CHAPTER II

MYSOREAN INVASIONS AND TRANSFORMATION OF SOCIETY

The pre-modern political economy of Malabar was subjected to drastic change in the course of the latter half of the 18th century. The peculiar features of the existing state and society, as explained in the previous chapter, were in the process of a sudden shift primarily due to the expansionist policy of the neighbouring state of Mysore and the British intervention in the affairs of the province. As a large corpus of literature has come to light, the present chapter is not intended to cover new evidences, rather attempts to make an analysis of this process and present a hypothesis.

The writings on the Mysorean interventions on Malabar (writings/folklore/legends) share more or less the same ideas. Right from the beginning of colonial historical writing, Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan, the father-son duo of Mysore have been represented as the synonym of all vices on the earth. Col. Wilks' History of Mysore was a pioneering work in this regard. He vehemently used the Orientalist terms like 'bigotry' and 'tyranny' to characterise the administration of Haidar and Tipu Sultan. Meadows Taylor's dramatic narrative, Tipoo Sultan, highlighted the ruler as the embodiment of all sorts of wretchedness. The following lines are description of an imaginary camp of Tipu Sultan. "It was no uncommon thing to see
beyond the precincts of the camp, a row of miserable Hindoos hanging upon
trees, who had defied the Sultan's efforts at conversion and had preferred
death than change the religions of their fathers".¹ Edward Thompson and G.T.
Garrett, comparatively liberal writers also were not deviating from portraying
Tipu as a bigot.² Francis Buchanan, who was appointed by the British
Government to survey the conditions of the province of Madras, Malabar and
Mysore, had a very sharp colonial gaze while describing the indigenous
people. For example he was very much enthusiastic about the much debated
issue of conversions under Tipu's rule.³

William Logan, who has always been honoured as the liberal and
'sympathetic' manual writer, also was very conscious not to deviate from the
colonialist presumptions. He presents a sensational and typical colonial
narrative with much supportive statistics of the Hindus who were killed and
proselytised by Tipu Sultan. For example, he writes, "the country [Malabar]
was split into a number of Kingdoms and principalities, a prey to the bigotry
of its late Mohamedan conquerors abandoned by its principal landholders, and
distracted by the depredations and rapacity of the Mappila banditti [sic].⁴

¹ Meadows Taylor, Tipoo Sultan, A Tale of Mysore War, Madras, 2001 (Reprint),
p.267.
² Edward Thompson and G. T. Garrett, History of British Rule in India, Vol. 1,
New Delhi, 1999, p.206.
³ Francis Buchanan, A Journey From Madras through the countries of Mysore,
It is interesting to note that even a recent study on the Hindu-Muslim relations in North Malabar has been influenced by the colonialist perception of the issues of bigotry and tyranny. According to this study, "in spite of his iron fisted administration and his heavy handed exactions, Haidar had interfered little with the religious activities of his Hindu subjects. But Malabar was now entrusted to a ruler who added religious bigotry to other disadvantages of alien rule". The dominant ideas of colonial writers are found reverberated in the writings of the scholars of the present as well.

If the above-mentioned statements can be seen as externalist perceptions, the so-called nationalist (as a more convenient term for indigenous) narratives have got caught up into the issues concerning religious conversion, bigotry or persecution. For example, K.V. Krishna Iyer, in his pioneering work on Zamorins of Calicut deals with the issues of conversion without questioning the colonial theories. Similarly, while analysing the role of Malabar in Asian trade, Ashin Das Gupta concluded that the basic causative factor for the disintegration of trading enterprises was the invasion and intervention of Mysorean powers in Malabar.

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K. Madhavan Nair, the veteran nationalist leader and writer, alleges that it was Tipu's invasion of Malabar and his projects of proselytization as the prominent causative factor for the revolt of 1921. For another historian of this land, the conquest of Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan still aggravated the ills that bedevilled Malabar. Recent remarks from historians like M.G.S. Narayanan and others seem to be irrational and far from the methods of scientific historical research. While making evaluation of the national movement in Kerala, he outrightly condemns the Mysorean presence in Kerala primarily because those powers were responsible for the stagnation of process of development in Modern Kerala. The writers who are focussing on the 18th century trade and pepper politics share the same views. For N. Rajendran, pepper cultivation in Malabar was badly affected by the turmoil following the ravage reprisals of Tipu Sultan against the Hindu rebels in the area. Instead of making critical analysis of the colonial fancies and fabrications, the indigenous researchers were blindly following the colonial discourses and unfortunately they were echoing the same stereotypical representations.

8 K. Madhavan Nair, Malabar Kalapam (Mal.), Kozhikode, 1993, pp. 13-14.
Another group of historians, on the other hand, came to the fore with an antithetical view to the above mentioned texts with an overwhelming zeal of eulogizing the Mysorean powers, again stands far away from scientific method of historical research. Attempts made by C. K. Kareem, A. P. Ibrahim Kunju etc. were primarily focussing on raising a defensive stance with regard to the Mysorean rulers.12 Both historians were compelled to write in this way in order to create another discourse of the Mysorean rulers. According to them, both colonial and nationalist writers did not discuss all the facts. They claimed to have highlighted many other sides of these rulers as well.

While the colonialist writers often gave much importance to the religious sentiment as the prime causal factor for Mysorean invasion of Malabar, a rarely quoted contemporary record gives us a more logical and novel dimension for the same.13 According to Vella's (a brahmin chronicler of 18th century) description, the native rulers were responsible for the depredations of arrival of Haidar and the subsequent conflicts. Haidar came through the north with the aim of extracting the money Zamorin owed to him in connection with the previous battle and its settlement. Several other rulers


including the Raja of Chirakkal had to pay similar dues to Haidar, states Vella.

As Zamorin had been regularly paying dues to the British (it is said that Zamorin had mortgaged his ceremonial ornament and borrowed money even from the king of Pandalam at that time) he couldn't pay Haidar's dues. Though Mysore had extended his date of payment for many times, Zamorin still could not make the payment. The Zamorin's move to seek asylum in Kollam exasperated Haidar and according to Vella, the Zamorin had already decided to commit suicide. As soon as the cavalry of Mysore landed in Malabar, the Zamorin did commit suicide, setting fire to Ambadi Kovilakom. Vella underscores the Zamorin's inability to pay the outstanding dues of the previous years as well as the pressures from his own men as the important reason for the fatal incident. Vella goes on to argue that the prime motive of Haidar's assault was nothing but economic. He has picturised his own experience of buying back the stolen Bhagavati idol [which was allegedly stolen by Haidar] of Tirunavay temple from one of the markets of Kochi at a cost of 5000 panams.

If this chronicle can be taken at its face value, we may conclude that Haidar was an ambitious ruler whose prime motive behind invasion of Malabar was purely economic. A ruler who ascended to power mainly with

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14 N. M. Namputiri, 'A Malayalam Chronicle on Hydar's Invasion of Kerala' Indian History Congress, Bombay, 1980.
his military credentials, Haidar had to prove his mettle as a warrior and had to mobilize resources through raids and invasions. By his conquests in the north and acquisitions in Malabar, Haidar could well claim that he had added territory far larger in size than the original dominions of Mysore that the Raja had reigned.\textsuperscript{15}

Such policies were not the only ones followed by Haidar in Malabar. For example in Madras between 1780 and 1782, Haidar Ali tried to denude the Jagir of its population. Aware that the Jagir was a source of food, fodder, labour and even betel leaves for inhabitants of Madras, Haider burnt villages and either killed or scattered their local populations to intimidate the British.\textsuperscript{16}

Apart from this, Haidar was trying to introduce internal restructuring of the state and revenue system. His regime represented a combination of existing institution of the Mysore Raj with an influx of Mughal elements. For generating much revenue from agriculture, he took the standard Mughal view that the local potentates were zamindars and as such their entitlements were not sacrosanct. He aimed to dispense with their intimidation and imposed the land tax (which was a tax on produce, equivalent to surplus or rent) directly on peasants, realizing through salaried officers.\textsuperscript{17} (This system was really

\textsuperscript{15} Irfan Habib ed., \textit{Resistance and Modernisation under Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan}, New Delhi, 1999, Introduction, p.xxi


\textsuperscript{17} Irfan Habib, \textit{op.cit.}
adopted by Munro and introduced as Ryotwari settlement during the British dominance).

