Chapter - 5

THE HISTORICAL PROCESS OF NATIVE POLITICAL EARTHQUAKES

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By 1763, the English company had become the unquestioned mercantile power in north Malabar by practically easing out the other European and Indian rivals and by employing effective control over the native powers. It became successful in establishing indirect political control and direct appropriation of the resources in Kolathunadu. The Mysorean invasion of Malabar in 1766 and the establishment of their sovereignty over the region resulted in the temporary cessation of the merchant capitalist modus operandi of the English.

The invasion of Malabar by Hyder Ali and his son Tipu Sultan of Mysore in the latter half of the eighteenth century left a deep impact on Kerala polity and society. Haider Ali was a petty soldier under the Wodayar dynasty of Mysore. This dynasty came to prominence after the disintegration of the Vijayanagara Empire. In 1609 Raja Wodayar established his independent rule in Mysore with Srerangapatam as his capital. Hyder had his first acquaintance with Malabar politics when he was serving as an officer in Mysore army. In 1751 Marthanda Varma, the Raja of Travancore requested Hyder to assist him for suppressing the unruly Nayar nobles. Hyder made necessary preparations for this purpose. The Nayar nobles got frightened and they agreed to submit unconditionally to the King. Marthanda Varma intimated Hyder about this change of circumstances but the latter claimed compensations for the preparations he had made. When this demand was not met, Hyder decided to take revenge against the king of Travancore.¹

¹ C.K. Kareem, Kerala Under Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan, (Ernakulam, 1973), pp. 23-24
Circumstances leading to Mysorean Invasions

Hyder Ali became Faujdar or military governor of Dindigal in 1755. While serving in this capacity, he established contacts with the French at Pondicherry and with their help augmented his troops and military stores. He accumulated considerable wealth by plundering the neighbouring petty kingdoms. Hyder’s force made its first appearance in Malabar in 1757 in response to an invitation sent by the Palakkad Raja to help him to resist the expansionist designs of the Zamorin. Hyder accordingly sent his brother-in-law with sufficient military support to help the Palakkad Raja. Zamorin was forced to buy peace by promising to pay Hyder a war indemnity of 12 lakhs of rupees. In 1761, by overthrowing Krishna Raya, the last king of the Wodayar dynasty, Hyder had become the Sultan of Mysore. He invaded and annexed Bednure in 1763, which brought him to share common boundary with the north Malabar.

When Bednure came under his sway in 1763, Hyder claimed two lakhs of pagodas from the Kolathiri, which was originally due to the defeated ruler of Canara. He also demanded the Nileswaram Raja to restore all the forts, which originally belonged to Bednure. When Nileswaram Raja refused to comply with and sent an army to defy, Hyder decided to invade north Malabar though the invasion took place only after the lapse of few months.

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2 Lewin B. Bowring, “Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan”, in Rulers of India, ed. (Delhi, 1969), pp. 23-25, 37-38
3 Ibid., p. 27
5 Diary and Consultations of the Tellicherry Factory (hereafter D&C), dated 2 March 1766, sl. no. 1503, Tamil Nadu Archives (hereafter T.N.A)
6 Ibid, dated 4 May 1763, sl no.1472, p. 207
Hyder Ali had expansionist motives in Malabar on two different counts: first, for controlling the spice trade of that region and second, for ensuring steady supply of arms and ammunitions from the European powers on the Coast for feeding his military machine. However, the invasion of Malabar was facilitated by the internal compulsions of the contemporary Malabar politics. The recovery of the 12 lakhs rupees promised by Zamorin as indemnity was one of the avowed reasons in invading Malabar for a second time in 1766.

The Kolathunadu political structure entered into 'a sea of intrigue, conflicting interests and mutual jealousies' during the period under survey. Ali Raja of Cannanore ornamented one of his mosques with a golden spire and it was strongly objected by the Prince Regent of Chirakkal on the ground that such a practice was contrary to the established rules of the land. Quite naturally a war had ensued between the Prince Regent and Ali Raja. The Tellicherry factors mediated between the two and a hollow peace treaty was concluded on 28th August 1762.

In May 1763 Hyder conquered and annexed the port of Mangalore. The Tellicherry factory depended on that port for the supply of rice for the use of the factory. They decided to establish a treaty obligation with Hyder and an agreement was signed on 27th May 1763 at Bednure by which the English company was permitted to export 300 corges of rice from Mangalore either to Tellicherry or Bombay without paying the duty

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9 Minutes of the Governor General Sir John Shore on the Malabar Joint commission, Madras, 1879, p. 58, T.N.A.
10 Logan, n.4, p. 453
called Adlamy. Hyder was very shrewd in not allowing this liberty to any private English merchants since it will lead to severe fall in customs duties. The agreement further guaranteed not to assist the enemies against each other.\textsuperscript{11}

This was the preliminary arrangement between Hyder and the English factors. Hyder was desirous to maintain cordiality with other European trading companies on the Malabar Coast for procuring arms, ammunitions and horses from them. Thus in October 1764 Hyder send Anand Row, a Brahmin envoy, to the English, the French and the Dutch for formally announcing his intention to invade Malabar as soon as he had settled with the Mahrattas.\textsuperscript{12} In his negotiations with the factors of Tellicherry, the emissary requested English help with four or five hundred soldiers and sufficient arms.\textsuperscript{13} On 6\textsuperscript{th} November, Anand Row visited the English factors once again and delivered the message that Hyder had now made up his mind to invade Malabar and to make the rajas his tributaries. He further requested the factors to assist Hyder in carrying out his designs or to at least remain neutral. The English factors could not readily accept these demands, as they were liable to protect their treaty obligations with the Malabar rajas, especially the Prince Regent of Kolathunadu, against external aggressions.

Even under the shadow of an impending invasion from Mysorean force, chaos and confusion prevailed over the Chirakkal royal house. The prince of the northern palace of Udayamangalam and Prince Ambu

\textsuperscript{11} William Logan, \textit{A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and other papers of Importance: Relating to British Affairs in Malabar}, (New Delhi, Asian Education Services, 1989), rpt. 1, I/LXXIX, p. 68
\textsuperscript{12} D&C, dated 26 October 1764, sl. no. 1503, T.N.A.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 6 November 1764, Ibid, p. 121
Thampan of the Pally palace and the Ali Raja formed a union against the Prince Regent. The prince of the northern palace was made submissive upon conciliation but Ambu Thampan continued his fight and he was duly supported by Ali Raja,\textsuperscript{14} which resulted in a civil war. The Prince Regent came out victorious in defeating the contestants with the help of the factors at Tellicherry. Ali Raja and Ambu Thampan had thereupon decided to invite Hyder Ali to invade Kolathunadu as a measure of retaliation against their native rivals.\textsuperscript{15}

**Hyder Ali in Kolathunadu**

In February 1766, Hyder Ali along with a formidable force crossed the northern border of Malabar through Mangalore. The Bombay Council dispatched orders to Tellicherry to negotiate terms with Hyder and “to point out to him what powers were in alliance with the company and should not be molested”.\textsuperscript{16} Accordingly, a two-member delegation visited Hyder at Madayi and on 23 February 1766, and he agreed to

“confirm and ratify all the several Grants and Privileges made over to them by the several Malabar Powers for the sole purchasing and exporting the produce of the countries, particularly pepper, sandalwood and cardamoms from the Malabar frontier to the northward, the Zamorin’s dominions including them, and further I

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., dated June 20 1765, sl. no. 1474, p. 601

\textsuperscript{15} Foreign (Miscellaneous, hereafter MSS), sl. no. 55, para. 20, p.21, National Archives, (hereafter N.A)

\textsuperscript{16} Logan, n. 4, p. 459
do promise to grant and confirm the same wheresoever my arms may prove victorious”.17

At the fort of Madayi an envoy of the Kolathiri met him and sued for peace. Hyder made inflated demands, which were not conceivable for a Raja like Kolathiri having meagre resources at his disposal.18 On reaching Cannanore, Hyder was welcomed by the Ali Raja with not less than 12,000 moplah soldiers. The Mysorean army guided by Ali Raja and his brother seized the palace of the Raja of Chirakkal in February 1766 and the members of the family took refuge at the Brass Pagoda within Tellicherry limits.19 Ali Raja retaliated with vengeance and disrupted the English trade in Randathara by conducting continuous invasions violating the treaty obligation between Hyder and the English.

