

TELANGANA

LAND AND PEOPLE

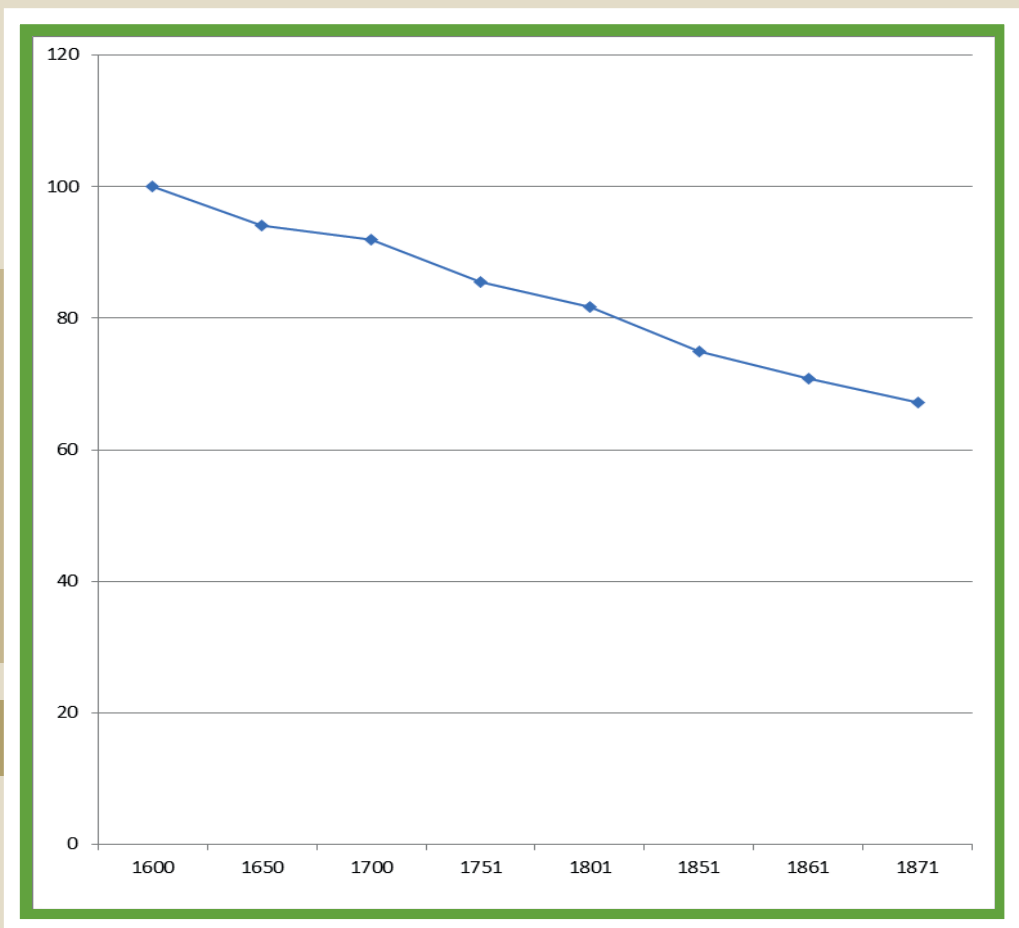
FROM 1724 - 1858 CE

VOLUME 3



**A K Goel, RETD IAS
Rekha Pande, PhD
Ravulapati Madhavi, PhD
Zareena Parveen, PhD**

TELANGANA ECONOMY - INDEX NUMBER OF PER CAPITA INCOME AT
CONSTANT PRICES - 1600-1871 CE



The Per capita income at constant prices declined by 24.68 percentage points from 1700 to 1850 CE. Economic decline apart, it was a period of social stagnation too

A painting on Front Cover:

*Mahalaqa Chand was a unique courtesan of the Century.
Her company was sought after by the Kings, Poets,
Romantics and the ordinary.*

*Even today, she is remembered as Hasina-e-Jamal - the
most beautiful creation of the almighty, on earth.*

Source: State Archives, Govt. of Telangana.



TELANGANA -LAND AND PEOPLE

FROM 1724 TO 1858 CE (VOLUME 3)



Authors

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TELANGANA – LAND AND PEOPLE FROM 1724 To 1858 CE (VOLUME 3)

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Foreword

History gives identity and helps unify people. The Telangana State was realized in 2014 CE, after a long and sustained struggle by its people. Thereafter, the new state is taking continuous steps for all round development of the land and welfare of its people. Public functionaries have an important role to play in meeting the goals of good governance and realizing the aspirations and felt needs of the people. In order to train and sustain a dedicated work force for the government, the MCR HRD Institute of Telangana is working as 'Centre of Excellence' for motivating the public servants towards citizen centric good governance.

Since the creation of Telangana state, thousands of trainees have passed through the portal of this Institute. During their training, it was considered necessary to strengthen their understanding about Telangana, its Land and People. Pertinent material has been developed in this regard by skilled resource teams after detailed discussions with several batches of trainees, which has been published as Volume-I and Volume-II. Telangana – Land and People Volume-III is yet another attempt to gather accurate and scientific material from all reliable resources that covers the elaborate subjects of Telangana as a sequel to the information available in Volume-I & II.

I am hopeful that Telangana – Land and People, Volume-III will be an interesting and informative reading for everyone. Here I would like to commend the scholars, researchers and all others, who were directly or indirectly involved for gathering and collating the information for all the 3 Volumes and capturing the historical realities of Telangana. This endeavor will give an opportunity to the Telanganites in particular and their well-wishers in general to reflect with pride and a deep sense of gratitude on the grandeur of their own history and the splendor of their vivid culture.

Dr. Shashank Goel, IAS
Director General

**Dr. MCR HRD Institute of Telangana &
E.O. Spl. Chief Secretary to Government of Telangana**

Hyderabad
August 2023





Preface

Change is growth and history help us to understand change. The land comprising the present day Telangana was inhabited by hunter – gatherers in the Holocene period (last 11,000 years) which was climatically stable. With such a vast canvas and time journey, the difficult task of joining the historical lines and dots became possible only with creation of the new state of Telangana in 2014 CE.

Telangana, located in the high deccan plateau was the seat of numerous dynasties. The region emerged as epicentre of culture during the rule of Kakatiyas, Qutb Shahis and Asaf Jahi dynasties. Telangana being the youngest state is one of the fastest growing states in India, with an annual growth rate of around 18% for the last few years. Thus, there is an imperative need to sustain the fast pace of progress by duly orienting and motivating our public servants. This need is the *raison d'être* for this volume.

The first volume has already covered the period from stone age to 1323 CE and the subsequent second volume has similarly covered the period from 1323 to 1724 CE. The present Volume-III covers the period from 1724 to 1858 CE, which relates to the first phase of Asaf Jahi times. In all, it consists of six chapters. Each chapter is a modular unit. It can be read independently, or in a sequence, depending upon reader's choice. But, once started, we are confident that other chapters, like flowers in a garland would demand their attention too. Telangana, like a freshly strung garland would leave its unique fragrance with each reader.

The first chapter deals with the evolving polity of Hyderabad state, which encapsulated the present-day Telangana lands during the first half of the eighteenth century. It starts with the commencement of its founder, Nizam-ul-mulk's rule and witnessed its interaction with Maratha and French forces. After departure of the founder, his progeny rendered themselves as willing tools in the vortex of Anglo-French rivalry. In the process, territories of Northern circars and Carnatic were lost to the French company.

The second chapter deals with the various aspects of statecraft like governing structures, general administration and military administration, which was a continuation of the Qutb Shahi period. However, the taxation system and revenue administration were overhauled. A comprehensive record of all land holdings (*raqba*) was put in place. There were other taxes

known as Rahadari, Peshkash, Bagat, Customs, Salt, Diamonds, Mines and Mints. Jamabandi, or the annual settlement of revenue dues from each cultivator was fixed.

