CHAPTER III

ADMINISTRATION OF MALABAR UNDER HAIDAR ALI
AND TIPU SULTAN

(a) Integration of small principalities. The most important revolution that brought out by the Mysore rule in Kerala was the integration of the small principalities, as a result of which "the whole of Malabar came to be organised under one political control." (1). "The disappearance of the feudal system of administration and its replacement by a centralised system of Government" (2), had far reaching consequences not only in the political sphere but also in the social and economic aspects of Kerala life. K.V. Krishna Iyver, in his work "The Zamorins of Kozhikode," has to admit that "during the Mysore occupation the old order was completely changed." (3). We have to add to this that a new set up which was hitherto unknown to the people of Kerala, "based on modern and progressive ideas" (4), emerged in its place. The Nair nobles and princes could not compromise with this modern and progressive measures.

(2) A. Sreedhara Menon: A Survey of Kerala History, P.304.
(3) K.V.Krishna Iyver: Zamorins of Kozhikode, P.254.
(4) A Survey of Kerala History, P.305.
brought out by the Mysorean administrators, because the principles of Government introduced by them were opposed to the usages of the country.

Before the Mysorean occupation, the country was parcelled out into congeries of small States, "the Government of which being perfectly feudal, neither laws nor system of revenue were known amongst the inhabitants" (5). Stein Van Gollenesse enumerates 42 small principalities and four important kingdoms in the year 1743. (6). "Each State was partitioned", writes Warden, "into gradations of military divisions from the Naduvazhi* to Desavazhi and every division or sub-division was designated by the allotted quota of Nairs it was required to bring into the field." (7). Thus the Kingdom was divided into a number of pad or districts of varying extent, each presided over by a hereditary Chief called Naduvazhi and each pad was, for military and other purposes, divided into desams, some of which were presided over by hereditary Desavazhis, while others being the private property of the Naduvazhi or the King were administered by the latter directly or by officers appointed by them. The Desam was further sub-divided not into territorial units but into caste and tribal groups such as the Gramam of the Rambodiris, the Terra of the Nairs, the Cheri of the low castes, the territorial limits of which, though more or less well-defined, over-lapped each other. The pad and desam of this coast differed from analogous territorial divisions elsewhere in that they consisted not of so many towns and

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(6) D.R. No. 13, pp. 45-6.
*Nadu means country equivalent to a modern district. Naduvazhi is the ruler of a pad, whereas Desavazhi, the ruler of Desam.
(7) Warden: Report to Board of Revenue, September 12, 1815, Para.63.
villages but of so many Haias, such as 'the Five Hundred of Kodakaranad', 'the Four Hundred of Annamanad' and 'Three Hundred of Chengazhirad'. (8). The affairs of the caste or tribal groups were under the management of headmen or leaders, Gramani, Karanava, Tandas etc. as the case might be. The Karanava looked after the local affairs of the Tara, superintended the cultivation of the demesne of their chief who might be a king, a Naduvashi, a Desavash or a mere Jenni, received a share of the produce for their maintenance and rendered military services to him, whenever called upon to do so. The Desavashis, where they existed, had the direction of all the affairs of the desom and saw to the execution of all the orders sent to them by the king or the Naduvashi. (9). They were also military leaders subject to the authority of the Naduvashi and marched at the head of their quotas when ordered to the field. The Naduvashi had authority in their respective nadas in all civil and military matters, but the extent of that authority and the degree of their subordination to the king depended upon their political status." (10).

Thus the 'Hindu Village' which existed in other parts of India was conspicuous by its absence in Kerala. (11). Instead, the caste and tribal units of Tara, Gramam and Cheri formed the lowest division in the political set up. These Tara, and Gramam were virtually independent of the Naduvashis and Desavashis. The peculiar political usages observed by the rulers and nobles alike tend to develop such a system of disintegration of political authority the result

(9) Ibid.
of which was anarchy and confusion. "The Nair inhabitants of a *Tara* formed a small republic." (12). Andrian Van Rheede, the Dutch Governor of Cochin from 1673 to 1677 made it very clear when he wrote, "no king of Malabar has the power to make contracts which are prejudicial to the interests of the land-lords, noblemen or Nayers; such a king would run the risk of being expelled or rejected by his subjects." (13). The representative of the English East India Company at Calicut, reported to his superiors in 1746, thus, "the Nayars being heads of the Calicut people, resemble the Parliament, and do not obey the King's dictates, but chastise his ministers when they do unwarrantable acts." (14). "The Nairs were, of course, best soldiers," writes P.K.S.Raja, "but their system of military organisation, which was based on service and obedience to the immediate feudal lord and not to the sovereign rendered it impossible for the king to depend upon the local militia." (15). Thus "the inefficient feudal hosts of traditional Malabar warfare" (16) made the unification of the country well-nigh impossible. Buchanan testifies to this fact in the year 1800, when he writes that the 'Degavazhis' assumed the title of the Raja in their respective territories and possessed full jurisdiction. (17). The Naduvazhis and Degavazhis always fought each other. The whole country was, thus in the words of N.K. Sinha, "in a state of anarchy, a sea of intrigues, conflicting interests and mutual jealousies" (18), before the Mysorean occupation of Malabar.

(13) Quoted by Gollennesse in his 'Memorandum', 1743, P.52.
(14) Tellicherry Factory Diary, May 28, 1746, quoted by Logan, i, P.37.
(16) K.M.Panicker: Malabar and the Dutch, P.64.
The peculiar condition of the Kerala country was the absence of a paramount power. Zamorin wanted to exert his authority. (19). But the traditions and usages were such that he could not do away with his tributaries and chieftains. The ruler had no right to interfere in the internal affairs of a chieftain, much less a tributary. The land held by them was hereditary and they enjoyed a right to hold in demesne. No ruler could deprive them of their ancient property. This was one of the important customs followed by the rulers of Kerala. Here lies the conspicuous difference between a feudal baron of medieval Europe and a Nair chieftain of Kerala. As the ownership of land rested with the nobles in Kerala, their properties could not be confiscated. The king was not the owner of the land contrary to the system of feudal Europe. (20). These nobles acquired lands not in the name of the kings.

The princes and chieftains were quite free to enter into any alliance or treaty with any power, or declare war and conclude peace or collect taxes and tolls. They were quite independent as free rulers. The only check upon their power was that they were not permitted to wear crowns or mint coins or keep a canopy over their head, which were considered royal prerogatives. (21). The strange political usage of reinstalling the vanquished rulers and chieftains after a war (22) and abstaining from awarding capital punishments to them (23), kept them unchecked and left them free from any fear of destruction. Another factor to be reckoned with was the influence of the temple kingdoms of the time. Most of

(19) Fyn. (Misc.) S.No. 55, P.18.
(23) Ibid, P.274.
the lands were temple properties. (24). Just like the medieval Christian Church of Europe before the Reformation, they asserted rights and privileges over the temporal power. No ruler of Kerala was brave enough to fight against them and to pursue a fugitive prince who had taken asylum in these temples. They were sacrosanct and free from sacrifices. Sometimes the feudal elements combined with these ecclesiastical authorities rose the flag of revolt against their suzerain. (25). The rulers could not check these violent and disruptive tendencies because of the usages and traditions followed by them.

Therefore, neither these Naduvaghis or Desavaghis nor even the major Rajas possessed unfettered sovereign authority. Royal power was restricted to a great extent by the Nair nobles like Kaimalas, Pillais, Karthayungs, Nambiars etc. who possessed armies of their own. (26). The feudal nature of the military organisation made even the major rulers dependent upon the willing obedience of these Brahmin priests and Nair chieftains. Thus the absolute absence of a unifying central authority was the outstanding feature of Malabar politics on the eve of Haidar Ali's conquest.

But this feudal anarchy and political instability ceased with the advent of Mysoreans in Malabar. The Desavaghis and Naduvaghis with their unbridled power were reduced to submission. The Central Government became effective and powerful. A country where a number of Chieftains rendering the administration of their respective territories at their will and pleasure could not afford to a uniform system of

(25) A. Balakrishna Pillai: Research in the History of Ancient Kerala, PP. 13-16.
(26) K.M. Panicker, P.28.
administration. Buchanan testifies to this fact when he says "owing to the quarrels between the different Rajas and the turbulent spirit of the Nair Chiefs who were frequently in arms each other, the state of the country was little favourable to the introduction of good Government." (27). Malabar, when it came under the Mysoreans, gave a shock treatment to the ills of these out-moded feudal legacy and became one of the districts of a well-managed empire of India. It was placed under Madanna, "an experienced revenue officer as Civil Governor of the place." (28).

