



Administration of police and jail in the princely State of Boudh (1803-1947 A.D)

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Abstract

The Garjat States of Orissa also known as Princely States or Tributary States or Feudatory States. Boudh was one of the oldest Princely States of Odisha. Police duties were performed by the Paiks or cultivators holding on tenure of military service. Some British officers suggested that, police stations or thanas headed by Darogas should be established. The principal police stations were at Boudhgarh, the headquarters of the state; Ghantaparha on the Patna-Sonpur border and Manamunda on the bank of river Tel. The *chowkidars* constituted the village police force and were appointed for watch and ward duties in the villages. The prison organization at Boudh was constituted during the second half of the 19th century. Extramurally they were employed on the jail and ex-State gardens, in improving *basti* sties, in filling up insanitary pits and ditches. The Rajas disposed of criminal cases of minor importance, but sent up for trial before the Superintendent, the more heinous. The State Boudh had its own civil and criminal courts including District court and High court under the direct control of Ruling Chief. In all the Sanads the British Government categorically emphasized and directed the Chiefs to administer justice “fairly and impartially” to all concerned respecting the legitimate rights of the people.

Keywords: Garajata Boudh, administration, police, jail, justice

Introduction

Orissa was geographically divided into two parts i.e – Moghalbandi and the Garjats. Moghalbandi, comprising the regulated districts of Cuttack, Puri, Balasore, Koraput and Ganjam were directly ruled by the British and the Garajat States were ruled indirectly by the British through the princes of respective states. The British rules and regulations were not applicable to these States. These states were ruled by the princes according to their sweet will and pleasure.

The Garjat States of Orissa also known as Princely States or Tributary States or Feudatory States. The Feudatory States of Odisha were twenty-six in number. twenty-six States were divided into three groups on the basis of their annual revenue size and population. Boudh was one of the oldest Princely States of Odisha. Boudh was included in the group of ‘A’ class states.

The Tributary States or the Garjats have played a significant role in the administrative History of Odisha. The State of Boudh lies between 20° 13’ and 20° 53’ N., and 83° 35’ and 84° 48’ E., with an area of 1264 square miles. It is bounded on the north by the river Mahanadi, separating it from the Sonepur and Athmallik States; on the east by the Dasappa State; on the south by the Khondamals; and on the west by the Patna and Sonepur States, from which it is separated by the river Tel. A humble attempt has been made in this paper to present the administration of Police and Jail Boudh 1803-1947.

Generally, till the end of the 19th century Rajas of Boudh did not maintain regular police stations. Police duties were performed by the Paiks or cultivators holding on tenure of military service^[1]. Due to the absence of efficient and well-organized police system, crime was on the increase. The heinous crimes like dacoits and murder were frequent. Even the Rajas were indulged in the crimes of very serious nature.^[2] Obviously some British officers felt the necessity of adopting measures to improve the police administration of

the states of Orissa. So, they suggested that, police stations or thanas headed by Darogas should be established.

In 1814, John Richardson, the settlement commissioner of Orissa expressed strong views regarding the appointment of police Darogas^[3]. He stated that although chiefs were guilty of great excesses, the extension of police laws the Tributary Mahals would be “very inexpedient and productive of, not only much expense but of great evil for many reasons”.

Administration of Police

Police administration on sound lines did not exist in the princely state of Boudh before the coming of the British. Police functions in those days were discharged by irregular troops. A regular police force in this state was created towards the latter part of the 19th century^[4]. According to Cobden-Ramsay, towards the beginning of this century the police force of this state consisted of 2 sub-Inspectors one of whom has been trained at the Bhaglpur police Training School, 10 Head constables and 59 constables. The principal police stations were at Boudhgarh, the headquarters of the state; Ghantaparha on the Patna-Sonpur border and Manamunda on the bank of river Tel. The Chowkidars were working as village police^[5].