The machinery of land revenue collection was based upon a graded hierarchy. The administration was based upon the edifice of an institution called “mansab”. It meant an instrument of appointment to any member of military, revenue, executives, ecclesiastical and nobility. The Nizam ul Mulk was the ultimate authority to appoint these “Mansabdars”. The overall court culture of Asaf Jahis was almost a replication of Aurangzeb’s tradition with its schedule of working, official action, procedures, etiquettes and regulations. The status of law and jurisprudence in Hyderabad state has also been covered. It broadly conformed to the system of crime and punishment prevailing in Mughal administration as perfected during Aurangzeb’s time. Economic trends have also been covered.

The third chapter deals with interaction of the Asaf Jahis with the British company during the second half of the eighteenth century. During this period, innumerable treaties were heaped upon hapless Nizams and consequently, more than half of the territories were lost to the British company. It climaxed in the treaty of the subsidiary alliance wherein the British became the principals and successive Nizams their subsidiaries. The grandeur of courtesans as a part of court culture during those times have also been covered. It needs to be properly understood due to multi-layered corruption in its perception, prevalent in today’s contemporary society.

The fourth chapter deals with the political subjugation by the British followed by inevitable fiscal plunder. Various strategic instruments coupled with appropriate trade policies facilitated the sustained plunder of Nizam’s treasury which emaciated the overall economy. The pro-active role of native facilitators was crucial in this loot. It was climaxed by plucking away of Berar from Nizam’s grip.

The fifth chapter deals with the revolt of native forces against the century long humiliation causing territorial loss and fiscal plunder. All sections of society including armed contingents and various sections of civil society participated in the prolonged revolt. It was eventually crushed with the massacre of recalcitrant troops as well as thousands of rebellious tribals.

The sixth chapter deals with the quantification of fiscal plunder followed by economic decline and emaciation of all classes of population, be it peasants,

weavers and the sundry. Peasantry was desiccated, weavers were roasted and the population was emaciated. It was indeed an era of darkness.

In 1857 CE, the Pan Indian revolt against the British East India Company was crushed and Delhi, the seat of Mughal imperium was captured. In 1858 CE, the paramountcy was taken by the British crown from the East India Company. From then onwards, the Asaf Jahi rulers came under the suzerainty of British crown. That pertains to the second part of Asaf Jahi dynasty and the narrative would be covered in subsequent volumes.



Benhur Mahesh Dutt Ekka, IAS
Addl. Director General
Dr MCR HRD Institute





Acknowledgements

Just as it takes a village to bring up a child, the same is true for a book. How many people have helped in this endeavour? Let us try to remember them. Innumerable civil service trainees spread over batches in the Dr. MCR HRD Institute come first. Their active participation in terms of class room learnings, subsequent feedback and discussions to finalise the sections and chapters is unforgettable.

A galaxy of senior academics have provided their historic insights. Dr.T.Manohar of Kakatiya University, Prof. Salma Ahmed Farooqui from H.K.Sherwani centre for Deccan studies, Maulana Azad National Urdu University and Prof. Adapa Satyanarayana from Osmania University have scanned selected chapters and enriched them with their encouraging feedback. Most importantly, senior academics from fiscal and economic disciplines, like Prof. E. Revathi and Prof. S. Galab have reinforced the text comprehensively. Professional photographer, Ravinder Reddy and author of Telangana Atlas, Shankar Reddy provided their unique support. The office team consisting of Mr. Tiwari and Mr. Balakishan, has taken pains to convert an assorted raw material into a finished product.

Mr.Balakishan needs special mention as he was at work on 24x7x365 basis – round the clock and round the year. Supriya's selfless design throughout the book is etched from cover to cover. Someone has to suffer the verbal bombardment to endorse the work. That duty (rather reluctantly) fell to the share of Sushma, my wife. She had no choice but to suffer this one-sided monologue, especially during dinner times. Finally, the leadership of the Dr.MCR HRD Institute, especially the Director General, who let the entire project unfold deserve our lifetime's gratitude.

Coordinator





Team of Authors

A.K.Goel is a retired IAS Officer of 1974 batch allotted to Andhra Pradesh cadre. After superannuation in 2010 CE, he has been focussing upon the project relating to Telangana – Land and People from Stone Age to the present times. He has acted as the Coordinator for the first two volumes of the Project, covering the period from stone Age to 1323 CE and from 1323 to 1724 CE respectively. Now, he has coordinated the present project, covering the period from 1724 to 1858 CE.

Rekha Pande is a former professor and was heading the History Department and Women's studies at the University of Hyderabad, India. She was the Founder Director of the Women's Studies Centre in Maulana Azad National Urdu University and University of Hyderabad. A guide to 24 doctoral scholars and a prolific writer of 20 books, she is a regular contributor to national and international journals. She has been a visiting professor of several universities abroad. Recently, she has been invited by the National Commission for Women, Govt. of India to be its resource person. All in all, she is an accomplished "GURU", performing multifarious roles with aplomb and dignity.

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Prelude

Prior to 1324 CE, the present-day Telangana lands constituted an organic part of the Kakatiya imperium with Orugallu (the present day, Warangal) as the capital. In 1324 CE, after the subjugation of Kakatiyas, the lands came to be ruled by Musunuri and Padmanayaka chieftains. Eventually, they were overpowered by the rising Bahmanis, who ruled these lands till 1512 CE. The Bahmanis behemoth imploded and the lands came to be ruled by Qutb Shahis with their capital at Golconda. In 1687 CE, Golconda rulers were subsumed by Mughals under the watch of Aurangzeb. Golconda was annexed and was ruled from Delhi as one of their subas (province) till 1707 CE.

Aurangzeb died in 1707 CE. Thereafter, the Mughal imperium witnessed the emergence of several provinces with new power centres across the Indian sub-continent. Asaf Jahi dynasty in the Deccan territories was one such power centre. Chin Qilich Khan played the stellar role, as the founder, followed by being the ruler of the domain. A brief summary would be appropriate.

In 1671 CE, Qamar-ud-Din was born in Delhi at the height of Aurangzeb's reign. His chronogram read 'Nek bakht', which meant 'a person having good fate'. After seeing the child for the first time, Aurangzeb had predicted about his future greatness. Blessed by the emperor, the young lad evolved under his direct watch. Honours multiplied and finally he was titled 'Chin Qilich Khan' (the boy sword's man) by Aurangzeb, before his death in 1707 CE.

From 1707 till 1724 CE, Chin Qilich Khan evolved from a master strategist to the founder of a new dynasty. He always ensured to be around the ever-declining centre of Mughal power, while being

careful not to get sucked into the vortex. In 1707 CE, he moved to Delhi and became a Fakir (a mendicant, who subsists on alms being offered by the sundry), but remained in touch with potential pretenders to the Mughal throne. With quick changeover of emperors, the master strategist maintained his calculated silence, without offending the key players. In 1713 CE, Farrukhsiyar designated him as Nizam ul Mulk and appointed him as Subedar of Deccan. Within a month, Mubariz Khan was also appointed as the new governor. The tug of war for Deccan Sultanate was inherent in the scheme of these twin appointments.

In 1715 CE, Nizam-ul-Mulk was recalled to Delhi due to the court intrigue of Mughals. He complied without murmur. Farrukhsiyar was killed in 1719 CE, but Nizam ul-Mulk maintained his calculated neutrality. In 1720 CE, he was sent to Malwa. As Mughal power was depleting at Delhi, Nizam-ul-Mulk struck and asserted his military superiority over their weak governors in Deccan. Once again, he was called to Delhi and offered vizierate in Mughal's court. A true disciple of the Aurangzeb's school of ideology, he was not in tune with the loose administration and lax political ambience at Delhi. Nizam ul Mulk always looked upon Deccan as the land of his dreams and in 1724 CE, he finally achieved it by the right of his sword after subduing Mubariz Khan in the battle at Shakar Kheda. Qamar-ud-Din, the 'Nek Bakht' was indeed a 'Man of Destiny'. As a true disciple of Aurangzeb, he founded and ruled over the Asaf Jahi Dynasty in Deccan lands.