Though various factors are attributed for the Mysorean invasion of Malabar, the nuances of pepper politics of the 18th century are rarely explained. The expansionist policy by Haidar and Tipu had focussed on establishing their monopoly in pepper trade. They had a long-term view of controlling the western coast on the backdrop of the British projects of acquisition of spice trade. No other place was strategically so important in the eyes of Mysorean rulers. British had established their presence as early as 1634-35\(^{18}\) with a view to get control over the spice trade of the region. Tellicherry Consultations and other records bring out clearly the British role in the extensive spice trade on the coast.

Apart from the Company, the local rulers like Zamorin of Calicut and the Arakkal dynasty had engaged in spice trade. Instances of their involvement in trade can be seen as part of diplomatic relations at the same time, mutual conflicts and intrigues were common throughout the 18th century.\(^{19}\) Piracy, plunder and negotiations were the most commonly found terms in the Company records. The Raja of Kolathunad gave permission to the British to construct a factory at Tellicherry in view of collection of

\(^{18}\) Logan, *op.cit*, p.338; The Kolathiri gave the British an old fort 'Cotacunna' on the banks of river Baliapatanam in 1669. But Logan states that the factory was established in 1694-95. Logan, *Malabar*, p.343.

\(^{19}\) For example, See, *Tellicherry Consultations*, 6th 1727 p. 112.
customs duty from the Company. Later on, they were offered to build a fort in Tellicherry in 1708\textsuperscript{20} as fortification against one of his troublesome vassal like the Kurungoth Nayar.

To get a picture of the spice trade in the course of 18\textsuperscript{th} century, the knowledge about the political structure of North Malabar is a prerequisite. In the north, Kolathunad 'Political cluster' existed around the dominant household of the Kolathiri who ruled over Chirakkal.\textsuperscript{21} The Vazhunnor of Vadakara was in semi-independent possession of Kadathnad, that is the territory lying between Mahe river and Kotta river. [Kotta river got its name from the fort of Kunhali Marakkar, who built it on banks of the river at Kottakkal. The river is also known presently as Moolad river]. And yet another offshoot was in similar semi-independent ruling family which held possession of the territory lying between the Kavayi and Mahe rivers various portions had come, whether by family alliances of the kind described or by grants, it is difficult to say, into the possession of various chieftains who were all more or less dependent on the Kolathiris. Randattara, otherwise called as Poyanad [according to tradition this was the country, \textit{nadu}, from which the Cheraman Perumal went (\textit{poyi}) to Arabia] was under the Achanmars, that is four houses of the Nambiar caste; Kottayam was under the Puranat Rajas and

\textsuperscript{20} Logan, \textit{Treaties}, p.2.

Iruvalinad, (including Kurungoth) was ruled by six houses of the Nayar caste. Iruvalinad literally means the country of two rulers. According to tradition, on the division of Keralam by Cheraman Perumal, this part of this country is said to have been vested with the family of two adiyodis – a class of Nairs, Tekkadi Adiyodi and Vadakkadi Adiyodi. Lastly, the Mappila Chief of Cannanore (the Ali Raja) or Raja of the sea had secured to himself a small slice of territory in and around Cannanore. The original Kolathiri dominions were therefore broken up into a large number of petty principalities at the time of the founding of the Tellicherry factory, and the territory which remained under the direct rule of the Kolathiris was of comparatively small extent22 (see Map I). Naduvazhi-Desavazhi-Mukhyasthan was the way in which the political segmentation prevailed.

Due to the mutual jealousy and protracted warfare, the political atmosphere was very much conducive to external attacks. By 18th century, the Kingdom of Kolathunad was disintegrating. The Raja of Kottayam was by then independent of Kolathiri, the Arakkal of Cannanore was a vassal only in name, and the various princes of the ruling house of Kolathunad were no

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22 Logan, *Malabar*, pp. 343-44. Traditionally, it is believed that Iruvalinad and Kottayam were under the suzerainty of Kolathiri. But in practice we see that some of these principalities independently concluded the treaties with the British.
longer united. This kind of hostility and tendency to fight against their lords were fanned by the foreign powers from the Portuguese to the British.

The Arakkal of Cannanore was the most arrogant of Kolathiri’s vassals. Its position as a trading dynasty provided the opportunity to amass wealth which was spent mostly on luxuries and arms. The Dutch at Cannanore were the suppliers of western ammunitions to Arakkal. Both mercantile surplus and fire arms prompted them to lead frequent uprisings against their superiors, the Kolattiri. It was in 1720’s one such surprising incident occurred in which the then Ali Raja attacked the Prince Regent Cunhi Homo. As he failed to defend the Arakkal insurgency, Cunhi Homo sought the assistance of the British, which was readily provided. This was in tune with the Bombay Establishment’s policy of supplying arms and ammunitions to the local rulers and to wage wars on their own expense.

When the Raja had ill-feeling with the British, he had approached the Dutch for succour. The positive response from the part of the Dutch again caused the British to fear about the loss of Dharmapatanam [Dharmatom]. In response, they began to take the necessary precaution. These developments in the first half of the century gave the Kanarese a chance to become interested in the Malabar territories. The British had assisted the prince [Cunhi Homo] with 20,000 fanams worth of military stores when Arakkal started to revolt

23 Swai, op.cit., p.44.
against him. This act quickly silenced Arakkal and by which the British could ascertain their sole dominance over pepper trade in Malabar. But at the same time, the emergence of the French as a mercantile power and its claim over Mahe to establish their factory along with the Canarese invasion of 1730's had an influential impact on the British interests in Malabar.

The British attempted to prevent the French from establishing their stronghold at Mahe and in order to achieve that the British had influenced the Vazhunnor at Vatakara. As a result, the Vazhannor had moved against the French but the Nambiars with the Kurungoth and Narangoly sided with the French. British attributed this to a huge amount as bribes given by the French to the Nambiars. The Kanarese invasion was looked upon as a godsend for the commercial aspirations of the French East India Company. By that time they intensified their plans on Malabar. Accordingly, they built the fortress of Peringattur with a view to hinder any access to pepper coming to Tellicherry from the country of Vazhunnor and Iruvalinad. But they couldn't make a considerable advance in objectives except engaging in their own trade. But at the same time, the British had intensified their policy of intervention in the political affairs of the Rajas, which culminated in gaining the right to collect the custom duties over North Malabar.

The British had gradually extended their sphere of influence by building a series of forts at the island of Dharmatam. There were other forts which were necessary to preserve their commercial interests amidst the external as well as internal challenges. The Edacatt fort which was built in 1737 to prevent "unauthorised" export from Randattara, the grove island Fort, the Madaccara fort, the Fort of Kutali, the Morocoona [sic] fort, the Millian fort in the Kurungoth Nair's territory etc. were put under the control of the British.²⁶

It was at this juncture that the British had to face the most serious challenge to their monopoly of coastal spice trade in Malabar from the state of Mysore. The protracted rivalry between the two powers could be divided into three phases of three Anglo-Mysorean wars of 1768-69, 1780-84 and 1790-92. The commercial operations of the British on the coast had been disrupted due to stringent trade prohibitions imposed by the Mysoreans. In this context, the Bombay Council had even recommended a total withdrawal from Malabar. But it was the perseverance of the factors of Tellicherry that enabled them to avoid such a plan.

