



## Stages of urbanization: some reflections on the March of Subha of Sira as an Imperative Political Unit

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### **Abstract**

*The province of Sira was politically and militarily an important region of South India prior to the colonial British take over. It was ruled by Moguls, Bijapura sultans, Mysore Wodeyar kings, Hyder Ali & Tipu sultan until it came under colonial Government of Princely Mysore. There was a periodical development of this region from inaccessible hilly plains to a strategic political division. Several Mogul viceroys administered here which helped the march of this place in to a crucial sub urban center. As this place became an vital political division, there was a systematic administrative machinery which promoted the area as a southern stronghold of various kingdoms. Mogul Provincial heads such as Dilawar khan, Kasim Khan helped the prospective growth of this place as an administrative unit. The Province boasted of a good & strong administrative cadre there by acting as a strong bastion against Maratha incursions. The Mogul emperors equipped this province because they wanted to contain the periodic Maratha invasions. This paper examines the province of Sira in the light of these historic facts & spotlights the calculated implications of molding the province as a southern stronghold by all administrators. The area could develop politically, culturally & economically because it was a principal province because it was considered planned & strategic area geographically & physically.*

**Key words:** Administrative Machinery, Bureaucracy, Strategic Province, Sub Urban Center

### **Introduction:**

The Sira province was politically and militarily an important region of South India prior to the colonial British take over. The Province of Sira was ruled by the Bijapura Kings from 1638 A.D to 1687 A.D. The Mogul rulers had a sway here from 1687 to 1757 A.D with its capital at Sira town. The Marathas wrested the province from Mughals and held it from 1757 A.D A. D to 1759, when the Mughals

regained it. In 1761 A.D, Hyder Ali whose father Sheikh Fateh Mohammed occupied an important position in the local Mughul Army declared his independence from the Mughal Empire and declared himself the 'Nawab' of the province. He called himself 'Nawab Hyder Ali Bahadur ' but lost the province to the Marathas from 1766 A.D until 1774 A.D when his son Tipu Sultan, captured it for him. (Stein, Burton (1985)



In the medieval period before the Mughals, state or provinces were not demarcated in well-defined way. Under Emperor Akbar, the Empire was divided into 12 provinces or probably Central provinces, which were part of Mughal India. These provinces were Agra, Awadh, Bengal, Bihar, Allahabad, Malwa, Gujarat, Ajmer, Kabul, Multan, Lahore and Delhi. Mogul province, which comprised the Carnatic region south of the river Tungabhadra, and which was to exist for seventy years, was established in 1687 A.D with its capital at Sira. It was popularly known as the Subah.

### THE SUBAH OF SIRA

The province was composed of seven parganas also known popularly as districts.

1. Basavapattana,
2. Budihala,
3. Sira,
4. Penugonda,
5. Dodda Ballapura,
6. Hosakote, &
7. Kolara.

In addition, area covering

1. Harapanahalli,
2. Kondarpi,
3. Anegundi,
4. Bednur,
5. Chitradurga area, and
6. Parts of Mysore province

were considered by the Mughals to be tributary states of the province.

### The Reign of Kasim Khan

Qasim Khan was appointed the first Subhedar and Faujdar of the province in 1689 A.D. he was a very energetic subhedar he controlled the area from Maratha incursions capably. The area developed with vast treasures under him. He was well equipped with an army. Most Subhedar who governed after him could not last long because there were periodic political turmoil.

### The Reign of Dilawar Khan

Dilavar Khan was appointed governor in 1726 A.D, his term lasting until 1756 A.D. In 1757 A.D, Sira was overrun by the Maratha Invaders, only to be restored to the Moguls in 1759 A.D. In 1761 A.D future ruler Hyder Ali, whose own father had been the Mughal Faujdar of Kolar district in the province, captured Sira, and soon conferred on himself the title of "Nawab of Sira". (Manor, James (1975), "Princely Mysore before the Storm: The State-Level Political System of India's Model State.") However, the defection of his brother five years later caused the province to be lost again to the Marathas, who retained it until Hyder's son, Tipu Sultan, recaptured it for his father in 1774 A.D. (Stein, Burton (1985)).

### Stages of Urbanization

The capital of the province, Sira town, prospered prospectively under Dilawar Khan. He expanded in size to accommodate 50,000 homes. Palaces



and public monuments of Sira became models for other future constructions. It is seen both Hyder Ali's palace in Bangalore and Tipu Sultan's in the fort city of Srirangapattana built during the period 1761–1799 A.D of their rule, were modeled after Dilavar Khan's palaces in Sira. According Historian Rice 1908, Bangalore's LalBagh as well as Bangalore fort were also designed after Dilawar Khan's Bagh gardens in Sira and Sira fort respectively. (Manor, James (1975), "Princely Mysore before the Storm: The State-Level Political System of India's Model State)

When Tipu Sultan succeeding his father as Sultan of Mysore in 1782 A.D, he deported 12,000 families, primarily city officials, from Sira to Shahr Ganjam, a new capital city, he founded near to main Srirangapattana Island. This facilitated the growth of shahr Ganjam as a suburban center as well. Shahr ganjam came to hold a small masjid , official residences , water outlets, gardens,& community halls. (Stein, Burton (1985),