Asaf Jahi Rulers (1724 - 1858 CE)

Sl. No.	Ruler	Time line
1.	Nizam-ul-Mulk	1724 – 1748 CE
2.	Nasir Jung	1748 – 1750 CE
3.	Muzaffar Jung	1750 – 1751 CE
4.	Salabat Jung	1751 – 1761 CE
5.	Nizam Ali	1761 – 1803 CE
6.	Sikandar Jah	1803 – 1829 CE
7.	Nasir-ud-daula	1829 – 1857 CE
8.	Afzal-ud-daula	1857 – 1869 CE



1. Reign of the Founder & Carnatic Campaign

From 1724 CE onwards, Nizam-ul-Mulk laid the foundation of Asaf Jahi dynasty.

After proving his valour with sword, it was time for Nizam-ul-Mulk, to prove himself as a master diplomat. Maratha forces under the leadership of Peshwa Bajirao were always around to demand their 'Chauth'. He diplomatically redirected Bajirao's fury towards Delhi. In 1739 CE, he moderated the fury of Nadir Shah after the frightful Delhi's massacre. In 1740 CE, Bajirao died and the newly formed kingdom in Deccan breathed peace. In 1743 CE, Nizam-ul-Mulk arrived with force at Arcot, the hub of Carnatic polity. The fort at Trichirapally was evacuated from Maratha's control. Soon thereafter, the French followed by the British Company representatives started shadowing the new victor for seeking trade concessions. On his part, Nizam-ul-Mulk was able to keep a strategic balance between the two. In 1744 CE, he returned to his capital. In 1747 CE, he appointed one of his sons, Nasir Jung as the Subedar of Carnatic. In 1748 CE, Nizam-ul-Mulk died. The political equilibrium of the Asaf Jahi domain, controlling six subas in the Deccan was going to be disturbed, soon. Immediately afterwards, the polity witnessed a frequent change of rulers due to Anglo French tug of war. It was accompanied by the loss of Carnatic and northern areas from the control of Asaf Jahis. A brief background is as follows.

Nizam-ul-Mulk, had six sons and a daughter. In 1747 CE, he appointed one of his sons, Nasir Jung as the Subedar of Carnatic. Soon after the death of Nizam-ul-Mulk in 1748 CE, the power vacuum, especially in Carnatic, started attracting the attention of English and French companies. Each of them started supporting the rival factions, with a view to enhance their own interests. Dupleix, the innovative French governor at Pondicherry captured Amboor. Nasir Jung's authority was dented. He arrived with a big force but Dupleix also captured Gingee, a formidable fort. In the game of deceits and double speak; Nasir Jung was killed in 1750 CE.

Muzaffar Jung was declared as the new Subedar by Dupleix, the new kingmaker of Deccan. Simultaneously, Carnatic was

taken away from his control and given to Chand Saheb, another protégée of the French. The new Subedar, Muzaffar Jung returned to his dominions under the guard of French security, under Bussy's command. The internal intrigues consumed Muzaffar Jung in 1751 CE while on his way from Pondicherry to Aurangabad. Without any hiccup, Bussy installed Salabat Jung, on the musnad. In 1753 CE, the ever-grateful Salabat Jung bestowed Northern Circars upon Bussy, the French governor.

As French influence peaked in Nizam's court, the jealous ministers intrigued and ensured Bussy's dismissal. But he arrived with force and ensured his reinstatement, with all honours intact in 1756 CE. Thereafter, the Battle of Plassey in 1757 CE has tilted the power balance in favour of British. All French forces were called back to Pondicherry, including Bussy.

In 1758 CE, Bussy left Hyderabad. The softie and pliable Salabat Jung were left alone, without any security cover. Within a couple of years, he was removed from the scene. From 1761 CE onwards, Nizam Ali came to rule Hyderabad under the protection of the new saviours – The British. Therefore, the period from 1744 to 1761 CE saw the melting away of Carnatic and Northern circars from the Asaf Jahi's grip due to Anglo-French Tug of War. The future was going to be even more grim for the Asaf Jahi polity.

1.1 THE REIGN OF THE FOUNDER

From 1724 CE onwards, Nizam-ul-Mulk laid the foundation of Asaf Jahi dynasty. On June 20, 1725, on the representations of all the nobles present at the Mughal's court, the various offences of Nizam-ul-Mulk were pardoned. His Jagirs held as before were restored. A formal Firman was issued conferring upon him the Subedari of the six subas of the Deccan and the title of 'Asaf Jah'. But, in the bargain, two subas of Gujarat and Malwa were taken away from him and given to others.

The diplomat in Nizam-ul-Mulk had always been alive and kicking. Regarding his appointment by none other than the Mughal Emperor, he reciprocated the gesture in a humble manner. Expressing himself as a 'fidwai' (Fidwai means a trusted and faithful servant, in Persian) of the Emperor, he responded,

“The forehead of desire became radiant by the ardour of devotion and servitude when (I thought) of addressing His Excellency, who gives the honour to the throne of the heroic order and elegance to

the crown of royalty; and who is like Solomon in dignity, conqueror of countries, Khaqan (Emperor of China or Chinese Tartary) of the world, shadow of the holy Caliph of God, the merciful, and giver of heaven to justice.”

“The servant begs leave to inform His Majesty of the august arrival of the Firman of elevated dignity, foundation of favour and kindness, conferring the title and the announcement of the increase in zat, sawars and dams, by way of favour. It has also been the royal will and pleasure to restore the jagirs in Hindustan (North India) and to announce the joyful news of further favours. The forehead of devotion has now become as high as the bright stars near the pole of the Lesser Bear. The servant begs leave to offer salutation and thanks for the *Khil’at* (robe of honour) which His Majesty has been kind enough to send to him which, in fact, is a means of decoration, glory and elevation of the stature of servitude, making it the manifestation of the light of honour and elegance. The sword of His Majesty’s servant has proved to be of excellent water in slaying the enemies of the State and Religion. It (the sword) is the decisive argument and dispels the darkness of useless disputation, the opener of the gates of victory. Its studded hilt in the hand of the most devoted servant (*fidwai*) has established Imperial sway in seven climes and has raised aloft the banner of sovereignty in the whole world. It has been the cause of the beating of drums of delight. His Majesty’s gift of Arabi and Iraqi horses of heavenly colours, with fine trappings, has enabled the devoted servant to hold tight the reins of the changing world (*ablaq-i-aiyyam*); and has raised (his) stature to the parti coloured firmament. How splendid these horses are! - tall, swift as the east wind, handsome, graceful in gait, incomparable, cause of the burning of hearts for the envious! Even if the pen opens its thousand tongues of gratitude for His Majesty, it would simply be impossible to recount one out of the innumerable favours and benefits conferred on this servant. The tongue of praise is powerless to give expression to sentiments of gratitude and limitless kindness. God willing, the servant will undertake the administration of the Deccan on this side of the *Narbada*, and will exert himself to the utmost to set matters right. By the grace of Almighty and the auspicious prestige of the Emperor, the

endeavours of the devoted servant to win His Majesty's pleasure will produce far-reaching results for the Religion and the State, and will cause happiness to Muslims especially and the public in general. As long as the sun shines on firmament may the altar of the Caliphate and the asylum of the world remain victorious and blessed, causing envy to the assembly of Jam (a great and ancient King of Persia) and the garden of Paradise.¹

Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah was a master swordsman. He was a master diplomat too.



Asaf jah-1 – Nizam of Hyderabad

He ruled over Deccan with his jurisdiction extending over almost the whole of peninsular India, south of the river Taptee



He ruled over Deccan with his jurisdiction extending over almost the whole of peninsular India, south of the river Taptee. Excepting a narrow strip on the western coast under Marathas, the dominion covered Khandesh, Aurangabad, Ahmednagar, Bijapur and Mysore down to as far as Trichinapoly. In the north, Asaf Jah had been Viceroy in the province of Malwa just before arriving in Deccan. He did lay claim to a number of Jagirs and fiefs, but the Marathas were already levying chauth and collecting Sardeshmukhi there. So, Taptee may be regarded as the northern boundary of Asaf Jahi's rule, to begin with. Bringing this vast and spread-out dominion to order was his top priority. In 1714-19 CE, Saiyyad Hussain, as Viceroy of Deccan had allowed Marathas to levy

chauth in some western districts. They did it in an oppressive manner. Asaf Jahi constantly endeavoured to repeal their aggression without coming to an open war. His policy has been described as follows:

“On a general view, his plans were calculated to preserve his rank at court, and his power in the Deccan; to keep alive the old, and to create new dissensions amongst the Marathas; to preserve a connection with that nation in case it should ultimately be useful to direct their attacks from his own to the imperial territories; and however inconsistent some of these designs may seem, in this system of political artifice through the remainder of a long life, Nizam ul Mulk not only persevered but generally prospered.”²

In 1731 CE, the dissensions between the Marathas reached a climax. Triambak Rao Durbari came to open conflict with Peshwas. The Nizam secretly supported the former, thus forsaking an alliance he had previously formed with the later. Battle was fought in Gujarat where Triambak Rao was defeated and killed. Bajirao, the Peshwa chief on returning to Poona was highly indignant with Nizam's treachery. He was preparing to proceed against Nizam, but was persuaded to turn his arms against the Emperor at Delhi. Nizam himself promised to remain neutral.