The Anglo-Mysorean relations on the Malabar Coast were neither cordial nor hostile at the beginning of the March 1766. The English company had a great deal of apprehension towards the usefulness of their treaty obligations signed with Hyder. The Bombay Council felt that the grant obtained from Hyder did not have any validity and the real motives behind signing such an agreement was to prevent the company from actively interfering in his schemes of conquest. They suggested the formation of a native alliance under the command of the company against the invader.20

However, the Madras Council did not accept this proposal and they suggested coming to terms with Hyder. Any disruption with him could be fatal to the interest of the company because Hyder could easily ravage

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17 Logan, n.11, I/LXXXV, p. 71
18 D&C, dated 21 February 1766, (MSS), sl. no. 1476, p. 255, T.N.A
19 Logan, n.4, p. 460
20 D&C, dated 17 April 1766, Ibid, p. 311, T.N.A
Malabar by virtue of his command of the passes and a powerful cavalry. Secondly, Hyder was an effective check on the Mahrattas designs over the Coast. Finally, a possible combination of the Nizam of Hyderabad and Hyder had to be avoided for the safety of the recently gained Northern Sirkars in favour of the company from the Mogul emperor. Moreover, the company could easily control him on the West Coast, “at any time when he was not prepared to resist or when troubles in other parts of his extensive dominions called him away elsewhere.”

The first of the series of clash of interests between the company and Hyder was on the affairs of Randathara which had been mortgaged to the English company by its hereditary rulers, the Achanmars, in 1741. Hyder ravaged it, on 7th March 1766, on the pretext that the factors at Tellicherry afforded protection to the princes and other refugees. Moreover the English had refused to supply him with gunpowder and arms. In a letter addressed to the Bombay Council Hyder complained that Ryley, the English chief at Tellicherry, had encouraged the refugees and gave them stores for molesting pepper trade. Hyder came to the conclusion that the English were destined to be the masters of the whole of India unless a change took place. They had already established political control over the whole of Bengal and the greater part of the Coromandal Coast. Their next attempt, he reckoned, would be to subjugate Malabar and he was determined to prevent it. Hyder came in contact with the Dutch factors at Cochin and proposed an offensive and defensive alliance with them for purging the

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21 Logan, n.4, pp. 464-5
22 Logan, n. 11, I/XLIV, pp. 43-44
23 Dutch Records, (hereafter D.R), No.13, p. 153, T.N.A
24 D&C, dated November 1766, (MSS), sl. no. 1476, pp. 62-63, T.N.A
English from the Malabar Coast. At Kottayam Mysorean army had a walkover since the ruler and his nobles had already retreated. On 28th March, the invaders marched against Kadathanadu where they met with the first serious opposition by the Nayar militia. However Hyder’s organizational skill and military tactics coupled with the use of his cavalry helped him to overcome the hurdle effectively. On 17th April, Tellicherry factors were compelled to send a small force to Randathara and a boat to Baliapatam for protecting English trade. At both places the company could not achieve desired results. This was the first point of rupture in Anglo-Mysorean relation.

Hyder proceeded further to the Zamorin’s territory and defeated him. Zamorin was in no way capable of accepting Hyder’s demand of one crore gold mohurs as war indemnity. Desperate and humiliated, the Zamorin committed suicide in his palace. Hyder sent epistles to Cochin and Travancore through the Dutch Commissioners and demanded acknowledgement of his suzerainty. The Dutch were successful in concluding an accord with Hyder to not molest Cochin on the condition of paying two lakhs of rupees and eight elephants. Travancore resisted the conditions and Hyder wanted to invade that territory. However, the

25 D.R, No.13, pp. 153-4, T.N.A
26 Logan, n. 4, pp. 461-3, Logan quotes a contemporary narration by a Mogul officer of the picturesque fight between the Nayars of Kadathanadu and Mysorean forces. Hyder had to cross Mahe river for entering into Kadathanadu. His tactics and bravery astonished the Nayars and they were more surprised and frightened at the sudden appearance of cavalry traversing Mahe river.
27 D&C, dated 17 April 1766, p. 314, T.N.A.
28 D.R, 13, p.113
29 A Report of the Joint Commission from Bengal and Bombay appointed to Inspect into the state and Condition of the Province of Malabar in 1792-93, (Madras, 1861), (hereafter JCR), vol.2, para. 18, T.N.A.
monsoon that had set in on the Malabar Coast forced Hyder back to Coimbatore on 27 May 1766.

Before leaving Malabar, Hyder secured his new possessions by means of garrisons at Calicut and Ponnani and bestowed Madanna as Civil Governor of the Province of Malabar. Ali Raja and his brother Sheik Ali were appointed as the Civil Governor and Military Governor respectively in the conquered territories of Chirakkal.30 Thus the first phase of Hyder’s invasion on Malabar came to an end by the end of June 1766. Within the span of four months, he was in a position to command a major portion of the Malabar Coast except Cochin and Travancore. The spectacular aspect of this invasion was that he had the command of a long coast with a number of natural harbours and estuaries, which made him a leading sea power.31

Hyder was not intended to introduce a massive revenue administrative system in Malabar at this point in time. Though a system of revenue was unknown amongst the inhabitants of Malabar at the time of Hyder’s invasion, she was very rich in money. “For ages, the inhabitants had been accumulating the precious metals that had been given them for the produce of their gardens”.32 Hyder organized an expedition towards Malabar primarily to acquire resources for his expansionist designs elsewhere in South India. Immediately after the conquest, Hyder extorted vast sums with the help of his military officers and a system of revenue was not felt until these sources began to fail.

30 Logan, n. 4, p. 465
32 Francis Buchannan, A Journey from Madras through the countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar, (New Delhi, Asian Education Services, 1988), vol.2, rpnt., p. 548
Native Resistance

No sooner had Hyder retired to Coimbatore, the Nayars of Chirakkal, Kottayam, and Kadathanadu rose in revolt and attacked the blockhouses or military out-posts established by Hyder. The communication to these out-posts were cut off by the swollen streams and the garrison in charge of it could not contact their chiefs at Calicut and Ponnani. Raza Khan, Hyder’s lieutenant, was at Madakkara on the frontiers of Coimbatore and upon hearing about the insurrection his army numbering 3,000 men set out to quell the outbreak. However his small force handicapped by lack of cavalry and harassed at every river-crossing by the Nayars was finally drawn into a position at the junction of the Tutakal and Ponnani rivers where advance and retreat alike were impossible.

Hyder, knowing Raza Sahib’s peril, made a characteristically impetuous march with 3,000 horses and an infantry consisting of 10,000 men. Later 300 Europeans also joined this march. The organized resistance of the Nayars came to an abrupt end primarily owing to the valour of the European troops that had turned the impending defeat into a victory. The Nayar soldiers retreated into the woods and mountains and it is believed that Hyder instructed his troops to hang them when found and to put their wives and children into slavery. Hyder ensured calm by adopting violent

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33 Foreign (MSS), sl. no. 52, part. 1, pp.80,97, National Archives, (hereafter NA)
35 Logan, n.4, pp. 465-6.
36 Ibid., pp. 467-9. Logan gives us a detailed description of the vengeance inflicted upon the Nayars and the edicts declared by Hyder for depriving them of all their privileges. His narrative was on the authority of a contemporary writing, authored by an anonymous man but edited by Prince Ghulam Muhammed, son of Tipu. However Kareem (n. 1,p. 46) refuted such charges on the ground that “No other contemporary observer has made any mention of these”
means and made Manjeri in the Ernad taluk the administrative and military headquarters of the conquered regions of Malabar. Many of his infantry were distributed in blockhouses, which spanned over the key areas and the rest quartered at Madakkara fort. Before leaving the country for Coimbatore, Hyder ordered to erect a fort at Palghat in the centre of the gap in the line of the Western Ghats to facilitate communication with Coimbatore.\footnote{37}

