

CHAPTER - XI  
ASSESSMENT AND CONCLUSION

The territories which came to be included in the Central Provinces have had a chequered history, throughout the Ancient, Medieval and Modern periods. This was the area which was variously ruled first by the Kalchuries for over four centuries with their capitals at Tripuri and Ratanpur. The Kalchuries were supplanted by the Raj-Gond dynasty. The early history of the Central Provinces was a history of Gondwana, of the tribes who peopled India before the Aryans effected any settlement therein. They ruled over a vast territory stretching from the source of the Narmada to the borders of Bhopal in the west, to Bilaspur district in the east and to the Chandrapur district of modern Vidarbha in the south. In the 18th century, the territories of the Narmada Valley came under the sway of the Marathas. While the northern parts were ruled by the representatives of the Peshwa, the Nagpur and Chhattisgarh regions were under the authority of the Bhoslas.

The whole of this territory came under the British occupation in the year 1818 ; first as a result of the treaty entered into by Baji Rao II with the British and later, as a sequel to the Battle of Sitabaldi in 1817, whereby the entire Bhosla territory in which Chhattisgarh region passed into the hands of the British.

In the beginning, the districts of the Narmada region were, in 1820, grouped into a territorial division which came to be known as the 'Sagar and Narmada Territories '. In 1835 this was placed under an agent to the Governor General in Central India. Later in 1835, it was placed under the administrative charge of the Lt. Governor of the North Western Provinces, with its capital at Agra. Nagpur Province was under a resident while Chhattisgarh was directly placed under British officers. Following the Bundela Rising of 1842 and Great Revolt of 1857 the turbulent tract of the Sagar and Narmada Territories were, in 1861, amalgamated with the peaceful areas of the Bhoslas.

Formed in 1861 , the Central Provinces then comprised of 19 districts. It is a very important epoch of our history. While political history of this area has by and large been studied by a few scholars, there is almost total absence of studies on the administrative history of this area. When the British came over, a large number of social and political institutions which the contemporary societies award after, century's experience and experimentations, were undoubtedly keeping the social fabric intact. We have had our successes and failures but the conditions were not as appalling as the Britishers or their apologists would have us believe.

It has been therefore, very interesting to study in brief, the institutions which were in existence for a few centuries before the British advent.

The success of the administrative institutions is entirely dependent on the harmonious relations between the rulers and the ruled. The Britishers, being an alien power, were interested not in the good of India , but in her goods. Naturally therefore, their exploitative mentality forced them to initiate and introduce social and political institutions which would keep the people in bondage and in total submission to the paramount power.

The problem of Indian administration did not constitute a vital issue in the English politics at the beginning of the 19th century.

It was in the year 1765 that the question of Land-Revenue first opened before the English. Upto this time the English in India had been buyers and sellers of produce. But in 1765 the reigning prince conferred on the East India Company, a grant in perpetuity of the Provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa ; and the whole civil and military government of this tract of country fell under their control and with it, the revenue.

Under the rule of the Gonds and Marathas, there were no fixed principles for the assessment and realisation of revenue nor were any kind of rights in land recognised. Under the Gonds, the District, which was covered with dense jungles, was mostly parcelled out into many petty chiefships, each held by one of

the headman of the clan, who furnished little or no revenue in money and rendered military services to the ruler.

During the Gond rule (latter period) the ruler himself retained large portions of the territory, which were generally managed by leases, at first directly granted to the actual cultivators, and later through a middleman, known as the malguzar. The assessment of the leased areas was based on the extent of the ascertained cultivated land of villages, rated at a fixed amount for every standard land revenue, called the *tusi*. Although the size of the *tusi* varied at times, a standard *tusi* was equal to 10 acres or four *khandis* of land.

The size of the *tusi* fluctuated under the Maratha rule. The attitude of the Bhosla Government was directed merely to the extortion of as much money as possible. The leases were granted for very short period and on very high rents, sometimes amounting to more than the village assets. The measurements were extremely imperfect and the data for assessment very rough. The cultivator had no recognised rights. This coupled with the inroads of the Gond marauders and the Pindaris, turned large tracts in utter desolation and impoverished the District.

The early British rule witnessed a series of summary and short-term settlements which followed the Maratha precedent of high demand and short collections.