Bajirao turned away from Deccan and trained his sights upon Delhi. Maratha armies overran Malwa, crossed Chambal and threatened the imperial capital itself. The fighting continued from 1734 to 1738 CE. Nizam proceeded to Delhi and threw his support upon the imperial side. After endless confrontations laced with negotiations, Peshwas eventually had an upper hand. Having received the concessions he had asked for, Bajirao got Malwa as well.

Taking advantage of Peshwas absence, the Emperor prevailed upon Nizam and bestowed Malwa and Gujarat in the name of his eldest son, Ghazi-ud Din, with a condition that he should drive the Marathas out of these provinces. In January 1738, Baji Rao at once returned with an army of eighty thousand men, crossed Narmada and met Nizam near Bhopal. Being cornered, the helpless Nizam granted Malwa and complete territory between Narmada and Chambal to Peshwas. Thus, without fighting a battle, Nizam bought peace by giving away the province of Malwa, which, in the first place had never been in his possession, while his other territories remained intact.

In 1739 CE, Nadir Shah invaded Hindustan and after completely sacking Delhi, returned to Persia. Asaf Jah had been with the Mughal Emperor throughout these proceedings, but had been powerless to help him. He realized that any attempt to uphold the Emperor's authority was hopeless. He accordingly returned to Hyderabad and resolved to devote the rest of his life to his own kingdom. In spite of an advanced age, he was endowed with immense energy and physical strength.

Khafi Khan has this to say about this period, "In a short time the country was brought under the control of the Musalman authorities. It was scoured from the abominations of infidelity and tyranny. Under former subedars, the roads had been infested with ruffianism of highway robbers and the rapacity of Marathas and rebellious zamindars, so that traffic and travelling were stopped. But now the highways were safe and secure. The Marathas had exacted chauth with all sorts of tyranny from jagirdars, and in addition to it, ten percent under the name of sardeshmukhi. Nizam ul Mulk so arranged that instead of chauth of the Suba of Hyderabad, a sum of money should be paid from his treasury. Sardeshmukhi which was levied from the ryots at the rate of ten per cent was abandoned. He thus got rid of the presence of the 'Kumaish-dars' (collectors) of chauth and the officials of Sardeshmukhi and Rahdari (passport system/octroi), from which latter impost great annoyance had fallen upon travellers and traders."

He had brought with him a band of devoted adherents. They were bestowed with gifts of land. Mohammadens were utilized for military services and in return for their valuable jagirs, they were bound to furnish large bodies of soldiers - foot, horse and artillery. So greatly did the Nizam depend upon the noblemen for support and loyal service that he divided his newly acquired kingdom roughly into three parts. One third was reserved for his own privy purse, and was termed the Sarf-I-khas; one third was allotted for the expenses of the Government, and was called the Dewan's territory, and the remaining third was distributed as jagirs or feudal estates. Of these, the military fiefs were the most important, and are still known as the Paigah estates. So extensive were the powers granted to the holders of these fiefs that they formed a kind of imperium in imperio and in their own jagirs possessed sovereign rights. They had the power of life and death, and were excluded from all

state taxation. This division of power and wealth was probably necessary in order to safeguard the new ruler from rivalry and rebellion, but it contained in it the seeds of future difficulties and complication.

Nizam-ul-Mulk brought Hindus and Muslims from Delhi and Malwa and appointed them in higher posts. From then onwards, the entry of northern people started in the administration of the Deccan. The Hindu noblemen were employed in administrative work. In this policy, Asaf Jah showed great sagacity and knowledge of Deccan traditions. From the time of first Gulburga Sultan, Alauddin Hassan Gangu, Hindus were customarily employed to manage land revenue and finance. This work they had done with eminent success until Aurangzeb's campaign dislocated the local polity. And now, the first Nizam had to deal with a new element, that of Marathas. Therefore, he showed great wisdom in reverting to the old policy of entrusting land revenue and finance to Hindus and relying upon his Mohammedan followers to furnish the military contingent. Rajas and landlords who gave their allegiance to the new master were confirmed in their old privileges, while others were cast aside. The protégés of the first Nizam accepted the title Asaf Jahi – or followers of Asaf Jah. The designation was highly prized as a proof of an honourable descent.

Indian history is for the most part a record of daring adventurers, who gain power and sometimes the throne by a series of crimes and utilize it for purposes of extortion, tyranny, and oppression. In the lives of Zulfikar Khan and of the two Saiyyads, we have a striking example of such careers and of the inevitable catastrophe. Asaf Jah presents a remarkable contrast to the general rule. His rise to power is stained by no crime, domestic or public, and his story is simply that of a man who bided his time, who seized his opportunity, and who was loyal to those who treated him loyally.

1.2 THE CARNATIC CAMPAIGN

In the beginning of 1743 CE, Nizam-ul-Mulk arrived at Arcot, the hub of Carnatic polity at the head of 80,000 horse and 2,00,000 foot. He stayed there till the end of March 1744, to restore order in the Carnatic country.³ A brief look at the prevailing situation in the country would be appropriate. Sadat Ullah Khan, the Nawab of Carnatic, being issueless adopted

his two nephews, Dost Ali Khan and Baqar Ali. He also obtained the necessary sanction for Dost Ali Khan to succeed him directly from the Mughal Emperor, without reference to his immediate liege lord, Nizam-ul-Mulk, the Subedar of Deccan. Dost Ali Khan, after his accession to the masnad neglected to pay the yearly tribute to the Subedar of Deccan. The latter started contemplating to proceed to Carnatic to restore his authority and take Dost Ali Khan to task. Before he could move, the Marathas under the leadership of Raghoji Bhonsle and Fateh Singh had already entered Carnatic in 1740 CE, to levy 'Chauth' in that region.

The Marathas laid seize to Arcot, the capital of Carnatic government and later on captured Trichinapoly, which at that time was held by Chand Sahib, the son-in-law of Dost Ali. The former was taken as prisoner to Satara, leaving Murari Rao Ghorpade in charge of Trichinapoly. Dost Ali Khan lost his life while defending Arcot. Marathas captured Arcot, reorganized Safdar Ali, the son of Dost Ali Khan as the new Nawab of Carnatic, on condition of his agreeing to pay Chauth to Marathas and also an indemnity of forty lakhs of rupees. The collection of Chauth had been the presumptive birth right of Maratha rulers in their domains.

As Marathas left, Nizam-ul-Mulk, the Subedar of Deccan demanded the payment of yearly tribute along with arrears from Safdar Ali. The latter just could not pay that because the treasury was greatly depleted on account of indemnity he had to pay to the Marathas. Hence, to meet these double expenses, he imposed levy contributions from each and every town and the fort in Carnatic. The resulting distress and sufferings of the people are graphically described by the agents of British East India Company.⁴

"The exactions of the Havildaars have been so vexatious and intolerable, that the several towns and villages have been deserted by its inhabitants. In a word, the confusion and disorder of the country is exceedingly great." Apart from paying levy, the people were greatly harassed and oppressed by dacoits and thugs.

