THE ESTABLISHMENT OF BRITISH POWER IN MALABAR

CHAPTER III
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Formative phase of the colonial endeavours in India has gained substantial attention in the researches of historians and social scientists. Those who have attempted to unravel the complexities of the process of transition of India to a colonial state and economy have also tried to locate the forces behind those changes. Substantial volume of literature has appeared as a result of microscopic studies concentrating on the economic and political transformations that occurred in various regions in India. Transformation of the English East India Company (E.E.I.C) from a trading corporation to the administrative establishment in the regions like Bengal, Coromandel, South India, Awadh, Western India etc. have been subjected to serious explorations by the scholars.\(^1\) Interestingly, only a few such studies have been come to the fore discussing the nuances of the changes that occurred in Malabar.

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The present chapter is an attempt to study various aspects of the formative phase of the British administration in Malabar. Most of the historians who studied the early phase of the establishment of the British dominance over Malabar have considered the Treaty of Srirangapatanam (1792) as a point of rupture from the pre-colonial to a colonial society and they believe that immediately after the signing of the treaty there heralded a new era of imperialism in the province. For example, Pamela Nightingale, whose work has meticulously analysed the condition of trade and politics of imperialism on the whole west coast, observes that gradual transformation of trade into administration occurred between April and December 1792, when the province of Malabar was under the exclusive control of the Bombay Presidency. She underscores the fact that it was for the first time that the roots of imperialism began to appear.\(^2\) N. Rajendran also considers the acquisition of the territory of Malabar in 1792 as a by product of the commercial rivalry of the European Traders.\(^3\) Similarly, K.K.N Kurup observes that, ‘now [by 1792] their long cherished ambition of Britain was fulfilled and they became the real masters of the coast of Malabar’.\(^4\) One of the recent writings on the British presence in Malabar by

\(^2\) Pamela Nightingale, *Trade and Empire in Western India, 1784-1806*, New Delhi, 1970.

\(^3\) N. Rajendran, *Establishment of British power in Malabar (1664 to 1799)*, Allahabad, 1979.

Margret Frenz is highly enthusiastic to popularise the stereotypical assumption of 'conquest' than to study the process of transition seriously.⁵

However, the above mentioned works do not address the questions regarding the process of 'acquisition' of the territory of Malabar. One has to enquire into the real motives of the British in the period mentioned, by probing whether the British had been successful in pursuing their commercial projects rather than contemplating on the immediate take over of Malabar for direct administration. The early responses from the Joint Commissioners, their correspondence between the Company authorities and the policies taken by the British government induce us to pose some questions regarding the early phase of the British projects in Malabar. The existing theories of 'conquest', intrusion etc. should be subjected to serious scrutiny against the backdrop of the British revenue settlements and retaliatory steps taken by the indigenous population against the British.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the British trading endeavours culminated in the protracted warfare and the subsequent treaty of Srirangapatanam in the year 1792 (March 8th). By this definitive Treaty, two of the Tipu's provinces at Calicut (63 taluks) and Palagatcherry [Palaghat]

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were ceded to the British\(^6\). The Malabar rajas hoped that they would be rid off the yoke of Mysore dominance as well as from the British immediately. But the Governor General Cornwallis had decided not to grant independence to the rajas of Malabar, contrary to the agreement of 1790, but to place them under the direct administration of the British\(^7\). Actually, the British had no legal status to do this. Because, prior to the Mysorean dominance over Malabar, the indigenous rulers exercised the customary right to rule the land, and they hoped that the British would reinstate them after the Mysoreans were defeated. On the contrary, the British officials were claiming legitimate authority over Malabar. They were following the same strategy throughout India without any legal or moral basis. This move is interpreted by some as a strategy to achieve economic monopoly over the products of Malabar with the aid of political control.\(^8\) For the indigenous rulers, the year 1792 was indeed an occasion of dominance over them by yet another stronger alien force.

But it was not an easy walk over for the British. Resistance by the local population, decline of agriculture and challenges from other European competitors prompted them to formulate a policy on extraction of spices and related resources from Malabar. They saw direct agreements with the local

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\(^7\) Correspondence between Cornwallis and Henry Dundas exposes the underpinnings; see Nightingale, *op. cit.*

\(^8\) M. Frenz, *op. cit.*, p. 76.
raj as the only solution to the problem. But as there was no effective state monopoly over the pepper trade in Malabar (compared to the State of Travancore), they realized that the agreements would not be effective. As a result, the Company embarked on reversal of earlier policy of considering the Malabar Rajas as independent princes paying tribute to the Company but to reduce them to the status of “Bengal Zamindars”. It is argued to be the most significant factor in the process of the establishment of British power in Malabar. ⁹

Cornwallis, the Governor General was anxious to introduce and establish practicable a system for their future government that shall be calculated to prevent internal dissensions amongst the chiefs and to procure under a regular administration of justice, all advantages to the Company, which their situation and productions are capable of affording both in revenue and in commerce. ¹⁰ For this purpose, Cornwallis informed Abercromby to establish peace and order to make temporary settlement with the Rajas for the payment of one year’s revenue in cash or kind. He promised to draw up a plan for managing the commerce and revenues of the newly acquired territories and for the administration of justice. ¹¹ Cornwallis had also instructed Abercromby, the governor of Bombay, to enquire into the present state of the

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⁹ N. Rajendran, *op. cit.* p. 236.


country and to establish a system for the future government. He also promised to offer two civil servants from Bengal in addition to the Bombay officials to investigate the resources and produce of the province and to report the best means of governing it.\textsuperscript{12} Apart from this, the Commissioners had to enquire whether the illicit trade, which had long been carried on at Mahe, was so detrimental to the Company’s interests. The Bombay establishment revealed its apprehension regarding the ports of Malabar by stating that if the Company possessed all the Malabar ports, Tipu could be effectively isolated from the French supplies and military stores.\textsuperscript{13}

Apart from the above statements, the following instructions of Abercromby to the newly appointed Commissioners, William Gamul Farmer and Maj. Dow are clear evidences of the Company’s commercial interests on the coast of Malabar. One of these instructions was to use mild language with the chiefs and to claim tribute in return for protection. He reminded them that the Company had one powerful arrangement on their side. The Rajas could not very well insist on a literal interpretation of the treaties when they had broken the most essential article – 'the exclusive trade of the country'. Abercromby concluded his instructions by pointing out that it would be more

\textsuperscript{12} W. Logan, \textit{Malabar}, vol. 1, Madras, 1951, p. 475.

