



REFORMS OF DIWAN Sir A. SASHAIASASTRI IN PUDUKKOTTAI STATE

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The aim of this paper is to highlight the reforms introduced by the Diwan Sir. A. Sashaiasastri in Pudukkottai state. Pudukkottai now the headquarters of Pudukkottai taluk and District of Tamil Nadu is situated 390 kilometers from Chennai, 53 Kilometers from Tiruchirappalli and 57 kilometers from Thanjavur is one of the west ancient regions in the country. The state of Pudukkottai lies between the Parallels of $10^{\circ} 7'$ and $11^{\circ} 4'$ North Latitude and between the meridians of $78^{\circ} 25'$ and $79^{\circ} 12'$ East Longitude. The area of the state is 1178 square milies. Its greatest length from east to west is 52 miles and its greatest breadth from North to South is 41 miles. It is bounded on the North by the Trichinopoly District on the South by Ramnad district and as the East by the Tanjore District.¹

The Princely state of Pudukkottai was created by Vijaya Ragunatha Tondaiman (1730 – 1769) with the amalgamation of Pudukkottai and Kulathur region in the year

1750 A.D. Early rulers of Tondaiman line through protection rights and a network of

kinship provided the embryonic base for the Pudukkottai kingdom That lasted upto 1948 A.D.

VijayaRagunatha Tondaiman (1730 – 1769), RajaRagunatha Tondaiman (1769 – 1789), Rajavijaya Ragunatha Tondaiman (1789 – 1807), Vijaya Ragunatha Tondaiman II (1807 – 1829), Ragunatha Tondaiman (1825 – 1839), Raja RamachandraTondaiman (1839 – 1886), MarthandabairavaTondaiman (1886 – 1928) and Raja RajaGopala Tondaiman (1928 – 1948).²

In 1750 A.D. Pudukkottai state consists of Kulattur, Parambur, Kattalur visengainadu, Viralimalai and Ammankurichi.³ When the Nayak dynasty of Madurai came to end and the Muslims came into power, Anwaruddinkhan, the Nawab of Arcot and his successors continued to the same friendly relations and conferred on the title of Bahadur.⁴ RagunathaRaya Tondaiman died in

1273



1730 and was succeeded by VijayaRagunathaRaya Tondaiman (1730 – 1768 A.D.). When the Muslim rule began to decay and field before the then dawning power of the British than hotly contested by the French.⁵ Tondaimans maintained friendly relations with British and fought in the side of British against their enemies. VijayaRagunathaTondaiman (1730 – 1769) RajaRagunatha Tondaiman (1769 – 1869) and Reg Vijaya Ragunatha Tondaiman (1789 – 1807) actively participated in the carnatic wars⁶, Anglo Mysore was⁷ and Poligar wars⁸ by taking sides with the British. As a reward for loyalty the British gave them the tract Kilanilai.⁹ Major William Blackburne (1807 – 1823) the resident at Thanjavur a competent administer intervned as the guardian of the RajaVijayaRagunatha Raya Tondaiman (1807 – 1825) who was then only ten years old.¹⁰ Blackburne appointed one Accountant known as Thanapillai to inform him news about the daily event of Pudukkottai. In 1812 the capital town Pudukkottai was rebuilt after an outbreak of fire. The administration of Pudukkottai was run by two managers (Pallavarayer and ThirumalaiTondaiman) and one Sirkil. The hostility of the two managers affected the administration of Pudukkottai. To solve the problem, Governor of Madras appointed the Ananthaiya as a Administrative secretary. In 1814, Ananthaiya attempted to evict the some Amarakalrars from their lads was not successful.¹¹ In 1814, three members council were appointed against the misuse of the power of Ananthaiya. In 1823, Vijayaragunatha Tondaiman was invested with full powers. RajaRagunatha Tondaiman Bahadur (1825 – 1839) was succeeded by Ragunatha-Tondaiman. In 1826, RajaRagunatha Tondaiman met Sir Thamos Munro, the Governor of Madras at Viralimalai. He was awarded the title His Excellency in 1830¹² by the William Bentink the Governor of Madras. RajaRamachandra Tondaiman Bahadur (1839 – 1886) was succeeded by RagunathaTondaiman in 1839 A.D. He was minor and attained only ten years old.