In the early days of January 1767, Hyder deputed a force to Malabar to bring the Raja of Travancore to reason, which led to another general rising in Malabar. Kottayam was in the vanguard of the rebellion in the north and the Mysorean troops were driven back from there.\footnote{38} At this juncture, the preliminaries of the first Anglo-Mysore War were brewing-up elsewhere. A new confederation of the Nizam and the Mahrattas supported by the Madras Council of the East India Company was born in the Deccan. The Bombay Council of the English Company was sceptical about such an alliance and decided to follow strict neutrality. They instructed the Tellicherry factors to follow the policy of non-intervention and to reject the proposal of the rajas of Chirakkal, Kottayam and Kadathanadu to form an alliance against Hyder.\footnote{39}

\footnote{37} Ibid., p. 469
\footnote{38} There are differences of opinion about the plight of the Mysorean army. According to Logan, n. 4, p. 470, “The Nayars all over the country again rose and shut up the invaders in their stockades”. Innes (n.34, pp. 63-64) remarked that, Hyder’s army “might have been driven headlong from Malabar, had not the Malabar chieftains in 1768 been deluded by the ‘insidious but skilful’ negotiations of Madanna”. However Kareem (n.1, pp. 48-49) put the contentions of both Logan and Innes as a myth created to conceal the real part played by the English in instigating the native rules against Hyder in 1768.
\footnote{39} D&C, dated 5 September 1767, (MSS), sl. no. 1478, pp. 16-22, T.N.A
First Anglo-Mysorean War

Bombay Council could not keep their policy of neutrality for long. In February 1768 they were forced to join the campaign against Hyder. The native rajas of Chirakkal, Kottayam and Kadathanadu came out enthusiastically once again to support the English factors with their men.\(^{40}\) The combined forces moved against Cannanore in early March and the scheme was finally abandoned thanks to the strong resistance by the Ali Raja.\(^{41}\) In a very crucial stride Hyder recaptured the fort of Mangalore from the English. The Bombay forces who were in charge of the fort “was driven out of Mangalore with such an indecent haste that they even left their sick and wounded behind them, as well as, their field-pieces and store”\(^{42}\).

The defeat inflicted on the English forces and Hyder’s presence so close to the northern boundary had a frightening impact upon the rajas of north Malabar and they negotiated peace with Madanna through the mediation of the French Commandant at Mahe and the Dutch at Cochin in December 1768. Madanna, on behalf of Hyder, agreed to reinstate the rajas of Malabar, except the Prince Regent of Kolathunadu and the Raja of Palghat, in their respective territories on the condition of them paying specific amount as war indemnity.\(^{43}\) The Ali Raja was appointed as the Civil Governor of Kolathunadu. Palghat with its fort was to remain in Hyder’s possession. These negotiations were favourable to Hyder on various counts. Firstly, he could retain his grip over two points on the coast, Palghat and Kolathunadu, from where he could resume his designs in Malabar at any time. Secondly, he could relieve his troops from Malabar.

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40 Ibid., dated 19 February 1768, Ibid., p.125.
41 Logan, n.4, pp. 470-1
42 Ibid., p. 471
and depute them to other major theatres of war in the Carnatic plains. Finally, the troops could retreat safely loaded with contributions made by rajas of Malabar.

The Kottayam Nayars were successful in taking possession of a bamboo fort near Nettur from the Cannanore Muslims and it remained under the joint custody of Kottayam and the English for quite sometime. Later, the English Company relinquished all their claims over the bamboo fort in favour of the Kottayam Raja in return of surrendering all his pretensions to a small territory adjacent to Tachara fort in the Island of Darmapatanam.

The first Anglo-Mysore war came to an end with the conclusion of a peace treaty on 3rd April 1769. The treaty of ‘Perpetual Friendship and Peace’ between the Governor and Council of Fort St. George in Madras and Hyder gained importance in the South Indian political state of affairs. A separate treaty was concluded with the Bombay Council to reiterate the provisions of the third clause of the treaty signed with the Madras Council. By this, the English Company was permitted to have “free liberty of trading in the several ports of the Nabob’s dominions on the Malabar Coast” on the

44 Ibid., para. 21, Ibid.
45 D&C, 17 December 1768, sl. no. 1478, p.222, Kadathanadu raja alone paid as much as Rs. 80,000, vide, J.C.R, para. 21, p. 30.
46 Ibid., dated 27 April 1768, sl. no. 1478, p.220, T.N.A
47 Logan, n.11, I/LXXXVII, p. 72
48 Aitchison, C.U, ed., A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries (Calcutta, 1973,) edn. 5, vol. 5, p. 128. Hyder was daring enough to force the Madras Council to consent upon to a stipulation that in case either of the contracting parties should be attacked by any other powers, mutual assistance should be rendered to drive the enemy out.
condition of paying custom duties at the rate of one and a half per cent on
the sale of all goods.49

Kolathunadu under Mysorean Rule

The Tellicherry factors were not satisfied with the terms of the
aforesaid treaty. The Mysorean interlude had inaugurated a kind of native
political turbulence in which the English Company had a very little role to
play. The total subjugation of the territory by the Mysorean force coupled
with the elevation of the Ali Raja to a formidable position was harmful to
the trading interests of the Company. Ali Raja exploited the favourable
political climate for enhancing his position. He attempted to control the
spice trade in Kottayam and Chirakkal, which were under his direct control,
in spite of the Company’s “free liberty of trading in the several ports of the
Nabob’s dominions on the Malabar Coast”. However, Ali Raja was forced
to surrender the district of Randathara to the Company in 1770, which once
again paved the way for prospering of English trade with the district.50 Ali
Raja retaliated for the loss of Randathara by purchasing the Fort of St.
Angelo at Cannanore from the Dutch in 1771 for a sum of Rs. two lakhs.51

In spite of such threats the Tellicherry factors were busy
strengthening their position in Randathara. On 12th March 1772, they
introduced a regular land revenue assessment in the following pattern.
“Private gardens were taxed at 25 per cent of the produce, rice lands
belonging to the Honourable Company paid 40 per cent of the gross
produce [---]”the “estates and verges” (paddy field) were “taxed at 10 per

49 Ibid., p. 130
50 D&C, dated 8 April 1770, (MSS), sl. no. 1480, p.95, T.N.A
51 Ibid., (MSS), sl. no. 1481, pp.43-44
cent”. An officer was made responsible for collecting the revenue from the district was styled as the Inspector of Randathara.  

At the end of 1773, Hyder Ali came down to Malabar once again through the Tamarasseri pass in Wynad with the intention to collect the defaulted payment of the promised annual tribute from the Malabar rajas when restored to their respective positions in 1768. The Malabar rajas yielded without any resistance and Hyder entered into the Kottayam territory and within a short span of time the Malabar Coast, except Travancore and Cochin, came under the direct administration of Hyder and it formed one of the provinces of the Mysore Kingdom. Since the resource mobilization through war indemnity, forced tributes and extortion of accumulated wealth fell short of his expectations Hyder decided to reinstate the native rajas as his tributaries. Sreenivasa Rao was made the Civil Governor in Malabar and was entrusted with the task of organizing a systematic land revenue administration on the pattern practiced in other parts of the Mysorean kingdom. Upon the estimate made by the Civil Governor, Hyder claimed a major share as tribute. The Prince Regent had been restored to his dominions in 1776 as Ali Raja, the Civil Governor of Kolathunadu since 1766, failed to pay the stipulated tribute to Hyder. This was a new experiment from the part of the Prince Regent. After an unsuccessful attempt to protect his ancestral dominions with the help of the English factors he turned towards Hyder who agreed to reinstate him on the condition of paying Rs. 5,000,00 as tribute. To disburse such an exorbitant sum Prince Regent had secure internal means and thus, he demanded Rs.