The Malabar district was divided into 12 Tockriog or collectorships to each of which Tockriogas and Seriattadars were appointed. (29). These were again divided into taluks. After the Treaty of Seringapatam, those ceded to the Company on March 16, 1792 were: Calicut - 62 Taluks; Cotiote - 3 Taluks; Cartinaad - 3 Taluks; Cannanore - 1 Taluk and Cochin - 14 Taluks. (30). The Tara organisation though underwent certain changes was maintained by the Mysore Officers as the lowest unit of administration. "The experienced Mysorean administrators of Waidar Ali and Tipu Sultan", observes W. Logan, "applied to the territorial units which they endeavoured to foster and keep alive as villages with hereditary heads, an essential branch of their system." (31). Thus Calicut nad was divided into 125 desomes. They embraced precisely the same lands as the 72 Teras into which that nad was like-wise divided. Even the hostile historians of Mysore rule in Kerala have to agree that the British administrators built up their administrative and political system in Malabar on the foundations laid by Mysoreans. (32) and that the Mysore activities in Malabar prepared the political and administrative background

(29) Fgn. (Misc.) S.No. 56, Part I, P.95.
(30) Ibid, No.55, PP.84-5.
for the assumption of sovereignty later by the Company. (33).

As the pioneers of the system, both Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan had to face innumerable impediments placed before them by the Nair chieftains who were wedded to the age-old traditions of the place that were adverted to above. One can very well imagine what would have been the severe repercussions when a system was destroyed and switched over to a new one, that too was instituted by an outside agency. In this task of replacing feudal anarchy that prevailed in Malabar by a strong centralised government, both Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan encountered a number of rebellions and difficulties which they successfully overcame. Had the English not intervened and instigated the Nair rebels, the result would have been very beneficial. The political system practised by the Malayalees underwent a great revolution to which they could not reconcile for a long time. It deprived them of their old privileges and rights to assert their independence and assume sovereignty whenever they desired over the small territories they held by hereditary right. On the other hand, it enjoined on them to be loyal subjects, like other sections of the society. The political organisation again drastically affected their social and economic structure because these were built upon the foundations of political privileges and prerogatives. When the political power of the Nairs ceased, "with it went the feudal conception of Malabar polity" (34).

The greatness attributed to the achievements of Marthanta Varma of Travancore and Paliyath Komi Achan of Cochin is "the ruthless suppression of all the recalcitrant nobles" (35), who like the Malabar chieftains defied the royal authority.

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(34) K.M. Panicker: Malabar and the Dutch, P.63.
and made the formation of a strong monarchy impossible. Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan asserted the same in Malabar with the avowed intention of the unification of the country, for which act of political insight, both of them were severely criticised by the same historians who praise Marthanta Varma and Rama Achan for the same work done by them. This remains as a paradox in the yardstick of historical analysis. "It was he (Marthanta Varma) who in one generation expanded his kingdom", writes E.M.S. Namboodiripad, "from a petty principality of a few dozen squires miles to the later State of Travancore and is thus rightly considered 'the builder of modern Travancore.'"(36). The accession of Marthanta Varma in 1729, opened a new chapter in the history of Travancore as well as in the history of Kerala (37). The time was such that "the country was honeycombed," observes Nagan Ayya, the Author of Travancore State Manual, "with petty chieftains who collecting round themselves lands of brigands subsisted on pillage and plunder and harassed the Raja and his subjects by turns frustrating all attempts to establish order or any settled form of Government."(38). He rose to the occasion and overcame the grave danger that posed against his royal authority. He genuinely desired to unify the whole of Kerala and wished to be the emperor therein. (39). By following a vigorous and aggressive policy the Raja was able not only to bring about the political unification but also to strike at the root of the feudal nobility in Travancore. 'The Attuventtil Pillamar' (the Pillais or Rais of Eight Celebrated feudal houses of Travancore), who were the turbulent nobles were all

(36) E.M.S. Namboodiripad: Kerala: Yesterdays, Today and Tomorrow, p.76.
sieved and executed (40). What Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan had done in Malabar was no more severe than the punishment meted out to the Nair chiefs by Marthanta Varma. But this was an outright violation of one of the principal customs of Kerala according to which the Nair lords should not be punished with death even if they rebelled against the constituent authority. (41). Marthanta Varma was a prince trained in the school of modern developments and was determined to break the old customs. He began to annex the neighbouring States one after another. "This was the first occasion in which a state was thus dealt with in Malabar history" writes K.M. Panicker, "for until this time, the custom was merely to reduce the ruler of a conquered territory to the position of a subordinate chief and leave him in the enjoyment of his territory." (42). He continued his violation of the principles of Kerala dharma again by the suppression of his dissipated nobles. K.M. Panicker goes on to say, "he showed himself during the whole of his career entirely devoid of a feeling for Kerala dharma .... His attempt was to sweep off the whole Malabar polity and establish in its place an autocracy of the type which prevailed in Madura under the Naiks and in Trichinopoly under the Nabobs" (43).

What prompted K.M. Panicker and similar historians of Kerala to pounce upon the Mysore rulers was that they also did act against the Kerala dharma. The ruler of Travancore who was a tributary to the Nawab and who was in the close neighbourhood of the Naiks of Madura was inspired by the centralised

(42) K.M. Panicker: Malabar and the Dutch, P.64.
system of Governments that existed in that part of the country and tried to translate it into practical politics of Kerala. The historians, therefore, call him 'the maker of modern Travancore' and extol him in hyperbolic terms. Same process of unification of the country was carried out by Kom P. Achan, the hereditary Diwan of Cochin in that State. He is esteemed by all historians to this sacrifice of his class interest for the exaltation of the kingly powers. But the students of history are baffled to see that both Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan were mercilessly made victims of unmerited criticism by the same historians, for the same political process followed by them in Malabar.

The process of the integration of small principalities of Malabar fell upon the shoulders of the Mysorean conqueror. In Malabar, the feudal nobility continued to be powerful and there was no indication of its immediate disappearance. "In fact, there was every reason to believe," writes P.K.S. Raja, "that the existing system of civil and military organisation would have continued in North Kerala, but for the Mysorean invasion." (44). The Mysorean system of administration put an end to the feudal anarchy in Malabar, just like it was destroyed by Marthanta Varma in Travancore and Kom P. Achan in Cochin. The fact that Travancore and Cochin existed as separate States till the formation of linguistic States on November 1, 1956, when these were integrated into, and formed the modern State of Kerala, shows how effectively the elimination of petty principalities was carried out in Malabar by the Mysore rulers. The English, after the cession of Malabar to them, tried to reinstate

(44) Medieval Kerala, P.219.
the old Rajas and re-establish the old traditions but failed deplorably in this respect. In this regard, they could only do away with the nice aspects of Mysorean reforms, at the same time failing miserably to innovate anything beneficial to the people. Finally as we have seen, the Malabar Rajas were pensioned and reduced to the position of Jennis or landlords under them.

(b) Changes in agrarian relations. The radical changes introduced in the agrarian relations and revenue administration can better be understood only if we know the salient features of Malayalee system of land tenure before the Mysorean occupation of Malabar. The most important point that has to be borne in mind is that the ownership right of the Jennis or landlords was quite different from that in any other part of India. When the Mysoreans took up the task of land settlement they found the prevailing system of property right different from their own kingdom. As against the system of rulers having absolute ownership of all lands in the country as in other parts of India, the rulers in Kerala had no right to receive the annual land revenue. (1). The ownership rights of the rulers over the land was the least while those of private Jennis were most in Kerala. Major Walker in his "Report on the Land Tenures of Malabar," made it clear in 1801 when he wrote, "in no country in the world is the nature of this species of property better understood than in Malabar nor its rights so tenaciously maintained.... The Jennmakaran possesses the entire right to the soil and no earthly authority can with justice deprive him of it."(2). The nature of ownership of land vested upon Jennis or landlords,

(1) Fgn. (Misc.) S.No. 55, Para. 9, P.10.
is amply manifested by different 'Commissioners' in their reports, constituted for the purpose of studying the land tenure in Malabar, by the English. In the years 1807 and 1815 when Thackeray and Major Warden submitted their reports to the Board of Revenue, they emphatically declared, "the whole of land in Malabar cultivated or uncultivated is private property held by Jemm right. (3) ....... the Jemm rights of Malabar vest in the holder an absolute right in the soil. (4). Dr. Buchanan who visited the place in 1800, gave a detailed description of the system of land tenure and the peculiar type of Jemm right enjoyed by the landlords of Malabar. (5). "Jemman right is antecedent to sovereign right," writes Nagan Ayya, "the peculiarity of the jemman property is that their owners have absolute control over them in connection with their revenue and rents and they take from their rights the 'cattam' or rents as well as the Rain Bhogam." (6). "Even forests, mountains and rivers in the country", testifies Hamilton, "are private properties"(7). All travellers to this country note this peculiar feature. The ruler had no right on the jemman properties held by landlords. At the same time, the jemman property embraced more than seventy-five per cent of the land, the rest being apportioned, as 'cherikal' lands held by the king and 'Devastanam' or the Devastanam lands appertained for the maintenance of the temples. (8).