Madras Government appointed other committee to run the administration of Pudukkottai. The Committee consists of SirKil, SaiRop Nayak, Foujdar, Appa Ayyar. Rani Kattakurichi, alias Kamalambal Rani Sakiba. The British Resident Bailey forwarded an unfavourable report about the administration of the Pudukkottai State. In 1848, Pudukkottai resident Post was shifted from Thanjavur collector to Madurai Collector John Black Burn. In 1848, Annasamy Ayyan son of Appa Ayyar became the Faujdar of Pudukkottai. In 1851, GopalNayak son of Syrope Nayak became the Assistant SirKil. In 1854, Faujadar AnnaSamy Ayyar became the Sirkil of Pudukkottai. An important event of his reign was the riots instigated by Venkannaservaikarar.¹³ As a result of the disturbances the British intervned and reduced the authority of the state to a mere shadow.¹⁴ Besides, there was a dead lock in the administration resulting from the ill will between the Rajah and the SirKil and the carbas in 1854.

In 1856, the title his Excellency granted to the Rajah was withdrawn and later in 1870. It was restored as His Highness.¹⁵ In 1854, SirKil Annasamy Ayyar resigned his post which was transmitted the Raja by the Resident and was accepted by the Raja and in his place. Bhavanisankar Rao was appointed SirKil in December 1863. In 1865, G. Li. Morris, Collector of Thanjavur became the political Agent of Pudukkottai. He reported the Government on the reforms essential for Pudukkottai.¹⁶ In the title His "Excellency" was restored to Raja on the occasion of the visit the Duke of Eden Burg the salute of thirteen guns.¹⁷

In the meantime enormous powers were given to the Sirkil by the British agent. Tondaiman lost most of his rights the disliked the Sirkil Bhavanisankar Rao. Yet, he was compelled to send his correspondence to the political agent only through SirKil.¹⁸ The Tondaiman had no other alternative but to represent the matter to the Secretary of state for India at London to protect his rights.¹⁹ The

1274



Supreme Government decided to intervene on 18th, September, 1874 the duties of the political Agent of Pudukkottai shifted from Thanjavur to the Tiruchirappalli collector Pennington. Pennington was deputed to report on the condition of Pudukkottai state and he finished his Job in 1876. The secretary of state a head perused the report and decided to alter the policy and opted by G. Li. Morris²⁰ and Accordingly Bhavani Sankar Rao was removed from the office the land revenue system was revised and the cultivators were freed and steps taken to the discharge of the debts of the Raja.²¹ In 1877, the Raja adopted MarthandaBhairava Pallavarayar his eldest sisters third son as his heir which was recognized and confirmed by the Government India in 1878.²² From 1876 to 1878 Pudukkottai state was severely hit by the drought.

The affairs of the state had been very rotten and the services of Sir A. Sashaiasastri were requisitioned to ameliorate the administration of Pudukkottai state and he was appointed SirKil and took charge on 8th, August, 1878. He can be called the maker of Modern Pudukkottai state. Towards his installation expenses the resident sanctioned Rupees. 500.²³ He extended the town erected Public buildings and restored tanks. He took measures to eradicate corruption in public affairs and filled treasury with revenue.²⁴ Sashaiasastri's zeal in the resumption of inams and in the abolition of Amani system. (Sharing the crop between state and Peasantry) had far reaching consequences.²⁵

At the time of Marthanda Bairava Tondaimans accession in 1886. He was only eleven years old. During the minority of the Rajah. Sashaiasastri was then Diwan Regent. He was retired on the termination of Regency in 1894 and was followed by Vedantachary as diwan.²⁶

In 1829, Sir A. Sashaiasastri was born in Poor Brahmin family at Amaravathi village in Thanjavur district. First two years of his school studies completed in the Anderson School at Chennai then he continued his

school studies in preparatory school at Chennai. He received stipends from Pachaiappas charitable trust and received scholarship from Government. In 1848, he joined as a clerk in the Revenue Board of Madras and served under the Sir Henry Bickel then he became the personal assistant to Sir Walter William. In 1851, he was promoted as a Head Serasthar at Masulipattinam. In 1859 he became the Deputy Collector in 1868, he became the Head Sherasthar of Revenue Board. In 1872, July, he was nominated as a Diwan of Travancore succeeded by Sir D. Madava Rao. From 1872 – 1877, he was served as a Diwan of Travancore and he retired in 1877 with the pension of Rs. 500/-. In 1878, he joined with Mr. Webster and conducted drought relief measures at Tiruchi, Tanjavur District. In meantime he was nominated as a member of legislative council of Madras Presidency.²⁷