In 1689 A.D, after the Mogul armies had overrun the Mysore region there was a shift in the growth of this province as a strategic place. Immediately several other nearby regions were annexed to the newly formed Subah of the province of Sira. The remaining region was allowed to remain under the rule of the Local chiefs called as pategars, who continued to collect taxes from the cultivators, but were now required to pay annual tribute to the provincial government in Sira. In the annexed

regions, in which tax assessment on cultivation was under Sarkar system of management, an elaborate system of officials collected revenue. (Stein, Burton (1985)

### **The Administrative Setup in SIRA**

Most offices had existed in the region under the previous Bijapura Sultanate administration, and consisted, among others, of Deshmuks, Deshpandes, Majmundars, and Kanungos. ( James Manor ) .While the Deshmuks "settled accounts" with the patel or the village headman. The Deshpandes verified the account-books of the village registrars popularly known as karanms. Kanungos entered the official regulations in the village record-books and also clarified decrees and regulations to the village governing officers and residents.

The Majmundars prepared the final documents of the "settlement" and promulgated it. Initially each Subah had one governor who was officially called sipah salar or the commander of the armed forces. In later times, the designation was changed to nazim but usually he was known as subhedar. Mogul king Akbar made an important change; as the governing authority in every Subah was bifurcated and the office of provincial Diwan was created. The subhedar was appointed by the Emperor. He was usually a mansabdar of high rank and enjoyed a salary depending upon his rank in the mansabdari system. He was the commander of the provincial army. His essential duties were to maintain law



and order, to supervise general administration, to administer criminal justice, to help the smooth collection of revenue (including the tribute due from vassal chiefs) and to execute the imperial decrees and regulations sent to him by the center. There was a high range of official bureaucracy in this province which helped the subheddar to manage the political affairs. They were periodically transferred from one province to another or given other assignments in the imperial service. Diwan was, in a way, the adversary of the subheddar, "the two had to keep a strict and jealous watch on each other". He was responsible for the, collection of land revenue and other taxes, for accounting and auditing, as also for the administration of civil justice. He appointed collectors He was directed to "cause the extension of cultivation and habitation in the villages"

The Faujdars were placed in charge of those subdivisions of the province which were important on account of the presence of zamindars or provided large revenue or contained towns. They were the chief assistants of the subheddar in the discharge of his executive functions and in the maintenance of peace. The kotwal was primarily the chief of the city police. Apart from enforcing law and order, he had to discharge many functions of a modern municipality, control weights and prices and enforce the Quranic rules of morality. The administrative agency of the provinces was in some respects "an exact miniature of the central government. Apart from the subahdar and the diwan, the subah

had its own high officials- bakshi, sadr quzi, buyutat, muhtasib, waqai-navis and mir bahr- who discharged the same duties in the province as officers bearing the same titles did for the whole empire. The bakshi was the paymaster of the provincial army. The provincial buyutat was the keeper of government property and official trustee. The muhtasib was the censor of public morals. The mir bahr looked after bridges required for military use, port duties, customs, boat and ferry taxes, etc.

The emperor was the highest court of appeal and sometimes acted as a court of first instance as well. Next to the emperor was the Chief qazi (qazi- ul-quzat) who held the office of Chief Sadr (sadr- us-sudur) as well. Apart from disputes relating to the religious and personal laws of the Muslims and the Hindus, criminal and civil cases were generally decided by the subheddar, the faujdars, the shiqdars and the kotwals on the basis of customary law, ordinances issued by the emperors and equity. The diwan did not hear criminal cases. Emperor Akbar took away from the subheddar the power of inflicting capital punishment.

Due to the existence of a wide range of bureaucracy there was a greater facilities of urbanization.

- ✓ Small /medium sized prisons
- ✓ The bridges over rampant hilly regions
- ✓ Water ducts
- ✓ Small Prayers halls



- ✓ Masjids
- ✓ Palatial structures for viceroys
- ✓ Civil projects
- ✓ Toll gates Market yards
- ✓ Bridges for military use
- ✓ Residences for armed forces
- ✓ Royal stables war horses
- ✓ Police chowkies
- ✓ Guard quarters
- ✓ Weekly market areas
- ✓ Go downs for food material collections
- ✓ Ammunitions assortment quarters
- ✓ Smaller gardens
- ✓ Temporary housing for high bureaucrats
- ✓ Civilian residences
- ✓ Cargo shipment
- ✓ Underground barracks
- ✓ City entrance arches
- ✓ Provisional garrisons
- ✓ Camps for infantry
- ✓ Make shift military bases

All this lead to growth of this region as a sub urban center.

**Conclusion-** thus the province of Sira was of strategic importance even under Moguls. It was a political division of Bijapura sultans. Later, the province grew as an important political division under Mysore Wodeyar kings & under Hyder Ali & Tipusultan. It enjoyed

premeditated political supremacy. It had a well equipped army, wide range of bureaucracy , complimentary geographic location, & optimistic subhedar leadership . All this helped it to emerge as a sub urban center. Hence there was a sequence of chronological incumbency in leadership strategies, consistent political maneuvers, & economic overtures in this area. These wide angled rungs of administration here transformed the whole scene & province of Sira materialized as key political unit far south.

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