CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

THE CREATION OF PRINCEDOM OF MYSORE

After the dismal disintegration of the political superstructure of the Vijayanagar Empire, many subordinate political segments raised their heads. These were the local warrior elites such as Nayaks, Poligars and Wodeyars. By 1600, Mysore which was one such subordinate segment, emerged as an independent political power. A long list of kings ruled the region, until Hyder Ali Khan usurped the throne in 1761. Mysore grew to be a strong and valiant power under Hyder and his son Tipu Sultan. At the end of 18th century, Mysore was the only province which offered resistance to the Britishers, the then masters of three-fourth of India. However, with the unfortunate demise of Tipu Sultan in 1799, Mysore also came under the strong hands of British flag. The fact that it took 30 years and 4 wars to crush the power of Mysore under Hyder and Tipu, is itself a commentary upon the extraordinary superiority which Mysore had achieved under them.

After the defeat of Tipu Sultan in the IV Mysore War, the Partition Treaty of Mysore was concluded between East India Company and the Nizam of Hyderabad in 1799. According to this Treaty, Mysore was shared between English and the Nizam and a small part was placed under a minor descendant of the ancient Hindu family of Mysore. Thus, princely state of Mysore was created out of this humiliating treaty, as a landlocked country, signatory to the Treaty of subsidiary alliance and agreeing to pay a subsidy of 7 lakh pagodas
annually to the British coffers as a colonial tribute. This treaty was in a way different from other subsidiary treaties of such kind because it contained a clause that Mysore could be taken over by the colonial authorities at any time.

The division of territories was so acted as not to disturb the balance of power between the Nizam and the Peshwa (1). No overwhelming additions were made to the dominions of the Nizam or of the British. If the treaty broke down on any occasion, it was stated "they had no alternative but to dividing the whole territory between the allies" (2). But the Raja was nowhere claimed to be a right heir to the dominions of Mysore (3). And the creation of Mysore was more due to the spontaneity of British and was less due to sympathy towards the Raja. Moreover, when the partition was done, "the Raja did not inherit any patrimony in the soil and could not claim even a single village" (4). When British conquered Mysore, it comprised districts annexed by Hyder Ali over which 'Raja's ancestors never ruled'. The independence of Raja's ancestors after the destruction of the kingdom of Vijayanagar to which they had long been vassal chief was short lived and they had entirely lost by the sword what they had gained by the sword' (5).

B.Hettne rightly called this crippled Mysore "as a child of British Imperialism" (6). And the imperialists maintained that British had every right to shape and reshape the conquered territory. So a wisely webbed subsidiary treaty was executed into action in Mysore cutting down its political autonomy of a mere shadow.

The period before Rendition (1881), witnessed two historic epochs, firstly the indirect rule from 1799-1830 and
secondly the direct rule from 1831-1881. Dewan Poornaiah was installed as Dewan in 1799 to the new born province of Mysore. The country was still in an unsettled condition. As it had been a scene of bitter warfare, the Dewan had great responsibilities. Dewan was given 500 pagodas per month with a commission of half percent on the net revenues of the state (7). This prompted Poornaiah to give strict personal attention to revenue matters. He proclaimed the restoration of the former Hindu rates of assessment on land and remission of all balances of payment. The Sayer establishment was reshuffled by 1800. By 1801, Dewan had imposed duties on all possible articles of consumption. Thus under him, revenues of Mysore improved greatly. But, this great accumulation of revenues brought him into the whirlwind of criticisms. Maharaja himself wrote in 1815 that "Dewan Poornaiah whose talents lay only in the collection of the revenues, directed his attention to the accumulation of money merely for the purpose of displaying his industry and zeal in this branch of the administration, but he was inattentive to the interests of the people" (8).