At the kind invitation of his Excellency the Rajah Ramachandra Tondaiman Bahadur (1839 – 1886) and under the encouraging auspices of Mr. Sewell the political agent and of the members of Government of Madras who were all deeply interested in the well being of the Pudukkottai state, Sir A. Sashaiasastri took charge of the administration of the state on the 8th, August, 1878.²⁸ The selection was suggested by Sir Madhava Rao, who had occasion at the time to pay a visit to Pudukkottai. He saw that things had not been going well in the state for some time and wrote a confidential note to the chief secretary to the Madras Government from which the following is an extract. The Present Raja of Pudukkottai is one of the those Princes, who possess in a remarkable degree the power of producing the most favorable impression on visitors. He also possesses most agreeable manner yet in point of effect he has not been a successful and Popular ruler.

A Ministerial crisis appears to be impending at Pudukkottai. The choice of a suitable minister is obviously one of the most essential conditions on which the healthy

1275



development of the state will depend. Why not utilize the services of Sashaiasastry or Sadasivanpillai in this direction?, "The Place was offered to Sashaiasastry, who was not very willing at first to accept the place as he thought that it was almost beyond his power to bring the state to order.

Sir Madhava Row pressed Sashaiasastry to "Vouch safe to Pudukkottai", What it so much required, the services of a first rate man Sashaiasastry reconsider his decision and finally made up his mind to accept the place. The Government of Madras, His Grace the Duke of Buckingham expressed his gratification at the appointment and had the doubt that the arrangement would be attended with early benefit to the state and later on the secretary of state for India expressed his satisfaction that the Raja should have availed himself of the services of so competent a minister.²⁹

Sashaiasastry can be called "the maker of Modern Pudukkottai State". He extended the town erected Public buildings and restores tanks. He took measures to eradicate corruption in Public offices and filled the treasury with revenue. He established Pudukkottai as a model town during the end of nineteenth century with protected water supply, drainage, street lighting and broad well laid roads.

In 1878, he Joined the Pudukkottai state service as a SirKil or Administrator. This position was designated as Diwan in 1885. He continued in office till 1894. For sixteen years as the administrator Sir Sashaiasastry had brought about a sea change in the administration of the state and had evolved ways to improve the revenue of the state. The Revenue records of the state were in shambles when he had taken over. The grains procured as "Amani" from the ryots did not reach the granary of the palace in full. In 1884, the name of the post SirKil was changed as Diwan. Sashaiasastry became the first Diwan of Pudukkottai. Sir Sashaiasastry impressed upon the British the need to officially recognize the eleven year old Raja

Marthanda Bairava Tondaiman. Bahadur who ascended the throne on May, 8, 1886. Sir Sashaiasastry became the Dewan Regent on 26th, November, 1894, Raja attained majority and assumed the charge of the crown. Sashaiasastry retired from service and settled down at Kumbakonum in Tanjore district.³⁰

Matters Judicial : The appellate power over all the courts had been till 1878 vested exclusively in the Huzur Appeal Court, consisting of His Excellency the Raja as President, the sirkil or Minister as ex-officio Judge and an Appeal Judge. During 1879 – 1980 the appellate Jurisdiction over the Munsiffs' Courts and the small cause court was transferred from the Raja's court of Appeal to the Civil Judge.

No fees had been levied till October, 1879, for the institution of suits in the Courts. A regulation was passed authorizing the levying of fees from the 1st of November, 1879, on the institution of all suits, appeals and proceedings in the Courts of Civil judiciary.

The Munsiffs Court at Kulattur was abolished and amalgamated with, the Town Small Cause Court.

The abolition of the 'Amani' or the sharing system. The Amani system of settling the revenue from lands, under which the ryot was a mere tenant at will was abolished, so that the lands which were held on this tenure became the private property of those that held them, subject to the payment of a fixed assessment. The general result of the settlement after a few year's experience was one of satisfaction to the ryot, who felt the change as an emancipation from thralldom. (See Revenue History).

