

# A Relook into Administrative Changes in Mysore under Krishnaraja Wodeyar–III (1800-1831 A.D.)

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**Abstract :** The paper discusses several aspects that are related to the reign of Mummadai Krishnaraja Wodeyar, who was anointed by the British as the ruler of Mysore, after they defeated Tippu Sultan in 4<sup>th</sup> Mysore war. The newly created kingdom had several problems. The present article discusses numerous problems both of the people and the Maharaja. Here is an attempt to study the critical analysis of the efforts of the Mummadai Krishnaraja Wodeyar III between 1800-1831. His failures forced the English government to put an end to his rule and take over administrative responsibility.

**Key words :** Colonial, intruder, usurper, regiment, Amir, fouzdar, subsidiary, alliance, Kandachara, division.

## Introduction:

Mysore after 4<sup>th</sup> Mysore was given over to the ruling family of Wodeyars. Wodeyars were the strong supporters of the British during their war against Tippu. Tippu was considered an intruder and they planned to defeat and fall of Tippu. Resulting in four wars with Mysore and his final defeat and death in the battle in 1799 removed a stronger challenger defeat of Tippu was a prestigious issue to the British. He was the Indian ruler who had a greater plan to weaken their hold over India. The existence and extension of the power of Tippu were sure a real threat to their existence in the subcontinent. The grand plans of Tippu to join with all the Indian rulers of the South and seek cooperation from the Amir of Afghanistan, and French ruler Napoleon Bonaparte posed a reality as both the foreign powers consented, but the Indian rulers who were egoistic and jealous of his rising power, did not cooperate.

Surprisingly all Indian rulers including the erstwhile rulers of Mysore opposed the rise of Tippu. The royal Wodeyars guided by its queen Laxmi Ammanni were in constant touch with British. Tippu had an enemy within his own cabinet Dewan Poornaiah; the clever Brahmin who became the kingmaker in Mysore. He planned the fall of Tippu, and encouraged the erstwhile queen to write letters to English officers in Madras, disclosing the details of her lineage, and the need for support for her adopted son.

The main accusation of Wodeyars was that Tippu had usurped their kingdom. However, Tippu was popular among the people. Except for this accusation, they had no other cause for complaining Tippu's administration was far more progressive, innovative and inclusive. Presently some quarters accuse of religious fundamentalism and ill-treated Hindus. But the accusation of neglect of Hindus who were in majority was not true. It is proved beyond doubt that Tippu had almost 18 ministers and high level officers of the army and administration. They were; Poornaiah revenue minister, Krishna Rao-minister for finance and treasury.<sup>1</sup>

It is stated that this unrest did exist till 1804 and probably Mysoreans had strong opposition to British control over the state, would resurface as full blown Nagar resistance in 1831.<sup>2</sup> Poornaiah as Dewan, who negotiated with the English to fix the boundary of his kingdom and to bargain for more power under the Subsidiary Alliance treaty.<sup>3</sup>

**Palace:** The royal family was shifted to Mysore, as Srirangapatna was not safe, besides the English officers were in control of the Tippus palace. Thus managing the affairs of the royal family fell on Rani Laxmi Ammani. She efficiently looked after Young Maharaja's upbringing and education. She managed the affairs of the palace. During the period old palace in Mysore was renovated and a fort was constructed around it. Several other Houses were built. Building of offices and reconstruction of Mysore palace were his responsibility.

**Revenue Administration:** Mysore treaty of 1800 brought eight districts under the control of the Wodeyars. The capital was shifted from Srirangapatna to Mysore. These became the revenue districts. Poornaiah was not just the Dewan he was also regent for the young prince Krishnaraja who was a minor. Poornaiah wielded full authority over the kingdom for 12 years. He established the administrative system of Mysore and appointed those who were honest to him.<sup>4</sup> Many a time the officers in far-off regions neglected the administration and extracted more revenue than the government rate. Poornaiah was the dictator who ran the administration of the state with a deft hand. The Maharaja who was the titular head hardly had any knowledge of administration.<sup>5</sup>

Neither he allowed the Maharaja was allowed to gain any knowledge or training of administration. Thus it became a tussle between the Maharaja and the all-powerful Diwan.<sup>6</sup> By the end of his Dewanship he became very unpopular, when the British demanded his resignation he presented certain high demands, later British agreed for a jagir to be given to him and he was removed.<sup>7</sup> However his revenue administration was effective in bringing more revenue to the state. In this context, B.L.Rice observes Poornaiah's system of government was no doubt absolute.....the accumulation of surplus revenue presented itself to him, but Rice doubts whether this surplus fill the treasury at the expense of the state.