\textsuperscript{13} Bombay to Charles Mallet, 21st March 1792, cited in Nightingale, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 70.
advantageous to the Company if the tribute were paid in pepper, sandalwood and cardamom\textsuperscript{14}.

It was an uphill task for the Commissioners since the native rulers and their lords were in anticipation of the restoration of their powers and titles. That is why general Abercromby instructed them to adopt a rather cautious dealing with the Malabar Rajas. He, as we have seen, had even directed them to follow a mild language with the local chiefs. But the ‘Policy of mild language’ lasted only for a few months. From September 1792, a policy of intervention was favoured, one which was to assure E.E.I.C of a monopoly of pepper\textsuperscript{15}. Directions to use a mild language, five months of confusion in the affairs of Malabar Rajas are enough to think of the Company's lack of confidence or power to pursue a colonial policy on the land.

To some authors, developments in Britain were responsible for the Company's limited annexation prior to 1792. The visions of the British Government and Director’s motives in London were antithetical to that of the Company officials in India. The loss of American colonies and the ongoing substantial national debt had made the British government in need of revenues but was wary of costly military enterprises. The British cabinet thus wanted its share of the resources from the conquered territories without the burden of

\textsuperscript{14} Letter from Abercromby to Maj. Alexander Dow, cited in P. Nightingale, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 74-75.

\textsuperscript{15} M. Frenz, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 99.
administration. On its part, the dominant factions within the court of directors continued to envision the Company as having primarily a commercial, rather than political role in India although many of the Directors also coveted the land revenues of Bengal\(^{16}\). But what is not clear from this is that, why the British couldn't surpass their hurdles in their way to the complete dominance over Malabar after 1792. It is a question which demands a detailed discussion.

When the Bombay Commissioners met at Tellicherry on 22\(^{nd}\) April 1792 to discuss their tasks, they had at least three objectives to guide them in administration of the province. Cornwallis had left instructions that they were to make temporary agreements with the Rajas to deliver one year's revenue to the company and they were to consider the means of transferring all judicial powers in the province in to the hands of the Company servants. In addition, the Commissioners were to discover how best to enforce a monopoly of pepper trade in the province, which as far as possible was to include the Tranvancore produce\(^{17}\).

Though the British establishment acted as masters of the land, there remains the question, why didn't they engage in the permanent treaties? It is argued that, since the Malabar rajas had to play little role in the treaty of Srirangapatanam, the British annexation was no longer conceded by them. It


\(^{17}\) P. Nightingale, *op cit.*, p. 74.
was because of the collapse of the cordial relation between the British and local rulers. In 16th and 17th centuries, the Malabar rulers and the British had largely accepted one another as trading partners, but the increasing commercial and administrative motives of the British culminated in the conflicts. The British had formed alliances with the local rulers against Tipu until 1792. In return, they promised the rajas their independence. After the treaty of Srirangapattanam, the Rajas were reduced to the posts of tax collectors and administrators of the British government and their sovereignty was neglected. The British had no legal right to the rulers of Malabar, but their claim of sovereignty in Malabar can be attributed partly to the view that they were ‘better’ superior civilization. To them it was their moral obligation to liberate the Indian people from the rule of ‘despots’. This self image gave the British the idea that their law was superior to other systems and that it was quite unnecessary to take notice of the existing law of a conquered country. The British were able to justify their claim to rule, and its associated sovereignty, by preserving the difference between the colonizers and the colonized. The fact is that the British had no actual right to rule over the land of Malabar.

Farmer and Dow, the Commissioners, were against various policies of the British and they recorded their reservations against the policies of

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18 M. Frenz, op. cit., p. 152.

19 Ibid.
Governor General in the first official meeting itself. Another observation of the Commission was that there were even no records to rely on, as Tipu had destroyed all materials. The British presented certain prejudicial statements as if they were facts; for example, to the British, the records regarding details of land revenue were scarce in pre modern Malabar, so that according to them, there prevailed no systematic revenue system!. The same reason was alleged by Mackenzie that the sources of history of Malabar were destroyed by the Mysoreans\textsuperscript{20}. And of course, there is no corroborative evidence with regard to these sorts of allegations having the overtones of colonial stereotypes.

The Rajas had returned to their countries to reassert their previous authority and it was unlikely that they would willingly give the commissioners the information needed. There was a possibility of obstructing the Commissioners' enquiries and the rajas would falsify their revenue returns so that their tribute to the Company should be meagre. It was in this context that Mr. Farmer and Dow insisted the Company to maintain the power of the Rajas and leave the administration of the country in their hands accordingly\textsuperscript{21}.

The nature of the revenue collected by the British can be identified as a form of protection money. All Malabar Rajas were reminded of the erstwhile destruction by Tipu Sultan and their panic was exploited by the British. The

\textsuperscript{20} Mahalingam ed., \textit{Mackenzie Manuscripts}, cited in M. Frenz, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 175, 177.

\textsuperscript{21} Minute of the Joint Commissioners, Farmer and Dow, 22\textsuperscript{nd} April, 1792, Tellicherry, cited in P. Nightingale, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 75.
rulers like Zamorin and the Nair chiefs believed that the country might go back to Tipu, and instead of living in peace under the shadow of the Company, all their troubles and vexations might return and they might be driven back into the Travancore country\textsuperscript{22}. The Joint Commissioners believed that Tipu had taxed Malabar too heavily, particularly its northern half, and that he had monopolized the internal trade. Logan and others argued that the Mysorean policy towards Malabar was characterized by tax increases which placed a heavy burden on the farmers\textsuperscript{23}. The rationale behind the British revenue policy was Tipu's over taxation of Malabar\textsuperscript{24}. The revenue records refer to \textit{negady} for tax\textsuperscript{25}. Thus, by creating a sharp division between the taxation of the 'despots' [read the Mysoreans] and the British, they could justify the introduction of a lesser heavy tax.

As mentioned, the Commissioners had earlier criticized the Company's system of government in India. They argued that the Rajas would rule the province far more effectively than the English could do. The Commissioners were conscious of the fact that the British alone could not police the country side in Malabar and the administration through the mediation of the rajas was necessary. The proposals echoed the so-called Cornwallis system, which had

\textsuperscript{22} Logan, \textit{Malabar}, p. 506.
\textsuperscript{23} \textit{Ibid}, p.638.
\textsuperscript{24} R.J.C., 1792-93, para 459-61. pp. 465-468.
\textsuperscript{25} R.D.D., No. 14, 1795, p. 126.
proposed to compromise with the zamidars among other local potentates. The Company followed this policy not only because it was short of trained administrators but was inadequately informed about the province.