The reorganisation of the Devastdnam Department. "The Department of Devastdnam Manager was found worse than useless and was abolished. The supervision of the pagodas and their establishments together with the accounts of receipts and expenditures connected therewith was transferred to the Tahsildars. Two travelling Superintendents were appointed, one for the pagodas in the

1276



British Territory, where special services are performed at the cost of the State and the other for those in the State. Much abuse having crept into the working of the department, the management was remodelled without additional cost to the State and placed under the Tahsildars and Deputy Tahsildars under the orders of the Karbar".

The resumption of the Western Palace Jagir. The Government ordered the resumption of the Western Palace Jagir on the 14th of May, 1881.

"The estate had almost entirely passed into the usufructuary possession of creditors. The Jaghirdar was in home straits and appeal to the Madras Government for relief. The matter was referred to Sashia Sastri, who went into the question of the tenure of the estate and found that the estate was inalienable by sale, gift or mortgage; and under the advice of the Madras Government, the Jaghir was absolutely resumed in 1881 and a money pension amounting in round numbers to Rs. 15,000 a year was granted to the family upon such conditions as would ensure to every member of the family his share of the benefit of the arrangement. Liberal provision was also made to meet reasonable extraordinary charges".

The restoration of salute and the grant of the title of "His Highness". In consideration of the introduction of many important reforms and a general improvement in the character and tone of the administration after the appointment of A. Sashia Sastriar as the Sirkil, the Madras Government forwarded in June 1882 to the Viceroy and Governor-General of India an appeal from the Sirkil for the restoration of salute to His Excellency the Raja.

The following extracts are from the Sirkil's letter to the Political Agent.

"His Excellency the Raja would now assure Government that it will be his study for the future, as it has been during the recent past, to bring the administration of his State to the highest pitch of perfection which the resources of the State and the help of the

wise ministers at his command would permit..... "For my part, I hope and believe that the restoration of honours taken away and the grant of new ones will not make His Excellency the Rajah forget the past or neglect the future; for he now knows that "all honours" are based on and inseparable from, good administration". The event of the year was the sanction on the 22nd April, 1884 by Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen-Empress of India of a salute of 11 guns to the Raja and his successors as a hereditary distinction. "Simultaneously, the Government of Madras was pleased to order that the Raja of Pudukota would thenceforward be addressed as "His Highness".

1277

A grand Darbar was held on the 19th of May, 1884 to celebrate the happy event. "The Political Agent, after repeating his assurances that the Tondiman of to-day would not be found less loyal than his ancestors, should occasion arise, handed over to the Rajah the communication of Government conveying the intelligence of the conferring of a hereditary salute of 11 guns and the title of "His Highness". As an act of mercy, several convicts were pardoned and set free.

The lighting of the town was commenced with 100 street lamps. The destruction of prickly pear, "the spread of which most pernicious plant had been rapid and was proceeding with accelerated velocity year after year, was taken on hand ". 1883—1884. The Pallavankulam was completely dried, and the old bathing ghats were removed. From other tanks also the slush and silt of years were removed with the result that guinea-worm that "seemed to be the everlasting curse of Pudukota" was stamped out, and "those who year after year bore the badge of the curse came to breathe free and think of the return of summer without a shudder".

"The work of removing the slush and silt of the Pallavan tank seemed at first sight an insuperable one, and the modus operandi by which it was accomplished was rather



unique. All the available labourers of the three taluks had to be called out and mustered for the purpose. The *average* number at work *every day* for 10 days was 3,000, while the highest number in a day reached 5,000..... A free conjee and water pandal was maintained at the time on the spot, the season at the time being intolerably hot. The labourers were relieved every three days by fresh sets from their respective vattams. So the hardships of the compulsory labour were minimised as much as possible, for the very short time it lasted ". The name of the tank was changed into Sivaganga, by which name it is now known (see p. 103, footnote).

A holition of certain petty *cesses*. "Certain petty cesses called *Mahimes* or presents collected from ryots in the days of the Amant system for the benefit of (1) Pagodas, (2) certain Pandarams or religious mendicant Sudras, (3) a certain Iyavaru or Vaishnava Astrologer and (4) lastly, a family of Mudaliyars who collected these cesses and conducted therewith certain services in the temples at Chillumbrum, Avadaiarcoil and Madyarjunam (or Tiru-vidaimarudur), were abolished. In all probability these were originally voluntary alms given by the ryots at the threshing floor for the various charities indicated. In most cases, the handfuls were taken out before division into Melvaram and Kudivaram.....They had acquired the character of prescriptive right and continued to the time of the supersession of Amani system in 1879-80, when the grain doles were commuted into money cesses. These petty cesses after all amounted to no more than Rs. 915 altogether. The cesses were entirely abolished with effect from the 1st of July, 1884, thus ensuring to the ryots freedom for ever from the petay and vexatious demand. A sum of Es. 1,000 per annum was sanctioned from the State Treasury to be paid as compensation to the pagodas and persons concerned".