52 Logan, n.4, p. 473  
53 Kareem, n. 1, p. 55  
54 Innes, n.34, p. 64  
55 Buchanan, n. 32, p. 446  
56 D&C, n.d, (MSS), sl. no. 1491, p.62, T.N.A
60,000 from the Achanmars of Randathara\textsuperscript{57} and sent his officers to the English to request restoration of the district of Mount Dilly to him.\textsuperscript{58}

Tellicherry factory was in a very difficult position. Hyder had already expressed his dissatisfaction with the company as the latter was incapable of giving him timely military support during his Mahratta campaigns.\textsuperscript{59} Hyder became more critical of the company for the protection given to the Nayars who had deserted Malabar.\textsuperscript{60} The Tellicherry Factory was confronted with severe economic crisis owing to the continuous deficit financing. The returns in the form of revenue and pepper from northern Malabar were insufficient to meet the mounting expenditure of the factory.

The Prince Regent, despite his tutelage to Hyder, continued to supply pepper exclusively to the English company which helped the latter to withstand the ravages of the new political developments. However this aid was insufficient to maintain the mercantile pursuit of the Tellicherry factory. Hence the factory was to be reduced to a residency. The fugitives who found asylum in Tellicherry factory, like the deposed petty rulers, landlords and local merchants, presented a petition to the Bombay authorities against such a move and assured to contribute Rs. 60,000 per annum to maintain a force for their protection by a tax on their gardens and houses. On 4 March 1776, despite the protests, it was reduced to a residency with an establishment of a Resident, and one or two factors.\textsuperscript{61}

The Prince Regent’s endeavours to strengthen himself with the support of Hyder, and the war between England and France in Malabar

\textsuperscript{57} D&C, dated 14 June 1777, (MSS), sl. no. 1487, p.76, T.N.A
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., dated 21 August 1777, Ibid., p.110.
\textsuperscript{60} J.C.R, para. 18
\textsuperscript{61} Logan, n.4, pp. 479-80
determined the course of the native politics of Kolathunadu. The French recognition of American Independence (1778) brought them to war with England, and in India the English captured Pondicherry on the 18th of October 1778. Hyder became alarmed for the safety of Mahe, as it was the channel through for imported arms, ammunition and French reinforcements. Hyder ordered the Prince Regent, the rajas of Kadathanadu, Kottayam and Calicut to join the French at Mahe. The Prince Regent alone joined the French with 1,500 Nayars. This was the beginning of a new polarization in Kolathunadu politics. The Prince Regent who had been an ally of the Tellicherry factors decided to join hands with the Mysorean forces and all other native rajas took shelter under the English.

**Second Anglo-Mysorean War**

The English forces captured Mahe on 19 March 1779. Prince Regent with the help of the Mysorean army defeated the Kottayam Raja and proceeded to Kadathanadu where the senior Raja was deposed in favour of a young Prince. The English factors did not have any intention to confront Hyder but the latter became actively hostile to the former, as there were several instances of native rebellions against the Mysorean authority backed by the English. In October 1779, Hyder imposed a severe embargo on Tellicherry and took measures to cut off its links with the Malabar hinterland. Moreover, he stopped the supply of provisions through the ports of Calicut and Mangalore towards Mahe and

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62 Innes, n.34, pp. 64-65  
63 Foreign (MSS), sl. no.56, part-1, p.74, N.A  
64 Logan, n.11, I/LXXXIX, pp. 73-77  
65 J.C.R, para.22  
Tellicherry. The Price Regent attacked the English outpost at Mount Eli and also overran the district of Randathara. The young prince of Kadathanadu attacked the British outpost at Moicarra and seized it along with the neighbouring places like, Andollamalla and Tirumalla. However, the king of Kottayam and four Nambiars of Iruvazhinadu along with a considerable force of Nayars joined hands with the English. The safety of Tellicherry factory had become precarious since it was attacked on all sides. Under the circumstances the English troops were ordered to evacuate Mahe and concentrate in Tellicherry.

With the commencement of the Second Anglo-Mysore war (1780-84) Sardar Khan, Hyder’s lieutenant in Malabar, appeared with a large army from Srerangapatam and infused fresh energy into the siege of Tellicherry which went on for the next eighteen months. However, the native refugees in Tellicherry with the help of the Nayar troops of the Kottayam Raja foiled every attempt of the Mysorean allies to break through the slender line of outworks. By the end of the year 1781, fresh military reinforcement arrived from Bombay and Major Abington had become successful in recapturing the Fort of St. George at Mahe. Within a short span of time the Mysorean force was practically ousted from north Malabar and Palghat became the only place of importance remaining in Hyder’s control in south Malabar. Sardar Khan, who was taken prisoner by Major Abington, passed away on February 26, 1782.

67 D&C, dated 1 October 1779, (MSS), sl.no. 1490, p. 186, T.N.A
68 Logan, n. 4, p. 482
69 D&C, dated 10 November, 1780, (MSS), sl. no. 1491.,p. 155, T.N.A
70 Foreign (MSS), sl.no. 55, p.36, N.A
71 Innes, n. 34, p. 65
Kolathunadu under the English Company’s Influence

The interim period between Hyder’s departure and Tipu Sultan’s entry into Malabar helped the Tellicherry factors to augment their mercantile and political influence over the north Malabar region. During the period prior to the invasion of Hyder the company had established their dominance in Malabar trade with the cooperation the Moplah merchants. The native rulers did not have any control over the production and distribution of spices and other valuables in their respective territories. They could not guarantee any regular supply of produces since they had no real political or military power in their respective territories other than a customary share in the produces of their lands. 72 The company did not prefer to deploy its own servants to procure spices from the inland and instead always preferred to chose a single native merchant as the chief agent, Chatto Chetty during the early half and Chovvakkaran Musa in the latter half of the eighteenth century to deal with the producers. 73 Stephen Law, the Chief of Tellicherry, justified it in such a way that it (deployment of its own merchants) “would not only prove hazardous in respect of their safety, but infallibly raise the prices”. On the other hand, if the company dealt with many local merchants, Law feared they would compete with one another and raise the price of pepper. 74

When Malabar was brought under the Mysore rule, the leading merchants like Chovvakkaran Musa, Baile Babajee, Bedocandy Amed and

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73 Buchanan, n.32, p. 126, see also Nightingale, Ibid., p. 46
74 Letter, Law to Court of Directors, Tellicherry Diary, dated 22 November 1736, sl. no. 1577, T.N.A.
Banabeli Abdulla, fled to the Tellicherry fort from the hinterland. The ‘contractual system of pepper’ trade collapsed rapidly and the chaotic conditions that prevailed in the country further foiled its scope. The immediate attention of the Tellicherry factors after the evacuation of Hyder was to reorganize trade and to recoup the huge amount spent for establishing peace. The native rajas who sided with the company were persuaded to share the heavy financial burden of the combined struggle in the form a share of the revenue from their respective territories. The company soon pretended itself as a sovereign power in north Malabar and they also desired to claim a share of revenue in the same manner that Hyder did.

The Resident of the Tellicherry factory proposed schemes of agreement with the ministers of the rajas of Kottayam, Kadathanadu and Nambiar of Iruvazhinadu. The company demanded Rs 90,000 as their share from the revenue of Kottayam and Rs. 1, 00,000 as annual tribute that could be paid either in cash or kind (pepper) at the rate of Rs 90 per candy. The Raja had to send “as large a force as he possibly can to be supported at his own expense unless employed in the actual defence of the company’s property.” In case company’s troops may be sent to assist the Raja, it

75 K.S. Mathew, “Maritime Trade of Peninsular India and the Indian Merchants during the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries”, Presidential address of 27th annual session of South Indian History Congress, Rajapalayam, 2-4 February, 2007, p. 19
76 The contractual system was aimed to manipulate the price of pepper through active interference in the normal market conditions. The buying season of pepper was in the months of January and February. The English factors used to make discussions with their French counterpart at Mahe to fix a compromise price of the commodity well in advance. Then the English factors summoned the local merchants, who were confidants of the company, for negotiating the price of pepper per candy and made advance payments to them. The local merchants had their agents in the hinterland and the producers of pepper were trapped either by giving presents like cloth and assortment as well as money during June, July and August, the festive season in Malabar. Vide, Swai, n. 66, pp. 63-64
77 Kurup, n. 59, p. 168
should be supported at his expense and all such charges incurred on should be paid in course of one year.\textsuperscript{78}