Haidar's first attack on Malabar was in 1757, when he was merely the foujdar of Dindugal. When the Acchan [ruler] of Palaghat appealed to Haidar to rescue him from the harassment of the Zamorin, Haidar positively

²⁶ Ibid., No. XXXI, p.28.
responded. He assumed power of Mysore in 1761 and controlled the administration of Canara in 1763. In 1764 he declared his intention to invade Malabar and appealed the British and other European powers to co-operate with him. While the French gave a definite answer of support, the British contacted the Bombay Council and considering the state of British military ability, Bombay advised Tellicherry to remain neutral in this regard. Such a position was taken because of the precaution in the context of emerging Maratha challenge on the Konkan coast. The Bombay Council had instructed also to appoint some emissaries to discuss the company's commercial plans in Malabar with Haidar. Accordingly Haidar promised that he would respect the East India Company's interests when he conquered Malabar.  

Haidar Ali attacked Malabar with the French assistance and he had assured the neutrality of the Dutch and the British. Within a period of five months the Sultan could conquer Malabar. Ali Raja, who had also been appointed by Haidar as High Admiral of the Mysorean navy, played a pivotal role in this conquest by acting as a scout for the Mysorean army which consisted of a cavalry of 4000, and infantry of 8000 soldiers.

Though Haidar returned to Coimbatore in June 1766, he was forced to come back in the following month due to the resistance staged by the Nairs against the Mysorean suzerainty. Before returning to Coimbatore, Haidar

27 B. Swai, op.cit, pp. 96-97.
28 Logan, Malabar, p.405.
announced that he had deprived the recalcitrant Nairs of their second place in the Malayali caste hierarchy and that he had banished them to the low status of untouchables. Before he quit the country, Haidar by a solemn edict, declared "the Nairs deprived of all their privileges; and ordained that their caste, which was the first after the Brahmans, should there after be lowest of all castes, subjecting them to salute the Parias and others of the lowest castes by ranging themselves before them as the other Mallabars [Sic] had been obliged to do before the Nairs; permitting all the other castes to bear arms and forbidding them to the Nairs, who till then had enjoyed the sole right of carrying them; at the same time allowing and commanding all persons to kill such Nairs as were found bearing arms. By this rigorous edict Haidar expected to make all the other castes enemies of the Nairs, and that they would rejoice in the occasion of revenging themselves for the tyrannic oppression this nobility had till then exerted over them".  

But later on Haidar himself realized the fact that it was difficult to ensure the submission of Nairs, because they would have thought death preferable than to such a degradation. Then he declared a further edict giving concession to those Nairs who embrace Muhammedan religion. However this sort of an ordinance could make a far reaching impact in the caste oriented hierarchical power relations of Malabar.

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29 Ibid, p. 413.
30 Ibid.
Meanwhile, Ali Raja was requesting Haidar to invade Tellicherry. But Haidar wished to maintain a rather cordial relationship with the British, at least its neutrality. Ali Raja had often looked at the Mysorean invasion as an opportunity to expand his commercial and territorial interests. Though he had been appointed as the governor of the former Kolathunad, he felt it was inadequate as some pockets of his territory were controlled by the factors of Tellicherry. By the end of 1766, Ali Raja raised claim on Randattara from where the East India Company obtained a substantial amount of pepper. Then he persuaded Rashad Ali Khan, Haidar's Foujdar in Malabar, to stop all commercial transactions between Tellicherry and Kottayam [Cotiote]. He also asked the Mysore governor at Mangalore, Shaikh Ali, to ban the exportation of rice from Kanara to Tellicherry, and in that way isolate Tellicherry, and cut off Tellicherry from the major sources of food.\(^{31}\) The interesting aspect of the policy of Haidar in this phase is his quiet diplomacy, where as the mercantile Prince's (Ali Raja) was overt and aggressive.

The first direct act from the part of Mysore towards the control of pepper trade on the coast was in 1767, by which the Tellicherry merchants were refused permission by the Mysore powers to buy pepper from the hinterland.\(^{32}\) As a result, the Tellicherry country merchants refused to sign contracts to supply the English East India Company (hereafter E.E.I.C.) with


\(^{32}\) T. D. (Tellicherry Diaries), No. 1467, 22 Jan 1767. p. 103.
pepper as had been the procedure previously. The British commerce on Malabar Coast was dwindling mainly due to these designs of Hyderali, especially a trade embargo on Tellicherry. Large quantity of pepper was ready in several parts and Mahe, Cannanore, and Badagara merchants were having permission to purchase and export them.33

These instances are pointers to understand the very motives of Haidar's conquests of Malabar. Haidar had realized the fact that the commercial success of the Tellicherry factors prior to 1766 in Malabar had been based on three important elements; the factors' financial and, even more so, political potential to buy pepper and behave as politicians; the co-operation of the country merchants in playing the vital role of buying pepper from the interiors of Malabar and transporting it into the Tellicherry warehouse on the coast; and the collaboration of Malabar Rajas, their ministers and some of the Kadathanad landlords.

These elements might have been taken for granted before Haidar's conquest with the establishment of Mysorean administration on the Malabar Coast. However, the elements which had ensured British monopoly of the pepper trade were swept away.34 Administrative structure and policies in Malabar were entirely undergoing serious changes during this period of time. Unlike the Malabar rajas, Ali Raja in the north, Maddanna in the south and

33 T. D. No.1476, 22nd Mar, 1767.
Ali khan at the apex of power in the Mysorean Malabar administrative hierarchy, felt no particular need to have the British on the coast. The British could no longer use their political influence in protecting their commercial interest any more.

The puzzled Factors of Tellicherry had submitted a request before Haidar to lift the embargo in Malabar and make the honourable Company his friends by giving them all sandalwood and pepper produced in his country. Haidar replied that until and unless the Company stopped its support to the Nair soldiers and helped his soldiers, all sandalwood and pepper shall not be given to the honourable Company.\textsuperscript{35}

Haidar was making two points very clearly. First of all, the British can't expect pepper from Malabar, as most of it had been destroyed by the Nairs, whom support and refuge was extended by the British. Secondly, the British may get pepper if they could stop protecting the Nair rebels and instead help him to subdue them. Haidar also underscored the fact that without giving military hardware to him, the British can't procure pepper from the territory of Malabar.\textsuperscript{36}

The British decided neither to supply arms and ammunitions to Haidar nor wage a war with him. Kadathanad Raja and Prince of Chirakkal had

\textsuperscript{35} T. D. No. 1478 A, 5\textsuperscript{th} August, 1767.

\textsuperscript{36} T. D. No. 1476, 22\textsuperscript{nd} March, 1767.
demanded the Company's assistance and assured pepper from their country to
the Company. In reply to the question of the Tellicherry factors, the Bombay
council expressed its opinion against risking direct confrontation with the
Mysorean Government. But towards the end of 1767 the British was forced
to revise this view and thought of a limited intervention on the issue. This
belated decision however empowered the Tellicherry factors to supply arms
which the Rajas of Malabar were repeatedly asking for.