Colonel Baird Smith gave a proposal for a permanent settlement of Land Revenue to Sir Richard Temple, the chief commissioner of Central Provinces. The permanent settlement was to cause all other heads of revenue, except land tax to increase. The main principle laid by the proclamation of 1854 and accepted by Central Government in 1861 was the recognition of proprietary rights of the *malguzars*. Thus when the proprietary rights of *Malguzars* having been recognized, it was decided, for Northern India, that the land revenue should be limited to one half of the rent at and this was extended to Sagar and Narmada territories. For Nagpur the Government of India had sent directions to leave the *Malguzars* from 35% to 55% of the gross rental.

The three clear Principles which were established at great settlement of 1863 were :-

- (1) Proprietary rights to the Malguzars in the province.
- (2) Limitation of the State demand to half of the rental.
- (3) Making the settlement for a long term of 30 years.

Thus the Malguzars were virtually the land lords in the settlement of 1863. But the sympathetic attitude of Sir Richard Temple disappeared when Colonel Keating became the chief commissioner of Central Provinces in 1871-72. Now the idea was that all the rent paid by cultivators were due to the state and Malguzars were only the agents to collect the rent on behalf of government. The Ryotwari System found favour with Colonel Keating. Mr. Peddar, commissioner of Nagpur division also favoured this, still he raised voice against introducing a change because it would have been a breach of settlement of 1863.

A Tenancy Act was passed in 1883. The object of the act was the protection of ten cultivators, but it bore the traces of the unwillingness of the government to recognise the full proprietary rights of the Malguzars in the central provinces. At this juncture the settlement officer intervened and settled the rents which the tenants should pay to their land lords. This interference weakened the land lord and strangled the tenant rights. Mr. Mackenzie, the chief commissioner of central provinces asked for a latitude of 50 to 65% of the rental to be fixed as land revenue which the government of India later on accepted.

In 1895 Lord George Hamilton, Secretary of State for India, decided that the period of settlement should be reduced from 30 years to 20 years. Thus one by one the three cardinal principles of the settlement of 1863 were whittled away within thirty two years. All the safeguards which had been provided by the Government of Lord Canning and Sir Richard Temple for the growth of a prosperous landed class and a prosperous peasantry were removed under the government of Lord Dufferin and Lord Lansdowne and Land revenue was fixed at a very high rate.

The revenue Department in Central Provinces was organised systematically. Several officers were appointed in the revenue department and their jurisdiction was also specified. Chief Commissioner was the chief controlling revenue authority, while commissioners were the chief controlling authority within their divisions, Deputy Commissioner and Tahsildars were appointed in Districts and Tahsils. Mokaddams, Lambardars and Patwaris etc. were the revenue collectors in the village. System of survey was also introduced. Each field was entered in the surveyor's Map.

The Acts which were introduced from time to time, improved neither the condition of pesantry nor did they guarantee the full proprietary rights of Malguzars. They did empower the settlement officer to interfere in settling the rents and this led to the deterioration of relations between the Malguzars and farmers.

After 1818, when Maratha territory was ceded by the Marathas to the British, the foundation for the growth of a regular system of law and justice was firmly laid.

Immediately after the formation of the Central Provinces in 1861, the new administration was faced with the major task of introducing a uniform system of law and procedure in the whole of the Central Provinces. With this aim in view, the various laws which were current in the different constituent units before the birth of the Central Provinces, were fused into one and uniform Rules and orders were made operative throughout the entire province.

In the year 1863, for the first time a complete classification of suits was prepared. In 1863-64 a station court was established at Jabalpur exclusively devoted to civil justice to avoid, to some extent, distraction incidental to a judicial officer, who had other and executive functions to perform. A law Act VI of 1865, was passed defining the competency of the various courts in all their several grades.

A system of inspection and supervision of subordinate courts was also evolved, involving scrutiny of records, procedure and decision of their presiding officers.

From the year 1865 onwards the judicial machinery of the District consisted of courts established under the Central Provinces court Act XIV of 1865 and those which exercised authority under Act XI of 1865 relating to small causes courts. The said Act legalised eight grades of courts to be provided over by the Tahsildar, Assistant Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, Commissioner, and Judicial Commissioner.

In 1885 an important scheme for judicial reorganisation was drawn up and incorporated in the Central Provinces Civil Courts Act (Act XVI of 1885), it actually came into force from January 1886.

The principal feature of the scheme was the gradual separation of administration of civil justice by the establishment of new civil courts in all places where there was work enough to occupy a separate judge.