Some minor reforms and other matters. The powers of registration were

withdrawn from the Tahsildars and Deputy Tahsildars, and separate Sub-Registrars were appointed for the discharge of the duties (28th of October, 1878). In 1878, the Administration Report of the State was for the first time printed and supplied to the important public officers of the State. Till 1878, the Administration Reports had been kept confidential and even high public officers including the Karbar were not permitted to go through them.

Regulations were passed for the recovery of arrears of revenue and for the acquisition of lands for public purposes. The printing press was considerably strengthened and a State Gazette was published for the first time. A census of the State *in* connection with the Imperial Census of February, 1881, was undertaken and completed. It showed an increase of 8,560 in the number of inhabitants of the State according to the previous census. The Government communicated (10th December, 1881) to the Political Agent that "the Raja's prefixing to his name the initials ' S.B.D.' = Sri *Brihadamba Das* appeared unobjectionable on political grounds, with which alone the Government was concerned".

August, 1882, Certain differences having arisen in connection with the settlement of the boundary between this State and Ramnad Zemindari, the Political Agent at great personal trouble inspected the localities with Mr. Gompertz, *the* Government Arbitrator, and the Sarkfl, and settled the differences.

22nd August. A regulation was passed for the protection of the earth-salt revenue. The rules which had been in force from time to time for the control of the manufacture and sale of earth-salt had never assumed a legal shape. The regulation embodied them into a systematic enactment. 7th October, 1882. Regulation II of 1882 declared distinctly the Acts of the British Indian Legislature relating to Civil and Criminal matters which were to be followed in the Courts of the State. 1883, 13th, June. A Town Sarkar Girls' School

1278



for imparting instruction to the girls of the town was opened.

The English school started in 1857 at the Capital was raised to the grade of a Second Grade College. It was ordered in 1883 that the supervision of the State schools by a British Inspector of Schools which had been going on from April, 1878 was unnecessary. 1884, 1st, April. His Highness cheerfully consented to the establishment of a combined British Post and Telegraph office and the people were thus given the modern advantages of the Money Order System, Insurance of parcels, Value Payable System, Savings Bank, etc., .

April, 1884. The Friday Fair was removed to the spacious grove to the south of the Sandaippettai suburb. 1884. To arrest the destruction of jungles and to create new sources of fuel supply, a beginning was made with a small casuarina plantation on the banks of the Vellar. 1885, April, For the encouragement of Primary Education, grant-in-aid rules were promulgated and came into force on the 1st of April, 1885. 24th May, 1885. Marriages of His Highness' Grand-daughters by the Senior Princess. "No former ruler of Pudukota lived long enough to witness the marriages of grand-children, and according to Hindu notions, it was a singular good fortune, which it was reserved to His Highness (Raja Ramachandra Tondaiman Bahadur) to attain".

The Treasury full. "For the first time in the history of Pudukota (in 1683) there was literally no room in the Treasury for the money that had accumulated in it, and it was thought advisable, rather than so much money should be idle, to invest the surplus in Government securities, not only as a source of some profit but generally as an Insurance Fund against future years of adversity. There was no intention of hoarding, for expenditure on public works was allowed to the fullest amount that could have been, carefully and economically spent".

His Highness the Raja's Tours. His Highness the Raja started on the 30th May,

1884 on a tour to the Trichinopoly and Madura Districts. "After visiting the shrine at Nerur in the Coimbatore District and the temple at Madura, the Raja was on the 30th of July at Trichinopoly, waiting for Their Excellencies the Governor and the Commander-in-Chief, who were then about to pass through or visit that station".

16th, July, 1884. His Highness the Raja accompanied by the Political Agent had an interview with His Excellency the Governor in the Waiting Room of the Trichinopoly Railway Station. 27th July, 1884. His Highness the Raja had an interview at Trichinopoly with the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Frederick Roberts. His Highness was received with military honours by His Excellency's Military Secretary at the carriage door and by His Excellency Sir Frederick Roberts at the entrance of the house and conducted to the drawing room where he had a very cordial interview. His Highness and His Excellency with the Political Agent then drove together in His Highness' carriage to the Race course.