Safdar Ali's authority was questioned even by his brother-in-law, Nawab Murtaza Ali Khan, the Nawab of Vellore. The latter not only refused to pay the usual contributions collected from Poligars to Safdar Ali but also contrived to murder him. It was achieved by connivance of his wife, who was sister of Safdar Ali, when, the latter visited Vellore

to collect his dues.⁵ Murtaza Ali, promptly proclaimed himself as the Nawab of Carnatic. This aroused the ire of nobles and they proclaimed Saiyyad Mohammed Khan, a young son of Safdar Ali as the Nawab of Carnatic in 1742 CE. To bring semblance of order and sanity in the fluid situation, the Nizam-ul-Mulk, the Subedar of Deccan reached Carnatic country in the beginning of 1743 CE.

In 1743 CE, after his arrival in Carnatic, Nizam-ul-Mulk confirmed Saiyyad Mohammed Khan as the Nawab of Arcot and as a reinforcement, the loyal Anwar-ud-Din Khan was appointed as his regent.⁶ In fact, so great was the confusion and so many rivals put forward their claim to the Nawabship that the old Nizam gave orders to his attendants that eighteen Nawabs having been to see him that day, the next person who presented himself under the style of Nawab should be beaten out of his camp with whips.

The forces of Nizam-ul-Mulk were able to get the fortress of Trichinapoly vacated by the Marathas. Beyond these Nawabs and Marathas, the shadow of French and English trading companies was also becoming perceptible in the ongoing power game. While the origin of these trading companies can be traced back to the seventeenth century, suffice would be to say that Dupleix, an ambitious French commander had succeeded as the French Governor at Pondicherry. He was anxious to show to the princes of India, the genius and superiority of the French nation. The English at East India Company were obviously jealous of the French ambitions. The mutual jealousies between the two companies led to a keen competition to secure the support of these warring Nawabs. The intrigues and mutual conflicts in Carnatic provided enough hunting grounds to these foreign adventures.

The Court of Nizam-ul-Mulk had Ghulam Imam Hussain, a strong friend of French. He had already facilitated the acquisition of minting rights in Pondicherry and 40 bighas of lands in Masulipatnam for building a factory and a village way back in 1734 CE. To gain the goodwill of Nizam-ul-Mulk during his camp at Arcot in 1743 CE, the French sent valuable presents to him.

Not to be outdone, the English East India Company, with a view to demonstrate their loyalty to Subedar, sent more presents worth about 13,000 pagodas to the Nizam and his son Nasir Jung through their

own faithful Khwaza Abdullah Khan. The objective, beyond affirming goodwill was also to get a reconfirmation of the rights granted to them by Saiyyad Mohammed Khan on his becoming the Nawab of Arcot in 1742 CE. They included,

1. The villages of Eravanore, Sandian. Copang, Vepery and Pandu Pack.
2. A grant for the liberty of coining Arcot Rupees and Pagodas, according to the usage and practice of the country mints.
3. Lessening of duties on sundry goods brought in and out of Chintradripeta and for the abolition of duties on other goods.
4. A grant of one adda on every collum of paddy produced in the countries of Poonamalle, Manin, Congalon, Peddapalam and Perambak to be applied to the maintenance of Pagodas of Chintradripeta.

Saiyyad Muhammad had also sent the necessary Sanads to all the 'Mutassady's in his dominions, intimating the grant of the above privileges to the English East India Company.⁷

Ghulam Imam Hussain, the friend of French in Nizam-ul-Mulk's court, popularly known as Imam Sahib intimated to the English that all these permissions granted by Saiyyad Mohammed Khan had no prior concurrence of the Nizam, the Subedar of Deccan and overlord of the Nawab of Carnatic. The English Governor at Madras Benyon sent his agents Coja Petrus and Venkatachallum to Imam Sahib at Arcot to settle the matter. The latter impressed upon Imam Sahib that it would be a disgrace if the villages already granted to the East India Company were to be taken away. Imam Sahib opined that adequate present should be sent not only to the Nizam but also to his son, Nazir Jung. English decided to send presents worth of about 1300 pagodas, leaving it to Imam's discretion to apportion them according to the rank of each dignitary, keeping some for himself.

Apart, from sending costly presents, the English Governor Benyon despatched a Mission. Messrs. Thomas Eyre, Samuel Harrison and Lieutenant Holland were chosen to lead the mission, which was equipped with the President's seal so that the presents chosen by Imam Sahib can be duly sealed in an appropriate official manner. A letter was also written to Imam Sahib that they hoped to get, through his mediation a reconfirmation of the grants already made by Saiyyad

Mohammed to the English East India Company and a Dastak (official permit) for transporting company's calicos, free of duties throughout the country. The mission was instructed to be polite in their demeanor and to impress upon the Nizam that they are entirely dependent upon his favours for enjoying the privileges already confirmed upon them by the previous ruler. They were asked to ingratiate with the Nizam and at the same time, remain vague and answer in general terms, if Nizam were to ask particulars about their trade.

The mission was given 630 Rupees, two hundred pagodas in gold and two hundred pagodas in Fanums for paying batta to peons and coolies; five hundred gold mohars, five hundred pagodas in rupees towards Durbar expenses. They were also given a letter of credit in the firm of Kasidas Bukkanji to draw the necessary money in case of emergency.⁸

Loaded with so many gifts and resources, the mission could hardly start before Nizam-ul-Mulk left Arcot to tackle Marathas ensconced in Trichinapoly. English was directed to follow Nizam and meet him somehow or the other. Transporting the heavy presents meant for Nizam took its toll upon coolies and oxen alike. The fatigued coolies and thirsty beasts were taking more time to cover the same distance. As cash got exhausted, they borrowed two hundred Arcot rupees from the Qiladaar of Ginjee. Here they heard that the French had already proceeded ahead to Trichinapoly and also had an audience with the Nizam. They too hastened and reached Trichinapoly on 28th March, 1743.

The next day, Imam Sahib visited their camp. He was received with due honours and was presented with the usual nazarana. They were also informed that Nizam, on hearing their arrival had ordered Mukhtada Khan to conduct them to his presence. On 30th March, Mir Mukhtada Khan visited the English camp with the guard of a horse, foot and two elephants. The mission, duly seated and escorted was conducted to the Darbar with drums and colours. They were shown their due places that were already assigned to them.⁹

After Darbar was over, the Nizam received them in his private apartment and they were served coffee with the honour of the fan, a privilege enjoyed by the most distinguished persons of the realm. The interview lasted for nearly an hour and after sundry discussions, the mission was dismissed with proper decorum. In the evening, both the Nizam and

Imam Sahib sent them dinner. The next day, presents were sent to the Nizam's tent. He expressed his pleasure on having received the presents and granting a private interview told them that he would send them to the Emperor at Delhi, while keeping some for himself. Mr. Eyre, as the chief of this embassy has recorded in his diary as follows:

“March 30th – About 8 this morning the Nawab's officer came to us with a guard of horse and foot and two elephants with drums and colours, and told us the Nabob was glad to hear of our arrival in camp, and had ordered him to conduct us to him. After the usual compliments, we presented him as by the list of presents. After his taking betel, we proceeded with him and were carried to the public Durbar, where the Nabob was sitting attended by his Omrahs, Rajahs, and other great men; and, making our obeisance in front at a considerable distance, we were shown a place on the carpets and to sit down there. About an hour after, when the Nabob rose from the durbar, he sent for us into private apartments, where upon his speaking our welcome we paid the Governor's respect to him; and he bade us sit down and then honoured us with a great deal of discourse on indifferent matters. Coffee was also served to us with the honour of the fans. This being the first audience, nothing was said of the presents and in something more than an hour he gave us betel and we withdrew and returned to our tents, where the Nabob and Imam Saheb each sent us a dinner. In the afternoon received a list from Imam Saheb of what goods he had assigned for the presents to the Nizam, which we got unpacked and sorted that night and sent early next morning to the Nabob.”¹⁰

“31st – The goods being sent and opened in the Nabob's tents, went to wait on him at the durbar, and that business being over, the Nabob sent for us to a private tent where the goods lay opened and we were desired to sit. The Nabob observed them very closely and took many of the parcels in hand and said they were very good, and of the painted looking glass and some others that he would keep some himself and send also some of them to the Mughal (Emperor) and would tell him that he had them of the government of Chennapatnam. Coffee was served and after an hour's discourse we retired.”¹¹

Imam Sahib, while sending the presents to the Nizam had omitted to send him the President's letter where confirmation of concessions granted by previous rulers was requested. On being pressed, Imam Sahib tried to evade the matter. Seeing his reluctance and smelling some foul play, the English decided to present the letter themselves. On 7th April 1743, Eyre as the head of the mission presented the President's letter to Nizam-ul-Mulk in an open Darbaar.