Another important feature of the scheme was the relief of the Dy. Commissioners of the districts in which civil appellate work was heavy, by the appointment of more officers of the rank of Assistant or extra-Assistant Commissioners to be civil Judges with appellate powers.

The year 1902, was the first throughout in which civil judicial work was carried out by a separate staff.

A new criminal code was enforced with effect from 1st January 1873. It marked the introduction of an important era in the history of criminal justice. This code defined and enhanced the powers of various magistrates and authorised them to try cases.

Rules were framed and laid down for the guidance of Jagirdars and Taluqdars empowered with police and judicial powers.

The Government of India took rigorous measures for the suppression of witchcraft in the Central Provinces. The use of photography for the identification of criminals was started. The system was prevalent in Mysore.

~~Before~~ the advent of the British, no regularised and separate police force existed. At the time when the Central Provinces were formed in 1861, the only police property so called were old Burkandas. Colonel Taylor recommended the reorganisation of the police force in 1861 upon what was called the new police system based on C.P. Act of 1861. A separate department of police came to be constituted with the I.G. of police. The construction of police stations and residential quarters for policemen commenced from 1861. Before this system was adopted, the police personnel used to construct their own quarters.

The Head of the constabulary stationed in the district was the district Superintendent. The highest grade the Indians could aspire for was that of Inspector. In order to ensure efficiency in the detection of crimes, arrangements were made to instruct the police in criminal law and procedure and also general education. The police performed several miscellaneous duties, besides prevention and detection of crimes.

In 1861, Jails were placed under the executive charge of civil surgeon under the district officers, chiefly the magistrates. Prior to the formation of the central provinces the jails were inspected by the inspector of prisons, who was appointed in 1862 for the central provinces. The Indian Jail Committee of 1864 recommended certain improvements in the general management of jail jails, whereby, several reforms were made in the condition of prisoners. The Prisoners Act of 1870 strengthened the existing rules.

In the year 1881, rules regarding the hand cuffing and ironing of prisoners were passed. Police schools were established for the training of the police in Central Provinces.

Definite leave Rules were laid down for the police officers. The necessity of supplying collection of police circulars in

vernacular to stations and compendious handbook for the guidance of the inferior police was felt. Mr. A.C Hawkins prepared the first police manual which was published in September 1887.

From time immemorial ideas of Local Self Government prevailed in India to a far greater extent than anywhere else in the world. The villages and towns were small states in miniature where all the local needs were served by the assemblies of the people themselves. During the turmoil that followed in the wake of the dissolution of the Mogul India, those Self-Governing organisations almost entirely disappeared from towns and greatly decayed in villages. It finally disappeared under the British. The new policy of administrative centralization, dealt a fatal blow to the village self government. The government adopted no definite system in the administration of local affairs in the rural areas. The form adopted during the British rule was an admixture of the British and continental patterns.

Before 1870 the rural committees were neither powerful nor representative, but a great stimulus was given to the development of Local Self Government by the Government of India's Resolution of 1870. Under this Resolution, the first municipal Act of Central Provinces was passed in 1873 and remained in force till 1883, when the Central Provinces Local self Government Act -I of that year was introduced. Thus for the first time definite legal steps were taken towards the development of local boards. But the committees were entirely dominated by officialdom and popular wishes and feelings had no scope in them. This actually destroyed the sense of responsibility of the people and there grew a sense of indifference among the people.

Lord Ripon's Resolution of 1882 marked a decisive advance in the policy of decentralization. The municipal committees in some towns of central provinces were already in existence from 1867 and now in 1882 Lord Ripon's well known Resolution on Local Self Government indicated that local bodies should have a large number of elected non-officials and that Government control on them should be indirect. So the existing Act was revised and

Act XVIII of 1889 was introduced. The Act of 1889 was replaced by the municipal Act of 1903 which enjoined that the members should retire in rotation. It also started the proceedings and correspondence to be written in vernacular instead of in English. Thus we see that municipalities did a lot of work for the welfare of people that included sanitation, primary education, Water supply and police duty. Still much was required to be done in this field.