The Commissioners also had proposed to give up the Company’s plans to monopolise the pepper trade and to put an end to considering pepper in a commercial light. The attempt of monopoly had failed and would continue to fail because the private traders at Mahe had offered higher prices for pepper far in advance than of those given by the Company. Farmer and Dow had realized the fact that when the Malabarins could sell their pepper at Rs. 175/- per kanti at Mahe, no threats or coercion could make them sell it to the Company at Rs. 130/-. They had directed the Company to give up its policy of enforcing monopoly by coercion and pay higher prices instead.

This proposal, however, shows a palpable departure from the official colonial policy in Malabar. The Commissioners stood against the deliberations of the Court of Directors, and Governor General had put forward their stand before their attempt to carry out their instructions. It is worthwhile to mention Murdock Brown’s opinion on the shift in commercial policy of the company soon after its takeover. He averred that "when the Company became sovereign, their interests demanded a total change of the principles hither to

27 Minutes of the Joint Commissioners, 22nd April, 1792; cited in P. Nightingale, op. cit., p. 75.
adopted in their mercantile transactions in the article of pepper. It was not their interest to reduce, but to raise the price as much as possible so long as there were foreign competitors to purchase it". The Company, he insisted, should have looked in to the revenues of the province to reimburse them for the higher prices they had to pay for pepper, and by these means defeated the competition of foreign merchants. It is believed that shortly after these suggestions were put forward by Brown, the commissioners began to change their earlier opinion about the administration of Malabar.

The Commissioners were directed to make a temporary scheme of internal administration which might continue until the Governor General had sufficient knowledge of the country to warrant the introduction of a permanent system. As they found on 22nd April, 1792, the local rulers had retrieved their previous principalities, the Commissioners were in favour of maintaining the power of the rajas and leaving the administration of the country into their hands. Accordingly, they decided to enter into annual agreements with the native chiefs.

As the Malabar state was segmented, and the commissioners failed to understand the parcelized nature of power, appropriation of surplus and

\[28\] Letter from M. Brown to Malabar Commissioners, 1st September, 1792. The role of private merchants like M. Brown in the shaping of Company Policy has not been properly studied.

\[29\] Minutes of Joint Commissioners, 22nd April 1792, cited in P. Nightingale, op. cit., p. 75. For a detailed discussion of the political structure of pre-modern Malabar and the question of land revenue, see chapter I.
status, they were faced with the problem of determining the real rajas in Malabar\textsuperscript{30}. The Bombay Commissioners began at Tellicherry to effect settlements with the northern Rajas of Chirakkal, Kottyam and Kadathanad, who were in cordial relations with the British\textsuperscript{31}. In the first set of treaties with the northern rajas, Dow and Farmer had to consider them only as allies of the British. The British granted the Rajas territorial sovereignty over their lands only on the condition that the right of the revenue ultimately will remain in the hands of the British. The Commissioners were highly thoughtful of the fact that if the lesser rajas refused to collect the land revenue, military aid should be given to the different rajas to enforce this right\textsuperscript{32}. The raja of Kadathanad was "to remain in the exercise of all his rights on the condition of the Company, deriving from it an adequate revenue, and exercising at the same time a just perception about the inhabitants, their subjects and security for themselves exclusively its valuable products"\textsuperscript{33}.

Gradually, the British endeavoured to nullify the legitimacy or the traditional rights of the local potentates by issuing several new orders. For example, the custom of rajas and lords accepting gifts from the people on the occasion of Onam and Vishu (annual festivals) were banned by a

\textsuperscript{30} B. Swai, \textit{op. cit.}, p.55.


\textsuperscript{32} B. Swai, \textit{op. cit.}, p.56.

\textsuperscript{33} \textit{R. J. C.}, Para 83; p. 109.
declaration\textsuperscript{34}. In response there echoed some voices of dissent. In this way the raja of Kadathanad had refused to forfeit his right to \textit{chunkam} to the company, since this constituted one of the most important sovereign rights to Malabar rajas\textsuperscript{35}. Due to the lack of resources and men it was not easy to offer resistance, so that the Raja of Kadathanad was forced to accept the conditions of the treaty with the Company\textsuperscript{36}, followed by the Rajas of Chirakkal, Kottayam\textsuperscript{37}, Iruvazhinad, Randattara and Beebi of Kannur\textsuperscript{38}. The treaties and engagements provide ample evidence to suggest that the British had not as yet established absolute power, influence or autonomy over the rajas or the land of Malabar. The immaturity of the Company’s policies in the initial phase shows that there were little traces of a coercive rule over Malabar at that time.

After eight months of appointment of Bombay Commissioners, the E.E.I.C. appointed the Bengal Commissioners Mr. Jonathan Duncan and Charles Boddam, who joined the former on 12\textsuperscript{th} December 1792. There is no evidence to believe that William Gamul Farmer and Alexander Dow, the two Bombay Commissioners, were inefficient or inept in administrative affairs. Major Alexander Dow had been the military commander at Tellicherry since

\textsuperscript{34} R. D. D., No. 14, 1795, p.126; R. J. C, Para 257 and 262; Logan, Treaties, No. ii. xxxv, 19\textsuperscript{th} Jan. 1793. Though the treaty was actually signed with the Zamorin, it was applicable to the Rajas of Chirakkal, Kottayam, Kadathanad, Beyapore, Kurumbranad, Parappanad, Vettattunad, Vellattiri, Palaghat, Kavalappara etc.

\textsuperscript{35} R. J. C., para 308, p. 344.

\textsuperscript{36} Logan, Treaties, No. ii. IV; R. J. C., para 83, p. 109.

\textsuperscript{37} Logan, Treaties, No. ii. V and VI; R. J. C., Para 83, p. 109.

\textsuperscript{38} R. J. C., Para, 83, 84, 85 and 86, pp. 109-113.
1789, and Farmer, though he had no experience of Malabar, had a thirty year’s career with the Company in various capacities. Then the question arises, why did the British decide to appoint the Bengal Commissioners to work along with the Bombay Commissioners? In the initial phase of extension of British trading interests, Bombay was looked up on by the Company’s authority considered Bombay as less attractive than Madras, or Calcutta primarily because of its unsettled conditions in the Malabar Coast. The above mentioned factors might have prompted the British to appoint two Commissioners from Bengal to the province of Malabar.