The same proposals were made with the ministers of the Raja of Kadathanadu except for the actual amount of revenue and annual tribute. Accordingly, Kadathanadu Raja had to pay Rs 45,000 as “the deficiency of last year’s revenues and an annual tribute of Rs 50,000”. Upon negotiation, the Raja agreed to pay Rs 40,000 as annual tribute and to “cede for ever” the royalty of the river Mahe.\textsuperscript{79} The Nambiar of Iruvazhinadu had to pay Rs 20,000 on account of the deficiency of last year’s revenues and Rs 25,000 as annual tribute. They agreed to pay the deficiency revenues “in the course of four years at Rs 5,000 per annum” and as tribute they offered Rs 15,000 per annum for the ensuing four years and after that period they agreed to increase the amount to Rs 20,000.\textsuperscript{80}

These proposals and the agreements reveal the colonial and mercantile interests of the English under the veil of assistance and protection given to the aforesaid petty rulers from the yoke of Hyder Ali. The English company achieved “exclusive right to the purchase of all the pepper, cardamom and sandalwood” produced in the respective territories and it became more eloquent in the absence of the French company at Mahe. Their attempt was to fasten themselves to the chair of a sovereign power in Malabar. The Resident and factors had become bold enough to ‘permit’ the rajahs and other petty chieftains of north Malabar “to hold their countries restored to them by the company”,\textsuperscript{81} as their “weight and

\textsuperscript{78} Logan, n. 11, I/XC, pp. 78-79
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid, I/XC, pp. 79-80
\textsuperscript{80} Ibid, I/XC, p. 80
\textsuperscript{81} Ibid, p. 81
influence” increased considerably as a result of the successful attempt to keep Hyder Ali at bay.\textsuperscript{82}

The defeat and death of Sardar Khan provoked Hyder and he sent Mukhdum Ali to Malabar. Hyder was “determined to concentrate his force, to abandon his scheme of conquest in Coromandal, and to direct his undivided efforts first, for the expulsion of the English from the Western Coast, and afterwards for the preservation of his dominions, and for watching the course of events”.\textsuperscript{83} The combined forces of the English and the Nayars defeated Mukhdum Ali’s troops on 8\textsuperscript{th} April 1782.\textsuperscript{84} On hearing the news Hyder dispatched his son Tipu to the West Coast to recover Mysorean possessions.\textsuperscript{85} Hyder died on 7\textsuperscript{th} December 1782, while Tipu was campaigning in South Malabar between Ponnani and Trithala against English armies and he hurried out of Malabar.\textsuperscript{86}

The Prince of Chirakkal was uncomfortable due to the withdrawal of the Mysore forces from north Malabar. The Ali Raja had once again become troublesome as he had territorial designs over the Chirakkal territories. The English factors approached the situation cautiously and preferred the Prince of Chirakkal to Ali Raja for giving support. The Prince’s inclination towards Hyder had been dangerous to the mercantile interest of the company all over the Kolathunadu region. His vulnerable position as the hereditary lord of the land would be useful to the company for recouping trade prospects in the land. This understanding might be the

\textsuperscript{82} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{83} Logan, n. 4, p. 487
\textsuperscript{84} Ibid, p. 490
\textsuperscript{85} JCR, para. 30
\textsuperscript{86} Kareem, n. 1, p. 69
reason for them to support the Prince against the Ali Raja with arms and ammunitions.  

Tipu’s disappearance from Malabar created differences between the Madras and Bombay authorities of the English company regarding the steps to be taken against the enemy. While the Madras government thought in terms of establishing company’s authority over Tipu’s Malabar possessions, the Bombay government preferred an advance on Bednure and this “a hasty and ill-considered scheme” collapsed when Tipu recaptured Bednure and Mangalore. In order to divert Tipu’s attention away from Mangalore, Colonel Fullerton, the Commander of English force, was instructed to employ fresh machinations in Malabar and accordingly he captured Palghat on 15 November 1783.

Brigadier-General McLeod organized another independent operation against Arakkal Beebe of Cannanore, the chief ally of Tipu in Malabar on the pretext of avenging the imprisonment of 100 English sepoys by the Beebe. The English force plundered Fort St. Angelo and other prime centres of Cannanore and all the members of the Arakkal family were made prisoners on 14th December 1783. On 8th January 1784, Beebe signed a “Treaty of alliance and Friendship” with McLeod by which she agreed to pay “within the space of one twelve month, one Lac and one half Lac of Bombay rupees as an indemnification for the expense of the war and [...] an annual tribute of one Lac of Rupees” to the Presidency of Bombay. In order to equip Beebe with enough resources to pay off the said sums, the

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87 D&C, dated 17 June 1783, (MSS), sl. no. 1495, p. 124, T.N.A
88 Logan, n.4, p. 495
89 Innes, n.34, p. 67
90 Logan, n.4, p. 500
91 Secret Proceedings, Foreign and Home Department Records, dated 13 April 1784, N.A
company agreed to allow her to repossess all the countries possessed by her “before the English army marched into her country”. The fifth clause made it clear that, “All the forts are to remain in possession and at the disposal of the English”. Finally Beebe was forced to sell the pepper to the company “at a reasonable price”.92

The support and protection given by the company to the Chirakkal Raja had been a perpetual eyesore in Anglo-Arakkal relations. The Prince of Chirakkal was a vassal of Hyder, ever since he had been reinstated in his ancestral territory by the latter in 1776. The Prince once again came under company’s protection during the early months of 1783 and he was provided with arms and ammunitions to fight against the Ali Raja. However, McLeod had no hesitation in allowing the Beebe to control the ancestral possessions of the Prince of Chirakkal when a separate treaty was signed with her. Moreover, the company was in a position to rein in the Arakkal house also into their debt trap by demanding exorbitant sums either as indemnity or as tribute. The St. Angelo fort was another remarkable gain for the company owing to its strategic and economic importance. The Madras government was jubilant on the achievement of McLeod whereas the Bombay government took it as a serious menace to the ongoing peace talks with Tipu. So, on 12th January 1784, the Select Committee of the Bombay government annulled it on the ground that it had been concluded without “authority”. However, on 2nd February it was confirmed as a temporary measure during the armistice with Tipu, or until peace should be concluded.93

92 Logan, n.11, 1/XCII, p. 82
93 Ibid, f.n, p.82
Tipu Sultan and Kolathunadu Affairs

The peace talks in Srerangapataam between Tipu and the English company concluded with the signing of the treaty of Mangalore on 11th March 1784, which ended the second Anglo-Mysorean war. The treaty saw Tipu in equal footing with the English company and it was the last occasion when an Indian power dictated terms to the British, who were made to play the role of humble supplicants for peace. The Raja of Tanjore and Travancore were treated as “friends and allies” of the English while the Beebe of Arakkal and “the Rajahs or Zamindars” of the Malabar Coast were treated as “friends and allies” of Tipu. All those rajas and princes who assisted the English against the Mysoreans, especially the Raja of Kottayam who had never bowed to Mysore, were put under the mercy of Tipu. Tipu’s concern over the stability of the only Muslim state in Malabar ensured evacuation of British forces from St. Angelo fort and the district of Cannanore and the same were restored to the Beebe. On the other side, Tipu agreed to renew “all the commercial privileges and immunities given to the English (company)” by his father in August 1770. Further, they were permitted to occupy “Mount Dilly and its district” taken by Sirdar Khan during the early phase of the second Anglo-Mysorean war. This peace treaty was of a rare kind ever since the East India Company’s inception of trade activities in Malabar. McLeod observed that abandoning of old allies for the sake of peace was a bad policy. Evacuation from Cannanore fort and the district and the inability of guarantying the ‘hard earned’ exclusive right to purchase pepper from that territory were severe losses for the company.