The revenue department introduced different types of revenue collection as suited for each place. They are a traditional revenue systems which had been continued previously. It is farmers who assessed and paid revenue regularly.

**Varam System or Batai System :** Here it is a land sharing system, where the farmer tills the land of the government and shared the profit over his expenses with the government. But he was not the owner.

**Amani Talav:** Here the peasants of a village tilling the agricultural land under tank irrigation is called talav. The Mysore state had several amani tanks. Profits will be shared between the government for providing water through tanks and the farmer. Like this several old traditional revenue systems were also continued.

Poornaiah had 8 revenue districts, where he appointed amildars and shirastedars. But his revenue administration was exploitative in nature, add to the woes of the farmers was the high handedness of the shirstedars, and corruption. The end of his Dewanship displayed his hidden. the ambition of gaining control over the ruling Wodeyars, putting aside their control over the administration of the kingdom. If the British were not the superpower he would have been in control of the state, he had more in comparison to Dalvoys, making the

Wodeyars titular heads. Gradually he turned more autocratic and exploitative, thus causing more unrest. His revenue demands were too high, only Brahmins were appointed as, amildars who were most corrupt leading to large-scale unhappiness. Dewan kept the Maharaja in dark about the affairs of the kingdom, who hardly had any knowledge.<sup>9</sup>

Nagar of 1830-31 revealed the hidden unhappiness among the peasant community. It was widespread and the successor & Poornaiah failed to suppress it, Maharaja appealed to the British to help. With the help of the English contingent the rebellion was suppressed, but Maharaja Krishanraja Wodeyar lost his authority over his state.

**Fauzdari Divisions or Districts.** For the smooth running of the administration, the Kingdom was divided into 6 Fauzdari divisions called: Fauzdari divisions had a Fauzdar; as the name itself connotes he had his own army of soldiers with the responsibility of law and order, revenue collection and justice.

1. Bangalore consisted of 28 taluks,
2. Astagrama 28 taluks,
3. Chitradurga 13 taluks,
1. 4. Manjarabad with 13 taluks,
4. Nagar-with 24 taluks,
5. Madhugiri 19 taluks.

Totally there were 125 taluks. Each taluk had one Amildar, two Shirestedar, clerks and munshi, Killedar, postman or news writers, messengers and other officers.<sup>10</sup>

Administrative details were bifurcated among 18 departments. It was a centralised administration where all 18 departments were placed in the same place called Attarakacheri.

In the Judicial system, both criminal and civil justice was based on previous systems. Amildars who usually dispensed justice followed local rules and regulations. Mysore had Maharaja's Adalat, where petitions over decisions of lower courts were heard. Maharaj was assisted by a Bhakshi and a Khazi

**Police System.** Towns and villages followed the old Kandachara police, Fauzdars had their own Fauzdari police, and in some areas, there was Barri system.<sup>11</sup>

**Nagar rebellion 1831:** Though elaborate arrangements were made for administrative convenience, there was no efficiency Poornaiah didn't control the Fauzdars who became strong enough to amass power and clout.

Secondly, there was a hidden flow of dissatisfaction due to comparison with Tippu Sultan's efferent administration, Poornaiahs lopsided developments, and Maharaja's inefficiency finally brought the total confusion outbreak started in Nagar region spread to the whole of that division, several ruling erstwhile chieftains joined the rebels due to dissatisfaction they had with administrative arrangement by the Maharaja's government.

The rebellion spread quickly, displaying the utter disability of the Mysore government. Finally, as per the subsidiary alliance, the British forces entered Nagar region, suppressed the rebels, many of them were put to death, and the situation was brought under control.

After the prevailing peace, and situation was under control, the English officers heard about the complaints of the Maharaja, the officers, and the people. Finally it found out the Maharaja was inefficient and had more interest in religious-cultural affairs than administration and decided to take back the responsibility of the kingdom.

