invaders, in order to sustain *dharma* and civilization, Shivaji took birth on this mother India as a *Yugavata*. Shivaji was born on 19th February 1630, at Kusr in Shivneri fort near the city of Junnar in Pune district of Maharashtra. His father was Shahaji Bhonsle who served the Deccan Sultanates and his mother was Jijabai. Jijabai gave birth to six children, of which the first four children did not survive and the other two were Sambaji and Shivaji, respectively. She was very intelligent and knew more about the *raja neeti*, *yuddha neeti* and other war skills. Most of his childhood was spent with his mother only and he learnt many lessons from *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata* and other historical events from his mother. As a scholar, Shivaji used to get up early in the morning and after bath, he was doing *pooja*, *dhyana* and meditation on lord Shiva. He learnt many *vidyas*, *shastras* and fighting skills to become a ruler to serve the country. During that period, invaders were dominated in Pune and all temples and hindu *mata-mandirs* were destructed by them. When Shivaji was 10 years old, he visited Bangalore along with his mother which was the capital city of Shahaji. Bangalore was under the control of Vijaya nagara kingdom. He spent two years in Bangalore and had a chance to visit *Badhshah* (Adilshah) of Bijapur along with his father Shahaji. When Shahaji instructed him to bow down and pay respect to *Badhshah*, he refused to do that. His mind was determined enough to fight against *Badhshah* to give independence to his people. This was the *Naandi* (a new beginning) to get *Swarajya* to his people. While returning back from Bijapur, he saw a butcher trying to cut down the head of a cow. Shivaji immediately cut off his hand with a sword. This was the lesson learnt from his mother to pay respect and to protect cows and Brahmins[1-3]. Shivaji didn't enjoy the stay in Bijapur as his blood was boiling to give complete freedom to the people. At the young age of 13, Shivaji made his own *Raja Mudra* in Sanskrit. He had the craze for independence and often used to say to the people that "freedom is a boon, which everyone has the right to receive" and "one small step taken to reach a small milestone, later helps you achieve the bigger goal" and he laid down the seeds of *swarajya* in people's mind [4].

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Transformational leadership qualities of Shivaji

Transformational leadership is the leadership come up to make changes in individuals and social systems. This also means that, bringing positive change and development in the followers or people and later changing followers in to leaders. A leader identifies the necessary change required in the followers and creates a vision to achieve that goal. Shivaji Maharaj was an excellent transformational leader who had a vision to identify the servitude of people to the foreign rulers and took the oath at the age of 15 to establish independent *swarajya* with the support of weak, illiterates, unemployed and farmers without any support or influence from his father due to his exceptional management skills. He was an orator, an innovator, an able commander, an inspirational leader, a motivator, a good administrator and a warrior who successfully used effective tactics to

capture forts under his control and build new forts near jungles for the safety and security of his soldiers and people and to strategic expansion of his territories and forts. He had a vision to establish naval force in order to protect his people living near coastal areas. He believed in moral values and justice. He used to say that “The whole world respects those who bend before *dharma*, truth, excellence and GOD”. He set up an administrative and advisory council called ‘Ashta Pradhan’ (a council of eight members) for successful military attacks on the Mughal Empire and good administrative system for the welfare of the people.

### III. INNOVATIVE SKILLS AND TACTICS

#### 3.1. Un-conquering management skillsof Shivaji

Shivaji faced many critical situations due to his rise in Maratha kingdom. But he safely conquered them due to his exceptional management techniques. Some of the examples are as follows:

- 1) Battle with Afzalkhan: Adilshah sent Afzal Khan with an army of 75,000 to Pratapgad to kill Shivaji in 1659. Shivaji pretended that, he has afraid of Afzal Khan and asked Afzal Khan to have a meeting at *Jawali*. During that meeting, Shivaji wore an iron body coat and iron nails and easily defeated Afzal Khan and his body guards. This shows Shivaji’s master mind and pre-plan.
- 2) Defeat of Kaltalf Khan in the Battle of Umberkhind: Shivaji faught and defeated Kaltalf Khan, who was a sardar of Shahista Khan in the Battle of Umberkhind.
- 3) Attack on Shahista Khan: Shivaji with his small team of Marathas of 300 soldiers attacked Shahista Khan who was a maternal uncle of Aurangzeb on 5th April 1663 at Lal Mahal in Pune at night. The Lal Mahal was surrounded by a strong security of 1,00,000 soldiers. Shahista Khan managed to escape but after losing three fingers. This shows Shivaji’s bravery.
- 4) Escape from Agra: On 18th August 1666, Shivaji Maharaj and his son Sambhaji Maharaj escaped from a fatal trap laid by the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb who invited Chhatrapati Shivaji to Agra on the occasion of his 50th birth anniversary. Shivaji was dishonored by Aurangzeb and arrested him and his son. Shivaji made an excellent plan to escape from Agra in one of the most miraculous escape in the Indian history. Shivaji pretended to be ill and started sending out huge sweet baskets to sadhus for his quick recovery and escaped by hiding in the basket. This shows his cleverness under bad situations.

#### 3.2. Shivaji’s tactics to turn *Swarajya* into *Surajya*

Shivaji had 370 forts in India and many of the forts were acquired and some forts were built from scratch and they were the safe places for Marathas from the enemies like Mughals, Portugals, Britishs etc. Then he started developing army and naval forces with innovative tactics in his kingdom to protect and bolster his people. He was the first Asian king who established naval force in defense. He also introduced new military tactics which used geography, speed and focused pin point attacks to defeat enemies [5]. He was the founder of *Hindavi Swaraj*, means self rule of Hindu people. He started working on improving the civilization of people. He had constructed all-weather lakes and tanks on the forts for water management system. It is a lesson for today as the scarcity of water will be faced by the people in near future. He also gave importance for agricultural development and irrigation of lands and development of industries for the economic needs of the people. Hence he made *surajya* from *swarajya* for all his people. His coronation was done on 6th June 1674 at Raigad fort and held the golden umbrella over Shivaji’s head. He was conferred the title “Kshatriya Kulavantas Chhatrapati Raje Shivaji”. From the source of *Wikipedia*, after the death of Shivaji, *Hindavi swaraj* become widespread use as “*Maratha Swaraj*”.

### IV. CONCLUSION

Shivaji’s life history has become the message to younger generation to learn management skills, transformational leadership skills and as a role model to achieve success and to uphold *dharma* and *Hindu* culture. His political and administrative skills were legendary and his vision and implementation of policies to make *swarajya* were extraordinary. Shivaji had vision of water harvesting and constructed many lakes and tanks on the forts. Today people have shown negligence to look into their own geography and history. If we adopt the policies of our great Indians leaders like Shivaji, we can safe guard ourselves and people from the ill effects of global warming and scarcity of water in coming days.

#### Conflict of interest

There is no conflict to disclose.

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