Implementation of such a policy was mainly for checking the
expansion of Haidar's power in Malabar. This policy found its reflection in
the first Anglo-Mysore war in 1768. Though a war of short span of time, the
British had intensified their policy of extension of arms to the native rulers
and they were instructed to begin an open war front against Mysoreans in
their provinces. As a result, the Tellicherry factors concentrated its attack on
Ali Raja of Cannanore with a call upon all local rulers to concentrate on the
liberation of their own country. By the end of 1768, Ali Raja had been forced
to retreat to Cannanore and Maddanna as well as the new Foujdar, Venkata
Rao, had been compelled to withdraw from Malabar. Except Palghat, the
Mysorean presence in Malabar disappeared near totally. Consequently, the
Malabar Rajas who had taken refuge in jungles or Travancore returned and

37 Logan, Malabar, p. 410.
38 T. D. 1478 A, 30th September 1767.
assumed their power and the Company again started to collect pepper freely. The first phase of Anglo-Mysore rivalry was ended for quite some time.

The third article of the Treaty of Madras (1769) reaffirmed the commercial privileges of the British on the coast, while there was no mention about the local powers. The treaty had focussed on British non-interference in Mysorean Malabar and forced the Tellicherry factory to shelve their alliance with the Malabar power. The treaty provisioned withdrawal of Company's sepoys from Malabar hinterland. The subsequent development shows that ceasefire was merely temporary.

The second phase of Mysorean occupation started with the expansionist policies of Ali Raja of Cannanore. When the British withdrew their sepoys from Malabar hinterland according to the Treaty of Madras, Ali Raja had bought the Dutch fort at Cannanore. The Company at the moment was observing a second round of neutrality. In 1773 Haidar had sent Srinivasa Rao and Sardar Khan to restore Mysorean administration in Malabar. While Sardar Khan and Srinivas Rao attacked the stronghold of Nair power, Kottayam, Ali Raja incited the Moplahs of Randattara to revolt against the British. Though this revolt had no considerable effect, the military action of Rao and Khan forced the ruling Nair family of Randattara to flee again. Then they moved to South Malabar to crush the suzerainty of the

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40 T. D. No. 1591, 26th Feb. 1771.
Zamorin of Calicut. As the British turned a blind eye to the request of the Zamorin, he made an agreement with the French for assistance. But when Rao and Khan attacked Calicut, the French remained idle and thus the Zamorin’s power collapsed.

A few words about the so called 'Nayar influence' and their political and economic influence on the contemporary society may help us in formulating certain hypotheses on new power structures. Apart from the duty of being protectors they were also supervisors or overseers in the case of landed property. The Nairs were originally the overseers or supervisors of the nadu, and they seem to have been employed in this capacity as the collectors of the share of produce of the land originally reserved for government purposes. As remuneration for this service and for their additional function as protectors, another share of the produce of the soil seems to have been reserved specially for them. Because of their political authority as the naduvazhis, the local landlords and the military authority, [certain families had titles of Ayyayira Prabhu, (chief of 5000 men) and Pathinayira prabhu Chief of 10,000 men)] the Nairs got a prominent place in the pre-modern Malabar society. These chiefs were also empowered to levy customs duties on imports exports and transports. They had a recognised right to usurp the

41 Logan, Malabar, p.133.
estates of decadent neighbouring chiefs. All kinds of fines could be levied by them and when a man died without heirs the chieftain took his property.  

In the period under discussion Malabar was ruled over by various naduvazhis who were mostly from Nair taravadus. From North to south, the authority was chiefly imposed in the local level by the Nairs. Randattara (Achanmar), Iruvalinad (Nambiar), Kurungoth (Nair), Payormala (Nairs), Koothali Pulavayi (Nairs), Kavalappara, etc were the main ruling Nairs of Malabar. The Rajas like Zamorin and Kolathiri were acting like the chief lords of many greater and lesser Nair rulers [other local rulers as well] with complete sovereignty to the Rajas. But in some instances, the subordinates rebelled against their masters in the favourable times. Gradually many Nair chieftains declared themselves independent and the E.E.I.C. concluded their settlements with these chiefs. The case of Nairs of Congad, Manoor and Yerterra should be cited in this regard. According to the Joint Commissioners, the Kavalappara Nairs were almost in a position of independent 'state' as this Nayar had never paid revenue to any suzerain

43 Ibid, p. 112.
44 Logan, Malabar, pp. 627-662.
authority.\textsuperscript{47} This trend was visible in the context of Mysorean invasion and subsequent British conquest. The Nairs had sought for succour from the foreign powers as well. After the treaty of 1792 the Company was concluding revenue settlement with individual chiefs rather than with the sovereign authority. From these evidences we can come to a conclusion of existence of a strong Nayar power in Malabar. These powers are occasionally referred to in the colonial papers and other reports under the rubric of ‘Nayar powers’.

There was a major shift in the political equations during the second coming of Haidar in 1774. While the Raja of Chirakkal and other local potentates were aligned with the British before 1766, the impression had spread that the British was incapable of preserving the security of the Malabar Rajas. Accordingly, one of the hitherto strongest allies of the British, Chirakkal Raja with others changed their side and became the allies of Mysore.\textsuperscript{48} As in March he secretly made peace with Haidar and accordingly he was made governor of the districts of Cotiote (Kottayam), Wynad, Nambullacottah, Iruvanzhinad and Kurungoth.\textsuperscript{49} Many local rulers dared to come in similar lines and some had even insulted the Company’s flag at that time.\textsuperscript{50}

\textsuperscript{47} Ibid, p. 203-04.
\textsuperscript{48} B. Swai, \textit{op.cit.}, p.108.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{50} \textit{Secret and Political Department Diary [S.P.D.D]}, No. 21, 1779 pp. 654-2.
Developments in Malabar after the first Anglo-Mysore war prompted the Bombay council to take a decision of reducing Tellicherry's status from a settlement to a residency. There was a clear indicator to Chirakkal Raja and others that the British were no longer a mighty force in Malabar. As a result the Raja had sent a force of fighting Nairs to get back Randettara and Ezhimala (Mount Delli) from the British. And he had also tried to cut down the trade links between Tellicherry on the one hand and Chirakakkal on the other. Though the British protested, they couldn't find success. It was a hard time for the factors’ trade motives on the coast.

In this context, though the share of Malabar pepper trade with the E.E.I.C. was dwindling, the demand for pepper increased than ever before.\textsuperscript{51} Realizing this fact the Board of Directors instructed the Governor of Bombay to supply with arms and ammunitions in return to pepper and sandalwood. The Company demanded to allow country merchants to collect products in Kottayam district. But it is a fact that even before his invasion of Malabar, Haidar had demanded cash for pepper, sandalwood etc. As the British refused his request he contacted others and by 1773, the Sultan had been getting a satisfactory amount of these commodities from the French.\textsuperscript{52}

\textsuperscript{51} N. Rajendran, ‘Shifting Balance of Pepper Trade in the late 18\textsuperscript{th} century India,’ in Papers in Honour of Prof. A.P. Ibrahim Kunju, Calicut, 1981, p. 175.

\textsuperscript{52} T. D, 11\textsuperscript{th} December, 1773.
belated proposal, Haidar refused to waive the embargo imposed by his officials on Tellicherry. A war between the two on this issue was imminent.

A war broke out between the French and the British in Europe which had its resonance in the land of Malabar as well. It was begun when the Madras Presidency sent troops to attack Mahe to be joined by the Tellicherry troops. Haidar was enraged and ordered his tributaries to go to rescue of Mahe.\textsuperscript{53} Though he had also sent an army from Coorg, the English could occupy Mahe in 1779. Considering the act as a breach of the Madras Treaty (because Mahe was treated as part of \textit{Khudadad Sarkar} by Haidar), Haidar attacked fort St. George in the same year and instructed Sardar Khan to attack Tellicherry simultaneously. So started the second Anglo-Mysore war, which was the last stage of the second phase of the British struggle to recover monopoly of pepper trade in Malabar.\textsuperscript{54}

Sardar Khan could make great advances in South Malabar. He had closed commercial residency of the British at Calicut and moved on to Kottayam to prepare for storming of Tellicherry. The Bombay council was helpless in assisting the Tellicherry Factors because they felt that the most immediate and challenging threat which will determine the existence of the presidency itself was that of the Marathas.