Till the closing years of the Maratha rule, there is no positive evidence about the system of education that prevailed in this area. Perhaps the Hindus preferred their children to learn great Hindu epics and the Muslim to recite Koran. In 1818 when the British took over this territory, they found a literature and a system of education existing among both Muslims and Hindus, in each case closely attached to their religion. Some private initiatives were taken and indigenous schools were established but they were ephemeral and less efficient. They were haphazard in the structure of curriculum and administration but they suited to an undeveloped Agricultural Society. With the publication of Lord William Bentinck's Resolution in 1835, greater emphasis was laid down on the study of English. The intention behind it, was to acquire English educated 'Babus' to help the rulers in administration.

The Halkabandi or primary vernacular schools were a new venture in the field of education. Despatch of 1854 of court of Director usually called the 'Magnacarta' of English education in India recommended that English language should be taught, where there was a demand for it but there should be no coercion in substituting of English for vernacular. Thereafter the schools began to spring abundantly in the district of Sagar, Jabalpur, Raipur. After the formation of central provinces, on the recommendations of Mackenzie, a solid infrastructure for the education in central provinces was prepared. On the basis of Mackenzie's recommendations, three circles of inspection were proposed i.e. Northern circle, Southern and Eastern circle. By 1862 various types of schools were opened.

In primary school there were two stages , preprimary and primary. But gradually the practise of providing elementary instruction to infants vanished. A regular system of education began in central provinces after 1863, from primary to middle and secondary Education, and then university education for those students, who sought to continue their education in higher level. The collegiate Education, started in Central Provinces in 1885 had its affiliation with the university of Allahabad.

The female Education attracted the attention of Government after the formation of central provinces. Sagar, Nagpur, Kamp-tee, Sitabuldi and Jabalpur were the only places which could boast of having girl's schools and that too was entirely due to the efforts of Missionaries.

The quality and efficiency of the schools did not improve, because of the paucity of the trained teachers therefore normal schools to train teachers was opened in Jabalpur in 1869. The dismal condition of the female education was also due to the conservativeness of the people. Under British efforts to educate the depressed class was made in about 1885-86. But the school always recorded a decrease and that too was on account of society's unprogressive attitude. The state of education in central provinces could not improve and for this the attitude of British Rulers can be held responsible because they never tried to understand the socio-economic conditions of the people of Central Provinces.

Ayurveda, as elsewhere in country, was the only system prevalent in central Provinces. Later on with the contacts of muslims, Unani system of medicine also became popular. The introduction of western or allopathic system of medicine coincided with the British occupation of this area i.e. in 1818.

Available records speak of the systematic administration of those medicines through well organised medical institutions only since the formation of central provinces in 1861. The present building of the military hospital in 1861 at Jabalpur was a mile stone in this direction. Under the Act XI of 1875

municipalities were mainly responsible for medical establishments, therefore since 1885 the management of dispensaries was transferred to the local bodies. The management of the dispensaries outside municipal areas was entrusted to the District Council. In the beginning the people showed great antipathy to take the allopathic treatment.

For the first time a civil surgeon was appointed in 1864 in medical department who was in overall charge of the government. Hospitals and dispensaries. He also advised the collectors on matters of sanitation as a part of his duty as public Health Officer.

The common diseases were cholera, Plague and small pox, which often took the form of epidemics. Cholera which often broke in the southern slopes of Satpura hills, was due to the pilgrims who returned from visiting fair at Pachmurhi, so holding of this fair in future years in spring season, when cholera usually broke, was prohibited.

Preventive measures as disinfection of water and anti cholera, anti plague and anti small pox measures were taken as well as antiplague vaccines and inoculation were introduced. But the administration report of 1862 of Central Provinces observed that those measures were not successful partly owing to the prejudices of the people and partly to the defects of the operation itself. Gradually the situation improved as in 1869-70 special vaccination centres were established in many districts and good work was affected through the exertions of District Medical Officers and Local authorities.

The cases of Leprosy were high in Raipur District, therefore, government Leprosy Home and Leper Asylum were established in Raipur.

Preventive measures were taken to check Tuberculosis. After a long period of experimentation a systematic registration of births and deaths was affected in central provinces by the end of 1866-67. The agencies depended upon for the collection of

such statistics were the municipal police in urban area and district police and Patwaris in rural areas, still the flaw remained, because the complete coverage was impossible and so the figures collected were apparently unreliable.

The collection of land revenue much depended upon Agriculture and this fact the British realised too well. Therefore, several acts were passed by the government related to agriculturists such as Land improvement loan Acts of 1871 1882, 1883 etc.