Duncan, one of the Bengal Commissioners started his career in Bengal and Banares and proved that he was one of the first able and upright administrators of British India. He was a man of science, social reformer, a philanthropist, cultured, learned, an able economist and a fine revenue administrator. This judgment on him receives powerful support from the opinions of Lord Cornwallis, who looked on Duncan with high favour and pressed the Court of Directors to give him a seat in the Bengal council. It was this impression by the Governor General that caused the appointment of Duncan first as the commissioner in Malabar and then from 1796 to 1811 as the Governor of Bombay.

41 P. Nightingale, *op. cit.*, p. 94.
Cornwallis had already given general instruction and had explained the scope of the Joint Commissioners. According to which, "they had to enter into full investigation with as much accuracy as possible in the general and particular situation this ceded country, in respect to its former as its late and present governments and to enquire into judicial administration". The landholders and cultivators were directed to improve the condition of their respective districts and increase productiveness of pepper vines. Both these plans may be deemed as a part of laying foundation to the commercialization of in agriculture in early modern Kerala. Agriculture was exclusively transformed to the production for the market, which was a major shift.

Proclamation of general freedom of trade in articles except pepper (20th December 1792) and prohibition of slave trade and establishment of two special courts of enquiry of justice etc. were the other measures introduced by the Commission. The new Commission was not satisfied with the way in which the treaties were concluded by the previous commissioners and had criticized Mr. Farmer’s improper concessions given to the Northern Rajas. They had to undertake a further serious and minute enquiry into the situation of the country about the former and future administration and revenue so as to

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42 Logan, Malabar, pp. 481-82.
43 Ibid, p. 482
make commercial advantages in pepper\textsuperscript{46}. Accordingly, the commission began to execute its plans by dividing the country provisionally its revenue divisions or collectorships and jurisdictions, civil, criminal and commercial agencies etc\textsuperscript{47}.

By a circular of Abercromby, the head quarters of the Company was transferred from Tellichery to Calicut in the year 1793.\textsuperscript{48} The establishment of two separate court of enquiry and justice at Calicut\textsuperscript{49} was considered not only as "a channel for authentic information as to the manner and degree in which justice had hither to been administered there in but impress the natives in the enjoyment of their several rights, lives and properties".\textsuperscript{50} This establishment strictly controlled the existing system of dispensation of criminal justice based on traditional rules. Neither death sentence nor mutilation of any part of the body was suspended thereafter\textsuperscript{51}. They found judiciary as the easiest instrument of dominance over the people of Malabar without exerting any form of coercion.

\textsuperscript{47} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{48} Circular letter of 30\textsuperscript{th} March 1793, by general Abercromby to Principal rajas and all rajas, cited in T. K. Ravindran, Malabar Under Bombay Presidency, Calicut, 1969, pp. 72-74.
\textsuperscript{49} Logan, Treaties, pp. 171-72.
\textsuperscript{50} R. J. C., Para 156; Logan, Treaties, No. ii. XXIV.
\textsuperscript{51} R. J. C., Para, 190; Logan, Malabar, p.485.
The Commissioners subsequently declared a general amnesty on 8th February 1793 for encouraging reconciliation among the people of Malabar. Such a favourable ambience was very much preferred for pursuing the Company's commercial interests in the region. Farmer was appointed the first supervisor and Chief Magistrate, under him two superintendents were to be served for northern and southern districts at Tellicherry and Cherpulasseri respectively. Abolition of extraction of purushantharam from Mappilas by the local rulers came into effect. By introducing such an act, the British might have thought of either the appeasement of violent/rebellious Mappilas or to make the local potentates less awesome to them. On the first anniversary of the treaty of Srirangapatanam (18th March, 1793), the governor handed over a letter to Farmer, instructions and orders from the government. It means that the Company establishment was suspicious about the effectiveness of the imperial administration in Malabar within one year.

By June, the Company prepared and passed a civil code and the superintendents were directed to function as judges along with their existing powers. After one month, the rules for revenue administration and for the conduct of the supervisor and superintendents were drafted and passed by

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52 Logan, *Treaties*, No. ii. XXIX, 8th February, 1793.
54 R. J. C., Para, 185; Logan, *Treaties*, No. ii. LXIII, *Purushantharam* levied by the Zamorin and other Rajas of Malabar on the effects of deceased Mappilas varying from 5% to 20%.
Duncan, William Page and Boddam. The initiative to the system to record collection of the country is worth mentioning\textsuperscript{56}. As the annual agreements completed their tenure, new agreements were signed with the rulers of Iruvazhinad Nambiar\textsuperscript{57}, Kurumbranad Raja\textsuperscript{58} (as the legal heir of Kottayam), Kadathanad\textsuperscript{59} Chirakkal\textsuperscript{60}, Randattara etc. A belated agreement was signed with the Beebi of Arakkal for the first time in the year 1795 and she had to pay arrears for 1791 and 1792 and had also signed another accord regarding Lakshadwip\textsuperscript{61}. The case of exemptions given to the Beebi of Kannur stands as the evidence to the absence of an imperial character of the Company.

In the meanwhile, the British had framed regulations for the customs house collections, prohibited the export and slave trade and trade in gun powder, war like weapons and stores. They also “declared trade in timber to be free\textsuperscript{62}, abolished the levy of profits on black pepper, coconuts etc. as

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid, p. 224.
\textsuperscript{57} Logan, Treaties, No. ii. XLI; R. J. C., Para 265-68.
\textsuperscript{58} Treaties, No.ii. XLII; R. J. C., Para 314.
\textsuperscript{59} Treaties, No. ii. XLV; R. J. C., Para 264.
\textsuperscript{60} Treaties, No. ii. LV; R. J. C., Para 26.
\textsuperscript{61} Logan, Treaties, No. ii, XXXIV, XXXV; R. J. C., Para 246.
\textsuperscript{62} Free trade in the case of timber means that both the English and natives can engage in freely; in the case of pepper, British found the monopoly was in failure and cultivators were declared free to sell their products to their wishes (on April 15, 1793). See Nightingale, op. cit., p. 91.
impolitic and instructed the supervisor to levy a modern tax in the shape of license on the retail tobacco trade"\footnote{Logan, Malabar, p. 496.}.

The Company adopted certain further reforms in revenue collection and pepper trade in the second year of its annexation. The most important of which was the Company's decision to relinquish the pepper monopoly and by which it would claim in future only half of the produce by right of its sovereignty\footnote{Nightingale, op. cit., p. 91.}. This system, according to the Company, was applicable only to the northern districts, where the cultivators of the southern districts were left free to sell their pepper. In January 1795, Philip reported that the Company had to pay between Rs. 180/- and 205/- for each kanti of pepper while private merchants paid only Rs. 150/-\footnote{Ibid, p.104.}.