Another important feature of land holding in Malabar was that no land tax was levied on the landed property(9).

(3) Thackeray's Report to the Board of Revenue, dated August 4, 1807.
(4) Major Warden's Report, September 12, 1815.
(9) Fqn. (Misc.) S.No. 55, Para 9, P.10.
This made the ownership of the lands absolute with the Jenmis. "In the political history of Malabar," writes W. Robinson, "one fact is at least supported by a considerable amount of evidence, viz., the lands were originally held free of rent and taxes." (10). Many a scholar dwells on the subject to find out reasons for this peculiar condition. W. Logan and C. A. Innes think that in the ancient period of Kerala history, land tax might probably have existed, but after the break-up of the empire of Perumals it ceased to exist. Both these writers have made a detailed study of the agrarian system of Kerala in their 'Malabar Manual' and 'Malabar Gazetteer', respectively. (11). "The absence of land revenue which appeared to the early enquirers and to the Court of Directors as extraordinary," observes Charles Turner, "is explained on the hypothesis that the Brahmin whom the Hindu law declared free from tax was the owner of the soil...... It is probable that some of the land was held throughout by Nayars, but these and the Nopilahs who were in possession as Jenmis when the district was ceded by Tipu claimed the same completeness of ownership as was claimed by the Brahmins" (12). The Zamorin had in a characteristic letter to the 'Joint Commissioners' in 1792 assured them that "by the ancient customs of Malabar, the Nayars held their lands free; they paid no revenue to anyone...." (13). Sheik Zainuddeen, declared "whatever might be the extent of the land held by the people, the Government did not levy either land tax or share of the produce." (14).

(12) Charles Turner's Minute on the Draft Bill relating to the Land Tenures of Malabar, Chapter II. 
(13) Fgn.(Misc.) S.No. 56, P.207. 
(14) Sheik Zainuddeen: Tunfat-ul-Kaikhiddeen, P.83.
This unbridled right of the ownership of land to any kind of obligation to the Government found a drastic change with the advent of Mysoreans. As early as 1766, Haidar Ali entrusted his civil Governor Madanna, to organise an efficient land revenue administration. It is not quite certain how far the work was carried out by Madanna to the desire of his Master in the early years of Mysorean occupation. But the reference of Buchanan to the effect that the condition of the country under the reinstated Rajas between 1768-1772 was "worse than it had been under the Canarese Brahmins...."(15) shows that Madanna might have started his work right earnestly from the early years of Mysorean rule. The revenue settlement started by Madanna was, however, suspended before two years when the Malabar Rajas were reinstated on condition of a stipulated tribute in the year 1768.

Failing in this experiment, Haidar Ali took direct control of the administration of the Malabar affairs in 1773 and Srinivas Rago was appointed as Civil Governor.(16). Based on the principles followed in other parts of Mysore kingdom, he organised a systematic land revenue administration. As a prelude to this, the first land survey in the history of Kerala was conducted by him. The Mysorean administrators surveyed the land and fixed the land tax on the basis of the produce. These were absolutely unknown to Malabar. The measurement of land was calculated, till then, according to the quantity of seed grain required to sow a

certain field. (17). No land survey was known to the people (18) and "that the Malayales had no means of determining correctly the extent of his cultivated land. (19). But he knew for certain how much seed was required for a certain field, what was the output of the land, and how much of the produce he had to give away as pattom or rent to the jenmi. Thus in the pattom paid to the jenmi, the Mysoreans found the simplest and most expeditious way of assessing the land revenue (20). "It was with the husbandmen and not with the landlords that the settlement was made." (21). A certain portion of the pattom or so-called rent paid by the husbandmen to the jenmis, was taken by the Government as revenue. The important features of this system were that the intermediaries between the Government and the cultivator were eliminated, lands were surveyed, the Government share was fixed on the actual produce, and above all the Government established direct relations with the tenants. The salient feature was that the feudal aristocracy saw its complete disappearance. The settlement was made with the kanamadars or tenants.

Only wet lands were taxed. Dry land and the property held by temples (Dewaswam lands) were exempted from taxation. (22). "It was", writes Buchanan, "to prevent them (jenmis) from falling into absolute want" (23). Thus it can be seen that the land revenue, though a novel introduction

(17) Fgn. (Misc.) S.No. 56, P.863 (Part II).
(19) Fgn. (Misc.) S.No. 56, Part II, P.937.
(20) Ibid, S.No. 55, Para.51, P.57.
(22) Buchanan: Vol.ii, P.368.
to Malabar, did not fall on the back of the tenants and create more burden on them. (24). The tax was collected on the jamai's share or rent was to be taken into account. The Mysoreans called the land assessment as 'the hugur niguthi', (the Government tax) and the settlement can be styled as the 'Ryotwari System' which was followed by the English in certain provinces after many years of this Mysorean experiment.

After the Treaty of Mangalore (1794), Malabar was restored to Tipu who entrusted Arshad Beg Khan to reorganise the revenue administration. (25). The reforms of Arshad Beg Khan in the revenue settlement were praised even by hostile historians. (26). The method of Arshad Beg Khan supposes that one parrah of seed corn will, on a medium product in each year, give ten parrahs, whereof $\frac{5}{2}$ will go to the cultivator and $\frac{4}{2}$ remain to be divided between the landholder and the Government. On the share of land holder and the Government viz., $\frac{4}{2}$ parrahs, of which $\frac{1}{2}$ went to the land holder and three to the Government. (27) Buchanan writes that the parrah or rent paid for a noray sowing land varied from 2 to 8 noras of grain. That which paid the high rent were those produced two crops in the year and that which paid low rent, produced only one crop (28). The grain produce was commuted into money at Rs. 40/- per 1000 sccrs of paddy. "In Hyder Ali's time ...... 50 per cent of the pattans", writes Logan, "payable either in kind or commutable into money at Rs. 40/- per 1000 sccrs. In Tipu's, the rate continued to be the same, the revenue being collected in kind." (29). At the same time, those belonging to the English East India Company were assessed at 100 per cent

(24) Pgn. (Misc.) S.Fo. 56, Part II, Voucher No. 40, P.897.
(26) Ibid, Para.32, P.40.
the pattom commuted to money at Rs.45/- per 1000 seers. (30). This shows the assessment was highly moderate and reasonable.

The assessment on garden lands varied from locality to locality taking into consideration the fertility of the soil and the yield of the garden. Crops like cashew, cardamom, cinnamon etc. and garden produce like plantains, vegetables etc. were exempted from taxation. (31). Only cocoanut trees, jack trees and pepper vines were assessed. The nominal fixation for each kind of tree was usually at the rate of one fanam (Annas two) for every bearing cocoanut tree, Annas four for every bearing jacktree, eight pies (four naye paisa) for every bearing arecanut and Annas twelve for every pepper vine estimated to produce 15 seers of green pepper. (32). Trees which did not produce more than 10 cocoanuts were excluded from taxation as unproductive. (33). Thus in a garden of 100 cocoanut trees, old and unproductive trees would be less than 50 according to this calculation. The owner had to pay tax for 50 trees whereas both old and not yielding more than ten, would also produce the nuts that were exempted from taxation. Besides these trees, plantains, kitchen plants etc. were grown that were also exempted. (34). For the purpose of fixing the assessment, cocoanuts were converted at 8.7-8-0 per 1000 nuts, arecanuts at 8.4/- per thousand nuts, jacks at 8s.4/- per tree. "The commutation rates," observes Buchanan, "were so much below market prices as not to leave the Jema altogether destitute" (35).

