

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF BRITISH RULE IN MADRAS

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The advent of the English in Madras in 1640 led to the establishment of settlements and acquisition of territories. The charter of 1683 gave full power to the company to declare war or make peace with any of the heathen nations of Asia, Africa and America within the charter limits to the raise, arm, train and muster such military forces as seemed requisite and necessary and to execute material law for the defence of their forts, palaces and plantations against foreign invasion or domestic insurrection or rebellionⁱ. It was necessary to keep law and order in Madras, if attempts were made to break peace by word or deed. This charter reflected the political power granted to the company. In the same year the king of Golconda granted a firman to the Governor of Madras, confirming all the privileges with additional powersⁱⁱ.

On 13 April 1686 James II, the king of England empowered the Company to extend constitutional government in its Indian territories by the establishment of municipal constitution for Madras. The grant was noteworthy in two respects. It made the development of territorial character of the Company's rule in Madras and it also signaled the readiness of the Crown to accord more powers to the Companyⁱⁱⁱ. The charter of 1686 confirmed all former grants given to the Company with additional powers of coinage and exercising the Law Material. Hence the English declared that they had to advance the English interest and make the Company's formidable martial government in Madras^{iv}. The mutinous soldiers who refused to go to the Bay and ring leaders who plotted mutiny, treasons and rebellions were sent to the gallows^v. It was done in a bid to establish an orderly government at Fort St. George and to make the people sensible of their being subject to the laws and punishments of Great Britain^{vi}.

In 1686 the Company resolved to maintain the honour of the English nation and their king. If the king of Golconda claimed any control over the city of Madras he was told in plain terms that the English had him as a good friend, ally, confederate sovereign and Lord Paramount of all the countries, excepting the small territory of

Madras. The English maintained and defended in against all and governed it by their own laws without any appeal to any prince except their Sovereign Lord, the King of England. They paid their agreed tribute^{vii} of pagodas 1200 per annum to the king of Golconda. If he broke the terms, the Directors advised the Governor of Fort St. George to defend yourselves by Arms and from that time renounce paying him any more tribute. “It was the apportune time for the English to assert their own king’s right and prerogative to the important place”, when the king of Golconda was oppressed by the Mugals on one side and the Dutch on the other. The English asserted that they paid “1200 pagodas rent for Madras not capitulated at our first settlement”^{viii}.

In 1686 the Dutch had commenced a war against the ruled of Golconda, who was also under the oppression by the Mughal forces and that was the suitable time for the English to fall into a strict confederacy with him and to give him private assistance for his money and to think of whatever was necessary to get by a firman from him. In fact situation was wisely utilised for the best advantage of the English. They began to resist the activities of the Dutch and resolved to resist force with force and to settle matters by arms^{ix}.

The English at Fort St. George were happy to see that the natives were obedient to the English laws. The Nawab of Golconda had no naval strength to attack the English on sea. The creation of Municipal Corporation was motivated by the desire to secure taxes. But strike and non-co-operation movement greeted the imposition of a house tax in 1686. Hence Josiah Child conceived the idea that a mayoralty and municipality for Madras would meet the case and that the people would submit to taxation more readily if it came from themselves instead from the company. He hoped that the pageantry of power would cajole the natives into parting with the money for the public good^x. In 1687 quit rent was collected for every house in Madras^{xi}. In the same year Madras witnessed the preparation of census for the first time. The company resolved to assume independent jurisdiction within their own settlements and to act as self-governing body within their own limits.

In 1687 the English proclaimed that they intended to establish such a policy of civil and military power to create and secure large revenue, as it would be the foundation of a large. Well grounded English domination in India^{xii}. All the orders of the Company had the force of law and all the people under the Government of Fort St. George should obey them^{xiii}. In 1687 all the servants swore in before they entered upon the exercise of their office to be true to the Sovereign Lord, the King of England^{xiv}.

Gaining confidence in their power, the English decided in 1688 that they should pay injury with injury on the enemies who committed injuries on the English. Thus in the words of Sir Josiah Child the Company was being transformed from a body of mere trading merchants into conditions of a sovereign estate of India^{xv}. The

civil servants in Madras were trained in the use of arms from 1688. The English tried to establish their civic rights in Madras and to govern and protect their own servants, merchants and inhabitants who were originally the royal subjects but by the virtue of the cove they became the English subjects. They hoisted the Union Jack in the place of the St. George's standard at the Fort on 12th June 1688, soon after Yale's succession as the Governor of Fort St. George^{xvi}. Madras was declared independent of the settlements and allowed to exercise the sovereign powers^{xvii}.

REFERENCES:

- ⁱ B.C Raj. Constitutional History of India and National Movement, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1972, P.5
- ⁱⁱ Letters from Fort St. George 1711, Tamilnadu Archives, Chennai, p.40
- ⁱⁱⁱ Despatch from England, 1686 -92, Tamilnadu Archives, Chennai, p11.
- ^{iv} Despatch from England, 1686 -92, Tamilnadu Archives, Chennai, pp1-10.
- ^v Letters from England 1688, Tamilnadu Archives, Chennai, p 44.
- ^{vi} Despatch from England, 1714 -18, Tamilnadu Archives, Chennai, p7.
- ^{vii} The record bears the word 'tribute' for the first time for the rent of pagodas 1,200 per annum
- ^{viii} Despatch from England 1686-92, Tamilnadu Archives, Chennai, p.53.
- ^{ix} Ibid, pp38-62
- ^x Frank penny, Fort St. George, Madras, London, 1900, p.84.
- ^{xi} Despatch from England, 1686 -92, Tamilnadu Archives, Chennai, p98.
- ^{xii} The Imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol.II. Tamilnadu Archives, Chennai, p 459.
- ^{xiii} Despatch from England, 1686 -1692, Tamilnadu Archives, Chennai, p111.
- ^{xiv} Ibid, pp83-88
- ^{xv} Ibid, p 47
- ^{xvi} Dairy and Consultation, 1688, Tamilnadu Archives, Chennai, pp. 78-79.
- ^{xvii} Edward Thompson and G.T Garratt Rise and fulfillment of British rule in India, 1969, p.48.