According to another plan, the Company had claimed four fifths of the revenue for its own use and this was to be collected by its own agents. The former revenue collectors of Tipu were appointed for the posts and theoretically, the power of the Rajas was curtailed\footnote{Ibid.}. Major Dow urged the government to adopt Tipu Sultan's Plan, according to which, Moopans (headmen) were to be appointed to various districts with a proportion of
armed Mappilas to assist them. In the case of some local rulers like Chirakkal Raja, the Company had made agreement for a joint administration. This was in one sense a reversal of the existing policy and acceptance of the position of the earlier Commissioners who suggested to make the power of the Raja pivotal instead of introducing the Bengal system. The justification attributed to those recommendations was to meet overburden of maintenance of army and the lack of sufficient Company personnel.

As mentioned elsewhere, the intervention of the British into the domain of revenue and redefinition of the customary rights like janmam and kanam are issues of significance. The Commissioners viewed the status of Janmi as being equivalent in all respects to that of Roman dominus and by its proclamation in 1793, formally recognized the Janmis as owners of the soil. With the help of the newly established courts of justice the British could legitimize all their reforms. The motive behind this reform, in fact, was the creation of a landed aristocracy as a class of collaborators with the British as in the case of Bengal. E. M. S. Nambutirippad, in one of his earlier writings, has maintained that by reinstating the landlords and local rulers to

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68 Logan, Treaties, No. ii. LV, 5th July 1793.
70 Logan, Malabar, p. 495.
collect the revenue, the British were trying to create a ‘rent receiving parasitic class’. However this observation has not been subjected to serious analysis.

The new revenue settlements and reforms were highly detrimental to the existing system of avakasoms, [the intricacies of which have been previously discussed] so that the beneficiaries of which, the local rulers and regional Kanamdars aspired to make a concerted effort to get rid off the menace of the colonial rule. The Zamorian was the first Raja to express his objection to control land revenue under the terms imposed by the Malabar Commissioners. Similar voices of dissent were raised from the ruler of Palghat Kunji Achan and his people and many other local chiefs. W. Fawcet’s request to deduct some of the Jumma, the complaints of Kurumbranad Raja and his subjects, Southern Superintendent’s letter submitting his inability to collect revenue, complaints from some 3000 Nairs of Kadathanad etc. prove that the revenue policy was ineffective in the initial phase.

The immediate and striking manifestation of such a feeling was that of uprisings led by Pazhassi Kerala Varma Raja along with some local chiefs.

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73 B. Swai, op. cit., p.56
75 Ibid, p. 348.
76 Ibid, p.94.
77 Ibid, p. 263.
like Kannoth Nambiar, Kaitheri Ambu, Kumaran Emman, Elambilaya Kunchan, Rairu, Menakoran, Paithalottu Nair, Moylan Kannachan Nambiar etc. Parappanad Raja, Unnimutha Muppan and Athan gurukkal were leading figures in the south to pose such challenges against the British. The details of the nature and course of resistance will be discussed in another separate chapter. Interestingly, it was at the same time that the Commissioners recommended to shut down the Tellicherry Factory alleging increase in expenditure. Added to this were the problems with regard to the treaties with Tipu Sultan, who had intermittently raised his claim over Wyanad. According to the Sultan, it [Wyanad] was not to come under the purview of the Treaty of Srirangapatanam.

Stevens, the Supravisor, had formulated certain ideas on commercial reforms to be followed by the Company. First, the Company would encourage production of pepper if they levied a tax in cash on the vines in the north, instead of taking half of the produce in kind. Second, guards were to be stationed in each pepper garden to see the Company gained its share of pepper. He defended his policy and insisted that it was not practical to purchase pepper directly from the cultivator. He emphasized the great hold of Rajas and merchants on the pepper supplies and repeated Robert Taylor’s

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79 R. J. C., Para 509; Logan, Malabar, p. 500.
80 S. P. D. D., No. 55 (1797); No. 57, 1797.
proposal that the Company should pay the merchants in cash for the pepper they delivered and levy high penalties for any failure to carry out contracts. According to Nightingale, the unbroken hold of the rajas and pepper merchants on the spice trade, the activities of Murdock Brown, and the private interests of the Company's servants in Malabar, in several ways combined to deprive the Company of the commercial advantages envisaged in the acquisition of the province.

The power and influence of Murdock Brown within the Company was enormous. Mr. Brown, a French merchant of Mahe joined the Company's service in 1793. Born a Scot, he became successively a Dane, an Austrian and Frenchman, and wherever smuggling or illicit trade was carried, he was sure to be involved. Even his detractors admitted his intelligence and unparallel knowledge of Malabar and if any one had the influence or initiative necessary to overcome Tipu's prohibition it was he. Brown had been described not only as a shrewd merchant but also as a man who had close contact with the higher officials of the E. E. I. C., especially the Governor Jonathan Duncan. Walter Ewer, one of the directors of the Company and William Gamul Farmer etc had high impression regarding Brown. As Brown spent most of his time in Malabar, he had a good command over Hindu laws, culture, and the local language, that is Malayalam. Since Duncan was one of the founding members

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82 Ibid, pp. 156-57.
of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, he was keenly interested in these matters and had appreciated the work of Brown. Most of the British officials disliked the dubious activities of Mr. Brown\textsuperscript{84}. But Duncan’s ignorance of commercial knowledge gave Brown a great deal of influence over him. Duncan never questioned the commercial advice which Brown gave him and used his influence to defend Brown’s appointment as Deputy Commissioner of Police when it was opposed by the Bombay government\textsuperscript{85}.

*The Report of the Joint Commissioners* was submitted in October 1793. The Supervisor Farmer had been directed to suppress the insurgency of the rulers especially of Wayanad. Those were Pazhassi Kerala Varma Raja\textsuperscript{86} and local Chiefs like Kannoth Nambiar, Kaitheri Ambu, Kumaran, Emman, Elambilaya Kunchan Rairu, Mena Koran, Paithalotttu Nair etc.\textsuperscript{87} Failing in suppress the uprising, Farmer was forced to resign and after that Stevens was appointed to the post. Though he had some particular proposals in tune with the British mercantilist ambitions, an allegation of bribery was raised against him. Thereafter he was succeeded by Mr. Handley. Strategies of war, or

\textsuperscript{84} P. Nightingale, *op. cit.*, p.38, 56 and 97.
\textsuperscript{87} K. K. N. Kurup, *op. cit.*, 2004, p. 49.
compromises were found repeatedly formulated but the spices could not be extracted by the Company officials.