Even the Report of the Insurrection Committee which enquired into the Mysore Rebellion of 1831-32 echoed this (9). Sir Mark Cubbon the later Commissioner of Mysore characterised Poornaiah's administration as "oppressive system of fiscal administration" (10). But whatever the tone of criticism was, Dewan Poornaiah "was a successful administrator if judged by the standard of the immediate finances of the state" (11). He met extraordinary expenses, without borrowing and organised a highly efficient revenue hierarchy and left behind a vast sum as state reserves (12).
After the Dewanship of Poornaiah, the state finances showed a heavy fall due to the mounting expenditure to maintain the enlarged Royal household. But, the Maharaja averred that the deficit in finances was due to unfavourable seasons (13). Though many recommendations were made to rectify the evils, Raja delayed their enforcement and this led to the straining of the relations between the Resident and the Maharaja. The finances fell to the lowest ebb by 1825. When Sir Thomas Munro, the Governor of Madras visited Mysore in 1825, the disorder of the Raja's affairs had reached to such a height "... if reforms were not immediately begun direct interference would be unavoidable" (14). The administration of Raja was a kind of personal autocracy. He was greatly weakened by the absence of capable ministers and honest advisors. The extravaganza and the lack of governing ability, strained the state exchequer. All this culminated in the insurrection of 1829. As finances offered no security for the punctual payment of subsidy, the Imperial Government announced the takeover, under Article IV of the Subsidiary Treaty in 1831.

Communicating the take over decision to the Maharaja in 1831, Lord William Bentick wrote, "this mismanagement, and the tyranny and oppression that resulted, came at length to such a pass as to be no longer bearable. British Government cannot permit its name or its power to be identified with these acts of misrule" (15). Thus, instead of a traditional Hindu kingship, an "administrative society" (16) imposing its direct rule forcefully as the ultimate political salvation came to force in Mysore in 1831.

Mysore was placed under a Chief Commissioner and European Superintendents at District levels. During the
first phase, the Commission did not attempt any drastic changes in the existing administrative system. The whole idea was to remove some of the most ostensible and fragrant abuses. As a colonial administration, the British wanted to see that congenial atmosphere was created for the development of resources with an eye on more tax revenues and export items. Between 1834 and 1861, Mysore was ruled by Sir Mark Cubbon as Chief Commissioner and under him local institutions were carefully maintained. Immediate attention was given to land revenue collection. The stern rule of Cubbon gave immediate returns in forms of revenue (17).

This period was called as "Non-regulation" period in official parlance, because the Regulations and Acts in force in the Regulated provinces were not extended to Mysore, fewer officials were employed. Executive and judicial functions were to a great extent exercised by the same person.

Lewis Bentham Bowring, who assumed after Mark Cubbon in 1864, effected some remarkable improvements in the State. A large number of departmental reforms introduced by him gave the government its modern colour. The major events in Bowring’s tenure was the introduction of Land survey and settlement into Mysore. They were intended to secure the proper rights of the state and of the cultivators, the benefits of improvement made on land by cultivators were left to them. The cultivator was given a hereditary right of occupation as long as the assessment of rates was paid. The cultivation of commercial crops such as coffee, cardamom, rubber, tea, pepper, etc was encouraged by grant of lands.
In the year 1870, three events of importance took place:

a. Adoption of a son by Krishna Raja Wodeyar in June 1865

b. The recognition was given to the adopted child in April 1867; and

c. Death of Krishna Raja Wodeyar in March 1868.

Lord William Bentinck felt acute pain on realising, when he visited Mysore, that the action taken by him by resuming the government affairs of Mysore was a hasty one. In his despatch dated 14th April 1834 Bentinck stated "...the treaty warrants our assumption of the country with a view to secure payment of our subsidy. The subsidy does not appear to have been in any immediate jeopardy. Again the treaty authorises us to assume such part or parts of the country as may be necessary to render the funds we claim efficient and available. Rather, the whole of the country has been assumed, with regard to the justice of the case, I cannot but think it would have been more fair towards the Raja...".

Bentinck’s proposal for the partial restoration of the country was rejected by the court of Directors. But, Raja had never left the hope of resuming his lost kingdom. During these years, a Resident was allowed to continue at his court and there was a lot of friction between Commissioner Cubbon and the Maharaja. The Maharaja again appealed to the higher officers like Lord Ellenborough, Lord Hardinge and Lord Dalhousie. Lord Dalhousie who had inaugurated the policy of wholesale annexation of princely states, sent no reply at
all. Even his visit to Mysore in 1855, did not produce any change in his attitude towards princely states. Though queen's proclamation of 1858 assured Indian Princes that their rights, dignities and honours would be upheld, Lord Canning stated that still he was unable to support Maharaja's request for reinstallation. Lord Canning was of the opinion that "if the authority of the British officers was removed or even hampered, the peace and prosperity of Mysore would be at an end" (19). Even Sir Mark Cubbon, who had clashes with Maharaja in running the government voted in favour of non-restitution. Sir Charles Wood, Secretary of State for India decided in 1863 that, the Maharaja was not entitled to Restoration, because, the Treaty contained no such article whereby the territories once assumed will have to be handed over again. Because the Maharaja was not a sovereign prince but a dependent prince having no rights whatsoever, as conferred in the Subsidary Treaty (20).