\textsuperscript{53} S.P.D.D. 19A, 13\textsuperscript{th} September, 1778 and \textit{R. J. C.}, Vol. 1, p.32.

\textsuperscript{54} B. Swai, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 114.
In this troubled time the Tellicherry was trying to get the support of local powers to build defence against Sardar Khan. Anjengo and the Raja of Travancore helped them very much and the Malabar Rajas and Nairs were encouraged to wage war against the Mysorean powers. There emerged an alliance between the Malabar Rajas of Kadathanad, Kottayam and Calicut overwhelmingly fought and defeated the French in Mahe on 19th March 1779.\(^{55}\)

The British also asked the local merchants of Tellicherry to contribute liberally towards the defence of the Residency. The response was overwhelming, because the traders found the last "oasis of peace and security and good government" in Malabar that was the factory of Tellicherry.\(^{56}\) The following leading traders such as Paliarandi Macky, Comben Alupy, Chovakaran Musa, Baile Babajee, Bodocandy Amod, and Banibelli Abdulla, etc. contributed a total of Rs. 14,000/- toward the war effort.\(^{57}\) Until 1781, the Bombay Council could extend support only in the aftermath of its negotiation for peace with the Marathas.\(^{58}\) The Tellicherry could manage with this assistance.

\(^{56}\) T. D., 1514, 3\(^{rd}\) A.P. 1794, p.125.
\(^{57}\) B. Swai, op. cit., p. 117.
\(^{58}\) S. P. D. D., No. 26, Para 37, 1782.
Soon after the arrival of the British troops under the command of Major Abington and Humberstone in Malabar, they could advance of Sardar Khan in the North. The Mysorean strongholds in the south easily surrendered to the British. The local lords like Raja of Kadathanad, Kottayam and Iruvalinad returned to their countries. The Zamorin could also restore his power in Calicut.

As the threat from Mysore had almost gone, the factors submitted a proposal for annexation of Malabar but were rejected by the Bombay Council. The Tellicherry then thought of making the local lords such as Kadathanad, Kottayam, Zamorin, Iruvalinad and their allies and in effect, tributaries. Each Raja had to sign a treaty of friendship, more importantly for transferring exclusive right of purchasing pepper, cardamom, sandalwood and any other spices.59 Though similar adjustment was made with almost all local powers, the factors could make out the fact that some of the Rajas could not comply with their assurance of collecting and providing estimated pepper to the Company. In such cases, the factors would admonish the Rajas and order to collect the maximum.

In the course of time, Haidar died in action (1782) and the second Anglo-Mysore war ended in 1784, when Tipu Sultan and Madras signed the

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59 For more details of proposals and provisions of treaties, see, S. P. D. D., No. 27.
Treaty of Mangalore. But for Tipu, it was embarrassing to accept one of the provisions regarding Malabar Rajas. According to the treaty, the Malabar Rajas were part and parcel of the Company, where as for Tipu they were indeed the part of Khudad Sarkar and nothing could be decided on the province by the British other than through his own officials. The controversial provision was withdrawn due to the objection raised by Tipu. Thus the commercial and political motives of the British were once again questioned. Nevertheless, as the Company entered the third and last phase of the struggle for the control of the spice trade, Tellicherry was reinstated to the status of a settlement, largely because of the impressive performance its factors had displayed when resisting Sardar Khan's siege from 1779 to 1782.

The most important task of Tipu was the restoration of power in the province. He launched certain innovations on spice trade with a view to grab the British influence and by which to weaken them. He imposed very severe commercial restrictions on the Tellicherry settlement and Calicut Residency. Consequently the trade of the English settlement of Tellicherry and the French settlement of Mahe declined. But while permitting private enterprise, Tipu became chief merchant of his country, and established state monopoly over gold, tobacco, sandalwood, precious metals, elephants, coconuts and

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60 Logan, Treaties, p. 83.
61 B. Swai, op. cit., p. 124.
62 Ibid.
black pepper. Timber was also come under monopoly, the owners of forest being given three rupees a candy. The income of Tipu from forests in Malabar was calculated as 30,000 pagodas.63

Calicut was one of the major centres of timber trade. From there some teak wood was sent to Mangalore, where it was used to build vessels for Tipu. The rest was sold to the Indian, Arab, and European merchants. At first a Moplah was in charge of cutting teak wood trees, but later a brahmin was appointed in his place. Under Tipu's orders Raja Ramachandra established state shops in every taluk which did business in gold, silver, cloth and other articles. Apart from this, the Sultan had tried to abolish the local bankers and to take over the functions of remittance and exchange himself.64

The British records speak of Malabar forests of Eranad and Velatre [Vellattiri – the Valluvanad taluk] rich with teak wood, black wood, iron wood, jack wood and bentucka (Ventek) which was being brought from the most remote part of the Eastern mountains. There are also references about the felling of Timber by Tipu and who used to keep a number of elephants with him for the purpose. This trade of Tipu was transformed in to an established one with a number of carpenters, labourers, peons and elephants.65

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64 Ibid.
According to Mr. Farmer, most of these forests were private property and Tipu had made an allowance to the proprietors according to ancient customs of two *fanams* per tree of ten inches diameter, and that since his assumption of monopoly in 1785, the price of timber had risen at Bombay.\(^66\)

The mode of procurement of timber as explained by Farmer is quite interesting. "Before the timber be cut down, it must be barked and allowed to stand two, three or four seasons to dry and consolidate; after which it is generally felled in October and November and drag by elephants (the use of which is indispensable) to the water side, in the month of July and when the rivers being then full, these timbers reach Vipoor (Beypore) in the vicinity of Calicut in September, where a merchant can all the changes and risks included afford on market places".\(^67\) In this way about 4000 candies of timber was received by Tipu Sultan from Malabar alone.\(^68\)

It is more sensible to believe that this timber trade along with the spice trade had a determining role in the selection of Feroke (a village formerly called Paramukku) as the capital of Mysorean Malabar. After the treaty of Mangalore, (1784) the British were compelled to give up their claim over the province and the whole Malabar was again moved to the hands of Tipu Sultan. The result was the re-assertion of the Mysorean power over Malabar

\(^{66}\) *Ibid*, p. 454.  
\(^{67}\) *Ibid*.  
\(^{68}\) *Ibid*, p. 455.
by appointing Arshad Beg Khan as the Governor. It was in 1788 Tipu decided to remove the old capital at Calicut to a much preferable station between seven or eight miles away from its mouth which was better adapted to become a sea port than any other port, and where he built a fort and city, named as Farookhabad.  

This new capital was geographically and strategically more important. As it was on the banks river Chaliyar, it could monitor the conveyance of spices collected from the eastern hinterlands and timber from the hillocks. Similarly, the proximity of Beypore port was also an added benefit. The procured goods could easily be transported from the new city without much risk. The whole trade of Calicut might have shifted to Feroke within days. Buchanan observes that Tipu had destroyed the commercially flourishing city of Calicut which was the seat of Zamorins. It was because of this flourishing river borne timber trade. The British later constructed a saw mill under the initiative of Mackonochie at Beypore, which was a failure. It was along with the establishment of the mill that a survey of forest resources of Malabar was proposed by the British. During the time of the British, the

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70 Buchanan, op.cit, p. 474.
71 Pamela Nightingale, op.cit, pp. 100-01, for more details, see also S. P. D. D., Nos. 106, and 109, 1801.
timber was also coming from Kuttyadi forest area to Calicut.\textsuperscript{72} Baliapatam (Valapatanam) in the North was another centre of extensive timber trade.\textsuperscript{73}

The Mysoreans, especially Tipu Sultan, had established a wide road network in order to enlarge his commercial as well as political ambitions of the Sultan. Another notable measure by Tipu in order to restrict the British influence on Malabar was to intimidate the local potentates as well as local traders. He realized the fact that success of British commerce in Malabar was as a result of the subordination of the local merchants to the E.E.I.C. through the credit system. Like his father, Tipu also saw the merchants of Tellicherry as a lucrative source of revenue. The need to retain the merchants in the Khudadad Sarkar was therefore considered important. He thought that the best way to eliminate the Company from the spice trade in Malabar was to ensure that the Moplah merchants should be forced to withdraw from Tellicherry.

