DIWANS OF MYSORE: MAKERS OF MODERN KARNATAKA

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Abstract

This paper attempts to study how the concept of **Diwans** was conceived in the Mysore **Kingdom**, with **Diwan** Purnaiah as the first ever Prime Minister contributed to growth of Myspre as model state. The Maharajas of Mysore founded the kingdom in 1399 with a brief interruption in the last two decades of the 18th century. After Tipu Sultan, the concept of Diwans was conceived in the Kingdom, with Diwan Purnaiah as the first ever Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Mysore, who was a diwan for Tipu Sultan, and after the end of the Sultans, to the Maharaja of Mysore His Highness Krishnaraja Wadiyar III. The word Dewan (in Urdu) means the Prime Minister of a kingdom; more precisely, a royal advisor to the monarch.

Rising to the position of Diwan in those days was not that easy and required good communication skills, fine grasp of laws of various fields, good public relationship, etc. Holding Diwanship was something like walking on a tight rope. Special skills were required to be in the good book of the Maharajah and his royal household on one hand and try to maintain his rapport with the British officials on the other. There was no difference between a powerful Diwan and a juggler in a Circus, he had to put every step in the administrative corridor carefully. For many Indians, in the colonial era, it was a far cry to reach such a level and had to be content with a position of subaltern in character.The following lists the Diwans of Kingdom of Mysore through 1799 to 1947. The most notable of the diwans are: Diwan Purnaiah, Diwan Sir C. V. Rungacharlu, Diwan Sir K. Seshadri Iyer, Diwan Sir P. N. Krishnamurti, Diwan V. P. Madhava Rao, Diwan T. Ananda Rao, Diwan Sir M. Visveswarayya, Diwan M. Kantaraj Urs, and Diwan Sir Mirza Ismail. Many of the diwans are7e4 bml p0ol x associated with several industrial and educational initiatives undertaken during their terms. These initiatives include almost all works assigned/ directed by the king, permeating activities like setting up and maintaining industries like Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, Visvesvaraya Iron and Steel Plant, Mysore Lamps, Mysore Chemical and Fertilizers Factory, Mysore Paper Mills, Mysore Paints and Varnish Limited. The State Bank of Mysore was established in 1913. Dams for irrigation like Krishna Raja Sagara in 1924 and Hydroelectric Power Plants on Shivanasamudra Falls in 1902 and Jog Falls. Bangalore was the first city in India to get electric street lights in 1905.

Key words: *Princely state, nationalism, caste, Kannada, colonialism, Diwan, Mysore*

Introduction

When the Mysore kingdom came under direct British rule in 1831, early commissioners Lushington, Briggs and Morrison were followed by Mark Cubbon, who took charge in 1834. He made Bangalore the capital and divided the princely state into four divisions, each under a British superintendent. The state was further divided into 120 taluks with 85 taluk courts, with all lower level administration in the Kannada language. The office of the commissioner had eight departments; revenue, post, police, cavalry, public works, medical, animal husbandry, judiciary and education. The judiciary was hierarchical with the commissioners' court at the apex, followed by the Huzur Adalat, four superintending courts and eight Sadar Munsiff courts at the lowest level. Lewin Bowring became the chief commissioner in 1862 and held the position until 1870. During his tenure, the property "Registration Act," the "Indian Penal code" and "Code of Criminal Procedure" came into effect and the judiciary was separated from the executive branch of the administration. British commissioners administered Mysore from 1831–1881. Mark Cubbon (1834–1861) and L. B. Bowring (1861–1870) are among the well-known commissioners of the period.

In 1868, the British Parliament heeded the king's plea and decided to restore the kingdom to his adopted son Chamaraja Wadiyar IX. In 1881, the transfer of power back to the Wadiyars heralded an important phase in the making of modern Mysore. For the first time in India, democratic experiments were introduced by the establishment of a representative assembly. The next king, Nalvadi Krishna Raja Wadiyar, earned great fame as a saintly King-Rajarishi, and his kingdom was hailed as Ramarajya by Mahatma Gandhi as an ideal kingdom comparable to the one ruled by the historical hero Lord Rama.

Under British hegemony, the Wadiyars, freed from security concerns, shifted their attention to the patronage of the fine arts. They made Mysore a cultural center of Karnataka, fostering a number of famous musicians, writers and painters. The Diwans of Mysore played an important role in the transformation of Mysore into a progressive State. In this direction, the part played by C. Rangacharulu, the first Diwan after Rendition was very prominent. During the later part of the colonial period under the Crown, India produced a galaxy of prominent administrators who rose to the position of eminence and displayed their talents in full flow in the area of managing the princely states.

