

Travancore-Cochin Integration; A model to Native states of India

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Abstract

The state of Kerala once remained as an integral part of erstwhile Tamizakaom. Towards the beginning of the modern age this political terrain gradually enrolled as three native kingdoms with clear cut boundaries. The three native states comprised kingdom of Travancore of kingdom of Cochin, kingdom of Calicut These territories never enjoyed a single political structure due to the internal and foreign interventions. Travancore and Cochin were neighboring states enjoyed cordial relations. The integration of both states is a unique event in the history of India as well as History of Kerala. The title of Rajapramukh and the administrative division of Dewaswam is unique aspect in the course of History.

Keywords

Rajapramukh , Dewaswam , Panjangam, Yogam, annas, oorala, Melkoima

Introduction

The erstwhile native state of Travancore and Cochin forms political unity of Indian sub-continent through discussions debates and various agreements. The states situating nearby maintained interstate reactions in various realms. At occasionally they maintained cordial relation on the other half hostile in every respect. In different epochs the diplomatic relations of both the state were unique interns of political economic, social and cultural aspects. This uniqueness ultimately enabled both the state to integrate them ultimate into the concept of the formation of the state of Kerala. The division of power in devaswams and assumed the title Rajapramukh is unique chapters in Kerala as well as Indian history

Scope and relevance of Study

Travancore and Cochin the native states of southern kerala. They maintained good relations with each other at the same time they settled the disputes relating to water, land and Boarder. The temple disputes and the formation of Devaswams and division of power is difficult one. But the diplomatic way they solved the problems and unified in to Travancore Cochin is the model of other Indian native states.

Analysis of sources and Literature

The study is based on primary sources. The chief sources of the paper are the covenant of the integration files. The letters of British government royal proclamations, Dewan communications, devaswam files were consulted for the study. The secondary sources of publish books is useful for the study

Limitations of the study

A lot of secondry sources available for the reconstruction of Kerala History. But the secondry works mainly concentrated the general aspects of integration .It is partly mentioned the powers and functions of Rajapramukh and devaswam departments . The study concentrated the title of Rajapramukh and the division of power intemples is mentioned.

Rajapramuh –Title of Sri Chithira Tirunal

Sri Chithira Thirunal assumed the king of Travancore in 1924, after the queenship of Sethu Lekshmi Bai . he is benevolent ,farsighted king of Travancore . He modernizes Travancore by lot of welfare activities and engineering works. He ruled the native state up to 1949. His policies and welfare measures were admired by British also. The famous temple Entry Proclamation in 1936 is the unique event in the History. He assumed the title Rajapramukh in 1949.

On assuming the position of Rajpramukh of the united states of Travancore and Cochin, he solemn assurance to the government of India that to the best of his ability, he should preserve, protect and defend the Constitutions of India and that of the united states of Travancore and Cochin and devote himself to the services of the people of India. This letter was to be read by the chief justice in the presence of the Maharajah at that time of the inauguration of the new union.

The second problem was the Maharajah's proposal that the he should be Rajpramukh for life. The Maharajahs of Gwalior, Patiala and Jaipur had already been made Rajpramukhs for life and it was impossible to resist a similar demand on the part of the Maharajah of Travancore. From the point of the view of both revenue and population, Travancore occupied a more important position than Cochin. But the Maharajah also proposed that there should be on Uprajpramukh and that in the case of his temporary absence, the chief justice of the united state of Travancore and Cochin should officiate for him. This proposal was certainly unfair to the Maharajah of Cochin, who was entitled to be the

Uprajpramukh and to officiate as Rajpramukh according to predilections created in other unions. At the same time, there was no doubt that, in view of his age, his religious predilections and other considerations, it would be highly inconvenient for the Maharajah of Cochin to stay for any length of time in Trivandrum, which was obviously to be the capital of the new union. The Maharajah of Travancore made it a condition that if he found his new position irksome in any way, he should be allowed to resign. I agreed to this.

Argument of Cochin

As regards the Maharajah's request that he should be styled Perumal and not Rajpramukh He told him that this could not be under the new constitution of India, all heads of provinces would be called governors and heads of unions Rajpramukhs. Any innovation such as the one he suggested would introduce complications.

He felt that the next thing to do was to bring about a meeting of the two Maharajahs, as this would not only eliminate any feeling that they had not been fully consulted, but would also have a good effect on the people of the two states. The relations between the two rulers had been anything but cordial. For many decades the rulers of these two neighboring states had not been on visiting terms. As the Maharajah of Cochin was very much older than the Maharajah of Travancore, he suggested to the letter that to first should pay a visit to Cochin and that the Maharajah of Cochin could later pay a return visit. Probably because his state was the bigger of the two in area, revenue and status, the Maharajah of Travancore was not reluctant to accept my suggestion; nor did he press him to do so.

He accompanied by the premiers of both state flew to Ernakulam to see the Maharajah of Cochin. He told him that I was anxious that he and the Maharajah of Travancore should meet, for that would make a good beginning. He readily accepted my suggestion that he should go over to Trivandrum for the purpose, whereupon a formal invitation was issued by the Maharajah of Travancore, who also sent his private plane and made all arrangements for the reception of his distinguished neighbor. It was the Cochin Maharajah's first aeroplane trip and he thoroughly enjoyed it. The Maharajah of Travancore received him with due pomp and ceremony and escorted him to the place which had been specially arranged for him. The local papers were full of the meeting. It did strike the popular imagination.