94 Ibid., I/XCIII, pp. 83-84
95 Ibid.
96 Quoted in Kurup, n.59, p. 173
The peace agreement of 1784 at Mangalore was a turning point in the socio-economic and political spheres of Malabar. The treaty restored Malabar to Tipu along with the rajas and petty chieftains with the only exception of Kurungoth Nayar. He was taken prisoner by the English company at the raising of the siege of Tellicherry in 1782. When the said treaty was concluded, all the English acquisition along the coast was relinquished, except Kurungoth territory. It remained under the possession of the English company and the Nayar continued to pay tribute to the company for some time.97

North Malabar was treated by Tipu as a tributary state rather than a subjugated one, as in the case of south Malabar.98 So, when Arshad Beg Khan was empowered to reorganize the revenue administration in the newly acquired territories, he employed an entirely different policy in north Malabar and made separate treaties with the various rajas there. Accordingly, the annual juma of the Kadathanadu Raja was fixed at Rs. 50,000, the Kottayam Raja at Rs. 1,00,000 and the Chirakkal Raja at 1,25,000.99 In 1785, Tipu made direct agreements with these rajas and the tax liabilities were duly revised. Now, the Kadathanadu Raja had to pay an annual juma Rs. 62,500 and the Chirakkal Raja had to remit Rs. 30,000 as nazrana (gift) and 1, 20, 000 as juma. The Raja of Kottayam was deprived of a part of Wynad; in return of the reduction of his annual juma to Rs. 65,000 from the earlier rate of Rs. 1, 00,000.100 These rajas were demoted to the status of Zamindars and it became their duty to collect and pay

97 Logan, n. 4, p. 503
98 Innes, n.34, pp. 326-7
99 JCR, para. 33-35
100 Ibid, para.43
revenues due from their respective territories and this continued at least up to 1789.

Thus far, Arshad Beg Khan was the sole agent of Tipu in Malabar; but in 1786, the civil and military administrations were separated and Arshad Khan was made military governor and Mir Ibrahim was posted as civil governor.\(^\text{101}\) The civil administration of Mir Ibrahim incited general resurrection of rebellions as he broke all engagements made with the Malabar chieftains and imposed new exactions. In 1786, Arshad Khan resigned and requested Tipu to come in person and avert the impending destruction of his authority in Malabar.\(^\text{102}\)

By April 1788, Tipu was successful in arriving at peace with the Mahrattas and the Nizam and he decided to turn to Malabar. His primary intention was to defeat the Raja of Travancore. At the same time he had to bring tranquillity in southern and northern regions of Malabar.\(^\text{103}\) The Prince of Chirakkal was his chief ally among the native rajas and it further accentuated rivalries between indigenous political agents. The fissure between the Raja of Chirakkal and Arakkal Beebe worsened even after both of them were parties to the treaty of 1784 as Tipu’s allies and friends. Tipu was not at all serious in enforcing peace among his mutually hostile allies.\(^\text{104}\) Tipu permitted the Beebe to temporarily occupy Mount Dilly and it was against the specific provision in the treaty for restoring “Mount Dilly and its district” to the English.\(^\text{105}\)

\(^{101}\) Margret Frenz, *From Contact to Conquest: Transition to British Rule in Malabar, 1790-1805*, (Delhi, 2003), p.94

\(^{102}\) Logan, n. 4, p. 504

\(^{103}\) Kareem, n. 1, p. 93

\(^{104}\) Kurup, n. 59, p. 183

\(^{105}\) Ibid.
After the treaty of Mangalore, Tipu decided to withdraw temporarily the direct confrontations with the English company. However, he had definite schemes for achieving territorial supremacy in South India. The Anglo-Mysorean conflicts in the Western and Eastern coasts convinced him that the English company was the only potential enemy. In order to weaken the political and economic supremacy of the company, Tipu devised a strategy to exploit the rivalries of the native chieftains with the English company. Prince of Chirakkal was perhaps the first to feel the force of this strategy. He was obliged to pay a huge sum as tribute and nazrana to Tipu and his palace was indebted to the company. He could not fulfil these obligations without the support of a strong power and necessary resources. Early in 20th January 1785, he occupied Randathara by force and the company was reluctant to oppose the occupation as “the company’s right to Randathara” was not clear and was not that of full sovereignty.106

With the arrival of Tipu on the Malabar Coast in 1788, Prince of Chirakkal attempted to strengthen his position as the ally and tributary of Tipu. Beebe of Arakkal became disappointed, as she desired to be reinstated in the position of governor of Kolathunadu. She approached the Tellicherry factors for protection on 25th May 1788 and in her message she made it clear that Tipu had advised her to make up her quarrel with the Prince of Chirakkal and to pick one with the English.107

These incidents could be considered as an indication of a paradigm shift in native power equations. In April 1788, the Tellicherry factors demanded the Chirakkal Raja to settle the outstanding balance due to the company, which amounted to Rs. 4, 09,623.1. 80. Out of this amount, the

106 Quoted in Kurup, n. 59, p. 185
107 Logan, n. 4, p. 505
Raja was personally indebted to only Rs. 1, 88,512.1.02 and the rest were the obligations of Achanmars of Randathara and the senior and junior rajas of Nileswaram. In May, the Raja of Chirakkal raised doubts regarding the authenticity of company’s accounts register and made new claims of customs duties by the company for the last 27 years and demanded an immediate payment of Rs. 1, 13,400 by the factors and he sent one of his ministers to Tellicherry with specific orders to stay there till the sum was paid. On June 7th the Raja invaded and occupied the Darmapatanam Island, which ever since 1733 had been in the Company’s undisputed possession. The factors suspected Tipu’s instigation in this incident and when they brought the matter to him, he justified it by arguing that the factors had taken the Island by force from his feudatory of Chirakkal and as he had given back Chirakkal with all its territories to the prince, the Island must also be restored to him. Tipu, before leaving Malabar for Coimbatore, appointed the nephew of the Chirakkal Raja as the governor of Iruvazhinadu and Kurungoth territories. This measure was highly risky for the existence of the Tellicherry settlement as it was from Iruvazhinadu that supplies of country provisions were chiefly obtained. Ravi Varma, the Raja of Chirakkal, died on June 19th and he was succeeded by his brother.

Tipu’s emergence as an important economic power in south India was harmful to the economic and political prospects of the company. The Tellicherry factory was in a strategic position not only as a direct link

108  D&C, dated 15 April 1786 (MSS), sl.no. 1499, p. 110, T.N.A
109  Ibid., dated 16 May 1788, (MSS), sl.no. 1502, p. 109, T.N.A
110  Ibid., dated 7 June 1788, Ibid., pp. 135-6 , T.N.A
111  Ibid, Ibid, pp. 138-9, T.N.A
112  Logan, n.4, p. 506
113  Ibid
between the administrative headquarters of the Madras and Bombay Presidencies of the English company through the Carnatic, but also as be a perfect military base station being close to Tipu’s dominions and his capital at Srerangapatam. The military force in Tellicherry after the treaty of Mangalore was deplorably low. The Madras government was ready to offer financial assistance for the strengthening of the settlement and instructed the factors to repair the defences of their fortifications and to put them in best condition to resist any possible attack. But the settlement was going through a miserable period in the 1780’s owing primarily to the embargo on trade declared by Tipu. The leading merchants of Malabar contracted for spices by the English factors found it impossible to collect spices, as Tipu’s chief agents were scaring them off from the Malabar hinterland. Many of them, as in the days of Hyder’s invasion, had fled to Tellicherry. Tipu’s emissaries appealed them to return to Cannanore or to any other part in the Malabar hinterland from Tellicherry. Further, they were warned, “that if they reject this offer and should a war ensue they must share the fate of the rest, and that they would not in the least be considered”. Despite such intimidation the Muslim merchants preferred to live under the protection of Tellicherry until the end of the third Anglo-Mysore war of 1790-92. Tipu’s embargo on trade was almost total as despite good pepper harvest during 1786, the English factors could not gather any substantial quantity of the produce.

The Hindu chieftains, particularly of north Malabar, were sceptical about Tipu and his religious bigotry. Kurungoth Nayar was the first

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114 Kurup, n. 59, p. 186
115 Swai, n.66, p. 66
116 D&C, dated 21 January 1786 (MSS), sl.no. 1499, pp. 10-11
117 Swai, n.66, p. 67
118 D&C, dated 20 August 1786, (MSS), sl.no. 1499, p. 160
chieftain who was the victim of Tipu’s wrath. He was a tributary of the Tellicherry factory until the re-establishment of the French settlement at Mahe on 15th August 1785, in pursuance of the treaty of Versailles. The French claimed him as their ally and the Nayar had become independent from the English yoke. Henceforth, he was under the French protection. The Nayar inhabitants of Iruvazhinadu rose in revolt under Kurungoth Nayar’s leadership against the Mysorean officials. Tipu sent a force against them and Kurungoth Nayar was taken prisoner and hanged at Srerangapatam. Kurungoth territory was annexed to Tipu’s possessions and put under the Amil of Iruvazhinadu.