Nizam deputed Imam Sahib to enquire into the various grants made by Saiyyad Mohammed Khan to English. He visited English camp and questioned them closely regarding the village grants and the effect of taxes on the company's goods. The mission was instructed to avoid going into details. Their answers were bound to be vague. Imam Sahib asked them to write to the President for particulars. It was more than a month and English were not able to make any headway with Nizam's court, except gifting them away costly presents. Many amongst the English Camp fell sick. The depleting finances were casting a gloom upon them. Bereft of any hope, the English urged Imam Sahib to procure permission for their departure from the Nizam's Court.

On 17th April 1743, the permission to leave Trichinapoly was delivered. Before their departure, Nizam asked them to send some guns, mortars and shells with a gunner. About their request for granting privileges, Imam Sahib informed them that sanads granting the same would be sent later. The English guests found the proposal quite agreeable, especially in view of their totally depleted finances and morale. Nizam-ul-Mulk sent a horse and 'sarpich' by way of presents to the English Governor at Fort St. George and the mission arrived at Madras on the 1st May 1743.¹²

Mr. Eyre remained in Nizam's camp for seventeen days before returning to Madras. They regarded themselves as under the special protection of Nizam and of his deputy, the Nawab of Carnatic. From this time onwards, the connection between the rightful Nawab of Carnatic, Anwar-ud-Din and the English became more intimate, especially when, French were to support a rival Nawab in a future power struggle.

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A French Tango

In 1744 CE, Nicholas Morse succeeded Benyon as the President of the English Company. As a gesture of friendship and amity, suitable robe of honour and presents were sent to the new appointee by Nizam-ul-Mulk. The promised sanad by Imam Sahib was nowhere in sight. The new Governor Morse decided to appeal directly to the Nizam-ul-Mulk. He wrote a lengthy letter and it would be appropriate to reproduce it in full.

“Your Excellency’s appearance in these parts the English had looked upon as the most favourable circumstance that would possibly happen to them; That thereby they might have the great honour of paying their respects to you, and that you might be informed of the assistance they have of late years given to on many occasions to the subject of His Majesty’s when the commotions in the country rendered their lives as well as fortunes very unsafe without the walls of Chennapatnam.

They persuaded themselves that these services would be acceptable to your Excellency and that they would entitle them to your favour and regard. This they had the great pleasure to find by the reception and kind treatment the gentlemen met with when they had the honour of being in your presence at Trichinapoly. By the blessings of God, the affairs of the province are now settled and your Excellency, as I am informed of your departure from us, before which I beg leave to hope your Excellency will grant us some mark of your favour as shall be agreeable to your great wisdom and generosity. This will show to the world of your kind acceptance of our services to the Circar, and is what I have waited for the most earnest desire and which I should not have doubted to have been honoured with before now, had the English been so fortunate as to have an advocate to put your Excellency in mind of us when matters of greater consequence would have admitted. Since I have failed in that point, I humbly presume to ask it myself of your Excellency, whose goodness now we rely on without any intercessor. This will be an addition to my happiness, as it will give an opportunity of making this particular address to so great a personage as your Excellency, of whom I beg favourable

ear to what I am now about to represent; and that the English Company provide goods in several parts of this country which is well known to be a great advantage to the Circar, as well as the inhabitants and that these are brought at different times at Chennapatnam and other places. The Jamadars of this country frequently stop them and make unreasonable demands from us on this account. Though we have His Majesty's Royal Firman for passing our goods custom free to which a great regard is always paid in Bengal. Yet the Foujdars in this province have not shown the same but have always acted in opposition to the Royal Order. I, therefore humbly entreat your Excellency, would be so gracious to grant a "dustuck", that by virtue thereof the English Company goods may be always freed from paying any custom. This will strengthen and support us in asserting our right to the enjoyments of what His Majesty has so graciously favoured us with; and I beg your Excellency would be pleased to send down your perwanah to the Governor of this Province to the following effect".

"That in consideration of the Royal Firman and the service done to the Circar by the Governor of Chennapatnam, I have freed the English Company from paying any customs on their goods which they purchase in several parts of the country, and carry it to Chennapatnam and other settlements."¹³

Morse had fervently appealed and also sent a draft for approval. Even this appeal had no effect and English were quite disillusioned about Imam Sahib's friendship towards them. Not to give in so easily, English sought the help of Imam Sahib's sister who was staying at Madras. She was persuaded to prevail upon her brother and she got the formal sanction from Nizam-ul-Mulk confirming the grant of the villages. The sanad was silent about granting the power of coining money to the East India Company. The English nevertheless continued to mint Arcot Rupees. In 1744 CE, the Nizam-ul-Mulk returned to the Deccan from Carnatic.

In the meanwhile, the war broke-out between the French and English Companies on the Coromandal coast. In 1746 CE, the French captured the Madras. Anwar-ud-Din Khan, the Nawab of Arcot and Nizam-

ul-Mulk's appointee wanted to assist English but the French arms under Dupleix leadership prevailed. Nizam-ul-Mulk, due to his pre-occupation with Marathas could not once again proceed to Carnatic to restore order there. In 1747 CE, he appointed his son Nasir Jung as the Nawab of Kondanur, Cuddapah and Arcot, empowering him to collect the arrears of tribute from Mysore.

Nasir Jung arrived in the Carnatic. Dupleix sent him a letter of congratulations and a Nazarana of 70 mohurs



Nasir Jung arrived in the Carnatic. Dupleix sent him a letter of congratulations and a Nazarana of 70 mohurs. The English requested the new Nawab to help them for restoring Madras. A word was sent that he would come to their succour soon. The court intrigue was pressed into service and Nasir-ud-Din was convinced that the country was in the grip of famine caused due to internecine Anglo-French wars. He therefore could

not go to help the English. On the other hand, the Dupleix gift was reciprocated with an equally formidable gift set with an emerald plume having a diamond between two rubies and a pendant consisting of three pearls. Imam Sahib also sent to Dupleix a horse and four jewels. The English, endowed with unfathomable perseverance did not despair. On 6th March 1747, Commodore Griffin wrote a pathetic letter to Nizam-ul-Mulk detailing about the sufferings of the English at the hands of the French and imploring him to restore Madras to the English. The letter read:

“I shall not enter into a particular detail of all the robberies, cruelties and depredations committed on shore upon the King, my Master's subjects by that insolent perfidious nation the French; connived at and abetted by those your Excellency (the Nabob of Arcot) whose duty it was to have preserved the peace of your country instead of selling the interest of a nation with whom you have had the strictest friendship time out of mind; a nation that has been the means of not only enriching this part of the country but the whole dominions of the Grand Mughal; and that to a people who are remarkable all over the world for encouraging upon and giving disturbances and disquiet to all near them; A people who are strangers in your country in comparison to those

who have been dropped by them of that most important fortress and factory Madras and now they are possessed of it, have neither money nor credit to carry on the trade. And now excellent Sir, we have laid this before you for your information and consideration and must entreat you in the name of the King of Great Britain, my Royal Master, to call the Nabob to an account for these past transactions and interpose your power to restore as near as possible in its original state what has been unjustly taken from us.”¹⁴

The letter had a desired effect. Nizam-ul-Mulk sent a mandate to Anwar-ud-Din ordering him to desist from helping the French and help the English in recovering Madras. It read:

“The English nation from ancient times are very obedient and serviceable to us, besides which they always proved to be a set of true people and it is very hard that they met with these troubles, misfortunes and destruction. I do, therefore, write you to protect, and assist them in all respects, and use your best endeavours in such a manner that the French may be severely chastised and rooted off, that his Majesty’s seaport towns may be recovered and that the English nation may be restored, to their right, establish themselves to their former places as before and carry on their trade and commerce for the flourishing of the place.”¹⁵

The English did not forget to reach out to Nasir Jung, the ambivalent prince. Mutyala, a local emissary was sent to his court. Nasir Jung showed his willingness to assist the English in retrieving Madras for a consideration of Rs.3 lakhs of rupees. Later on, due to the influence of a French faction in his court, he raised the sum to Rs.10 lakhs. Nasir Jung demanded payment upfront in cash. The British declined to take the costly assistance. After a great deal of haggling, it was agreed that Nasir Jung would supply one thousand horses to English on receipt of a sum of Rs.1 lakh. Firmans were also sent to Anwar-ud-Din and to the polygars in the Carnatic asking them not to help the French.