Sultan found Arakkal Beebi as the most apt person to implement such an important assignment and she put into effect the plan in January 1786. Firstly, she sent this message secretly to Chovakaran Moosa, one of the principal merchants of Tellicherry and other five merchants to leave from "the British territory" and she offered assylum either in her own district or in those of Nawab. Hearing this news, instead of leaving the country, the scared

\textsuperscript{72} Logan, \textit{Malabar}, p.41.
\textsuperscript{73} P. Nightingale, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 101.
merchants fled to Tellicherry factors seeking asylum and then decided not to leave Tellicherry.

By the beginning of the 18th century, Tellicherry had emerged as one of the prominent trading centres of Malabar. The British flourished in Tellicherry as they conferred contracts to local merchants for collection of spices from hinterlands of Malabar. *Diaries and Consultations* of Tellicherry refer to a number of merchants' names like Batilapaqui, Baunibetti Cunhippy, Comben Allipy, Chato of Agar, Cacart Tupy, Cunhiseu of Cotiote, Ticandy Cunially, Ekoda Moosa, and Madicarrem Calandera. Of course they were the feeding agents of the British who helped to flourish their trade motives. Tellicherry had developed to a modern town at that time. (It was developed as one of the major trading centres on the western coast and there was even a branch of Madras Bank and branches of three European banks at Tellicherry in the beginning of twentieth century).

Some facts related to the procurement of pepper in Malabar will be helpful to our discussion. In the southern division of Malabar, the traders go to the cultivators of pepper in June, July or August, and advance them money, on conditions that in January or February the cultivators shall deliver their pepper at a given price. The money advanced is a proportion to the needs of the cultivator. If he be pressed for money, not above two thirds of the value

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will be given. In other cases where the cultivator is not so necessitous, the money advanced is nearer the true value of the pepper. If the cultivator does not deliver the stipulated quantity of pepper, he must pay for the deficiency at the Calicut price, which is considerably greater than the common rate of the interior part of the province. The advance was frequently made in cloth or other goods; but most commonly in old fanams, worthy of quarter a rupee. There were many Moplah merchants who were prudent enough to wait for their money until the produce of their gardens is ready for delivery.\textsuperscript{76}

According to Buchanan, compared to the farmers of southern districts, the farmers in the north were almost under control of the great monopolist Chovvakkaran Moosa. The main centres of pepper cultivation in Malabar were Randattara, Irikkur, Kottayam, Kuttyadi, Mananthavadi, Pulpalli, Thamarassery, Kodenchery, Eranad, Valluvanad and Nilambur.

Buchanan observes, “Farmers of prudence and substance, such as the Mappilas mostly received no advances; but, when their pepper was fit for market sold it to the best advantage, and delivered it at the sea-port towns from 24 to 25 old \textit{Vira raya Fanams} per a Tolam, or at from 120 to 125 Rupees a \textit{Canti} of 640 lb. The case, however is very different with most of

\textsuperscript{76} Buchanan, \textit{op. cit.}, p.455.
the Hindus, who in Malabar are as remarkable for a thoughtless profusion, as in other province they are notoriously penurious”.77

During the time of Tipu's reign he had established regional warehouses [Pandyalas] in various places in Malabar.78 In the year 1789 when he established a monopoly in trade, he established the principal factory at Badagara [Kadathanad], others were at different parts of the coast such as Mahe, Koyilandy, Calicut etc. In any of these factories, the goods were received at a fixed rate, and paid for by the government, and were afterwards sold by the factors, on its account, to any person who chose to export them. The price fixed on the goods at delivery was low. The produce of the country was chiefly exported in vessels coming from Muscat, Cutch, Surat, Bombay, Goa and Mangalore.79

The British Factors realized the fact that the local rajas had an influential role in the control of pepper in Malabar. As land owners, the Rajas received pepper from the cultivators on payment of rent and in return for money advanced to them to provide food and necessities of life. They used their power and influence to purchase at low prices the greater part of the balance of pepper. In this, the Rajas worked closely with the merchants of the province, who bought pepper from them and disposed it of to foreign traders,

77 Ibid, p. 467.
79 Buchanan, op. cit., pp. 515-16.
Arabs and merchants from Gujarat and the North. The merchants also collected supplies in small parcels from individual cultivators to whom they advanced money and who were not under the direct influence of the rajas.\textsuperscript{80}

The rajas and the merchants of Malabar, almost all of the latter were Mappilas, between them held the pepper trade in a tight grip. When there was a competition between the French and the British on trade in Mahe, the rajas and the traders made large profits. Another policy followed by Mr. Farmer was giving bribes to the ministers of the rajas, for example Shamnauth, the minister of the Zamorin. This method was found effective as he offered to deliver pepper from the southern part of the territory by using the Zamorin's officers to collect the vines.\textsuperscript{81}

When the Company gained the supremacy over Malabar, for the first time the company claimed a total monopoly. Pepper which was not bound for the Company's warehouses was declared contraband, and any merchant found carrying it would be expelled from the province.\textsuperscript{82} This plan of monopolising pepper was supported by Lord Cornwallis and he expressed his wish that the revenues of the province might be received in pepper as far as possible. The Commissioners were also ordered to turn their attention to Travancore and to secure for the Company a large share of that country's pepper trade as was

\begin{footnotes}
\item[80] P. Nightingale, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 84.
\item[81] \textit{Ibid}, pp. 85-86.
\item[82] \textit{Ibid}, p. 87.
\end{footnotes}
possible. The Commissioners had soon begun to realize that their policy was an impossible one. Pepper was being smuggled at the price of Rs.200/- a kanti\textsuperscript{83} [one kanti is a unit of measure for weight approximately between 500 lb and 560 lb]. Almost all of Company’s pepper was moved to the hands of private merchants.

In 1793, when the British were trying to establish their administration in Malabar, they made no attempt for renewal of the pepper monopoly. The Company demanded half of the pepper produce of the northern districts in payment of revenue.\textsuperscript{84} Many of Tipu’s old revenue officers were reappointed by the Commissioners to undertake the duty of collection of revenue. However, the smuggling undertaken by some Company officials like Murdoch Brown, traders like Chovakaran Moosa and the Rajas remained unbridled. The fall of Mahe had not put an end to the foreign demands for pepper, because Arab and Gujarat Merchants still traded on the coast. Half of the pepper produce of northern Malabar was smuggled.\textsuperscript{85} Thus by May 1796, four years after the end of the war, the Company had little success to its name in Malabar. It had failed to establish its authority in the northern part of the province where the revenue was largely unrealised, and its commercial

\textsuperscript{83} Ibid, pp. 90-91.
\textsuperscript{84} Ibid, p. 92; R. J. C., Vol. 3, p. 294.
\textsuperscript{85} Ibid, fn. 3, p.106.
position was little better than that it enjoyed under Tipu. Thus the company failed in their major objective in the monopoly over pepper.\textsuperscript{86}