On the following day, His Highness the Raja accompanied His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief to witness a Review of the troops in the Parade Ground. His Excellency the Commander-in Chief returned the visit of His Highness the Raja on the morning of the 26th July at His Highness' Camp. After a tour which lasted 60 days, His Highness the Raja returned to Pudukkottai on the 30th July, 1884, and was received in a decorated Pandal, a little way outside the Town, and led into the Capital in procession amidst the rejoicings of His Highness' subjects.

His Highness made a second tour in November and December 1885 to Trichinopoly and Madura with the object chiefly, of fulfilling a vow, which he had taken on his previous visit, to light one hundred thousand lamps in the famous pagoda at Madura. His Highness left Pudukkottai on the 9th of November, 1885, and after visiting the shrine at Nerur, went to Madura where he fulfilled his vow. His Highness, after visiting

1279



the Shrine of Kunasekharam in the Trichinopoly District, returned to Pudukkottai on the 6th of December.

Changes of the designations of the Chief administrative officers. At the suggestion of His Highness the Raja and at the recommendation of the Political Agent, the Governor-in-Council of Madras approved on the 29th May, 1885 of the designations Sirkil, Karbar, and Deputy Karbar which were riot known or properly recognised outside the limits of the State and were not familiar to the Foreign Office, that is, the Political Department of British India, being changed into those of 'Dewan',* 'Dewan Peishkar't and 'Deputy Peishkar'. The change was adopted from the 1st of July, 1885.

The first gubernatorial visit to the Capital, 1886, 2nd — 4th February. "His Excellency the Eight Honourable Sir Mountstuart Elphinstone Grant Duff, g.c.i.e., Governor of Madras, was the first Governor to visit the Raja in his capital. His Excellency arrived a little before the noon of Tuesday, the 2nd of February, 1886, and left on the afternoon of Thursday the 4th *idem*. A grand Darbar was held on the occasion. A levee was held, at which the Raja presented all the members of his family, officers of the State, Sardars of the State, and other gentry of the Town. There was the usual display of fireworks, etc. His Excellency witnessed also the native game of tisanawp or the throwing of the Boomerang"

Death of Raja Ramachandra Tondaiman on the 15th, April, 1886. His Highness the Raja Ramachandra Tondaiman Bahadur died at the age of 57. All the Public offices and institutions of the state were closed for sixteen days as a mark of respect to the memory of the deceased. He left an heir to the Raj in the person of His Highness Martanda Bhairava Tondaiman Bahadur.

Raja Martanda Bkairava Tondaiman Bahadur

Education of His Highness the Raja. On May 2, 1886, the religious installation of the young Raja" known as the *Pattabhishekam* took place, according to the

custom of the family, in the State Pagoda at Tirugokarnam, a suburb of the capital town; and on 8th July the "*Raja* was formally installed by the Political Agent, who presented a *khillat* from the Government of Madras and a letter from the Governor, congratulating His Highness on his accession to the *musnad*. A Darbar was held on the occasion and the usual *nazars* were presented to the Political Agent. His Highness was then conducted in a procession through the four main streets round the Palace, during which the installation was proclaimed. Six convicts were set at liberty in honour of the occasion.

On the completion of his nineteenth year, His Highness the Raja was installed by His Excellency the Governor of Madras, Lord Wenlock, and invested with the powers of administration at a grand Darbar that was held for the purpose. His Excellency the Governor, who was received with the usual honours at the Darbar, delivered an address to the Raja.

Regency : During the minority of the Raja, the State was administered by (afterwards Sir) A. Sashiah Sastri. He was invested with the powers of a Regent and was styled Dewan-Regent. To relieve him of a great part of his routine and less responsible work, an assistant Dewan was appointed at the beginning of the Regency. This arrangement continued till His Highness came of age and assumed the reins of Government in November, 1894.

During the eight years preceeding the Regency, the foundations of good government had been well and deeply laid. The Land Revenue system had been remodelled; the *amani* tenure, which was prejudicial alike to the State and the ryot, had been abolished. Most of the irrigation tanks had received the necessary, Urgent repairs. The main trunk roads to Trichinopoly, Tanjore and Madura had been put hi order. The service had been reformed and the tone of the service raised. Grimes had been put down. A second grade College had been raised and the ranks of office had come to be



supplied with young men educated on modern lines. All this had necessitated a series of energetic measures and vigorous changes.