Further Arshad Beg Khan, Tipu's Governor, on receipts of complaints reduced the Jema (demand) 20 per cent all round.

(33) Ibid: P.404.
(34) Ibid: P.405.
(35) Ibid: P.404
on wet lands and gardens (36). Thus all reasonable grievances of the cultivators were readily redressed by the revenue officers of Tipu Sultan (37). But the system was not above criticism. The Mysorean officers who assessed were strangers to the land and could easily be misled by the local informants who with the connivance of the landholders under-estimated their lands or if prejudiced against any party over-estimated them. Thus as Buchanan testifies to it, "all the vigilance of the commander and his Master were certainly inadequate to prevent unjust inequalities in the original assessment and there cannot be a doubt that many land-lords who chose to corrupt the officers of revenue had their lands valued at a low rate and the deficiency which this occasioned was made up by valuing high the lands of those who were poor or too proud to corrupt the assessors." (38). It is surprising that Buchanan accuses Tipu in a later stage for resurveying the land and refixing the revenue and separating the civil and military administrations under different officers. The anomalies that crept into the first survey and assessment were cured with rational and scientific treatment by Tipu Sultan. But this measure too was condemned even by Buchanan who clearly appraised the situation and knew that there were corruption and malpractice in the first settlement (39). When it was rectified, that too was made a subject of criticism. This is the general treatment of the history of this period by all English historians. Even now, instances are not wanting to substantiate the possibility of the officers being corrupted, and thereby

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(36) Fgn. (Misc.) S.No. 55, Para. 39, P. 43.
(39) Ibid: P. 446.
defeating all lofty aims of beneficial schemes. But it will be cruel on our part to put the blame for all the irregularities of the officers under a Government exclusively on the shoulders of the policy-makers. Considering the cumbersome process of a revenue settlement in a country where it was unknown and considering the fact that the revenue officers of Tipu were from Mysore who being strangers to the land, might have been given wrong information by the local informants who had their own prejudices and also considering the want of proper communications etc., the task undertaken by them as pioneers in the field, should be reasonably appreciated though certain shortcomings were there. At the same time, both Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan were always prepared to redress the grievances when complaints were launched to that effect. (40).

In the year 1786, Tipu Sultan separated the civil and military functions of the Government as an effective step to prevent corruption and improve the efficiency of the revenue administration. Mir Ibrahim was made as the Governor of Civil Administration and Arshad Beg Khan retained the military functions. The land survey was again conducted and a number of irregularities of the first survey were detected. (41).

Subsequent to this, lands held without title and payment of tax were brought under the purview of taxation. Following the opinions of Buchanan and Wilks who say that Arshad Beg’s administration was successful and it was made at naught by the interference of Tipu by the separation of the civil and the military. K. M. Panicker makes this charge: “He (Mir Ibrahim) broke all the treaties, imposed new exactions, and generally

(40) Fgn. (Misc.) S.No. 55, Para. 39, P. 43.
infuriated the Nair Chiefs. Even the Moplah notable Mancheri Kurukkal turned against Mysore." (42). These accusations are baseless. If stopping the evasion of land tax and bringing the illegal possessors of unauthorised lands under the jurisdiction of the revenue administration were a breach of treaty, the Mysoreans broke all treaties. They applied the law universal. The fact that even the Muslim landlord and devine Manjeri Kurukkal was not allowed to defy the law of the country amply illustrates that the Mysorean system was above caste or religious considerations. It is probable that the Kurukkal, because of his priestly attire and status in the Muslim community might have made use of his position to possess more lands than were actually there in the title deeds and evaded land revenue. Similar cases might have been detected in others also. When these illegal possessions were brought under justice and revenue law, the parties affected raised a hue and cry. It is interesting to see that the revolt of Manjeri Kurukkal was suppressed with the help of Ravi Varma, a prince of the Zamorin's family. (43).

The land-lords of Kerala were all Nairs and Namboodiris except a few Muslims like Kurukkal of Manjeri. (44). The policy of Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan was to eliminate the intermediaries between the actual cultivator and the Government. In Malabar, when they began the work of revenue settlement, they found that most of the Jenmis had fled from the country. This helped them to make the settlement with Kanam-dars or cultivators directly. The peasants and cultivators especially in South Malabar even now are Muslims whereas the landlords or Jenmis are Namboodiris and Nairs. The hostile critics of Mysore administration make out a point that the settlement was made with the cultivators in Malabar because most of them were Muslims. It is a gross misrepresentation of the fact as it was the policy pursued by them throughout their

(43) Pgm. (Misc.) S.No. 55, Para. 51, P. 57.
(44) Pgm. (Misc.) S.No. 56, Part II, P. 801.
dominion. In short, the new agrarian policy of Mysore Nawabs shook the edifice of the feudal society and toppled down the cracking pillars of its polity.

(c) Trade and Industry. We have seen that both Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan considered the possession of Malabar with its ancient ports of Calicut, Cannanore and Mangalore, extremely important. That is why they held Malabar dear and promoted its industry and trade. Kirmani testifies to the multifarious activities undertaken by Haidar Ali to promote trade and industry in his kingdom. He writes that Haidar Ali kept all merchants, traders and bankers with him by making them kingly presents and he also brought up their goods with the greatest avidity and at high prices. To horse dealers, he gave presents of gold and raiment besides the value of the horses he purchased and so liberal was he, that if on the road through his territories any horse by chance died he paid half the price of the horse. He continues: "His loans and advances of money were scattered like sand ever in the face of earth." (1). He encouraged merchants from foreign countries to come and settle in Mysore so that the benefit of trade might prosper his kingdom. But unlike the Rajas of Cochin, Travancore and Malabar who either became vassals of foreign traders or yielded to their dictates and gave trade monopoly to the Europeans, the Mysorean rulers considered them only as mere merchants subjected to the law of the country like other subjects. This is clear from the letter written by Haidar Ali to the Governor Fort William, on March 19, 1779, on the eve of Second Anglo-Mysore War. "There are many factories in my country", wrote he, "belonging to the Dutch, English, French, Portuguese, and Danes who trade in my

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(1) Kirmani: Nishan-i-Haidari (Miles) P.475.
country on the footing of subjects..." (2). Never in the reigns of Haidar Ali and his son, the European traders could succeed in inserting a favourable provision of trade monopoly in any treaty engagements, eventhough they exerted their utmost to this effect. But they were allowed to continue their business like ordinary merchants of the country. After the Malabar conquest, Haidar Ali extended his grant to the Dutch and the English to have their commercial activities in the Malabar Coast subject to the limit of the earlier contracts entered into with the Rajas of the Coast. At the same time, he created a fleet under his naval commandant Aly Raja of Cannanore and promoted maritime commerce to a greater extent.

In the time of Tipu Sultan also, trade and industry of Malabar received a great fillip. "He was alone among the Indian rulers", writes Prof. Mohibbul Hasan Khan, "to realise that a country could be great and powerful only by developing its trade and industry." (3). A person of rare talents having "the audacity of conception, fertility of resource, and an overweening sense of majesty" (4) would seldom fail to grasp the unprecedented attainments of European nations who had entered into the arena of commerce and industry. Therefore, like the Europeans, Tipu also endeavoured to reap the benefit of trade and commerce. Accordingly, the State monopoly on import and export commodities was imposed. He sought to set up State monopoly on gold ore and other precious minerals and metals as well as on tobacco and sandal wood, elephants

(2) Fgn. (Sec.) Dept., Fort William. Prof. of the Sec. Select Committee from 4th January to 28th January, 1779.
(3) Mohibbul Hasan Khan: History of Tipu Sultan, p. 344.
and teakwood, and coconuts and pepper. That the European settlements in the Malabar Coast suffered very much in their trade activities due to this, is evident from the letter of the Chief of Tellichery to the Governor Fort William (5). The English felt even like winding up the Tellichery Factory due to the enormous loss in maintaining an establishment without any trade prospects. (6). But they believed that in future if Tipu could be dislodged from the Malabar Coast "Tellichery would be most important a settlement on the point of view of military and commerce." (7). This State monopoly introduced in Malabar was only the implementation of the commercial policy of Mysore Government pursued throughout their kingdom. How zealous were the officers of Tipu in carrying out successfully their master's prohibitory order and in preventing the unauthorised foreign merchants from dealing in the country, is evident in the reply given by Tipu Sultan to the Governor of Pondichery to his complaint that the officers in Malabar molested the merchants from Pondichery and stopped them in the frontiers with their merchandise. Tipu required the Governor, "in future when you despatch Bouparies into our dominions to purchase goods you must give them a letter from yourself to the Talukdar written in Malabar language when he will in conformity with your desire, suffer the specified articles to pass. The reason of the orders issued on this subject is that of late certain strangers have come into dominions, where borrowing money of the ryots and others, they have been guilty of various unwarrantable practices." (8). In another letter to Raja Ram Chundar, Tipu wrote, "two letters from you have been received. You write