Besides, out of total revenue of something more than Rs. 140,000/- due for the years ending September 1795, no less than six lakhs of rupees remained uncollected on 31st October 1795. Prior to Mr. Duncan's arrival at Calicut on 21st November, the Supervisor had however collected Rs. 1, 67, 704/- of the arrears, but a balance of nearly 4.5 lakhs of rupees remained unadjusted. It is clear that the system of settlement adopted by the Joint Commissioners was unsuited for the circumstances of the country.\(^{88}\)

Thus, by May 1796, four years after the end of the war, the Company had little success to its name in Malabar. It had failed to establish its authority in the northern part of the province, where the revenue was largely unrealized and its commercial position was little better than it had enjoyed under Tipu.\(^{89}\)

In this situation, Duncan created a new Malabar Commission by appointing on 19th May 1796, Thomas Wilkinson, Alexander Dow, Augustus William Handley and Robert Rickards. The new Commission brought Murdoch Brown back to the prominence and influence and removed his enemies from power. But some of his clandestine activities were subsequently identified and one of the Company officials thought that Murdoch Brown was the Chief incendiary of the country. And it was realised that, in the correspondence with the local

\(^{88}\) Logan, *Malabar*, p. 505.

Rajas, Brown was not paying proper respect and it is believed that, it was a serious matter ‘as contempt of the rajas, has always been one of the first seeds of revolt’.  

In January, 1797, the Commissioners sent troops to end the revolt of Pazhassi Raja. But because of the Pazhassi mode of jungle war fare, it had lost more men than had Cornwallis at the siege of Srirangapattanam. The Company had requested for peace and Pazhassi stood aloof from further retaliation against them. But the peace agreement did not last long, as Wellesley was appointed as the Governor General with larger imperial motives. His pursuit of an unrivalled mastery over the province was occasioned by the death of Tipu Sultan (1799).

To William Thackeray, who prepared a report on the revenue affairs of Malabar and Canara, the civil war had dissipated the revenue collection in the province. The table produced by him shows that only 3, 85, 223 pagodas were collected against the settlement amount 37, 92, 856 pagodas. An exorbitant rate of 60% of land tax, he states, was unbearable for the rulers. The British were collecting revenue from the local Potentates and they were extracting the

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same from the farmers. It was in this context that the Company appointed a new Malabar Commission to make arrangement for exaction of revenue under John Smee and naturally it caused fresh incidents of conflicts and as a result, the atmosphere of peace again disappeared.

From 1784 onwards the Company was with a view that Tellicherry was useless to the Company. The intermittent wars, Tipu’s embargo on Malabar Coast etc. had compelled to think them as ‘nothing is to gain on Malabar side’. Even in 1789, when Tipu attacked the territory of the Raja of Travancore, Lord Cornwallis was still of the opinion that the Bombay Presidency be dissolved. The experiences after the establishment of the Company administration in Malabar prove that no considerable advancement was made possible during the time. Inability of the British officials to collect the estimated revenue demand and persistence of non-payment of revenue and uprisings by the local chiefs proved that it was very difficult to establish a colonial administration in Malabar. Consequently, the province was transferred to the jurisprudence of the Madras Presidency in May 1800 with view to grapple with the rebels expeditiously. It was followed by abolition of the two superintendent ship and dismissal of the Malabar Commission. The

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93 P. Nightingale, op. cit., pp. 87-88; M. Frenz, op. cit., pp. 105-106.
94 P. Nightingale, op. cit., p. 47.
95 Ibid, p.56.
generally stated causal factor (also the official version) was the convenience of administration, and prosperity of the people, "as it is the object of the British Government to promote and ensure." This however, cannot be taken at its face value. But the reason for the transfer should be explored.

The new regime of Fort St. George (Madras) introduced certain important measures. First was the appointment of William Mc Leod as the Principal collector and the dismissal of the second Malabar Commission. Secondly, Mc. Leod's order to disarm Malabar (Arms Act) in 1802 was followed by new tax policy and governor's declaration of martial law of 1803. These measures in fact gave a fillip to the rebels and they raised an unprecedented resistance, culminating in the storming of Calicut prison. Accepting the responsibility of deterioration of law and order in the province, Mc. Leod resigned and Rickards was appointed to the post. As an immediate response to the troubled situation, Rickards introduced new measures of reduction of rate of revenue.

Nevertheless, Rickards could not surmount the popular discontent manifested in the form of revolts at Kalliat and Anjarakandy, which finally led to his own removal. Thomas Warden, the new collector could make some

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99 Logan, *Treaties*, No. ii. CCXXXIV.
advance in 1804 November by assigning Malikhana to the former rulers with a view to mollify them and to get their support in future. The only ruler stood defiant was none other than Pazhassi Raja. It was only after a protracted and bloody encounter that the Company could surrender Pazhassi Raja in the year 1805. As their age old enemy in Malabar was being made part of history, it heralded a definitive colonial rule in the province.

Most of the studies that analyze the character and impact of early phase of colonialism in India lead us to certain generalizations. The most notable and debated among them is the concept of “Partnership” between the British and the Indians. Holden Furber was the first scholar to formulate the idea of “dialogic” character of the British colonialism. He used to call the period between 1500-1750 as the “age of partnership”. This aspect of dialogic process was later elaborated by Eugene F. Irshick in his eloquent study on colonialism in Madras (Jaghir). He observes that for the process of interaction, the British used to refurbish or establish the religious centres [temples] and had followed the custom of beating ‘tumukku’, a drum to announce the state policy, with a view to get respect and obedience to the government. Directions to the company officials from Governor General on the need for knowing Malayalam also be considered as a technique of making

100 Logan, Malabar, pp. 528-43.
102 Ibid, pages 20, 22.
the people of the land closer to the colonial administration\textsuperscript{103}. There were also some directives to use force and make changes in culture in order to dominate the indigenous people.

Similar kind of an example was also seen in 1775 in Benares, where the British obtained sovereignty over the land and became the protector of that great Hindu pilgrim centre\textsuperscript{104}. More or less the same practice was followed by the British in Malabar that, three \textit{thangals} (highly revered Muslim spiritual leaders whose pedigree is related to the prophet) of Malabar, namely, Putiyangadi thangal, Koyilandi thangal and Kondotty Thangal, by making a grant exempting the lands from payment of the revenue, as had been the custom in Tipu’s time, on the condition that their people would stand loyal to the British.\textsuperscript{105} Issuing of \textit{Malikhana} also may be considered as a step towards this direction.