The formation of an agriculture and Horticulture society for the central provinces was mentioned in the report of 1861-62, with its Head quarters at Nagpur in the Maharaja Garden. Maharaja Garden was a nursery and a depot for trees, shrubs, plants and flowers, from all climates and all countries. At the civil station of each district a public garden had been formed. A trained officer came to Nagpur from Edinburg. The society received an annual grant from the government. Much had been done towards developing cotton cultivation. The soil and climate of Berar suited for growing cotton. In 1866-67 two acres of Egyptian and New Orleans Cotton were sown, but experiment failed, the area under cotton cultivation gradually increased and much of the additional cotton culture had displaced the culture of cereals. Dr. Forbes, the cotton commissioner for Bombay visited the best growing tracts in the Wardha valley and advised as to the best manner of picking and packing the staple for export. The severe famines made the cultivators realise the need of supplementing the rain fall by means of artificial sources of irrigation. Though the cultivators realised the importance of developing their lands by improvising irrigation facilities and through other means, the land Acts of the Government during 1886-1893 discouraged the Malguzars as well as the peasants by not fully accepting their rights.

The administration of Forest Department in Central Provinces started in 1860. Colonel G.T. Pearson, as the first conservator of forests for the Sagar and Narmada territories took over the charge in 1862. Considering forests

as a gift of nature people used to hack and burn the forest at their will but from 1879 onwards the felling of the trees in forests and shifting cultivation was stopped. First working plan was prepared by E.E. Fernandez, conservator of forests on 1st November 1899. Each working circle was divided into the regular and the Nistar felling series. Three rotations of 15, 20, 30 years were prescribed in the regular felling series. The Nistar felling series consisted of 5 years in rotation. As a result of Fernandez's plan, dead and deteriorating trees in the sal forests were removed, leaving only young and vigorous trees, an important improvement in the state of regeneration of the forests. The forests in the central provinces were kept two categories, the Reserved forests, under special control and management of the forest department and unreserved forests which were managed by the District Officers. Whereas in the 'Reserved Forests' all rules of conservancy were strictly enforced and to gather forest produce a License was required from the forest officer, for unreserved forests the rules were not so strict and they were leased annually to the farmers.

Since ancient and medieval times India had been a major exporting country. Besides its manifold cottage industries, India's customary industrial activity was comprised mainly in the word 'cotton'. Most of the cotton export was channelled through the East India Company which found a ready market for export in Europe. The advent of Railways was decisive for Indian economic development in a number of ways. For commercial and Industrial questions a new department of commerce and industry was created, Power driven manufacture in the province can be traced back to the policy of the British government. In respect of the cotton textile industry in India East Nimar was cultivating cotton in abundance. The beginning of steam gins and steam presses was made in the year 1890, Empress Mill at Nagpur was an important step towards textile industry. Cotton textile, silk textile, paper

Industry, Wire drawing dyeing etc were some of the major industries of the province. As the indigenous handloom industry was facing a cutthroat vie from the cheaper mill made textile from Manchester, the persons engaged in this industry had to search for their livelihood in other directions. All factories were looked after by District Magistrates, in addition to this the civil surgeons were appointed ex-officio inspectors of factories. The sanitation in the factories under native management was somewhat defective. Central Provinces, despite all efforts, remained, backward because of its vastness, people's ignorance and above all British Governments greater consideration for the consumption of British made commodities in India.

A critical study of the administration of central provinces under the Purview (1861-1903) leads us to conclude that since this period was the period of consolidation of British Raj in India, nothing altruistic of imperialism could be expected.

" Trial and error" administrative measures were witnessed, since, the period was one of transition also, along with consolidation. Certain lapses were, therefore, inevitable. The administration was less cruel and less ruthless than that of the Indian predecessors. It was not oblivious to the basic problems of Indian people, nor, totally regardless of existing administrative system.

The cornerstone of British Policy in the Indian sub-continent (as elsewhere), was, siphoning of India's potential wealth, in the form of raw materials, towards England and the use of India as a ready and profitable market for British finished products. The administration of C.P. could not have been an exception to this. All that Britishers did, was not solely philanthropic as to contribute exclusively, to the well being of the Indians.

Nevertheless, the administrative structure of C.P. , built during the period of study, laid the foundation of the

pattern of administration that the posterity was going to adopt in this central region of our country.

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