Born in 1831, C. Rangacharulu entered the Madras Government service in 1950. Through his intellectual brilliance and administrative acumen, he soon rose in the official hierarchy and by 1859; he was working as Deputy Collector of Rajahmundry. Meanwhile he published two pamphlets one on "Bribery and Corruption in the Revenue Department" and the other on "Mirasi Rights in Changalpet and Tanjore districts", where he fearlessly exposed the evil that had taken root in the department. Rangacharulu served for eighteen years in Madras presidency, when destiny brought him to Mysore.

In. March 1868, His Highness Sri Krishnaraja Wodeyar III passed away. The British marched their troops into Mysore, sealed off the palace and put his treasures under lock. Major Elliot was appointed to prepare a complete inventory of the Maharaja's properties, scrutinize the expenditure of the palace establishment and settle the Maharaja's debt. C. Rangacharulu was appointed to assist him. Later Rangacharulu was appointed to assist Lt.Col Haines who was appointed by the Government of India as guardian of crown prince Sri Chamaraja Wodeyar X. In June 1869 G.B. Mallesen succeeded Lt.

Col. Haines and Rangacharulu continued as assistant of the guardian and was in addition appointed as the "Controller of the Palace."

Rangacharulu was keenly aware of his role in moulding the character of the young prince and training him for his exalted position. He jealously maintained the dignity and prestige of the prince. Once Col.Malleson treated the young prince with scant courtesy for which Rangacharulu protested. The Colonel greaw indignant and asked “Who are you to tell me?” For which Rangacharulu replied “Both of us have been appointed to help the Maharaja and not to ill-treat him.

In 1874 C.Rangacharulu wrote a paper entitled “Fifty years of British administration in Mysore” This paper was published in London and created a great sensation. In this paper he pointed out the shortcomings of the British rule. In particular he exposed the defects and limitations of the British administration.

Objective:

This paper intends to explore and analyze the significance of **Dewan** of the **Mysore Kingdom**, As able statesman and administrators. Also their unique distinction of serving the state with integrity for economic / industrial properity

Role of early Dewans : British Empire and the Mysore Kigndom

Diwan, Purniah earned praise from the British for his progressive and innovative administration. In 1811, he retired from service following the sixteenth birthday of the boy king. In 1831, dissatisfied with the economy of the princely state and citing mis-administration, a situation brought about by corrupt local officials (tashildars), the British took direct control of the kingdom. King Krishnaraja Wodeyar III spent most of his time encouraging the fine arts, resulting in the development of Carnatic music and Kannada literature. For the next 50 years, Mysore was subject to the rule of commissioners, who were British-appointed officials. In 1876–1877, towards the end of the direct British rule, Mysore was struck by a devastating famine with estimated mortality figures which ranged between 700,000 and 1,100,000, or nearly a fifth of the population. Shortly thereafter, King Chamaraja Wodeyar, who had been educated in the British system, took over the Mysore administration in 1881, following the success of a lobby set up by the Wodeyar dynasty. From then onwards, until Indian independence in 1947, Mysore remained a princely state under the British Raj with the Wodeyars continuing their rule.

In May 1879, Rangacharulu was appointed as Revenue Secretary by the Chief Commissioner. On 25th March 1881 at a Durbar held at the Mysore palace, Sri Chamajendra Wodeyar X was invested with full ruling powers over the territories of Mysore and the new Maharaja in a proclamation issued on the same day appointed C. Rangacharulu as the Diwan of the State.

When Rangacharulu took charge as Diwan, the State had not yet recovered from the effect of the great famine of 1877. To carry out relief measures, the Government of India had advanced a loan of Rs. 80 lakhs at an interest of 5%. Rangacharulu Succeeded in persuading the Government of India to reduce the interest from 5% to 4% and to have the loan paid in forty-one yearly installments of four lakhs each. To reduce expenditure two districts, Chitradurga and Hassan and nine taluks were abolished. Four munsiff courts and three sub courts were abolished. The number of jails was reduced from nine to three. Owing to these measures, the State was able to save Rs two lakhs per annum. Rangacharulu believed that a good

system of communication was essential for the development of trade and commerce. He floated a loan of Rs. 20 lakhs at 5% interest per year and started work on the construction of the Railway link between

Bangalore and Tiptur. Another unprecedented step taken by him was the establishment of Representative Assembly, the first of its kind in India. The Assembly consisting of 144 members met for the first time in 7th October 1881. The Representative Assembly consisted of persons drawn from all the cities, towns and other important places. Though not elected by the people, the members represented the interests of the people and they brought to the notice of the Administration the grievances of the people. A responsive Government used to attend to the redressal of the grievances of the people very promptly. This was, indeed, the first-step in introducing democracy in the State.