But the actual loyalty or direct support was extended from the merchants and newly created class of Zamindars, bankers etc. To Bayly, the British colonial establishment was founded and extended upon the strong base of partnership with Indian merchant class. Influence of Jagath Seth and Omi

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\item \textsuperscript{103} Letter from Governor General in Council, R.D.D., No. 13, (1794), p. 205.
\item \textsuperscript{104} C. A. Bayly, \textit{Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars, North Indian Society in the Age of British Expansion, 1770-1870}, Delhi, 1992, p.1.
\item \textsuperscript{105} Logan, \textit{Malabar}, Vol. 1, pages 494, 498, 527.
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\end{footnotesize}
Chand in Bengal and Delhi is cited as examples\textsuperscript{106}. Both had benefited from each other in their objectives and Indians were made the active agents rather than the passive eye witnesses. By this process, India was made tributary to the capitalist world system\textsuperscript{107}. But actually, the Indians were merely passive agents. Prof. A. K. Bagchi, in one of his recent works, presents a position just opposite to that of Bayly\textsuperscript{108}. However, argument that commercialization on Malabar coast had gone further than Bengal and Madras\textsuperscript{109} is not corroborated by available facts. But one thing is quite sure that though the state was parcellized, the economy of Malabar was not a static one, as the production, especially agriculture, was aimed at the ‘national’ or international markets. (for a detailed description of cash crop farming, mortgages and management see, chapter I). Nightingale is of the view that, both in India and Malabar, merchants found it necessary to exert political power in order to safeguard and extend their trading interests\textsuperscript{110}. But scholars like Marshall maintain that Wellesley’s larger political motives were the cause for expansion of India\textsuperscript{111}. (The most crucial

\textsuperscript{106} C. A. Bayly, \textit{Indian Society and Making of the British Empire}, Delhi, 1987, p. 49.

\textsuperscript{107} \textit{Ibid}, pp. 4-5


\textsuperscript{109} C. A. Bayly, \textit{Indian Society}, p. 61.

\textsuperscript{110} Nightingale, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 239.

thing we lose in this sort of discussion is the real culprit that is colonial policy, instead of revolving around a few individual administrators). Like the case of Aukrur Dutta of Bengal\textsuperscript{112}, the British had made some influential merchants such as Chovvakaran Moosa in North Malabar their allies with whose association they could collect the spices with lesser strain.

Nevertheless, the Company failed in establishing a strong colonial administration for the first years of its acquisition. For example, in theory, the settlement of 1765 had established a British Bengal but Orissa remained unconquered until 1803\textsuperscript{113}. And in the case of Benares, though the British had obtained administrative powers in the year 1775 in Benares, they couldn't exercise any direct political authority for quite some time. From 1788 to 1795 it was a brief transition period for Benares. In Madras also, the British could make a break through only by 1821 with the introduction of Ryoitwari settlement, although it had acquired the right of direct administration in 1782\textsuperscript{114}. In the case of Malabar also, a period from 1792 to 1805, one can not claim the existence of any sort of a powerful state/government. Rather it can be termed merely as a transitional period to colonial economy and polity. Obviously, the imperial state during this time had failed to consolidate.


\textsuperscript{113} P. J. Marshall, \textit{Bengal the British Bridge head, Eastern India, 1740-1828}, Delhi, 1990, p. 141.

\textsuperscript{114} Eugene Irshick, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 127.
As a matter of fact, the British introduced the Permanent Settlement in order to make the elite class its allies. In the new system, petty kings, the revenue and military entrepreneurs, the great bankers and warrior peasant lords represented the forms of indigenous capitalism. The British created a market in land by making permanent land revenue settlement in 1795, "by giving title to land to those whom the British considered zamindars; by using land sales to realize delinquent tax payments; and by failing to settle land rights within lineages which were recognized as zamindars." In Malabar, they had also introduced signing of revenue settlement with the local chiefs and landed aristocracy. And it was their method to look at janmis as the owners of land like that of European system (It will be discussed in detail in the next Chapter). Apart from this, permanent registration of land was also introduced in Malabar in the year 1794. In order to create private property in land, they started to occupy and control the waste land and whose ‘owner’ would pay the revenue to them.

One school of historians maintains that the British had always assured the Indian participation throughout their administration in India. According to them, the British had realized the fact that for the day-to-day routine work of the Company, the Indian civil servants were the better option. In places like

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Benares, the British district officials were faced with the immediate task of recruiting a large number of clerks, scribes and peons, they also had to employ some Indians in responsible positions as amils or tahsildars (local tax collectors) and low officers\textsuperscript{119}. In Malabar also there were indigenous people like Moopans, who were formerly the local revenue collectors appointed by Mysorean rulers and now their rights were reinstated by the British. Similarly, the Menons and other upper caste/class Nairs, who had opportunity to get appointed to the clerical and other coveted posts. As the British revenue system introduced in Malabar was simply the adaptation of the Mysorean revenue administration\textsuperscript{120}, a large number paradeshi (foreign) brahmins who were previously the civil servants of Mysore, also were reinstated. But these are not sufficient to believe that the British had considered Indians as equal partners; indeed, the equal partnership was impossible.

Bernard S. Cohn argues that even country-born' Europeans, the dubashis (bi-liguist), many of whom engaged in small-scale trading activities, were looked up on with suspicion and they were treated as un trust worthy\textsuperscript{121}. He goes on to argue that, by the opening up of the colonial projects of 'knowledge', which means translation, surveys, studies etc, a great number of Indian scholars, teachers, scribes, priests, lawyers, officials, merchants and

\textsuperscript{119} B. S. Cohn, \textit{An Anthropologist}, p. 329.
\textsuperscript{120} C. A. Bayly, \textit{Indian Society}, p. 86.
\textsuperscript{121} B. S. Cohn, \textit{Colonialism and its forms of Knowledge}, Delhi, 1997, pp. 20.
bankers, whose knowledge as well as they themselves were to be converted into instruments of colonial rule. And more importantly, they were to be subjected to the scrutiny and supervision of the white *sahibs*, ran the everyday affairs of the Raj\textsuperscript{122}. Actually, the British wanted to make use of Indian service. So it can be categorically argued that the “partnership” theory is a “motivated” and absurd one.