The Commissioner heavily complained of Maharaja's unchanging and costly habits which resulted in a debt of half a million sterling between 1831-64 and his "return to power would be anything, but a return to reckless and excessive expenditure" (21). It was also argued that the transfer of authority was not desirable as it was impossible to transfer a large body of British officers in civil employment and European planters and that the reversion of Maharaja's rule would mean withdrawal of European officers and abandonment of a system of upwards 30 years growth" (22).

But, a change in this attitude towards the Mysore question was round the corner with Sir Stafford Northcote assuming the Office. He stated in clear terms "having regard to the 'antiquity' of the Raja family, its long connection
with Mysore and the personal loyalty and attachment to the British Government has so conspicuously manifested that Her Majesty desires to maintain the family on throne" (23).

This change was evident because of the change of Government in England. The conservative party in England with Lord Cranborne as the Secretary of State for India came to power. He protested against any annexations. As the adopted child of the Maharaja was still young, Government was conducted under the direction of the Commissioner as before. The old Maharaja could survive only a year after this and he died in 1868 and the young Prince was installed on throne in 1868. After this epoch making event, deliberations were started for the smooth transfer of power to native hands till the minor prince attained majority.

The transfer of power to a native authority meant some organic changes in the existing system, because, quite a large number of European officers had to be replaced by natives. A.C.Lyall, Secretary to the Government of India wrote on this subject "... two generations of the inhabitants of Mysore have grown up under our rule and in one part of the province there is a considerable body of English settlers who have invested their capital and acquired valuable property in the soil. Before Mysore is made over to its future rulers, the Government of India should take adequate guarantees against any pre-judicial changes in the administration which has thus taken roots in the country" (24). It was made expedient that all the laws and regulations existing as then were made to continue as before. Provision was made for establishing legislative machinery to enact laws. And Maharaja was to be provided with a Council of 3 officials and Dewan was made Maharaja’s Chief Executive Officer. No
councillor was armed with judicial powers to act independently. Thus, the Chief authority and the ultimate governmental responsibility would in all cases rest actually as well as nominally with the Raja. It was also provided that this Executive Council should be provided with a deliberative assembly, "composed of eminent retired officials, representatives of great local families and representatives of various sections and interests of people" (25). Thus, the Council, styled "the Council of His Highness, the Maharaja of Mysore" with C.V.Rangacharlu as Dewan and Mr T.A.Thamboo Chetty, P.Krishna Rao and R.S. Mudaliyar as Executive Counsellors was constituted.

Lord Rippon made it clear to the new King his duties and responsibilities "... bearing in mind the important duties that now devolve upon you, your Highness will conduct the administration of your dominions with justice and firmness so that while securing the affection and promoting the prosperity of your people you will maintain the honour of the Mysore state and preserve the cordial relations now existing between the British Government and Mysore" (26). Since then the Government was run by the Maharaja. Soon after a Representative Assembly was formed consisting of civilians and important persons to discuss and deliberate on the important issues.

SUMMING UP

So, this in brief is the political background that came to be established by 1881. From this date starts the struggle for a state formation in Mysore. With limited resources, limited areas of taxation, little capital formation and little capital investment, Mysore was crippled
in its process of development. The level of political autonomy that prevailed in Mysore did not allow the Dewans to attain self-reliance in economic political arenas.