Maharaja was made just a nominal head, the whole administrative responsibility was taken by the British Government. Chief Commissioners and Commissioners were appointed as administrative chiefs of the Mysore state. The capital was shifted to Bangalore, which became the administrative centre. Attara Kacheri and Residents courts were located in Bangalore. vi

**Loss and regain of power:** Removal of his authority on the complaint of misrule was a black mark on the Maharaja Appointment of the Commissioners concluded the administrative responsibility of the Raja, The Commissioners from 1831- to 1881 were in full responsibility of the kingdom, But Raja did not reconcile to the loss of his power. His advisors like Bakshi Narasappa framed letters requesting the English government reconsider his genuine claim over the kingdom. Many British officers, even British public supported the claim of the Raja of Mysore. It was long-drawn process. Bakshi Narasappa drafted a letter and it was signed by 7347 prominent citizens of Mysore, the letter was sent to Sir John Lawrence.<sup>12</sup>

Services of Dr. Campbell should be remembered by the royal family for his genuine services, which became fruitful.<sup>13</sup>

The newspapers and journals of England namely Pall Mall gazette The examiner, The Indian Mail, The Daily News, The Morning Star, and Fortnightly Review wrote special articles in support of the claim of the Maharaja.<sup>14</sup>

Major Evans Bell published his book 'Mysore Reversion; demanding reversing the authority of Mysore Maharaja.<sup>15</sup> All these petitions, pleadings and submissions became successful in 1868. Mutiny and its suppression on 1857-58 led to disappearance of the East India Company, start of the Queen's Rule or proclamation brought new hope to the Wodeyars and the British Parliament considered giving back the authority of Mysore administration to the ruling family as per their request in 1868;

Finally considering the perpetual treaty they had with the Wodeyars, the English decided to give back the administrative authority to the Wodeyar. It was effective from 1881, after Rendition; By the then Raja Krishnaraja Wodeyar-III had passed away only after adopting Chamaraja Wodeyar as his successor.

Meanwhile, Krishnaraja Wodeyan-III showed a keen interest in religious pursuits. He built several sattras or rest houses for the travellers. He gave a large donation to a number of agraharas, donations to Bhramanas and temples. Though he was shaiviate, patronised both Shaiva and Vaishnava temples, institutions, and learning centres.<sup>16</sup>

He himself was a great scholar of Sanskrit and Kannada. He was interested in music, painting, drama and arts. He published books by several authors for which he established a Printing and publication centre. He encouraged Mysore's style of painting little different from the painting encouraged by Tippu Sultan. Mummadaï encouraged education and encouraged English learning, whereby he established Raja's school, the first ever school in Mysore

To conclude the administrative adjustments made by the Maharaja's government was the need of the time. The problems the government faced were huge and multiple and needed deft hand to deal. Our observation showed that the efforts of Dewan Poornaiah succeeded to an extent to quell the unrest and to maintain law and order. But later on Maharaja Mummadi Krishnaraja III, faced the issues both inherited, as well as due to the mistakes made by the Dewan as well as neglect of Maharaja. Thus he failed as a ruler to retain his kingdom, he excelled in other fields like art, music and literature.

#### Notes and references:

1. The other prominent Hindu ministers were Sham Rao- minister post and police, Ranga Ayyangar, Srinivas Rao, Appaji Rao, Moolchand, Subba Rao, Nayaka Sanganna, Narasayya who was the chief Munshi, Nagappayya -foujdar of Coorg, Hari Singh, Sripat Rao, Shivaji, Rama Rao.
2. Janaki Nair, *Mysore Modern*, Orient Black Swan, Hyderabad, 2012, p7.
3. A. Niranjanraja Ursu, op.citi, p-57.
4. R. Siddalingaswamy, *Agrarian Relations in Mysore 1799-1861*, Navakarnataka Publishers, Mysore 1997, p-46.
5. Janaki Nair, *Mysore Modern*, Orient Blackswan New Hyderabad, 2012, p-9.
6. B.L.Rice, *Mysore A Gazetteers* Compiled for the Government, Government of Mysore, p.269.
7. Siddalingaswamy, op.citi pp-45-47.
8. M.Krishnaiah, *Samgra Adhunka Mysuru Charitre*, Ganavi Prakashana, Bangalore, 2021, p-47.
9. Ibid p-58.
10. Madegowda, *Modern Mysore State 1881-1902- A Study of the Elite, Polity and Society*, Mysore, 1994, p-16.
11. Ibid.
12. Mysore State Papers Selections Vol-iv, p-311-367.
13. Ibid, p- 323.
14. A.N.Niranjanaraja Ursu Mummadi.. op.citi p-219-230.