Tipu attempted to control and subjugate the feudalistic elements of the southern and northern parts of Malabar. He enhanced revenue rates and forced tributes exorbitantly which invited a series of resistance all over the region. For the rajas and the Nayars, these measures meant “a decline in their status within the population and in their influence in political decisions”.

Tipu viewed the native social structure and turbulent spirit of Nayars as perpetual menace to the stability of his Malabar dominions. He was firm in destroying both and made a proclamation, which runs as follows.

“From the period of the conquest until this day, during twenty four years, you have been a turbulent and refractory people, and in the wars waged during your

119 Logan, n.4, p. 503
120 JCR, para. 62
122 Frenz, n.101, p.97
rainy season, you have caused numbers of our warriors to
taste the draught of martyrdom – Be it so. What is past is
past. Hereafter you must proceed in an opposite manner;
dwell quietly, and pay your dues like good subjects; and
since it is a practice with you for one women to associate
with ten men, and you leave your mothers and sisters
unconstrained in their obscene practices, and are thence
all born in adultery, and are more shameless in your
connexion than the beasts of the field: I hereby require
you to forsake these sinful practices, and live like the rest
of mankind. And if you are disobedient to these
commands, I have made repeated vows to honor the
whole of you with Islam and to march all the chief
persons to the seat of government”.123

The subjugation or disappearance of the native kingdoms in
Malabar made the Nayars in general unemployed and the decline of
agriculture and commerce impoverished them economically.124 Tipu took
measures to impose restrictions on the movements of Brahmins and they
were put under the threat of forcible conversion to Islam. Therefore, they
refused to take messages to Anjengo settlement from the Tellicherry
factory. The English factors learnt that Brahmins messengers were no
longer safe as a report prevailing that Tipu had issued orders for all the
Brahmins on the coast to be seized and sent up to Srerangapatam for
conversion to Islam and to eat beef forcibly.125 The report that 200
Brahmins on Malabar Coast were “seized and confirmed, made

123 Quoted in Logan, n.4, p. 510
125 Logan, n.4, p. 507
Mussulmen, and forced to eat beef and other things contrary to their caste”

 infuriated the Raja of Kottayam and he was the “first and foremost” to move steadfast against such tinkering in the accepted age-old native systems. He along with the Raja of Kadathanadu came forward to request the English to protect the Brahmans from Tipu’s encroachments in the age-old non-refutable practices. Tipu was particularly hostile towards both the rajas of Kottayam, Kadathanadu and their principal Nayar subjects. He alleged that the said rajas had found asylum in Tellicherry settlement and taken boats from there to Travancore along with Rs. 10 lakhs rupees each with them. His force on 12th March plundered Kuttippuram, the nerve centre of Kadathanadu and put all the Nayars along with their families under the threat of a “voluntary profession of the Mohammedan faith or a forcible conversion with deportation from their native land”. Very soon all those captives were forcibly converted to Islam.

In the meantime, the Prince of Chirakkal was observing a conscious measure of inactivity despite his differences of opinions with the Tellicherry on the questions of Randathara and Darmapatnam. When the English force reoccupied the island of Darmapatnam, on 2nd January 1789, he yielded to it without raising any protest at all. Though on March 22nd the Prince approached the Tellicherry factors for protection from the atrocities of Tipu, they refused to give him asylum.

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126 D&C, dated 20 July 1788, (MSS), sl. no. 1502, p. 180, T.N.A  
127 Frenz, n.101, p.97  
128 D&C, dated 11 August 1788, (MSS), sl. no. 1502, pp. 207-8, T.N.A  
129 Ibid., dated 8th March 1789 (MSS), sl. no. 1504, p.85 T.N.A  
130 Quoted in Logan, n.4, p. 510  
131 D&C, dated 12 March 1789, (MSS), sl. no. 1504, p.98, T.N.A  
132 Logan, n.4, p. 508  
133 D&C, dated 12 March 1789, (MSS), sl. no. 1504, p.116, T.N.A
all members of the Chirakkal family reached Darmapatanam and pleaded for English protection and upon refusal they managed to sail in a country boat to Travancore.\textsuperscript{134} Accounts vary regarding the plight of the Prince of Chirakkal from ‘he was killed in a skirmish with Tipu’s brigades’ (Wilks,) to ‘he was killed in an attempt to escape’ (company records) to ‘he committed suicide on finding that escape was hopeless’. Tipu treated the dead body with contempt and had it dragged by elephants through his camp and was subsequently hung up on a tree along with 17 of the followers of the deceased.\textsuperscript{135}

By April 1789, Tipu had subjugated Kadathanadu and Chirakkal territories. The degree of resistance was much severe in Kottayam, which enabled the inhabitants of that territory to maintain a comparative independence under the able leadership of Kerala Varma, popularly known as Pazhassi Raja, the junior prince of the Western branch of the Kottayam dynasty. He was daring enough to manage the family even when the rest of the family including the senior Raja had taken refuge in Travancore.\textsuperscript{136} Finding that there were no ‘friends and allies’ in Malabar Tipu handed over a portion of the Chirakkal territory\textsuperscript{137} to the Beebe of Arakkal and formalized the preliminary ceremonies of a matrimonial alliance between the Beebe’s daughter and his son. These measures helped him to get rid of the trouble from Mappilas population on the coast, as the Arakkal house was considered to be the unquestioned leader of Islamic community in Malabar.\textsuperscript{138}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{134} Kurup, n.59, p. 193
  \item \textsuperscript{135} Logan, n.4, pp. 511-2
  \item \textsuperscript{136} Frenz, n.101, p.97
  \item \textsuperscript{137} Logan, n.11, I/ CLI, p.129
  \item \textsuperscript{138} Logan, n.4, p. 512
\end{itemize}
Third Anglo-Mysorean war

Ever since Hyder’s first invasion of Malabar, Travancore was an eyesore for Mysore and the treaty of Mangalore protected Travancore, though Tipu was furious for the safe asylum provided by them to the fugitive chieftains of Malabar. The new coalition between the English, the Nizam and the Mahrattas in 1789 was a clear signal for third Anglo-Mysorean war and the war started on 28 December 1789 when Tipu attacked the northern border fortification of Travancore. The English East India Company authorities in Bombay were wise enough to assess the situation but without the support and cooperation of the native chieftains of Malabar the anti-Mysorean movement could not be successful. The system of land revenue collection and the rigid centralized administrative process invited protest all over the region. Tipu was isolated and those chieftains who supported him or consented to become his tributaries became hostile thanks to his policy of forced conversion. The Governor General Lord Cornwallis directed Robert Taylor, the chief of Tellicherry, to negotiate with the Malabar rajas for a combined action against Tipu. The proclamation issued by Robert Taylor on 24th April 1790 runs as follows:

[...] This is to give notice to the Malabar Princes, Moplah inhabitants, etc., etc., that any of them who will join this detachment and act against the Nabob Tippoo Sultan during the present war may rely on the Honourable Company’s protection and being included as allies of the Honourable Company in any future treaty
they may enter into with the Nabob, which assurances the Chief of Tellicherry now gives in the name of the Honourable Company, his own, that of the Governor-General of Bengal and Governor of Bombay by their express authority. And any of the neighbouring powers, who may not join in the present contest will be considered as enemies of the Honourable Company and acted against accordingly. Any of the powers, who may be willing to accede to the terms proposed may obtain from the Chief written agreements in the name of the abovementioned.143

The proclamation, containing both assurances and warning, had the desired effects and all the rajas and chieftains, except the Beebe of Cannanore, came out eagerly to support the English. On 4th May 1790, Robert Taylor on behalf of the English company issued a Cowl to Ravi Varma of Pally palace of Chirakkal, which assured