The intrigues of the Pro-French faction at Nasir Jung’s camp scuttled the Mutyala’s plan. He was made to spend Rs. 3 lakhs to propitiate the nobles around Nasir Jung

He was made to spend 3 lakh rupees to propitiate the nobles around Nasir Jung



but had to leave Arcot with only 55 Mughal, 50 Maratha troopers and 300 peons. 5 dresses of honour and 2 horses were also given for British as gifts. On 9th March, 1747, Mutyala reached Fort St David after narrowly escaping from being waylaid by the French. In Madras, a cold reception awaited him at the hands of Flayers, the Governor, who was angry with him for having spent so much and got so little in return.

The French, on the advice of Imam Sahib sent to Nasir Jung and Nizam-ul-Mulk two powerful telescopes and a book on physiology and anatomy as presents. While thanking the French for the beautiful gifts, Nasir Jung wrote that the fact he had not treated Mutyala with favour was a proof of his affection for the French. In the meantime, Imam Sahib tried to persuade Nizam-ul-Mulk to write a letter to the Emperor at Delhi justifying the French action in capturing Madras. But, the Nizam being a shrewd politician and seasoned diplomat, refused to be persuaded so easily.¹⁶

In March 1747, soon after Mutyala's departure, Nasir Jung left for Aurangabad having heard the news of Nizam-ul-Mulk's illness. In June 1748, Nizam-ul-Mulk died at Aurangabad. He had always suspected these foreign settlers and regarded them as out to take full advantage of the internal dissensions amongst the Indian princes. His policy to deny them any relative advantage by keeping himself aloof from their quarrels was a part of his diplomatic skills. The courtiers of both the nations, French and English were kept at an arm's length, guessing as to whom he favoured most. This was a part of his deliberate policy.

What Nizam-ul-Mulk avoided, his descendants could not avoid. No sooner his restraining influence disappeared, than the whole of Carnatic and later on the Deccan became a cockpit of Anglo-French struggle for power.¹⁷

1.3 THE RISE OF FRENCH

The Anglo-French rivalry in India came to an end by the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. The treaty, at best was a temporary truce between the two rival companies. The battle animosity, existing between the two required only a spark to burst into a conflagration and this spark was provided by the death of Nizam-ul-Mulk in 1748 CE. His departure, released all the latent disruptive forces in the Deccan and the Carnatic

that were hitherto kept in abeyance by the powerful personality of the first Nizam. His death plunged the Deccan peninsula in civil war and turmoil. In the Carnatic, the Hindu rulers of Mysore and Tanjore aspired to become independent. The dreams and ambitions of French Governor Dupleix to benefit his company and his nation started taking wings through active intervention in the growing chaos created by the jealousies amongst the princes in the Carnatic.

Asaf Jah had left behind six sons and one daughter.¹⁸ The eldest son, Ghazi ud Din was in high office in Delhi where Ahmed Shah had just succeeded the Mughal throne after Muhammad Shah's death. His mother Udham Bai and the harem head Javid Khan were busy in wasting millions on coronation festivities. The holy Sunni Savant, Shah Walliullah had become their patron saint. So, the dazzling court at Delhi kept Ghazi ud Din quite busy and therefore, he had no wish to come to Hyderabad, for now.

The dazzling court at Delhi kept Ghazi-ud-Din quite busy. So he had no wish to come to Hyderabad, for now...



The next son was Nasir Jung. He at once placed himself on the masnud, seized the treasury and proclaimed himself the Nizam. The other sons were Salabut Jung, Asad Jung, Basalut Jung and Nizam Ali. All had dreams to become Nizam, some day. Then, there was Muzaffar Jung, a dark horse. He was Nizam's daughter's son and his favourite and was generally supposed to have been designated as the heir. Nizam had made new friends with English merchants of Madras during his Carnatic campaign and appointed Anwar ud Din its Nawab before returning to Hyderabad. In the past, Carnatic Nawabs had considered themselves independent but were not recognized by Asaf Jah. His successor Nasir Jung followed the same policy.

Chand Saheb nourished an ambition to rule Carnatic, because his family had ruled Carnatic for many years. He was well connected and had a great reputation for bravery and military talents. His family lived in Pondicherry, which was under French with Dupleix as its able Governor. The frequent communication with Chand Saheb's family gave innovative ideas to ambitious Governor. He was sharp enough to grasp the idea of assisting native Princes in their quarrels with each other and in return, get power and influence for himself and his

country. He was ably assisted by his better half, Madame Dupleix, who was well versed in the native languages.

On 23rd June 1749, Nasir Jung received a Firman from the Mughal Emperor conferring upon him the Subedari of the Deccan and Carnatic and also the title of Nizam-ud-Doulah.¹⁹ The Firman was received with great ceremony and a copy was sent to Dupleix for his information. The English Governor Flayer promptly sent a congratulatory message to Nasir Jung. Not to be left behind, Dupleix, on the advice of Imam Saheb, the French partisan in Asaf Jahi's court also sent his congratulatory letter with the customary Nazarana.



Governor Dupleix

Dupleix, the innovative French Governor made use of Chand Saheb and roped in that dark horse, Muzaffar Jung, who was nursing grudge against Nasir Jung for grabbing Nizam's throne in Hyderabad. Battle lines were clearly drawn by now. Chand Saheb and Muzaffar Jung wanted Carnatic and Hyderabad throne which were presently occupied by Anwar ud Din and Nasir Jung respectively. The former team was supported by Dupleix. Therefore, the English support to the Nizam team was strategic, timely and providential. As skirmishes commenced, initial victories belonged to the French. Chand Saheb and Muzaffar Ali's men were joined by a small yet sharp and disciplined force sent by Dupleix consisting of four hundred Europeans and two thousand sepoys.

On 3rd August 1749, in a battle fought near Amboor, Anwar-ud-Din lost his life against the combined onslaught of Chand Saheb, Muzaffar

Ali and French troops. The French forces as recorded by Dupleix, “were not on a footing of auxiliaries. They acted as principles; former insults authorized it and during the whole course of the war, we have never looked ourselves in any other light.”²⁰ The battle gave a concrete shape to the hitherto fleeting vision in the mind of Dupleix. Hitherto, he could think of the possibilities of increasing the French influence by cooperating with the Indian Princes. But, now the battle of Amboor fully revealed to him the extent to which decay and rot had spread in the body politic of India and the possibility of the French becoming supreme. In September 1749, Chand Sahib was received with great pomp by Dupleix in Pondicherry.²¹ Muzaffar Jung, arriving later witnessed the same ceremonial reception. It was time to payback and the competitive instinct between Chand Saheb and Muzaffar Jung conferred several villages to French in the vicinity of Fort St. David in Madras. “They also obtained the seaport of Masulipatnam and Divi Island yielding annual revenue of Rs.8 lakhs.”²² The English at Madras viewed these grants with great misgivings. The French, if they so wished could cut-off all communications to Fort St. David, with their new strategic possessions.