Travancore and Cochin Join Meeting

He had separate and joint discussions with the Maharajahs. The Maharajah of Cochin, who apprised of all that took place at talks with the Maharajah of Travancore, readily agreed to the proposal that the letter should be Rajpramukh for life, but raised the question of the position of the Cochin ruler in the future. He told him that future appointments of rajpramukhs would be left to the governor-general and there was no reason to believe that the interests of Cochin would be overlooked.

Typical demand of Cochin King

The Cochin Maharajah made practically no demands at all. A typical request of his was that free copies should continue to be supplied to him of the Panjangam, of almanac and was published by the Cochin government annually and was priced at a few annas !he was prepared to efface himself completely in order that his people might enjoy a larger life. This spirit of full and ready co-operation was commended by the Governor-General in his message at the inauguration of the new union, when he expressed his 'deep gratitude and appreciation of the prompt and generous manner in which the people and the ruler of Cochin state have helped to achieve this union and integration involving a degree of self-effacement.'

Dewaswom -Travancore and Cochin

A problem peculiar to Travancore-Cochin related to the properties attached to temples, called Devaswoms. It is necessary to give some explanation of the history of the Devaswoms in each of these states.

Sri Padmanabha Swamy Temple

Travancore had been ruled by an unbroken line of Hindu kings from the earliest time and had retained throughout the centuries its essential character of a Hindu state. The most important temple in this state was always been, and still is, the Sri padmanabha temple, richly endowed and possessing very extensive landed properties. These were originally managed by a Yogam(or synod) of eight hereditary trustees and the ruler, but at the beginning of the eighteenth century the Yogam was ousted and the administration of the temple together with its properties was then taken over entirely by the ruler. Thereafter the temple properties became intermixed with the properties of the state. The state continued however to contribute to the maintenance of the temple and the religious ceremonies. This state of affairs continued until the time of the integration of the two states.

Devaswom Temples

A part from this temple, there were a large number of Devaswoms in the state founded and endowed by the people and managed by ooralars or trustees. From ancient times, the Maharajah had Melkoima rights (the right of superior authority or overlordship) over the trustees. Before 1811, the state had no direct concern in the management of these temples; in that year colonel Munro, the then British resident for Travancore and cochin, assumed the Dewanship and in exercise of the Melkoima right of the Maharajah, took over the management of the Devaswoms in Travancore. Three hundred and forty –eight major and 1,123 minor Devaswoms with all their properties were thus taken over for management even then their income was considerable. In course of time, the management of yet more was assumed.

A good deal of agitation was excited on the ground that the government of the state were spending less on the maintenance of the temples and on the religious ceremonies than the amount of revenue which accrued from the Devaswom properties and that they were

appropriating the balance of the income to themselves barred in 1946, the Maharajah issued another proclamation which fixed the amount payable every year to the temple at a figure of not less than Rs25 lakh and reserved the right of making further contributions if necessary from the state revenue. Finally, in 1948, immediately before the grant of responsible government, a proclamation was issued by which a yearly sum of Rs50 lakh was fixed for the maintenance of all the temples in the state, other than the Sri Padmanabha temple which was to receive Rs1 lakh annually.

Hindu opinion in the state was unanimous in holding not only that the continued payment of the existing allotments should be guaranteed, but also that adequate compensation should be given in respect of the properties taken over by the government and the profits derived from them. The annual contribution thus claimed ranged from Rs 1crore to Rs2crore .obviously this plea could not be accepted; at the same time it was impossible to decline the obligation of maintaining these temples, the state having taken over all their properties.

The discussed questions with ministers, as well as the Maharajah of Travancore., eventually came to an agreement by which the annual payment of Rs51 lakh made to the temples by the Travancore government would be continued and out of this amount a sum of Rs6 lakh would be contributed annually for the maintenance of the Sri Padmanabha temple.

The most difficult issue related to the administration of this grant. After prolonged discussion it was agreed that the administration of the Sri Padmanabha temple should be conducted under the control and supervision of the Maharajah through an executive officer to be appointed by him. It was members nominated by the Maharajah to advices him; and the Hindu members of the council of ministers. With regard to the other temples in Travancore, a body to be called the Travancore Devaswom board would be set up. This board would consist of three Hindu members, one of whom would be nominated by the Maharajah, one elected by the Hindus among the council of ministers and on by the Hindus members of the legislative assembly of the union.

Temples in Cochin

In Cochin unlike Travancore the properties of the temples were administrate separately as a 'reserved subject' by the Maharaja; but after the grant of responsible government, he appointed the primer of the state to act in his personal capacity as the chief executive authority for Devaswoms. The Poornathrayeesa temple at Thrippunithura is the temple of the ruling family and the Maharajah asked for the control of the rituals and ceremonies in this temple, as well as for those in the Pazhayannur temple. He agreed to this request. It was decided to set up a Devaswom Board in Cochin on the some lines as in Travancore. As Devaswom properties had remained separate, there was necessity to make any special grant from state revenues. The landed properties of the temples should add, and subject to the land revenue and tenancy laws of the state just like any other landed properties.

These decisions were subsequently incorporated in the covenant. Later on, when the constitution of India was being finalized, a provision was included to safeguard the payment

to the temple in Travancore by making it charged and non-votable by the legislature of the union.

Conclusion

It must be emphasized here that this provision in the covenant relating to Devaswoms brought about a far-reaching social reform in both states. These two states had been the set of orthodoxy not found in any other part of India except Malabar. The temple-entry reforming Travancore recognized to their representative in the legislature and in the ministry and would also be able to hold a certain extent the people of Harijans in the Hindu society; but under the covenant, the Harijans would gain a measure of control of the temple through posts in the Devaswom Department which had hitherto been denied to them.

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