[...] that provided you will enter heartily into the war against Tippoo Sultan and act rigorously against him, the English East India Company will assist and protect you, and do everything in their power to render you independent of Tippoo Sultan, [...] I do hereby further assure you that, in any future treaty that may take place between the Company and Tippoo Sultan you shall

143 Logan, n.11, I/CLVIII, p. 135
be included and considered as an ally of the Honourable Company.\textsuperscript{144}

Similar Cowls were offered to and accepted by Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja of Kottayam and the Raja of Kadathanadu.\textsuperscript{145} The native chieftains had no other options than joining with the English company. On the 9\textsuperscript{th} of May the official dispatch (dated 8\textsuperscript{th} April) from Lord Cornwallis was made available to them, which assured that the company would do their utmost “to render them in future entirely independent of Tipu, and the conclusion of a peace to retain them upon reasonable terms under the protection of the company”.\textsuperscript{146} The rajas of Chirakkal and Kadathanadu came back and remained under the protection of the English. On 31\textsuperscript{st} May Lord Cornwallis once again promised the native chieftains that he would do all possible “to force that prince (Tipu) to relinquish all future claims upon their (Native chieftains’) allegiance, and to agree to their becoming the subjects and dependents of the Honourable company. To which we shall add that in order to secure a willing obedience from the Malabar chiefs, we should be contented with their paying a very moderate tribute, provided they will give the company advantageous privileges for carrying on a commerce in the valuable possession of their country”.\textsuperscript{147}

Fearing the resurrection of Nayar dominance and pre-Mysorean feudal order in the event of Tipu’s defeat, Moplah solidarity in favour of Tipu was evident in north Malabar\textsuperscript{148}. Arakkal Beebe’s vacillation was the major threat to isolate Tipu in Malabar. She was delicately balancing

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\textsuperscript{144} Ibid, dated 8th May 1790, Ibid, I/XCV, p. 85 \\
\textsuperscript{145} Ibid, f. note, p. 86 \\
\textsuperscript{146} D&C, dated 9 May 1790, (MSS-Political), sl. no. 1518, p.113 \\
\textsuperscript{147} Ibid, dated 18 August 1790, Ibid, p.191 \\
\textsuperscript{148} Ibid, dated 8 May 1790, Ibid, pp.110-1
\end{flushleft}
political affiliation with the Mysoreans and commercial ties with the English. The Beebe disregarded the proclamation of 24th April 1790 and supported Tipu during the third Anglo-Mysore war without any serious impact since Malabar had not been a major theatre of the war.149

By August the allied forces were in a position to relieve all the dominions south of Mysore from Tipu’s hands. The Beebe was forced ‘the preliminaries to a future treaty of firm alliance and friendship’ with the company on 8 August 1790. She agreed to admit the company’s troops “to garrison her fortress of Cannanore during the present war” and to give her eldest son-in-law and one of her ministers as hostages for the security of the English forces. Robert Taylor agreed to admit the Beebe as an ally of the English company “in the same manner as the other Malabar Princes,” whenever peace takes place between the English and Tipu.150 Accordingly Tipu’s troops were sent away from Cannanore and the company took possession of Randathara. The fact that Beebe was not serious in complying with the terms of this treaty became evident on 17th October when she denied admission to the battalion dispatched by Taylor to take possession of the Cannanore fort. Moreover Tipu’s force of about 8,000 men, on the request of the Beebe’s husband, returned to the fort within two days.151 The company’s mission to evacuate the Mysorean forces from Ponnani was accomplished successfully by November and once again Cannanore became the nerve centre of Anglo-Mysorean conflicts. On 16th December the siege of Cannanore was completed and the Beebe agreed to an unconditional surrender. General Abercromby, the Commander-in-Chief of the English forces, assured protection for the whole of the inhabitants of Cannanore on

149. Kurup, n.59, p. 200
150. Logan, n.11, I/XCVI, pp. 86-87
151. Logan, n.4, p.529
the condition that all military and naval stores and merchandize of every kind should be surrendered to the company. Beebe was permitted “to exercise justice to the inhabitants agreeable to their customs in all cases” without the interference of the English Commandant of the fort. Beebe’s minister and heir apparent were taken as hostages to the English camp and 5,000 of the Tipu’s troops in the town and fort surrendered unconditionally. The company took possession of St. Angelo fort and British flag was hoisted there. “Thus Cannanore, the first place in India to welcome Europeans to Indian shores, was the last of the important places in Malabar to pass into the conquering hands of the British”.

As far as Malabar was concerned, the Mysorean occupation ceased to exist by the end of 1790. However, the third Anglo-Mysorean war officially came to an end by the treaty of Srerangapatam on 18th March 1792. Tipu signed the preliminary articles of peace with the allies on 22 February 1792. As per the provisions of the preliminary treaty, “one-half of the dominions, which were in possession of Tippoo Sultan at the commencement of the present war” was ceded to the allies and Tipu had to pay “Three crores and thirty lakhs of Sicca Rupees” as war indemnity. All the “prisoners from the time of the late Hyder Ali Khan” were to be released. Two of the three elder sons of Tipu were to be given as hostages to the company. The “Definitive Treaty of perpetual friendship” between Tipu and the allies was signed on 18th March 1792 and it was meant to reaffirm the preliminary treaty obligations and to make detailed accounts of various districts ceded to the allies.

152 Logan, n.11, I/CLIX, pp. 135-6
153 Logan, n.4, p. 532
154 Logan, n.11, II/I, p. 138
155 Ibid, II/II, pp.138-43
Implication of Mysorean Interregnum

The Mysorean period that spanned for a quarter of a century (1766 to 1790) came to an end by the treaty of Srerangapatam. The process of native political earthquakes reached its logical conclusion though it took some more years for the tremors to die down. The Mysorean intervention in Malabar was the outcome of the complexities and contradictions of the state of affairs in native politics. The presence of three rival European powers, viz., the French at Mahe, the English at Tellicherry and the Dutch at Cannanore and the intricacies of their mercantile designs augmented the scope of structural deterioration of the native politics. At the time of Mysorean invasion the English company was in a commanding position among the native chieftains profiting from the spice trade on the coast. When Hyder planned to invade Malabar, the company showed no subtlety in arriving at an agreement with him on 27th May 1763 for safeguarding their own private mercantile interests. Likewise, when Hyder finally crossed the northern border of Malabar, another agreement was signed on 23rd February 1766 between the two, and any sort of protection offered to the native chieftains by the company was deliberately ignored. It was not eager to resist the territorial designs of the Mysorean invader or to protect the territorial integrity of their native allies. The Bombay Council instructed their Tellicherry subordinates to follow delaying tactics with regard to the protection of their native allies.156 Perhaps they might have considered the Mysorean invaders as a perfect substitute for the weary native chieftains of Malabar and steady supply of spices could be guaranteed against the sale of European firearms and equipments with the new comers. However, the genesis and growth of a native political power like Mysore under Hyder Ali had an eloquent

156 D&C, dated 13 November 1765, pp.135-6
implication in South Indian context. Hyder was not an archetypal native chieftain and he had expansionist motives and ambitions to control the prime centres in the subcontinent. The company decided to turn against Hyder upon the realisation of this reality.

On the other side, the native chieftains attempted to defend their position in the indigenous political spectrum with the help of invaders though it turned out to be a futile experiment. The Mysorean powers bombarded the existing socio-political structure to make the region amenable for a centralized system of administration. However, they had chosen two different measures in south and north Malabar; the former was subjugated and the latter made tributary state. The southern state was already in rebellion against the Mysorean system of governance. The northern region presented a different attitude towards Mysorean system, primarily owing to the continuance of the ancestral feudal elements as the tributary rajas and Ali Raja as the protector and saviour of Islam. However, these feudal elements also were forced to abandon their territories when Tipu took severe economic and social measures to subjugate them. Even then the political and social importance of these native chieftains in Malabar could not be obliterated, as the English company with their enormous superiority in military tactics later attracted the cooperation of this class against Tipu. At the same time these chieftains were the real victims of the entire development since they were subsequently deprived of their age-old sovereign rights over their realms and forced to accept the supremacy of the English company.