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(8) Kirk Patrick: Select letters of Tippoo Sultan, No. XXI, PP. 34-5.
'vermilion is not procurable within our dominions and is only to be got at Pondichery.' This being the case, you must send money and buy at those ports...... There is no need of sending goods or merchandise to barter for it."(9). This is another example to show the strict adherence to the commercial policy of Mysore Government. Tipu enumerated his import and export policy in his letter to the Imam of Muscat telling the circumstances in which he was compelled to promulgate the policy of prohibition of trade without licence and permit.(10). The Government under Tipu Sultan did not want to give the profit that accrued from business to the foreigners and "realising that the European nations owed their greatness to commerce and industry, he undertook, the role of trader, manufacturer, banker and money changer."(11). He had established ware-houses throughout his country with a view to monopolise the wholesale trade. When he received a letter of complaint from Raja Ram Chundar that the merchants and money lenders seldom visit and make purchases, Tipu replied advising him to go forward even if the profit was not much in the beginning. People would come when they realised the benefit of the system (12). It was a novel feature to the country and to the time in which he lived. The state discharged the functions of traders and merchants. To facilitate trade and commerce, a commercial department was established by him.(13). A sum of four lakhs of Rohitis equivalent to $128000 sterling was placed under the head of the commercial department for the purpose of fostering trade and commerce.(14). This zeal and enthusiasm can easily be understood when we read the commercial

(9) Ibid: No. XIX, April 9, 1785, P.32.
(12) Kirk Patricks: Letters of Tippoo Sultan, No.XCVIII, P.129.
(13) Ibid: Appendix, E, No.V.
(14) Ibid: XI, III.
regulations issued by Tipu Sultan in the years 1793 and 1794. (15). He had constituted a Board of Commissioners of Trade and established 17 foreign and 30 home factories in several countries and districts respectively.

Another most commendable work introduced by Tipu in his kingdom was the State trading corporation. This was set up with a view of making the people participate in the commercial and trade activities. Shares were sold to his subjects, the value of which ranged from Rs. 5 to Rs. 5000. (16). Share-holders of Rs. 5 to Rs. 500 were given at the end of the year a profit of 50%, depositors of Rs. 500 to Rs. 5000 received a profit of 25% and those of Rs. 5000 above got only 12% (17). If a share-holder wanted to sell his shares, he could do so without any difficulty. He would receive the share value and the profit due to him. (18). By this regulation, he aimed at giving more benefit to the poor as the ratio of profit varied in the inverse ratio of the amount of deposit. (19). No prince of his age thought of such beneficial and modern schemes in India and it remains as a marvellous experiment of wisdom and innovation. The introduction of banking and exchange business was another important scheme that gave great impetus to trade and industry. The exploitation of the poor peasants by the usurers was to some extent prevented by the State monopoly of banking business. No doubt the country and its people benefited much by these economic measures.

The Mysore Government exported sandalwood, ivory, rice, spices, and cotton and silk fabrics. Tipu's officers in

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(15) Ibid: XXXIII, Appendix E.
(17) Kick Patrick: Appendix E.
Malabar collected the land revenue in kind as against the
practice under Haider Ali who took cash (20). This was
because of the increase in export business. As an intelli-
gent businessman, Tipu readily relieved the people from the
burden of paying cash for kind, but made profit out of it
by exporting the excess rice and cocoanuts. A number of
letters of Tipu written to his Deroghs of different factories
inside and outside India, show that Tipu excelled in the
qualities of a professional merchant and a successful busi-
nessman. When he knew that the price of pepper and sandal-
wood had come down, he wrote to Meer Kasim, Derogh of Mascat,
"not to dispose hastily or immediately of the black pepper
and sandal wood but to wait till they had attained a desi-
rable price." (21). Same is conveyed to him in two other
letters of different dates in which Tipu gives direction "you
must not be in haste to dispose of the cinnamon, sandalwood,
blackpepper and rice imported at Muscat from Mangalore. Keep
them carefully till they become dear and yield a profit and
then sell them." (22). In another interesting letter, the
Sultan gives instructions regarding the sale of sandalwood
at the rate of 120 pagodas for the first kind, of 100 pagodas
for the second quality, of 90 pagodas for the third kind and
of 80 pagodas for the fourth quality and pepper for 80 pagodas
per candy.

Not only did he make extensive export of commodities
of his dominion but also encouraged the foreign merchants to
establish factories and further the trade of the country.
When Khaja Heratoom and others requested him for trade facili-
ties, Tipu readily responded to them in these words: "We
highly approve of your intention and desire you will repair
in the utmost confidence with your merchandise either to the

(21) Kirk Patrick: Mc; CLIV, P.185.
(22) Ibid: CLVI, P.187 and CLX, P.189.
port of Mangalore or to the port of Calicut; where landing your goods, you shall in the first instance supply us at a fair price with such articles which we may want, after which you shall be let at liberty to sell the remainder at your pleasure." (23). A remission of 4/10th of customary duties was allowed by Tipu, when one Mao Seith, Dullal at Mascat wrote him of "his determination to establish a factory at Calicut" (24). Even when providing facilities for foreign merchants to establish factories and carry on trade, the State interest was zealously watched and looked after. No other Indian ruler tried to establish factories and warehouses in foreign countries. Tipu had his regular factory establishments in Mascat, Jaddah, and Ormuz. He made efforts to establish factories in Aden and Basara. (25). Outside his dominion in India, he had two factories at Cutch, one at Mundhi and the other at Mudra. (26). One of the important duties entrusted with his embassies sent to foreign countries, was to fetch technical know how to manufacture various items of industrial goods and start with new industries. It was a cherished desire of Tipu Sultan to establish a pearl fishery in Malabar. He required his Darogah of Mascat to send pearl divers to Mangalore for this purpose. (27). Local traditions attribute to the genius of Tipu for attempting gold mines in Wynaad which was actually worked out in the first half of 19th century under the English. (28). In his letter to Mohiyudddeen Ali Khan, Tipu after acknowledging the receipt of seven pieces of lead sent by him, writes, "it is usual for a silver mine or silver

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(23) Ibid: CXXXI, P.189.
(24) Ibid: No. CCXI, P.239.
(25) Kirk, Patrick: Epitome, P.
(26) Ibid.
earth to be found under a lead mine.... shall send persons
skilled in such earth from the presence to examine...(29).
Tipu's attention was drawn to the necessity of a strong
fleet and for that purpose he established two dock-yards,
one in Wajidabad and the other in Mangalore. (30). The teak-
wood on which the State monopoly was made was collected in
large quantities from Malabar and sent for this purpose.
Tipu through his agents in Jeddah and Muscat procured ship-
wrights for his ship building industry. (31). The models of
ships were supplied by the Sultan himself. (32). How far
these schemes were worked out in Malabar and how far they
were successful, we do not know. But one thing is certain
that Malabar would have benefited much better than it actual-
ly did if it was destined to continue under Tipu Sultan.

Tipu was no doubt inspired by the Industrial enter-
prises and the subsequent development of the European coun-
tries through industrialisation and banking. In India, it
was he alone who felt the pulsation of the revolutionary
development abroad. Therefore, he wanted to cope with these
commercial countries by establishing his own factories and
industries and manufacturing essential industrial goods for
the domestic use and for the purpose of export. The students
of history will be very much interested to read the letters
written by him to his Daroghs of different stations requir-
ing them, "we are anxious to procure some seed of saffaron
plants, silk worms, date trees, almonds" etc. (33), in one
letter and in other two letters "having ascertained in what
part of the country saffaron is cultivated.... engage persons
to purchase one or two maunds of the seed. Procure silkworms.

