



CRIME AND PUNISHMENT IN TRAVANCORE: NATURE AND PERCEPTS

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Abstract

Travancore, former princely state in south western India now part of Kerala state. In this study tells about nature of crime and punishment in Travancore. Judiciary plays a dominant role in conducting trials and giving punishments to the criminals. In Travancore state existed number of crimes. These crimes give heinous punishments. In the final result of the study suggest that these punishment methods based on the caste also.

Key words: Nature of crime, Punishment methods, Judiciary

Introduction

Since 200Bc to Vedic period, the society is very rustic .Theologians knows Morals and values and also they were understood its greatness. Treachery, rape, steal, kidnapping these is existed in Vedic period.

Kaudilyas Arthasastra deals with how to find crimes and how to punish these crimes. Many of the works deals with the methods of punishments and varieties of crimes. Srancisde ,paulinospathiri etc were the writers described about ancient punishments and crimes also.

At early period existed heinous crimes are; murder and prostitution that given severe punishments was decapitation or behead.

Another serious crime was a man sexual intercourse with another's wife its given punishment was that man laid on the ironware and it cremate to become red hot¹. A man to do any crime which limb of the body. Mutilation was one of the punishment method existed among the Travancore rulers .Kollam year 628,vattezhuttu record mentions that in Thiruvitamcode caste customs violated vellanadar tribes ,so the king ordered to kill them².In ancient times caste violation remained in Travancore state. a women cover her breast came from foreign country. This cause to the caste violation among the Travancore peoples. At that time, the rules of Attingal princess to be separated her breast³.Caste violation was common at that time.

Crime is not a social given. It is constructed in response to social and political pressures⁴.The police force played a dominant role in maintaining law and order in the state. Detention of crime was one of the primary importance of the police organization. They were adopted various methods of detect crime.

Police were stood for the welfare of the peoples and restore the peace of the state .In Travancore had no written laws and these laws varied from person to person or caste to caste⁵

The head of the state and embodiment of authority, all power of the state vested in the hands of maharaja. Criminal and civil officers obeyed partly on the Dharmasastras in earliest days and partly on the regulationsthem in the force under the east India Company's government in the later period⁶.

The rulers were given grave punishments to the criminals like slowly being crushed by elephants, chopping away the hand, and leg etc. These are the punishments which prevailed in Travancore. Whipping was the common punishment methods. In painful approaches in ancient society was death penalty, hanging and beheading with guillotine⁷

Murder ,dacoity ,robbery, housebreaking, ordinarytheft, cattle theft etc are the most prominent crimes and these cases reported in Travancore state⁸.There was no organized violence in the state. Crime is not at present particularly rife in the Travancore, there is no organized crime, nor are there professional criminals. The commonest offences are

those against the person property and disputes regarding the possession of land with cases of smuggling and forgery⁹.

In the grave offences were crime against King, village assemblies and temples. These crimes considered as the treason, so they were also given grave offences.

Punishments vary from caste to caste especially Brahmins, they were the high caste peoples in the Travancore state. So they enjoyed privileges. They had done any crime, they had no gave serious punishments, they were only gave excommunication from the state, ordeal of balance etc. In low caste peoples they gave heinous and painful punishments like digging hands in boiling ghee or oil, hanging, capital punishment etc. Crimes and laws are interrelated.

One of the serious crimes was corruption and black marketing. In any officer committed corruption in the administration, such officers dismissed from the service of the state. They had to suffer punishment higher than that of an ordinary citizen of committing offence¹⁰. The nature of crime and punishment. Travancore was the mirror of culture and civilization of Travancore society. The Travancore rulers were never practiced injustice. Punishments awarded in open court or public place, especially they chosen temples. A unique celebrity in the history of the suchindram temple as the time honoured ordeal conducted there. Suchindram, kaimukku or prahyam as it had been popularly known as a particular mode of testing the innocence of a suspected offender¹¹.

Smuggling was also considered a severe crime in early Travancore. cutting of the nose and the ears was the punishment given that this¹². Black marketing was the another crime there In Travancore rulers detecting the crime was practiced trial by ordeal. The ordeal has been different ways like, by balance, by water, by fire, by poison, by red hot iron, by chewing rice etc. These each ordeal had a actual time. For instance, the fire ordeal was applied in December and March and also during the rainy season, another example was that ordeal by water applied in the hot weather¹³.

In Travancore, the lower caste women suffer many problems from administrators. In many ways they were exploited. They had no right to wear dress and also they were ready to pay tax for cover her chest. Intervention of Christian-missionaries these condition was changed¹⁴. A women had no money to given for covering her breast, so cut out her breast and kept in the plate.To the beloved memory of her name the place of Mulachiparambu

Police administration which was efficient in the prevention of crime. Preventive provisions of the criminal law procedure to decrease serious crimes in Travancore state¹⁵.To prevent crime strict enforcement of law and order made by government through efficient police force. In short the police and Travancore rulers stood for welfare of the peoples. After the intervention of British, existed law and order was totally changed.

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