Rangacharulu the Administrator

Rangacharulu was the first to establish a colony for Anglo Indians and Eurasians in India. Nearly 4000 acres of land near Bangalore was granted to them to establish a colony. The colony came to be known as White Field. During those days young men of Mysore had to go either to Madras or Bombay to pursue higher studies. To provide opportunities for bright young men of Mysore, Rangacharulu instituted scholarship for them. Sir M. Visvesvaraya, who later became the Diwan of Mysore was one of the recipients of such scholarship.

Rangacharulu was a workaholic. He used to get up at 5'o clock in the morning and after finishing his morning chores used to grant interview to the people until 10 a. m. when he left for office. Common people had free and easy access to him. He kept a tight rein of the administration. No official from the lowest to the highest escaped his vigilant scrutiny. When he heard words of corruption or tyranny by an official, he would himself set out and conduct an enquiry on the spot.

Rangacharulu had a passion for reading and possessed a large and well stocked library. Books on Philosophy, History, politics, literature and Journalism were included in his collection. He had great love for Kannada language and encouraged Kannada writer Basavappa Sastri to translate Kalidasa's Shakuntala in Kannada later the author was conferred the title "Karnataka Kalidasa" by Rangacharulu.

Towards the end of 1882, Rangacharulu's health broke down and he passed away on 20th January 1883. To commemorate his memory a Town hall was built at Mysore, which was opened by His Highness Sri Chamarajendra Wodeyar X in 1885. Diwan Rangacharulu was a great administrator who laid proper foundations for the future administration of princely Mysore.

Sir Kumarapuram Seshadri Iyer (or Aiyar) KCSI (1 June 1845 – 13 September 1901), was an Indian advocate who served as the Dewan of Mysore from 1883 to 1901. He was the second Dewan of Mysore state since the reinstatement of the Wodeyar family on its throne in 1881 and was the longest serving Dewan of the princely state as well. He is regarded by most as the Maker of Modern Bangalore.

Seshadri Iyer

Seshadri Iyer was born in a Tamil-Speaking family from Palghat in the Malabar district of Madras Presidency which is in modern day Kerala. He had his early education in Calicut and graduated in arts from Presidency College, Chennai, in 1868. He was also a qualified lawyer.

Seshadri Iyer joined the services of the Mysore kingdom in 1868 and served as a district magistrate and later as Personal Secretary to the Diwan, Rungacharlu before being appointed Diwan himself. Seshadri Iyer was the longest serving Diwan of Mysore kingdom and served from 1883 to 1901.

Started the Mysore Civil Service Examinations were held for the first time in 1891 and the Department of Geology and the Department of Agriculture were founded in 1894 and 1898. Other notable achievements include the construction of the Vanivilas Sagar dam across Vedavati river, the initiation of the Shivanasamudra hydroelectric project in 1899 (the first such major attempt in India), electricity and drinking water (the latter through pipes) being supplied to Bangalore and the founding of the Archaeological Survey of Mysore (1890) and the Oriental Manuscripts Library.

Seshadri Iyer established the Kolar gold fields and Victoria Hospital and commissioned the Shivanasamudra hydel-electric power project. Seshadri Iyer had to deal with a devastating plague which afflicted Bangalore in 1898 and was responsible for the decongestion of streets and reconstructing the city in the aftermath of the plague.

