

ADMINISTRATION OF PUDUKKOTTAI PRINCELY STATE FROM 1801-1932

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Abstract

The political relations between the British and the Thondaiman was characterized by the absence of any treaty defining their relations. With the elimination of the hostile native powers, the British treated Pudukkottai as a subordinate non-tributary state. A Kotwal or police officer was permanently stationed at Pudukkottai to assist the Rajah. Blackburne, the resident at Thangavur was responsible for the creation of the civil court. Naya Sabha with four judges, and a criminal court Danda Sabha with three judges. The Mudra Sabha was a lower civil court which was subordinate to the Naya Sabha. He was instrumental in the introduction of Marathi as the language of administration. He issued orders that the transaction of government affairs should only be in the public Katcheri and that remittances of public money should be only in government treasuries.

KeyWord: Raja Regunatha Thondaiman, Pudukkottai , Administration.

Introduction

Raja Regunatha Thondaiman upheld that the right to try British Subjects on criminal offences should be exercised by state courts. In 1868, Lee Moris the Political agent sanctioned revision of pay scales of the government servants. He was responsible for the appointment of officers with the new designation. Joint Magistrate. Seshia Sastri the renowned administrator reformed the Judiciary, the revenue department and the general bureaucracy between 1880 and 1894 Seshiah Sastri reorganized the whole set up by eradicating corruption and filled up the treasury with revenue.

During the Silver Jubilee of the Raja Martanda Bairava Thondaiman in 1913, an elected representative was associated in the legislative advisory council. Besides, the privilege of the electing two members to the Pudukkottai Municipality and the grant of Rupees Ten Thousand to complete the Town Hall were extended to the people. On 22.09.1921 some members of the representative assembly visited karaikudi and presented a welcome address to Mahatma Gandhi . Immediately the Darbar cancelled their membership in the municipality and assembly.

In 1924, the Darbar issued an order for the creation of legislative assembly with limited franchise and it was inaugurated in September 29. The assembly was neither representative nor responsive, because the franchise was limited. It had a right to be consulted and a right to warn. The cut motions introduced were often withdrawn. The

Heads of Departments answered the various questions raised by the members. Generally the members competed with one other in exhibiting their loyalty to the state.

The Viceregal visit to the state provided an opportunity to release the prisoners who had participated in the riots. In the second Round Table Conference (1931-1932) Raghaviah pleaded on behalf of the state, to grant co-equal powers between the princely state and the presidencies. Muthuswamy Vallatharasu complained about the unchanging monotonous administration. He wanted substantial changes in the constitution and a change of mind of the ruling power influencing it. The Darbar maintained that the Government of India should not be disturbed on these issues at a time when it was pre-occupied with more important matters relating to war. On budgets presented in the legislative council Muthuswamy Vallatharasu complained that they simply recalled the class room experience of arithmetic and History.

Kailasa Ambalakarar, a member of the legislative council, stated that it was derogatory to the sovereignty of the state, to put the state police under the control of the British Indian Police officers. If this was position of the state, its independence was force. The Darbar, that was orthodox in social reforms, could not be liberal in granting constitutional reforms. While one member of the legislative council maintained that the time was not ripe for democracy, another member said that the Rajah should not be given absolute powers. On the question of responsible government, the Darbar always quoted the views of Agama Sastri to support their traditional stand. It was also maintained, that in the case of a tie in the council the ruler or Presiding Officer had a casting vote. Sir Alexander Tottenham, the author of the District Office manual, evinced keen interest in the periodical review of administration. He effected notable improvements in the municipal town and conducted ruler camps in the villages. Thus the state was run by Brahmin bureaucrats and British administrators like Seshiah Sastri Holds worth and Tottenham.

The relations of the British with the Thondaimans were mutual but unequal. Political relations officially began since 1801. No treaty was formally drawn between the East India Company and the Thondaiman rulers. The state acknowledged the sovereignty of the British Government. As a result, the loyal Thondaimans occupied a subordinate position and became the dependent chiefs of the British.

In actual working, the state exhibited certain features distinctly its own. The name of the state, 'Dharma Samasthanam' and Agama Sastri holding the post of the court Purohit indicate that the state followed Hindu traditions. But the rulers were at the mercy of the Britishers. The replacement of the personal rule of the Thondaiman will become an un-rewarded act to the Britishers. The transfer of authority will not clarify fully the relationship between the Thondaimans and the British⁶⁷. The withdrawal and conferment of titles indicate the authority of the British. This is what Dirks calls as 'Hollow Crown'.

The state was strategically located as a frontier guard of the Kallar-maravar region. Annexation of the state by the British will be a additional liability to them by way of administrative expenditure. The clans inhabited could not only be easily managed but also made us of to enhance power by rendering military help to a loyal ruler. By allowing the state to exist, the British commanded its resources without incurring any additional expenditure on maintenance. It was not economically viable to the

Britishers to bring the state under its direct rule. So due to economic and political reasons, the British allowed the state to continue as a separate entity.

In the legislative council, the voice of the people was raised for the grant of a responsible government to the state, as in the tiny state Aundh. The impact of All India politics and national resurgence was partially reflected in the discussion during legislative proceedings. Members were not satisfied with the often quoted phrase, 'Dharma Samasthanam', They compared the economic conditions in the British Presidency with that of Pudukkottai expecting reforms.

The state of Pudukkottai under the Thondaimans withstood the test of time. The formation and stability of the state was closely connected with the development of agriculture. Land settlements in the adjoining presidency were partially applied here. Land grants and land revenue gradually linked various segments of the peasant society. Yet, in the Legislative Council, officials and non-officials clamoured that mamul custom on agriculture should not be violated at any cost.

Conclusion

The Political Geography of India before independence would reveal the fact that only those states who were not acting against the interests of the paramount power withstood the test of time. By three Anglo – Karnatak wars, four Anglo – Mysore wars, three Anglo-Maratha wars, two Anglo Sikh wars, two Anglo – Napalese wars the English consolidated their power in India. In all their Campaign in the south the Tondaiman gave their helping hand to the British. In the eighteenth Century the help of the Tondaiman to the British and the Nawab of Arcot was timely in the consolidation of the rule of the East India company. Appeal of Mohamed Ali to Vijaya Raghunatha Tondaiman was the first occasion on which the Tondaiman came into contact with the East India Company, 1752, their assistance to the English continued throughout the Karnatic Wars the Anglo Mysore Wars. Apart from military campaigns the acquisition of Dewani Rights collection of revenue by the company slowly but steadily increased the authority of the East India Company. Confrontation of the Minor chiefs like the Kattabomman over the mode of collection of revenue, though intensive was short-lived. The role of the tondaiman in handing over Kattabomman has been a subject of much criticism. Political compulsions forced the Tondaiman to do so.

Reference

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6. Nicholas B. Dirks, Op.cit., pp.385-386.
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8. The Thondaiman rulers belonged to the Kallar clan.
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