In the formative years of British colonial rule in Malabar, they had made some attempts to bring the land under their control by survey of resources, making of maps etc. By 1790’s onwards, the British had started to conduct exclusive surveys in India. The British began a systematic survey of India as early as 1765, when James Rennel was appointed to make a general survey of the newly acquired Bengal territories\textsuperscript{123}. Much of the information that enabled the British to control and tax their Indian possessions was gathered by army and naval officers and resulted from the growing military character of the Company after Cornwallis. Officers accompanying residents on their postings extended the techniques of the great cartographer James Rennel to the Indian interior and drew the maps which were later filled out by the revenue surveys of 1814-35\textsuperscript{124}.

\textsuperscript{122} *Ibid*, p. 21.
\textsuperscript{123} *Ibid*, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{124} C. A. Bayly, *op. cit.*, p.87.
Malabar also was not an exception to this nationwide project. In Malabar, the Vettattunad escheats were surveyed by Capt. Moncreif, along with Col. Sartorious. He had surveyed the rivers of the country and Lieutenant Monier Williams drew the first map of Malabar under Moncrief's supervision.\textsuperscript{125} Investigations of Indian resources, particularly on the west coast were driven by the need to find suitable varieties of timber for the Bombay Marine\textsuperscript{126}. As the rivers were the main routes of conveyance of products, especially spices and timber, this kind of studies or observation invite special attention.

These projects of surveys and preparation of cartography must be seen as part of a larger colonial project, which were associated with the preparation of a series of reports and travelogues with specific objectives. The Report of a Joint Commission (1792-93), The Revenue Report of William Thackeray (1807) etc. were closely associated with the larger frame work for colonial dominance. The Joint Commissioners Report can be seen as a typical example of the colonial ‘gaze’ upon the people, their customs and resources. It had attempted to survey almost all details with regard to the state and economy. It is argued that the work of Buchanan is the best example of what Cohn has called as ‘survey modality’, one of the early colonial strategies of creation of knowledge of the colonized people.

\textsuperscript{125} Logan, \textit{Malabar}, p. 522.
\textsuperscript{126} C. A. Bayly, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 87.
The description of Malabar landscape presented by Buchanan goes beyond a simple report of a traveller or surveyor but assumptions of a plantation owner interested in transforming the landscape for furthering his investment opportunities\(^\text{127}\). His journey must be seen as a part of colonial knowledge production, similar kind of which were undertaken in many other regions of the country. Like Buchanan, Thackeray, in the year 1807, describes the natural resources, especially of rivers and the possibility of widening and connecting them for convenience\(^\text{128}\). The establishment of plantations in cinnamon, coffee, pepper nutmeg, spices, cotton etc. can be understood as part of the continuous process of colonial extension. The plantation at Anjarakandy in Kannur under Mr. Murdock Brown’s overseership was a very palpable development\(^\text{129}\).

Even in the early phase of colonial intervention in Malabar, the British had posed serious danger to the ecology of this region. Protracted warfare in the hilly regions along with the introduction of plantation and monoculture had badly affected the nature as well. The teak plantations of Eranad and Valluvanad taluks were the commercial destinations, the reported deforestation, felling of teak by the British etc. had contributed to the


reduction of water level in the area. Besides, Arthur Wellesley played a prominent role towards this, when he drove roads through forests of Malabar clearing trees to a mile on either side in his campaigns against Pazhassi Raja (1800-02).

The new regime was established in societies which were undergoing ecological cultural, social and economic changes. According to the new Cambridge school of historians that process of change had began long before 1765. Taking the case of Bengal, P. J. Marshall maintains his position that, the phenomena such as commercialization of some parts of agriculture, a brisk circulation of right to collect revenue and stratification of cultivators into rich and poor, which are some times attributed to the British, were clearly present in the Bengal of the Nawabs. The motive behind this kind of position is to popularize the view that colonialism had done nothing detrimental to the colonies except their missions of civilization. Anything negative that can be considered as the attributes of colonialism, was to them, of course present long before in the pre-colonial society. But the coming chapters will pay attention to those arguments in the background of Malabar, and examine the validity of such arguments.

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130 C. A. Bayly, Indian Society, p. 140
131 Ibid, p. 139.
132 P. J. Marshall, Bengal, p. 137.
Conclusion

This chapter has primarily attempted to make some reconsideration on the existing discourses on the British annexation of Malabar. An analysis of the positions of scholars like Pamela Nightingale, K. K. N. Kurup, N. Rajendran, Margret Frenz and others, tempt us to argue that Malabar was neither conquered nor consolidated by the British in the year 1792. Instead, until the death of Tipu (1799), they could only make some arrangements for the fulfilment of the spice trade.

The close examination of the annual treaties and permanent treaties with the local potentates of Malabar, lead us to the conclusion that the treaty of Srirangapatanam had no legitimacy and the rulers of Malabar paid little attention towards it. Secondly, instead of introducing a genuine revenue policy of their own, the British in the initial phase were imitating the Jamabandy system of the Mysoreans. Thirdly, the nullification of once declared pepper monopoly in Malabar is a clear evidence of the lack of confidence of the British establishment. Fourthly, the British were puzzled as they failed to tackle with the claims of Tipu over Wynad and intermittent challenges posed by Pazhassi Raja and other rebels. This had hindered the British appropriation of revenue/spices throughout the region of Malabar. Since the insurrections along with the resignation/dismissal of the collectors or officials became order of the day, the British were demoralized to pursue
their administrative aspirations. As they were unsuccessful in attaining its goal of absolute control over Malabar province, the British were forced to declare transfer of Malabar to Madras Presidency in 1800, but still the problems remained unchanged.

To be precise, troubles and tribulations of the British in Malabar continued up to the annihilation of Pazhassi Raja in the year 1805, and after which they had embarked on preparing the new revenue settlement and sought for new collaborators. This was accompanied by conducting surveys and preparation of cartography in Malabar. And in most of the regions in India, the British were not able to establish their predominance and sovereign power soon after their 'annexation'. But they had to wait for a favourable environment which was to be made possible by the collaboration of native 'partners'. The practices of accepting some cultural motifs and paying reverence to religious leaders, refurbishing or establishment of temples, supporting temple festivals, exemption to taxes to religious leaders or giving directives to learn local languages were in fact experiments towards getting support of influential sections of the society. Anyway, within the space of a limited power they attained, the British activities created a rupture in the pre-colonial economy and society. But indeed it is meaningless to apply a 'stereotypical' model of British acquisition applicable to India as a whole.