Prior to 1904, the administration of police in the subdivisions of Angul and Khondmals constituting then district of Angul was under the superintendent of the Tributary Mahals, but was transferred in the same year to the inspector General of police. The latter dealt with all matters affecting the internal discipline of the force and was its executive head, but the superintendent of the Tributary Mahals retained full powers to order the whole or any part of the police to proceed to any place where they required and was responsible to Government alone for any orders of this nature which he might issue. For administrative purposes the subdivision of Khondmal was constituted a Thana, and there were out-posts at Khajuriparha, Kunbarkhol and Saringia^[6].

Village Police

The *chowkidars* constituted the village police force and were appointed for watch and ward duties in the villages. In Baliguda subdivision, which was formerly included in the district of Ganjam, the Muthaheads with the assistance of their servants helped in running the village administration. Among other duties, the Muthaheads also looked to the maintenance of peace, recording of vital statistics, reporting of offences to the police*, etc. The Chowkidars were assisting the policemen. Besides they used to go to the police station every week to submit the statistics of births and deaths in the villages. The Chwokidars of Boudh were enjoying Jagir lands while those of Khondmals were paid monthly emoluments of Rs. 15 each. The Choekidari system of Boudh subdivision was abolished with effect from the 1st July, 1965 and that of Khondmal subdivision with effect from the 1st December, 1965. The Muthahead system was abolished with effect from 1st January, 1971. A number of 782 Chowkidars were on the roll when the Chowkidari system was abolished [7].

Jail Administration

The prison organization at Boudh was constituted during the second half of the 19th century. There is a good masonry jail with accommodation for sixty prisoners. In 1907-08 the average daily population in the jail was 29. The state spent Rs. 8,576 on public works in 1907-08.

During British period rule, the prisoners were employed both in out-door and in-door works. Extramurally they were employed on the jail and ex-State gardens, in improving *basti* sties, in filling up insanitary pits and ditches. The intramural work consisted of oil-pressing, paddy husking and manufacture of durris, bed sheets and prisoners' clothing. Towards 1929-30 it was noticed that the average daily population in the jail remained 22.77 [8].

Administration of Justice

The Rajas disposed of criminal cases of minor importance, but sent up for trial before the Superintendent, the more heinous. The Superintendent also took up all offences committed by the subjects of the Raja in the territory of another and all boundary and other feuds between the States. Administration of justice, civil and criminal by the Rajas was not guided by any definite principle or law although the Penal Code was made applicable to the states by the order passed by the Government of India in 1860 [9]. The State Boudh had its own civil and criminal courts including District court and High court under the direct control of Ruling Chief. The relationship between the Boudh state and the British Government were regulated by the sanad of 1894 which was revised in 1908 and the Chief exercised the power of a magistrate of the first class. The chief was assisted by a Dewan. There were the courts of the superintendent and the Assistant Superintendent for the administration of justice in the Boudh [10]. the total number of civil courts for disposal in the year 1907-08 was 342.

In all the Sanads the British Government categorically emphasized and directed the Chiefs to administer justice "fairly and impartially" to all concerned respecting the legitimate rights of the people. But in practice all those guidelines were brushed aside and the basis of governance was the whims of the Rajas. The Judges were dependent on the whims of the Rajas for the tenure of their service; they could be transferred to any department, degraded and

dismissed according to the caprice of the Ruler concerned. Very few of the Judges and Magistrates were really qualified for the work entrusted to them. There was no Rule of Law. Laws were not generally published or made public [11].

Conclusion

The judicial administration in Boudh was far from satisfactory. It was defective in several ways. Various reasons led to the denial of justice to the people. Firstly, there prevailed personal rule in the State. The cases were generally decided according to the sweet will of the ruler and not according to laws. Secondly, the various codes of laws were not enforced in this State. Thirdly, a lot of discrimination was practiced in the judicial sphere. For the same crime, some were punished lightly and some severely. Fourthly, there prevailed wide spread corruption in the ranks of police and the rest of administrative machinery [12]. Hence, the people in general were not satisfied with the administration of justice. There was growing discontentment among a large section of the population. So, they rose into revolt against the Princely administration in the form of Prajamandala Movement in the hope of improving their lot. The greatest advantage of the judicial system of the princely Boudh was that, it was speedy and inexpensive.

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