(32) Ibid: Appendix L, PP. XXVIII FF.
and their eggs with five or six men acquainted with the proper mode of rearing them." (34). Finally silk industry was developed by obtaining silkworms from Bengal, and Muscat (35). He had employed a number of European and Indian Engineers and artisans in his various industrial concerns. Scissors, balances, hour-glasses, knives, paper, watches, cutlery and guns were manufactured by his men. The silk and cotton industries of Mysore became world famous during his time. The best quality of sugar in India was produced in Mysore. The ordnance factories of Tipu manufactured arms, guns and gunpowder that were in certain cases superior to those of European make. In his letter to Louis XVI of France, Tipu wrote, among other things, on August 6, 1786, thus: "a double-barrelled gun made in the arsenal of the Sarcar, together with an embroidered dress is sent for the noble rank and will arrive." (36).

In fact the cause for the rupture with the English was the outcome of these activities to which the audacious English could not reconcile. When all other rulers vied with each other to obtain favours of arms and ammunitions from the European traders, it was the rulers of Mysore alone who had even competed with them by manufacturing better quality of guns and gunpowder. The rapid industrialisation of the country, establishment of trade corporations, Banking and trade monopoly accompanied by a prohibition of trade without licence etc. would never have been matters that could be overlooked by the English. It was he alone felt the necessity of developing our industries and technology to compete with the foreign merchants in India and also attempted to capture the

foreign markets for Indian goods. "Tipu was the first Indian sovereign to seek to apply western methods to his administration." (37), and it was again because of this that the English wanted to eliminate him from Indian politics. If he was destined to live as long as his father, no doubt, the course of Indian history would have been a different one. But all ended with the Fourth Mysore War.

(d) means of transport. Perhaps by far the most notable legacy of Mysore rule in Kerala, that has stood the ravages of time, is the network of roads finished by them in Malabar. The inland communications were carried out through waterways till the advent of Mysoreans (1). Since the country was compartmented into petty feudal fiefs which were in perpetual feud and the mode of warfare in vogue in this part of the country, "where a force on the march went in single file and unencumbered by artillery" (2), the necessity of roads was never felt by the rulers. Further, the innumerable rivers that divide the country into small pieces made the roadmaking impossible. "It was because of the absence of roads alone", observes P.K. Balakrishnan, "the foreigners who were constantly in the Coast for more than 250 years (before the advent of Mysoreans) could not influence or enter into the interior parts of the country" (3).

In the minutes written by Colonel Dow 'On the State of Roads in Malabar' after its cession to the English, comments, "the necessity for spacious and broad roads was not probably felt until the Muhammedan conquest" (4). Corroborating Colonel Dow, W.Logan sums up: "it was only after the Mysorean..."
invasions, the necessity of roads capable of carrying heavy guns began to be felt." (5). The author of Cochin State Manual enumerating the achievements of Cochin in the 1st half of 19th century, says "all the great roads in the State...... were constructed during this short period..." (6). This shows that till the 19th century, there were no roads in any part of Cochin. This can safely be accepted as a general rule regarding the whole of Kerala.

Another aspect closely connected with the means of transport that should be taken into credit, is that before the Mysorean invasion, wheeled traffic was unknown to Kerala. Ibn Battuta writing in the 14th century made his observation thus: "no one travels in these parts upon beasts of burden... when however any merchant has to buy or sell goods, they are carried upon the backs of men who are either slaves or coolies hired for this purpose. Big merchants may have hundred or more of these men to transmit their goods from one place to another." (7). Buchanan who inspected this country between 1800-1801, testifies: "In Malabar even cattle are little used for transportation of goods which are generally carried by porters." (8). He goes on to say that in this country, "there are no carriages." (9). Innes who wrote his Malabar Casket in 1908 made the following observation: "Before his (Tipr.'s) time wheeled traffic was unknown and even pack-bullocks were not used until comparatively recent times" (10).

Therefore, the state of affairs prevailed in the latter half of the 18th century can very well be imagined. In this connection, an instance mentioned by the author of Cochin State Manual is worth reproducing to make the situation more clear. He writes "wheeled traffic was established between Coimbatore and Trichur for the first time in 1844. When one fine
morning twelve bullock carts laden with goods from Coimbatore arrived at Trichur, where most people had not seen such a conveyance before, there was by all accounts more excitement in the place than when the railway train first passed through it 58 years later."(11). It was against this background of hollowness, the Mysore rulers undertook the tremendous task of knitting their vast kingdom by a network of roads, some of which are still in use even after the lapse of two centuries.

When Haidar Ali descended from Mysore for the invasion of Malabar, he found no road for the passage of his cavalry. It was with much difficulty through "the roads or passages scarcely admitting more than three men abreast"(12), he came with his army when he knew the revolt in the province after a few weeks of its invasion. We have seen that the small Mysore garrisons in the block houses could fail even to communicate the attack of rebels on these military posts to the contingents cantoned in Ponnani and Calicut, because of the want of any inland communications. Therefore, Haidar Ali, after the suppression of the revolt, resorted to the easier means of water transport and required his Commandant Ali Raja of Cannanore to construct an artificial canal connecting the Mount Dali river and the back-waters of Taliparamba and Vallarpadam rivers which was dug in 1766. This canal made the delivery of goods quicker and means of transport easier. It is called even now "the Sultan's Canal", (13) and is one of the important canals of today that serves as a speedy and shorter route in the whole of water transport machinery

(12) History of Hyder Shah etc., P.76.
in Kerala. Another means of transport registered under Haidar Ali was the setting up of a number of outposts at reasonable distances to facilitate the inland communications. The mighty Palghat Fort that stand in tact to the present day conveyed the means of communication between Malabar and Seringapatam. As Haidar Ali did not get much time to spend in Malabar, and as he was engaged in bloody wars with the English and Marattas, he could not claim the credit of being the pioneer of road-makers in Kerala.

This great task was enthusiastically carried out by his more famous son Tipu Sultan. "Tipu projected and in a greater part finished an extensive chain of roads", observes Colonel Dow in his "Minutes on the affairs of roads in Malabar", "that connected all principal places in Malabar, and pervaded (even) the wildest part of the country." (14).

In this context the observation in the Salem District Gazetteer is also noteworthy. It declares "the Britishers are not the first road-makers of India. Tipu's road engineering was of no mean order." (15). In the South, Tipu Sultan is, therefore, considered to have been the greatest of road-builders in the 18th century. (16). Considering the extensive and pervading network of roads and also considering the total lack of any such contribution of the English in this part of the country, Mr. P.K. Balakrishnan comments: "Tipu is not only the first to construct roads in Kerala, but also the last road-maker in Malabar." (17). Needless to elaborate the point as

(14) Pgm. (Misc.) S.No. 56, Part II, Voucher, No. XIX.
(16) B.R. Sarkar: Inland Transport and Communications in Medieval India, P.32.
it is evident that Tipu was "the pioneer of its (Malabar) roads." (18).

The whole of Malabar was connected with a chain of roads. As it is often said that all roads of the Roman Empire lead to Rome', "the grand termination of the intercommunications was Seringapatam and as the route necessarily led over the Ghats neither labour nor expense was spared in rendering it practicable for artillery." (19). The following is the important gun roads enumerated in the 'Minutes' of Colonel Dow:-

"1. From Calicut to the present cantonement Polwaya by Purrinalettu, Cheakkur, Tamarcherri.

"2. From Maleppuram to Tannarcherri.

"3. From Malappuram to Pudureni and from thence to the Ghats.

"4. From Calicut to Ferokia, Carate Hobbi, Ellaramthoo, Chetamungal, Purrinellattu, Tamarcherri.

"5. From Ferokia through Sherned Taluk by Chalapooa Hobli, Poolor, Tirurangadi, Venkattekotta, Poolettulettu, Erakelu, Kemaro, Waleakoomuttu, Tricharaparambha, Cowpara, Manjeri River, Pattambi, Walayar River, Coimbatore.


"The northern division is in like manner pervaded by roads.... They lead from Mount Deli both by the sea-shore

(19) Fgn.(Misc.) S.No. 56, Part II, Voucher No. XIX.
and through the interior parts of Chirakal, Cotiote, etc. generally having the direction the passes of Pudiacherrim and Tamaracherri." (20).