Mokshagundam Visvesvaraya

Sir Mokshagundam Visvesvaraya KCIE FASc (15 September 1860 – 14 April 1962), more commonly known as Sir MV, was an Indian Civil Engineer, statesman, and the 19th Diwan of Mysore, serving from 1912 to 1919. He started his primary education in Bangalore, received his BSc degree from the University of Madras, and then DCE (Diploma in Civil Engineering) from the University of Bombay through its affiliated institution and 3rd oldest Engineering College in Asia, College of Engineering, Pune. He received India's highest honor, Bharat Ratna, in 1955. He was knighted as a Knight Commander of British Indian Empire (KCIE) by King George V for his contributions to the public good. His birthday,15 September, is celebrated as Engineers' Day in India, Sri Lanka and Tanzania in his memory. He was Chief Engineer of Krishna Raja Sagara dam in the north-west suburb of Mysuru city, Laxmi Talav Dam near Kolhapur in south-west Maharashtra, and also served as Chief Engineer to develop a flood protection system for the city of Hyderabad.

Mirza Muhammad Ismail

Sir Mirza Muhammad Ismail (1883-1959) was a Diwan of the Kingdom of Mysore. A childhood friend of the king Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV, he acted as the king’s private secretary (1923-1926) and later worked as the Diwan from 1926-41. His contributions include the development of the Brindavan Gardens and launching the first rural electrification programme in India. Like one of his predecessors Mokshagundam Visvesvarayya, he was known for being industry-friendly and it was during his tenure that Hindustan Aeronautics Limited was set up. Other industries started during his period as diwan include paper, cement, steel, fertilizers, sugar and electric bulbs.

The period of his administration was an eventful one. He built the superstructure on the foundations laid by Sir M. Visveswaraya. His period saw Mysore State make substantial progress in the field of industries, both in the private and public sectors. He was an able administrator and set an inspiring example to the officials by undertaking extensive tours and personally looking to the grievances of the people. A major part of his administration was spent in suppressing various kinds of public disturbances. He had to do a tight-rope walking in the face of popular agitations conducted by the Congress Party. He had to maintain good relations with the top Indian National Congress leaders like Gandhi and Nehru on one hand and on the other, he did everything possible to suppress Congress movement in the State. The Sultanpet Ganapathi Disturbances in Bangalore in 1928 called for the appointment of an enquiry commission headed by Visveswarya. The Commission recommended the founding of the responsible government in the State. The disturbances made the Diwan somewhat unpopular and helped Congress to gain ground in Mysore. He expanded the Bhadravathi Iron factory by adding a steel plant. A cement and a paper factory were established at the same place. The Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, Porcelain Factory and the Glass Factory all in Bangalore were established. The Sugar Factory at Shimoga and the Khadi Production Centre at Badanval were the other industries that were set up during his time. A Trade Commissioner was appointed at London. He was a great lover of gardens and parks and the founding of gardens, parks and beautiful squares in towns and cities was encouraged by him. The Cauvery high-level canal was also constructed, irrigating 120,000 acres of land in Mandya district. Sir Mirza Ismail designed the world-famous, meticulously planned Brindavan Gardens, located on the terrace of the Krishna Raja Sagar Dam, near the Mysore City. The gardens contain a number of fountains in all shapes and sizes and in the evenings they are tastefully illuminated giving the entire gardens a fairy tale look. During his time the Medical College was established in Mysore which he opened later.

In 1930, he was knighted by the British Government for his services to India.

Conclusion

Mysore State was a state within the Dominion and the later Republic of India from its formation in 1947, out of the territories of the Kingdom of Mysore, until 1956 with Bangalore as its capital. The state was considerably enlarged in 1956 when it became a linguistically homogeneous Kannada-speaking state within the Union of India. It was subsequently renamed as the state of Karnataka.

Following Tipu's fall, a part of the kingdom of Mysore was annexed and divided between the Madras Presidency and the British vassals. The remaining territory was formed into a princely state and the five-year-old scion of the Wodeyar family, Krishnaraja Wodeyar III, was installed on the throne by the British. Because the king was a minor, the administration was run by Purniah, the first Diwan (minister) of Mysore. Mysore paid an annual tribute to the British Raj and a subsidy for maintaining a standing British army at Mysore

Sir M. Visveshwarayya, popularly known as the "Maker of Modern Mysore" or the "Father of modern Mysore state," holds a key place in the history of Karnataka. An engineer by education, he became the Diwan in 1909. He was the chief engineer responsible for the construction of the Krishna Raja Sagara dam across the Kaveri River as well as the chief designer of the flood protection system for the city of Hyderabad. Under his tenure as Diwan, membership of the Mysore Legislative Assembly was increased from 18 to 24, and it was given the power to discuss the state budget. The Mysore Economic Conference was expanded into three committees; industry and commerce, education, and agriculture, with publications in English and Kannada.

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