One of the most influential merchants, who emerged in the context of colonial forces, was Chovvakkaran Moosa of Tellicherry. Moosa’s name was firstly found mentioned by the Tellicherry Board in 1779, about eight years after the death of Ezekiel Rahabi, the Jew merchant of Calicut. Buchanan’s reference to Moosa as the great monopolist of Tellicherry proves that during the days of Buchanan’s journey (1800) Moosa was at the crescendo of his glory.\textsuperscript{87} The accounts from the year 1783 to 1793 speak of the quantity, value and price of the pepper supplied by Moosa to the Company. By 1790’s Moosa had grown to send his own ships to Mocha and to persuade the king of Kochi to let these vessels unharmed. His trump card in all difficulties was the E.E.I.C., which he would amiably describe it as our own Company.\textsuperscript{88}

With the unwavering support of the factory officials, Chovvakaran Moosa created an expanding sphere of influence that steadily swallowed up large chunk of the Arakkal domain. By the 1770’s Chovvakarans had become the richest and the most powerful lessees of Randattara district. The English factory considered Ali Rajas as the sole supporters of Haidar Ali on the coast of Malabar. Firstly the Company systematically eroded their economic base in

\textsuperscript{87} Buchanan, \textit{op. cit.}, p.456.
\textsuperscript{88} Ashindas Gupta, \textit{op. cit.}, p.128.
the hinterland. Secondly, it patronized the Mappilas who defected from their
camp, in the wake of their declining influence in Dharmapattanam as a
deliberate strategy to undermine the community support for the Arakkal
House.\footnote{Ruchira Banerjea, ‘A Wedding Feast or Political Arena? Commercial Rivalry
between the Ali Raja and the English factory in North Malabar in the 18th
century’, in Rudrangshu Mukherjea and Lakshmi Subramaniam, eds., \emph{Politics
and Trade in the Indian Ocean World}, New Delhi, 2003, p.99.}

Moosa’s position was not limited to be merely a merchant of
Tellicherry. He was entrusted with the task of revenue collection for the local
Rajas of Chirakkal, Kadathanad, Kutaku [Coorg] and Arakkal to make
payment to the Company.\footnote{Joseph Scaria, \emph{op. cit.}, p.3, pp.213-14, 399, 540.}
And on many occasions he had served rulers and
the Company as a ‘banker’ as well.\footnote{A. P. Ummer Kutty, \emph{Keyimarute Charitram} (Mal.), Tellicherry, 1995 (1916),
p.194; \emph{R. J. C.}, Vol.2, p.164.} He had also lent money to the British
Company, when it was in trouble. There is a reference to an amount of
20,000/- \textit{sicca} rupees borrowed by the Company from Moosa. By becoming
revenue farmers and extending loans to states and rulers, the merchants were
thought to have leverage over states. And by becoming revenue farmers,
merchants were also thought to have achieved direct access to the state
power.\footnote{Prasannan Parthasarathi, ‘Merchants and the Rise of colonialism’ in Seema
Alavi, ed., \emph{Eighteenth Century India}, New Delhi, 2002, p.201.} Instances of payment of cash in lieu of revenue and issue of loans to
the rulers and the Company etc. show the multi-faceted role of Moosa as a

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\footnote{Ruchira Banerjea, ‘A Wedding Feast or Political Arena? Commercial Rivalry
between the Ali Raja and the English factory in North Malabar in the 18th
century’, in Rudrangshu Mukherjea and Lakshmi Subramaniam, eds., \emph{Politics
and Trade in the Indian Ocean World}, New Delhi, 2003, p.99.}
\footnote{Joseph Scaria, \emph{op. cit.}, p.3, pp.213-14, 399, 540.}
\footnote{A. P. Ummer Kutty, \emph{Keyimarute Charitram} (Mal.), Tellicherry, 1995 (1916),
p.194; \emph{R. J. C.}, Vol.2, p.164.}
\footnote{Prasannan Parthasarathi, ‘Merchants and the Rise of colonialism’ in Seema
Alavi, ed., \emph{Eighteenth Century India}, New Delhi, 2002, p.201.}
merchant. At least three of the qualities of a 'portfolio capitalist' can be attributed to Moosa.\(^93\) To be precise, the indigenous traders, with the association of colonial forces had attained a capacity to accumulate capital in Malabar, though it did not flourish. However, Moosa and other traders had a powerful presence during the end of eighteenth century and early decades of the nineteenth century.

As already mentioned, Tipu's aim was to prevent these influential traders from procuring pepper and other articles and transporting them from hinterlands to Tellicherry. However, the Mappila Merchants didn't respond favourably to the call by the Bibee of Cannanore to move from Tellicherry to the *Khudadad Sarkar* for the fear of the fact that they would be dispossessed of their wealth.\(^94\) Because they found Tellicherry as the "only oasis of peace and security and good government" in Malabar; their property was not assured of security anywhere else along the coast of Malabar.\(^95\) But they stood aloof from the trade contracts with the Tellicherry. The British were deprived

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\(^93\) Portfolio capitalist is an entrepreneur who farmed revenue, engaged in local agricultural trade, commanded military resources, as well as on more than the odd occasion had a flutter in the Great Game of Indian Ocean commerce. For a discussion on portfolio capitalist, see Sanjay Subramaniam and C. A. Bayly, 'Portfolio Capitalists and the Political Economy of Early Modern India', in Sanjay Subramaniam, ed., *Merchants, Markets and State in Early Modern India*, New Delhi, 1990, pp.242-265.

\(^94\) B. Swai, *op. cit.*, p.135.

\(^95\) *ibid.*
of the chance to secure even small quantity of pepper they had obtained in 1785, for the Company’s official trade.  

The merchants stayed at Tellicherry until the end of the third Anglo-Mysore war of 1790-92 when Malabar was annexed by the British. The Governor of Bombay Abercrombie saw the seizure of Malabar as a chance to further the commercial interests of the Company. The Mappila merchants saw it as the occasion to further their commercial dealings with the Malabar hinterland which had been impeded by Tipu's hostilities. Abercrombie had understood the necessity to “protect the Moplas who were a very useful merchant class” for their own benefit and that of the Company. The Mappila merchants continued to be the Company’s principal commercial allies.

In the south, Arshed Beg Khan is reported to have taken stringent measures to conduct the British export and import at the Calicut port. He had issued a spate of orders eliminating all sorts of freedom of the company in Calicut. Mr. Firth, the Calicut Resident resigned because of this ‘tyranny and oppression’. Subsequently, Mr. Gribble was appointed as the new Resident and very soon he also realised that he could not get on with freedom. He reported that he was not permitted even to bring a few necessaries (like whisky and gin) from Tellicherry. Thereafter Mr. Gribble was also resigned and Arshad Beg Khan closed the Residency of Calicut.

96 T. D., No. 1500, 8th Jan 1787.
97 S. P. D. D., No.43.
The trade embargo imposed by Tipu had a far reaching impact on the British on the coast of Malabar. Their attempt to lift the embargo was quite futile. They realized that as long as they were reluctant to supply the fire arms to the Mysore Government they would not be permitted to engage in trade in Malabar. It was because of this reason that in order to beat the Mysorean embargo, the Bombay council deemed Travancore as the major source of pepper. The political condition was favourable for the British as the Raja was anxious to get British assistance against Tipu Sultan. As expected, Tipu made an attack in December 1789, and the British (Bombay Council) considered this attack as a grave threat to the last reliable source of pepper. The Governor General looked at this war as a matter of great importance and initiated a Tripartite alliance against Mysore. So in 1790, with the support of Hyderabad Nizam and Peshwa of Poona, Cornwallis declared war against Tipu.