As political autonomy was inter-woven with economic independence, strengthening the State machinery from within and without was impossible. The internal freedom of the State being only a myth, the developmental process was hampered and one sees a lopsided resource mobilisation in Mysore in later years. The political overtures of Mysore were clearly connected with this change in the policy of British paramountcy. From a policy of 'Ringfence' during 1790, which was directed against the possible invasion of powerful Indian states, many of the annexed states were made either buffer states or political enemies. But soon, the policy of "subordinate alliances" took the place of "Ringfence", which made the British power practically paramount. Mysore became a victim of this policy in 1799. Between 1830 and 1887, the policy pursued by British power was one of state intervention and assimilation, the principle of "doctrine of lapse" was applied on a "whole sale" scale. But Mysore was annexed in 1831 due to a unique cause, "misrule" by the Maharaja. But with the outbreak of 1857 mutiny, the British learnt what their policy of annexation had cost them. So Queen's proclamation made it clear that they desire no more annexations while upholding their formal autonomy, slowly and gradually penetrating into the State's sovereignty towards "British-Indian" model and at the same time making them entirely dependent on paramount power.
The condition of Mysore in 1881 was a clear example of this. It was calculated to soothe the unrest, existing among deposed princely principalities, thereby making the State machinery a spokesman of British policies. This policy of making a princely State as an agent of British power was clear during and early Rendition period. The policy changed slowly with the rise of Congress Movement. As Mysore was conquered through military arms, the constitutional arrangements were so calculated so as to make her extremely weak and dependent. By preserving the philosophy of old conservative school, the policy of westernisation and modernisation was deliberately delayed in Mysore.

Mark Cubbon, a patriarch of the old conservative colonial school as he was, did not effect much changes during his rule except maintaining law and order and collecting revenue. So essential a department as Education, a process of westernisation and modernisation was neglected. This also explains the 'silence' of Mysore during the great sepoy mutiny in 1857-58 which was almost unheard in Mysore. The policy of modernisation started only after 1861, when Bowring was replaced by Cubbon as Commissioner. Under him, the administration of Mysore was reorganised in accordance with the standard prevailing in British provinces. The conservative policy of finance, of keeping nearly heavy cash balance in the treasury was abandoned and specified amounts were begun to be spent on irrigation, roads, communications, education, etc. New departments were formed and European settlements in the form of coffee planters swelled. The process of commercialisation was started. The development of communications and impetus to growing of cash crops such as coffee, cardamom and cotton, and the change in the policy of making payment of taxes in cash, etc, stimulated the process of commercialisation in this period.
The representative institutions which developed in Mysore were a replica of the very concepttion of Kingship in India. Mysore earned an epithet of "Model State" under her "optimistic" dewans. The degree to which Mysore could increase her autonomy in internal administration was truly impressive in view of the conditions under which the process of state formation took place.

REFERENCES

1. "... any other arrangement would have aggrandized the Nizam's power beyond all bounds of discretion and afforded strong grounds of jealousy to the Marathas and have been an augmentation of their resources and means of mischief". Selections from the Parliamentary Blue Books, Part I, p. 15, para 5

2. Lord Wellesley's letter as quoted by Maharaja in his letter to His Excellency Elgin, Viceroy, dated 20th April 1862, Ibid, Page 14, para 4

3. Lord Canning wrote "Raja was not otherwise a party concurred than as the notified future recipient of the liberality", Ibid


5. Ibid, p.7, para 14

07. William Kirkpatrick, Private Secretary to Lord Wellesley in his letter to Resident dated 4th Sep 1799, para 10, as quoted by M.H. Gopal, "The Finances of Mysore State, p.3

08. Madras Secret Proceedings as quoted by M.H. Gopal, Ibid, p. 56

09. Report of the Insurrection Committee, December 1833, para 9, (KSAB)

10. As quoted by M.H. Gopal, Ibid, p. 57

11. Ibid, p. 60

12. Thomas Munro considered the period of Poornaiah as the "most favourable period of Mysorean Finances". Minutes of Thomas Munro, Madras Secret Proceedings, p. 544, para 16, TNA (M)

13. Maharaja to Governor of Madras dated 15th January 1815, Madras Secret Correspondences as quoted by M.H. Gopal, Op. Cit., p. 64


15. Ibid, para 14


17. In 1834 when Cubbon took over, the net revenues amounted to 58 lakh rupees and when he left in 1861 it stood at 100 lakhs. KNV Shastri, "The administration under Sir Mark Cubbon", London, 1932, pp.73
18. Selections from Parliamentary Blue Book, Part-II, p. 95, para 33

19. Lord Canning's letter dated 11th March 1862, ibid

20. From Commissioner of Mysore to Secretary of State for India, ibid, p. 62, para 21

21. Ibid, p. 64, para 22

22. From John Lawrence to Sir Charles Wood dated 8th May 1865, ibid, vol. IV, p. 61, para 20


24. From A.C.Lyall to Chief Commissioner of Mysore, dated 9th November 1878, p.152, para 3, ibid


26. From Lord Rippon to Maharaja dated 10th May 1881, ibid, p.239, para 2.