This report shows that no part of Malabar was left without roads. The Tamarasseri Ghat up which a steep gun-road ran, was the meeting place of no less than four roads. Two led by different routes from Malappuram and two from Calicut, one following more or less the line of the present Mysore road and the other passing through Ferok and Chathamangalam." (21). Ferok, Tipu's capital of Malabar, was connected with the Karkkur Ghat, by a road which runs through Kondotti, Edavanna and Nilambur, and with Coimbatore by two alternative routes referred to by Colonel Dow in his 'Minutes'. A road led via Tirurangadi to Kottakkal in the Eranad Taluk and then bifurcated, one branch going to Coimbatore by Angadipuram, Mannarghat, and Walayar (22). The Coast road from Beypore to Cranganore, which is even now called as 'Tipu Sultan Road', runs through Tanur, Ponnani, Valiyangadi, and Chetwai was another gun-road as was also the existing road from Tanur to Palghat by way of Pudiyangadi, Trittala and Lakkidi. Palghat was also connected with Dindigal and Kollengode, by lines of communication. (23). The Raja of Travancore apprehended this undertaking as an attempt to invade his country. In a letter written by the Chief of Tellicherry R.H. Boddham to C.W. Malat, the project of road-making by Tipu is conveyed in these words: "The Resident Anjengo under the 23rd ultimo, transmitted us a letter which the King of Travancore had addressed him expressing his apprehension, on account of having received advice from the King of Cochin, that Tipu was expected at Calicut, from which

(20) Ibid.
(22) Ibid: P.269.
(23) Ibid: P.269.
place towards the Ghats, a road was making to facilitate his approach." (24).

It can very well be imagined how intensively the work was carried out when we see that this grand work was completed within six years immediately after the Second Anglo-Mysore War. In fact, from 1790 itself, Malabar was lost to Tipu though it was legally ceded to the English after the Treaty of Seringapatam in 1792. It marks a glaring contrast with the English who even after ruling the country for 150 years, could not do what Tipu did during this six years in Kerala. (25). He employed thousands of labourers for the construction of this work. Buchanan saw in Trithala and other places in 1800 the inns established by Tipu Sultan for the use of the travellers and his workers. (26). He testifies that Tipu had to bring down from Mysore Brahmins to run the inns as the local Hindus considered the work as a menial and shameful job. (27). In 1807, Thackeray, felt justified in reporting to the Board that "Malabar was intersected by better roads perhaps than any other province in India." (28). "His routes are in general well-chosen", wrote Colonel Dow, "and led through almost every part of the province." (29). Tipu's gun roads are said to have been a prominent feature in his reign. The road-making in Malabar was only a part of his work of the same nature which was undertaken in all parts of his empire.

The hitherto unknown political unity and integration of the country was completed by welding together of these places that were once parcelled out as conglomeres of small principalities into a single political unit. The speedy transmission of conveyance, quicker and easier arrangement of

(24) P.R.C., Vol.III, No. 21, P.19, October 19, 1787.
(27) Ibid.
(28) Quoted by Innes, P.269.
(29) Fgn.(Misc.) S.No. 56, Part II, Voucher No. XIX.
communication and safer means of travel and transport are indispensable for commercial and industrial development. As we have discussed in the preceding topic that Tipu was the only Indian prince who felt the industrial developments and revolutionary changes that had occurred in the means of transport and communication as a corollary to the Industrial Revolution. Improvement of the means of transport is a sine qua non to foster the industries and trade. Tipu's network of roads guaranteed political security, economic prosperity and commercial development. It is also necessary for the running of an administrative machinery and its working with precision and speed.

In all countries, public works are undertaken only during the time of peace and security even to the present day. We were made to believe by the writings of historians that this period of Malabar was certainly a period of rebellions and disturbances, chaos and disorder. If it were so, no one can finalise such a major scheme in a country of rebellions and confusion. Further, no one would have expended that much of money and effort in a place where his authority was questioned and at stake. The roads of Tipu Sultan speak otherwise to the students of history that it was a period of political security and economic stability that the Government under Tipu Sultan found it to expend enormous amount on public works. We have seen that the feudal hosts were subdued and the country was knitted together under an efficient administrative system. Again, it was a time when easier means of transport and communication facilitated trade and travel on an unprecedented scale. Above all, it was a period when people from different States of India could constantly contact one another and converse together helping the fusion of different cultures and habits into a homogenous cultural synthesis. It is a bewildering fact that in spite of all these monumental
contributions if the traces of these lasting imprints were not bequeathed to posterity, it would have been difficult to refute the allegations that are made against this Mysorean administrator of whom James Mill remarked "as a domestic ruler, he bears advantageous comparison with the great princes of the East"(30). Since the English could not erase the lasting work left by Tipu Sultan in every part of Malabar ground, they had to admit that he was the pioneer in road making in Malabar. Even if Tipu did not do any other reform in Malabar, this alone will crown him with lasting glory.

(e) Social Reforms. We have seen the structure of Malayalee society as imbeded on feudal bed-rock in which only the Namboodiris and the Nairs who ranked first and second respectively in the caste hierarchy were counted. This system "what is called 'kanam Janma Karyada' - the totality of relations between the Kanam and Janma tenures - was so different from any other part of India," writes E.M.S. Namboodiripad, "that outsiders were dumb-founded when they were told about it."(1). Because, it was this system that again determined the social relations and habits of different castes. They were so intermingled that to study the feudal system of Kerala separately without giving due consideration to its bearing and strong hold over the conduct and behaviour of the society will be an anomaly. It was so framed that it would serve the unquestioned authority of landlords, and at the same time the unreserved servility of the subordinate classes in the society. The system of marriage and manner of dress required to be followed by all castes except the Namboodiris who were the landlords or Janmas originated from this system.(2).

"The tradition fostered by the Brahmans", says the author of Cochin State Manual, "ascribes to the mandate of

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(1) E.M.S.: Kerala Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow, P.3.
(2) Prof.Balamkulan Kunjan Pillai: Sennai Sambradayan Keralathil, P.82.
Parasurama which ordained that 'sudra' women should put off chastity and devote themselves to satisfy the desire of Brahmins. (3). This is supported by all writers, prominent among whom is L.K. Anandakrishna Iyer who, in his 'Cochin: Castes and Tribes', an invaluable work of its kind, observes that the Brahmins who are possessors of religious tenets pronounce 'slokas' (hymns) to the effect that the Nair women should not observe chastity. (4). Thus the regular and legal marriage for Nairs was prohibited by the Caste rules. This device, was imposed by the Namboodiri Jennis on the 'gentry' of Malabar because their laws strictly ordain that only the eldest member of the house-hold should be left free to enter lawful wedlock with a woman of their own caste, the younger members being left to shift for themselves in this matter. (5). The author of 'Malabar and its Folk', writes that the Brahmin ingenuity discovered a ready means of getting over the difficulty by a social prohibition of all valid marriages among the Nairs, which would otherwise have prejudicially interfered with their conjugal destinies. Thus it came about that the custom of concubinage so freely indulged in by the Brahmins with Nair women obtained such firm hold upon the country that it has only been strengthened by the lapse of time. (6).

As a result of the prohibition of marriage and the Caste law that ordained to put off chastity, there developed a system of what is called 'Sambandam' or irregular marriage in which a Namboodiri can cohabit with any Nair lady he likes without incurring any kind of future obligation or liability.

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(4) L.K. Anandakrishna Iyer: Cochin: Castes and Tribes, P.35.
The theory justifying this system is that the Namboodiris being direct descendants of Gods, their 'sambandham' with Nair women is considered to be sacred and divine. If the Namboodiri is pleased, God is pleased and the family which gets the opportunity to please him is blessed with eternal affluence and happiness. The Namboodiri right to enjoy any Nair woman is, therefore, divine and denial of him is denial of God. Nairs if they have beautiful girls long for their 'sambandham' with Namboodiris or at least prefer them for their deflowering. (7). Writing in the year 1900, T.K. Gopala-krishna Panicker observes: "at the present day, there are families especially in the interior of the District (Malabar) who look upon it as an honour to be thus united by Brahmins" (8). Some of the features of this mode of marriage prevalent among the Nairs in Kerala, are described in a preceding Chapter. Therefore, it does not require much elaboration. But we have to point out the two important outcomes of the regular practice of this system. They are the immoral practice of polyandry and the system of matriliny. Both were universally recognised orders among the Nair community of Kerala of which certain elucidations are required to understand the strange odds against which Tipu Sultan had to fight when he began his social reforms.