The British had seriously thought of making an alliance with the Malabar rulers and the Governor General Council wrote on the 8th of April and 31st of May 1790 to the Government of Bombay to “encourage the Nayars and native Rajas in Malabar to shake off all dependence on Tippoo....” The Company instructed the Nayars and chiefs to be their dependent subjects and the “Company will pay them a moderate tribute, provided they will give the

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Company advantageous privileges for carrying on commerce in the valuable productions of their country".\textsuperscript{100} To facilitate these schemes they found in the Raja of Travancore "a faithful ally and best friend in India" \textsuperscript{101}

Cornwallis had done further to attract the rebels and Rajas to assist in the war. A paper of protection was published inviting the rebels to come under the Company’s shelter and support them in their attempt to oust Tipu Sultan from Malabar Coast. It reads: “In the name of honourable company, I, Robert Taylor chief for transacting affairs of the English Nation at Tellicherry, who hereby assure you (here enter the Raja’s name) that provided you will enter heartly [sic] into the war against Tipu Sultan and act vigorously against him, the E.E.I.C. will assist and protect you and do every thing in their power to render you independent of Tipu Sultan.... I do hereby further assure you, that in any future treaty that you may take place between the Company and Tipu Sultan you shall be included and considered as an ally of the Honourable Company”.\textsuperscript{102}

In response to this, the local rulers like Chirakkal Raja, Kadathanad and Kottayam Rajas signed a treaty of alliance with the English.\textsuperscript{103} Similarly, a treaty of friendship was entered into between the Raja of Cochin and the

\textsuperscript{100} R. J. C., Vol. 1, p.79.
\textsuperscript{102} R. J. C., Vol. 1, p.80; C. K. Kareem, \textit{op. cit.}, pp.113-14.
\textsuperscript{103} \textit{Treaties}, i. XCV, pp.85-86.
The Zamorin of Calicut also signed in such a treaty to “exert his authority and influence in embodying Nayars of that country and in directing their operations against the common enemy either separately or in conjunction with the British forces." Though the Beebi of Cannanore was one of the allies of Tipu Sultan, she was compelled to sign a treaty with the British. Thus the British brought local potentates under their control and planned to wage a war with their support.

Soon after the attack of the British forces from Madras, Tipu Sultan was forced to withdraw from the Malabar Coast. The British succeeded in making the dissenting Rajas of Malabar as their allies except Beebi of Cannanore. In December 1790, when Abercrombie arrived on the coast, there were only two places, Feroke and Cannanore having the nominal presence of the Mysoreans. The Mysore force had to face the fate of the great fall at Srirangapatanam as a result of the joint attack led by the British, the Marathas and the Nizam of Hyderabad. By every means this battle opened the way for establishment of the British dominance in Malabar.

Soon after, the Company constituted a Commission known as the Joint commissioners to enquire into the affairs of Malabar. The first measures of the United Commission was to announce to the inhabitants a general freedom

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104 Treaties, i. XCLIX, p. 89.
105 Treaties, i. XCVII, p.87.
106 Treaties, i. XVI, p.86.
of trade in all articles except pepper, which was under the restricted privileges of the Company\textsuperscript{107}. Though opening of the free trade was declared, indeed, it was indicated the Company’s monopoly in spice trade over the province of Malabar.

**Conclusion**

As we have seen, the Mysorean state had made an influential presence in the latter half of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century in Malabar, for quarter of a century. From the evidence available, the most important reasons for invasion of Malabar were, indeed economic and strategic factors. Lucrative spice trade on the coast and possibility of an attack from the British from Malabar prompted Haidar and Tipu Sultan to attack and conquer Malabar. For example, the income from revenue until the Treaty of Srirangapatanam was 68, 89, 892 pagodas (over two crore rupees) including the tribute of 66,666 pagodas from Kurnool. Apart from revenue, the Mysorean state had a huge income from the trade monopoly as well. Of course, this huge amount of income was the main source of inspiration for Mysoreans and later by the British to attack Malabar.

Haidar and Tipu desired to control the rich trade of the coast, as much to further commercial links with Muslim West Asia to break down dangerous

\textsuperscript{107} R. J. C., Vol. II, pp.181-82
dependency on the Europeans.\textsuperscript{108} Tipu had realised that the decline of Muslim-controlled trade in the Arabian Sea and the rise of the Company’s pepper interests on the West coast presented an insidious threat to all the Indian States of the region. Accordingly, he tried to stimulate trade with Arabia and Persia by setting up state trading institutions in the port towns. Tipu seems to have understood the political weakness when confronting the surrogate of a powerful European nation state. He had made an attempt to face European mercantilist power with its own weapons; state monopoly and an aggressive ideology of expansion.\textsuperscript{109} It is ridiculous to add a religious colour to the whole business of statecraft. If religious sentiments can be attributed in the case of the Mysoreans, why don’t we consider the case of the Nayaka invasion in Travancore? How far can we argue that all the conquests except the Mysoreans are purely expansionist (political) and the Mysoreans’ simply religious?

There is no doubt that the religion has played a determining role in the case of Mysorean state and bureaucracy. Unlike the Mughals or other Muslim rulers, both Haidar and Tipu were pious and strictly practicing Muslims and had tried to go the state affairs in tune with Islamic rites. But at the same time they were giving enough space for persons belonging to other


\textsuperscript{109} \textit{Ibid}, p.97.
beliefs and they were appointed without any religious considerations. It was on the similar ground that these rulers made liberal grants of land, gold, or money to the temples or religious heads in their own and conquered territories. At the same time the references to conversions or religious persecutions are not negligible, though such stories are not fully acceptable. Cases of conversions and religious persecutions may be better understood as a strategy of punishment against those who challenged the Mysorean power. When some questioned their authority, they retaliated at their best, especially in a conquered land. The conquered land, for the army and ruler, is always a conquered one, so they treated the people of the conquereds as enemies. Religious conversions and other atrocities were a form of punishment either to humiliate the local rulers, people or the British. When Tipu invaded Madras, the territory of Muhamed Ali, the same practice was followed. In the eyes of Sultan, Muhamrmed Ali was not a coreligionist, but simply an alien ruler.\footnote{Eugine F. Irshick, \textit{op. cit.}, p.14.} Until and unless we are able to depend upon the indigenous records, we can’t go further from the British fabricated stories of the conversions and religious persecutions. It is equally important to note that the practice of attributing authorship of any destroyed or dilapidated temple to Tipu Sultan is
a recent tendency. It raises the question whether this is a part of a conspiracy of the fundamentalist groups to locate the enemy from history.111

The argument based on the religious sentiments becomes a mockery when we consider that the strongest resistance against Haidar and Tipu from Malabar was from Gurukkals of Manjeri and Hydros Kutty of Chavakkad. The Mappila merchants’ attitude against the Mysoreans also, as we have seen, was hostile. They were scared of by the Mysorean invasion and found it as a great blow to their ‘fortunes’ in the context of flourishing British trade. They neither left the place nor sought asylum in Beebi’s territory in order to escape from the wrath of the Mysoreans. Rather, they opted for association of the British. Those traders had even financially assisted the British.

To be precise, as elsewhere, the economic motives dominated the whole affairs of state and warfare in Malabar. Religion never served as the uniting factor in the case of Muslim rulers at least in the case of 18th century South Indian rulers. The most obvious example is that of Nizam of Hyderabad, who stood aligned with the British against Tipu Sultan. Every ruler in those times acted according to their political prospects, or immediate gains and religion was never a factor of unity. Religion, for the state or the ruling class was simply an instrument. They would make use of the religious sentiments for their political motives, according to the needs of the time. Of

111 The present researcher has come across some of such 'stories' from several Panchayath Vijnaniyams and temple souvenirs.
course, the pepper and other spices determined the whole course of the politics in the 18th century Malabar. And this process was made possible as mentioned earlier, with the assistance and support by the Mappila traders, Rajas and the Nairs of Malabar.