The eight years of the Regency mark a period of comparative rest and assimilation. The salient administrative features of this period are noticed below. The Salt convention, The first of these administrative measures was the suppression of the local earth-salt. The revenue from salt was, till 1887, a monopoly of the State, The State has no sea-board; but earth-salt was manufactured. It was gathered and stored in depots and sold for the benefit of the exchequer. Much abuse had crept into the department. In 1882, the management was remodeled and a regulation was passed for the protection of the salt-revenue and it provided also for penalties against the importation of the earth-salt into the British territory.

The British Government had been complaining from time to time (so early in fact as 1817) that the Podukkottai cheap earth-salt was being smuggled across the boundary. The question threatened to become a source of misunderstanding in 1881-1882 between the State and the British Salt department. On a strong representation made by the State, the Madras Government agreed to let matters stand as they were. But a little while after, the question was opened again and Government insisted on the suppression of earth-salt in the State. The late Raja, though at first unwilling, had ultimately agreed to the opening of negotiations in deference to the repeated wishes of the Madras Government. As a result of these negotiations it was agreed that the manufacture of earth-salt should be suppressed, the State receiving in compensation an annual payment of Rs. 38,000. The British authorities insisted at the outset that the head of the Hate preventive force should be an officer selected from the graded officers of the British Salt department. The Darbar protested against this on the ground that the *late* Raja had consented to

open negotiations only on the distinct understanding that the management of the preventive force should be entirely left to the Darbar. The British Government agreed to this after some correspondence.

The annual indemnity of Rs. 38,000 that was arranged to be given to the State was calculated thus: Rs. 15,000 for direct loss of salt-revenue, Rs. 13,000 for loss of revenue by the abolition of house-tax on the houses of the poorest classes, as a *solarium* for the enhanced salt-tax they would have to pay, and

Rs. 10,000 for cost of the preventive force. To give effect to this Convention, "the Pudukkottai Earth-Salt Suppression Regulation" was passed and came into force on January 1, 1888.

The Madras Government had at first suggested that the arrangements should be introduced tentatively for two years, as it was expected that .at the end of that period a fair judgment could be formed as to the adequacy of the preventive arrangements made by the State and the probability of the Madras Government securing a fair return for the large sum to be paid as compensation to the State. If found satisfactory in these respects the arrangements were to be made permanent : otherwise they were to be declared to be at an end and the *status quo ante* reverted to. A. Sashiah Sastri represented that two years was too short a period for judging fairly of the working of the new regulation and its results, and five years would be the least time inquired if any reservation of time was at all necessary. There was no reason to think that the subsidy would not be a paying concern to the British Government. If however the Government should find it at any time to their interest to discontinue the indemnity and revert to the old state of things, the Convention might be cancelled, sufficient notice being given to the State and sufficient consideration being shown to such claims as might then arise and be brought forward by the State.

1281



The Madras Government acquiesced in these proposals and decided (No. 671—Revenue dated July 12, 1887) that the arrangements would be cancelled at the option of Government after sufficient notice, if they found it to their interest to discontinue them and any claims for compensation to the State, arising from the resumption of earth-bait manufacture, shown to be justly due, would receive full consideration, though the decision as to the amount payable on this account must rest with Government.

A. Sashiah Sastri evidently believed that he had made a good bargain for the State. The Madras Government were not

quite sure that they would secure an adequate return for the indemnity they had to pay. The people of the State grumbled that they had to pay many times more than before for the salt they required and that the heavy price was out of all proportion to the better quality of the sea-salt. The salt duty in British India was raised about this time and this enhanced the unpopularity of the salt Convention.

For ten years the Convention worked more or less smoothly. In 1897, the Madras' Government doubted whether the working of the preventive force, in the State did not require closet supervision.

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1282



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- ²⁵ Ibid., 308 – 309.
- ²⁶ VenkataRama Ayyer, op. cit., p. 879.
- ²⁷ Siranjivi, Pudukkottai Samasthanavaralaru (Tamil), Chennai, 1980, pp. 133 – 135.
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- ³⁰ RadhaKrishna Aiyer, S., op. cit., p. 445.