The author of 'the History of Hyder Shah and of his Son Tippoo Sultan' writes that the Nairs are the nobility of the Malabar Coast and that they are the oldest nobility in the world for the ancient writers mention them and quote the law that permits the Nair ladies to have many husbands and that each husband gives a sum of money or portion at the time of marriage and the wife only has the charge of children. (9).

(7) Fgn. (Misc.) S.No. 56, Part II, P.971.
(9) History of Hyder Shah etc., P.60.
Sheik Zainuddeen who was a native of Malabar says, "Nair ladies will have two or four or more husbands. The date and time of each will be fixed previously and there is no quarrel on this issue."(10). "If the Nair lady is beautiful," writes S.K. Anandakrishna Iyzer, closely following Buchanan(11), "many Nairs live with her. The ever-increasing number of them, increases her respectability in the society."(12). We get abundance of descriptions of the system of polyandry prevalent in the Nair Community of Kerala from the writings of all the travellers and historians who visited the place and wrote about the Malabar society.(13). It thus became a recognised practice for a Nair woman to engage as many husbands as possible at the same time, so that there was no difficulty in finding substitutes for the drop-outs. She began to master all tricks of the trade.

As an inevitable consequence of polyandry, the system of matriliney came into existence among them. The reason assigned to this by all historians is that the Nairs being professional soldiers could not shoulder the burden of maintenance of families and, therefore, it was left to the responsibility of Nair ladies.(14). Again by matriliney, a peculiar system of inheritance and curious form of relations between sons and fathers evolved in the society. "The Nairs even the Zamorin and the other princes", writes the author of History of Hyder Shah etc. "have no other heirs than the children of their sisters."(15). This law has established that

(15) History of Hyder Shah etc., P.60.
the Nairs, having no family, might be always ready to march against the enemy. When the nephews are of age to bear arms, they follow their uncles. Sheik Zainuddeen, Barbosa and Buchanan corroborate the statement above. Since the children did not know their father, they remained with the mother. The mother having several husbands, the children born to a particular woman did not have a common father and in many cases the paternity of the children could not be ascertained with definiteness. Barbosa made it very clear when he wrote "the children which she has, remain at her expense... because they do not know their father." (18).

"The name of father is unknown to a Nair child. He speaks of the husbands of his mother and of his uncles, but never of his father." (19).

To facilitate this wanton conjugal relations, another caste rule imposed on all except the Namboodiris was that men and women should not cover the upper part of their body. Ibn Battuta who in the 14th century remained more than eight years in this part of the country gives interesting details of this mode of dress. (20). "In Malabar all Hindus whether male or female; rich or poor," observes Sheik Zainuddeen "are half-naked. Only a single loin cloth is girdled round the waist leaving the upper part exposed. In this respect, males and females, Rajas and nobles, rich and poor are equal" (21). Even in the year 1908 when C.A. Innes wrote his Malabar Gazetteer, he found "them to wear nothing above the

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(16) Fgn. (Misc.) S.No. 56, Part II, Para.10, PP.11-12.
(19) History of Hyder Shah etc., P.60.
(20) Ibn Battuta: Travel (Malayalam translation), P.74.
(21) Zainuddeen: P.63.
waist and it was considered immodest to cover the breast." (22).
These were strictly observed as caste rules and any deviation from these practices was equal to blasphemy. (23). Many
instance of cruelties was cited by K.P. Padmanabha Kenon, in his monumental work on 'the History of Kerala' to show
the insistence and strict adherence to this savage law. An
Ezhava lady who happened to travel abroad and who returned
well-dressed, was summoned by the Queen of Attingal and her
breasts were cut off for covering them. (24). The practice
was vogue till very recently. The Nair ladies with naked
bosoms parade in front of the 'Aaraat procession' that starts
from the Padmanabha temple of Trivandrum to the beach nearly
3½ miles in length. (25). The Nair ladies of Travancore and
Cochin have to remove their jackets to this day when they
go before the membrand of the royal family. (26). This was
followed throughout Kerala. The reason assigned to it was that
covering the bosom was tantamount to disrespect and
immodesty. These were the prevailing systems observed in
Kerala, the reforms of which was the avowed desire of Tipu
Sultan.

All historians agree on one point about Tipu Sultan
that he was free from all prevailing vices of his time. His
zeal to eradicate the savage practices among his subjects
had become proverbial. Himself abstaining from all excesses
and extravagances, he advised his people to follow suit and
exhorted them to observe purity and chastity in life. Tipu
might have been shocked to witness the abominable practices

(24) Grose voyages, quoted by K.P. Padmanabha Kenon: History
(25) Ibid.
(26) Ibid.
referred to above, prevalent in the Kerala society, because Kirmani says about him "in delicacy or modesty of feeling, he was the most particular man in the world, so much so that from the days of his childhood to that of his death, no one ever saw any part of his person except his ankle and wrist and even in the bath he always covered himself from head to foot." (27). The social reforms of Tipu Sultan studied with this background of his personal habits, would make none feel that they were aimed at interfering with others' religious observances. As a strict moralist, he required the people to cover the delicate parts of their body and prohibited the women going about exposing their bosoms. This was not peculiar to Kerala alone. "The whole of the territories of Balghaut" writes Kirmani, "most of the Hindu women go about with their breasts and their heads uncovered like animals. He, therefore, gave orders that no one of these women should go out of her house without a robe and covering for the head. This immodest custom was, therefore, abolished in that country" (28). What Kirmani calls 'immodest custom' was modest and respectful practice in Kerala. Therefore, both ends could not meet. The caste rule was so rigidly followed that even the lowest castes did not deviate from the rules. When Tipu Sultan knew that there was a tribe called 'Malai Kondigarus' in Malabar the men and women of which go about naked, he called the headmen and required him to advise his fellow-men to dress up decently. Tipu promised that if it were necessitated by poverty, he would provide them gratuitously with the clothes necessary for the purpose every year. But the savages made humble remonstrances begged hard to be allowed to dispense with the encumbrance of clothing. They finally told him that, if they were forced to wear clothes contrary to the rules of their caste, they would go and live in some other distant forests where they could follow their

(27) Kirmani: History of Tipu Sultan (Miles - Trans.), P.133. (28) Ibid.
Tipu left them to their fate without further persuasion.

Again, he forbade, by a royal edict, the pernicious practice of polyandry prevalent in the country. At any cost he wanted to stop this evil system. An instance mentioned by Kirmani is the clear manifestation of the concept of morality and the strict observance of it by Tipu Sultan. He says that when Tipu was sleeping "two ladies of the deceased Nawab's family both of them young and beautiful (God knows with what intention, good or bad) came forth from their apartments and began to rub his feet. While, however, they were doing this, he awoke and when he saw...he became exceedingly angry at their presumption and trembling with rage" admonished them. To such a God-fearing catholicity the unchaste and loose life would be an eye-sore. Therefore, in strong words and severe terms, he condemned the practice of polyandry.

Another important reform of Tipu Sultan was the prohibition of intoxicants throughout his kingdom. "The Nairs are excessively addicted to intoxicating liquors" writes Buchanan. The moral and social uplift of his subjects was the ideal of his kingship and throughout his life he longed unceasingly to attain this goal. His letter to Ghulam Ryder, Amil of Bangalore, dated January 4, 1797, is an eloquent testimony to his ardent desire to see his prohibition policy implemented successfully throughout his dominion. He wrote, "the account stating you had strictly prohibited the distilling and vending liquors, and had moreover made over the whole of body of vintners enter into written engagements to

desist from selling liquors is understood. You must also make the distillers execute the similar engagements and then oblige to take up some other occupation." (33). This letter also gives the means of implementation of the prohibition policy. He forbade the employment of female servants for domestic work as it would lead to immoral activities. He wanted his officers also to lead a life of morality and simplicity. When he heard about the illicit relation of his Faujdar at Calicut with a Nair woman, Tipu immediately insisted on his leaving the courtesan. (34). Professor Mohibbul Hasan Khan states that 'Makezie manuscript' contains an endowment created by Tipu Sultan for the purpose of giving financial help to get the unmarried poor girls married. (35). His revenue system and trade corporation etc. we have seen, were mostly meant for the amelioration of the poorer section of the community. But unluckily enough, all these reforms were resented by the Nair Community who believed that they were an outright encroachment of their religious observances. The failure of Tipu was that he could not feel the pulse of the society and could not make them understand that these were for their own good.

(33) Kirk Patrick: No. 423.
(34) Ibid: No. 464.