



Cash Crop to Commercial Enterprise during Commissioners Rule:1831-1881

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Introduction

In 1831-1881, the British took over the administration of the Mysore state from the Krishnaraja Wodeyar III on the pretext of misrule and the Raja had a commission agent in the Dewan, and the dewan had commission agents in the Foudzars. They in turn had officers called *Ami/dars* had agents to the lowest level of the village. During Krishna Raja Wodeyar rule the kingdom was divided into six provinces and each was under the control of an officer called Foudzar. In 1838, the Superintendent of the Nagar Division of Mysore H.Stokes, considered the extension of coffee cultivation of paramount importance, not as a distinct source of revenue, but as a source of wealth and comfort of ryots and promoting the general prosperity in Mysore. The commissioner Mark Cubbon (1834-1861) adopted the suggestion and Parry's contract was abolished because the coffee cultivation was spread out and measuring coffee plantation was a major problem, so instead of contract system they decided to put export duty on coffee and threw open the coffee cultivation to free competition. In 1939, Thomas Cannon replaced the *Vara* system by *Halat* or Excise Duty of Rs 1 per maund and gradually reduced to 4 Annas per maund.)

In Kadur district Thomas Cannon was the most successful and notable pioneer in the earliest large-scale plantation of coffee in 1830's and his famous

Mylemoney estate is still in good condition even today. In 1840s he had extended his holdings to about 500 acres and was shipping out the best known coffee as "*Cannon's Mark One*" named over cannon's Nose peak in the Bababudan. The next pioneer was Fredrick Green who opened estate at "Aigur" in Manjarabad in 1843. Soon after Aigur was opened he was joined by Mocketts in Saklespur

The natives also followed the footprints of the English planters in this regard. In 1856 there were only seven planters in the province, but it had increased to 662 in 1890-91 plantations held by Europeans in Mysore was 49,862 acres. There were 27,180 'native' plantations in Mysore with an area of 96,814 acres but many of these so-called plantations only consist of small patches of coffee. The total area of European and native holdings in 1890-91 was 146,676 acres. The local producers got benefit from the economic conditions created by the colonial power, even though these conditions were meant to favour the development of European capitalist enterprise and not that of the small holder production. This resulted in the commercialization of coffee and its gradual acquirement of the proportion as an industry.

The attitude of the government in favoring European planters was basically a reflection of its subordinate status to colonial power in British India. In 1862 the Commissioner of Mysore Lord Bowring succeeded Mark Cubbon and



once again the reorganization took place. Bowring in his book express the situation about coffee plantations as the European planters have conferred an immense benefit upon Manjarabad and the adjoining sub divisions where they have established themselves. "The native holders averse to the curtailment of their own feudal powers and fearing the consequences of the labourers quitting their employ frequently regard with a jealous eye the colonization of their country by the interlopers". The export of coffee occurred from 1863 on wards and the increase in the *halat* can be seen from the year 1863-69. The major source of income to the government was through the excise duty levied on areca-nut, Cardamom, pepper and tobacco on

removal from the place of the production and export duty levied on coffee. This also resulted in the growth of banking in the coastal region which was introduced in 1868 when the Presidency Bank of madras opened a branch to cater to the needs of British firms involved in exporting plantation produce. The growth of banks was largely due to the Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea, the region remained inaccessible for long and was not conducive for the setting up of industries. Early entrepreneurs, therefore, took successfully to selling financial services and even today coastal districts maintain a strong banking culture with almost every other household having at least one member employed in the banking sector.

Coffee Halat from 1831-1881.

Year	Halat	Year	Halat	Year	Halat
	Rs.		Rs.		Rs.
1831-32	4,270	1848-49	33,349	1865-66	1,02,781
1832-33	7,472	1849-50	27,509	1866-67	43,199
1833-34	7,472	1850-51	32,300	1867-68	1,06,357
1834-35	7,476	1851-52	25,952	1868-69	1,04,407
1835-36	7,476	1852-53	35,952	1869-70	66,978
1836-37	7,476	1853-54	31,327	1870-71	69,775
1837-38	6,262	1854-55	50,204	1871-72	74,948
1838-39	21,011	1855-56	32,229	1872-73	79,161
			42,711		
1839-40	14,811	1856-57	34,065	1873-74	54,978
1840-41	21,943	1857-58	43,234	1874-75	66,335
1841-42	15,205	1858-59	44,456	1875-76	74,573
1842-43	21,720	1859-60	76,469	1876-77	52,816
1843-44	19,779	1860-61	79,091	1877-78	38,108
1844-45	23,256	1861-62	68,113	1878-79	33,453
1845-46	23,006	1862-63	93,393	1879-80	36,712
1846-47	27,320	1863-64	1,09,463	1880-81	33,661
1847-48	30,059	1864-65	92,791		

Source: Rao, C Hayavadana,(1927): *HisIOrY of Mysore (J 399-1799)* comptled for Mysore Gazetteer,Vol. V, new edition, Bangalore 1927, p-155.



The planting association in an isolated environment of Malnad region forms an important phase in the early development and the exchange of views on common problems and the sharing of experience led to the conditions for a joint action through

different associations. The different regional associations like *Mysore Planters*

Association in 1864, *North Mysore Planters Association* in 1881 and the *Southern*

Mysore Planters Association in 1880 and a *Bababuddin Mysore Planters Association* in 1911. Then the earlier one in Wynad in 1857, the *Shevaroy's planters Association* in 1871, the *Coorg planters Association* in 1878 pointed to the emergence of a sufficiently large number of planters association in each district⁷³. The different Mysore planters association was brought together to form a single association from 1924 to represent Mysore planting interests except those in the former Chief Commissioners State of Coorg. The subsequent change from MPA into Karnataka Planters Association was only when state took the name of Karnataka.

In the initial year the contractors called *Maistries* who went around different districts in the state in search of labourers and supplied these labourers for plantations by giving advance money to labourers for purposes such as birth, ceremony, marriage and death and in turn got *bhakshis* (commission). The labourers were not able to repay the advances and initially went to work in the dense forests for coffee cultivation, but *Maistries* preferred labourers in-group of families rather than as individuals, so that they might be

induced to settle permanently in or around the estate where their whole family was taken to these estates on the assumption that a person

will not run away from the estates. The intimate connection between slavery and custom has given rise to an idea of a natural complementarity between labourers and landholders typically required low caste and tribal groups to work for landholders of higher-caste rank and the arrangement described in terms of hereditary occupations validated by tradition.⁸² Most of the landless labourers went to coffee estates due to poverty or due to the crop failure or due to drought went to work in the coffee estates.

The concluding years of the colonial rule Mysore was hit by a disastrous famine. The Dewan of Mysore had to resurrect the economy where the famine policy was subordinated to development works initiated by the Famine Commission of 1880. The post famine relief works were concentrated on modernization programmes like more rail networks and industrialization works were started in famine prone areas.

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