Nasir Jung got the information about Amboor debacle in Aurangabad. His authority was considerably dented. Stung by the reverses, he collected a huge army and sent orders to his tributaries chief to join in the line of march. Altogether, the army consisted of three lakh fighting men of whom, one half were cavalry along with eight hundred guns and thirteen hundred elephants. This enormous force was the largest which had ever entered Carnatic. He arrived in Carnatic in the middle of March 1750, and encamped at Valudavar village, some 35 miles from Pondicherry. Supported by the army of Nawab Muhammad Ali and British forces under the command of Lawrence, the Mughal forces occupied Ginjee Fort on 18th March 1750.²³

But French contingent had some glitches. Officers had not received their due share in previous plunder. The demoralized lot resigned from their posts. French had to withdraw.²⁴ Chand Saheb followed them. Muzaffar Jung, though left alone, refused to withdraw. His information from Nasir Jung was that of reconciliation and forgiveness. He accepted the purported offer. Nasir Jung was delighted and is said to have sworn of

Koran that he would neither make his nephew a prisoner nor deprive him of the governments he enjoyed during his grandfather's time.²⁵ Accordingly, Muzaffar Jung left his camp to meet his uncle Nasir Jung. No sooner had he arrived near his uncle's tent, he was seized, confined and chained. His camp was attacked. The followers dispersed and the rest were put to sword. His friends and allies retreated. His very life was in danger. Destiny was playing a strange game. But the game had just begun. The sudden success of Nasir Jung, based on breach of faith created discontentment amongst Nawabs of Cuddapah, Kurnool and Savanur. These Nawabs had been instrumental in persuading Muzaffar Jung to surrender who was now under seize and staring at death. Dupleix got in secret touch, with discontented Nawabs, opened correspondence and hatched an innovative plan. He sent ambassadors to Nasir Jung's camp ostensibly to obtain lenient terms for Muzaffar Jung and Chand Saheb, but in reality, to gain time to perfect conspiracy with dissatisfied Nawabs.²⁶

Due to continued stalemate in the negotiations, the country and the people suffered a lot. The country was devastated by the depredations of the troops. Prices of food grains and other articles soared high and even drinking water became scarce.



for eight days. They demanded that the dominions of Muzaffar Jung should be restored to him and Chand Saheb be made the Nawab of Carnatic. Nasir Jung insisted that Chand Saheb must be surrendered to him. The negotiations broke-down but the French envoys were able to sow the seeds of dissatisfaction in the Mughal camp. The nobles of Cuddapah, Kurnool and Savanur were dissatisfied with Nasir Jung because he was demanding tributes from them. They were silently won over by the French envoys. The latter were also able to gain a clear insight into the minds of other Mughal nobles and their anxiety to return home.

On 21st April, 1750, the English commander Lawrence met Nasir Jung and requested him to sanction the grant of Poonamalle (Poonamalle is a sea-abutting territory protected by a lagoon located in the present day Madras) to the English.²⁷ The latter evaded the issue and asked

Lawrence to accompany him to Arcot, where he would think over the matter carefully. Lawrence, did not like the idea of Mughals moving to Arcot due to strategic reasons. Nasir Jung neither listened to Lawrence's advice nor granted Poonamalle. On 22nd April, Lawrence left the Mughal camp for Fort St. David. Shortly afterwards, Nasir Jung moved to Arcot. On 3rd May, 1750, a Darbar was held at Arcot.²⁸ The Cuddapah Nawab pleaded with him for the release of Muzaffar Jung. Nasir Jung, assured the Nawab but did not release Muzaffar Jung due to fear that his nephew would rebel against him. The French attempted twice to bring about the escape of Muzaffar Jung with the connivance of the guards, but failed. The security around his confinement was made more stringent. The captive, taking it as a personal insult tried to commit suicide, but was prevented from doing so by the prison guards.

On hearing about this, Nasir Jung sent a message to his nephew that he would be released soon and his Jagirs would be restored to him. Nasir Jung was anxious to return to the Deccan soon, but at the same time, he was eager to collect his arrears of tribute from Carnatic. A large number of Mughal troops were sent away to Deccan in view of disease and pestilence. Those who still remained were also keen to depart to their homes as the rainy season was setting in. Countless bullocks, horses and other animals died in the camp daily and one of the vakils in the Nasir Jung camp wrote, "The place stinks so that none can lie down here." Disgusted with the prolonged and indefinite stay, the Carnatic group of horsemen secretly began to leave the camp daily.

Nasir Jung was oblivious of the ground realities in his camp. He kept himself busy with hunting and other amusements. Most of his time was spent in drunken bouts in the company of Nawabs of Cuddapah, Kurnool and Savanur.²⁹ On hearing about this, Dupleix remarked, "They are behaving like children or drunkards instead of strong and prudent rulers". Taking advantage of Nasir Jung's lethargy, Dupleix instructed his general Monsieur Bussy to capture the fortress of Ginjee. A small force of two hundred fifty Europeans and forty-two hundred sepoys commanded by M. Bussy stormed the Fort at night. Rather than seizing it, the

Most of his time was spent in drunken bouts in the company of Nawabs of Cuddapah, Kurnool and Savanur



sharp French pierced it, and were in possession of this historical Fort in no time, without inflicting a loss of more than two or three men.³⁰ On 11th September, 1750, the impregnable fortress was captured. Dupleix wrote, "As to the spot from which the rock was scaled undoubtedly, we were dealing with men willing to allow things to occur because the number of those who entered were insufficient to lose his head."³¹

Nasir Jung rose from the slumber of his pathetic state and recalled some of the troops that were on the way to Deccan. After their joining him, he proceeded towards Ginjee and reached the Cheyyur river in the middle of October 1750. The river Cheyyur was in floods and cattle were dying in great numbers for lack of fodder. The army could march only four miles a day with the greatest difficulty; Nasir Jung himself was forced to march in the rear of the army and not in the front. The prices of food stuffs rose steeply and the people were put to great hardships.³² Seeing the pitiable condition of the army, the Mughal sardars lost heart and advised the Nizam to make peace. Even, the Diwan Shah Nawaz Khan advised to Nizam to defer fighting, till a favourable opportunity occurred. In the last week of October, Nasir Jung reached within 16 miles of Ginjee and halted there. On accounts of heavy rains, the communications of the Mughal camp with the neighbouring villages were cut-off. Severe sickness began to spread in the camp. As situation deteriorated even further, Nasir Jung grew anxious and by December 1750, opened negotiations with Dupleix.

Though Dupleix was willing to come to some settlement with Nasir Jung, he also was playing a double game with the disgruntled Nawabs of Cuddapah, Kurnool and Savanur. The trio of Nawabs, angry with Nasir Jung for his demanding tributes and arrears fell easily in the conspiratorial loop of Dupleix. The Nawabs, on hearing that an amicable settlement was being arrived at between Nasir Jung and Dupleix became alarmed about their own safety. They wanted to prevent the amicable settlement at any cost. On the night of 3rd December 1750, they sent word to French commander to attack the Mughal camp.

On 4th December, in the early hours of the dawn, Bussy led an attack against the Mughal camp with 800 Europeans, 3,000 sepoy and 10 field pieces. The Mughal army was spread over a vast stretch of 18 miles with 60,000 foot, 45,000 horses, 700 elephants and 300 pieces

of cannon.³³ The guide sent by conspiratorial Nawabs conducted the French troops directly to the Nasir Jung's camp. Artillery exchanges woke-up the camp and Nasir Jung could hardly believe that French had attacked his camp, because on the previous day only, he had ratified the treaty with the French.

Soon, he became convinced of the truth and declared French action as, "The mad attempt of a parcel of Europeans." He ordered the head of Muzaffar Jung to be cut-off. Executioners went to the tent of Muzaffar Jung where the latter pretended to be reading the Quran. The executioners were bribed to delay the execution. News of French advances was arriving thick and fast to Nasir Jung. He enquired about the disposition of various Nawabs. The inactivity of the trio of Nawabs and the general confusion in the Mughal camp due to heavy inundation was brought to his notice. In the early hours of the dawn, Nasir Jung sighted the Nawabs with their troops standing aloof from the scene of battle. Nasir Jung drove towards them and saluted them. The Nawabs, on seeing the Nizam pretended not to be aware of his presence. Nasir Jung saluted them a second time appealing them to go and fight the common enemy as behooves brothers to the same faith.

Nawab of Cuddapah replied that he was not aware of any enemy. On hearing this, Nasir Jung ordered his attendants to fire on the Nawab troops. In the ensuing melee, Nawab of Kurnool discharged his musket at Nasir Jung. The bullet went straight and pierced through his heart. The Nizam drooped dead. The body guards of Nasir Jung, before they could recover from the shock of this dastardly action were cut down, while a few contrived to escape.

The severed head of Nasir Jung was carried to the camp of Muzaffar Jung. The latter ordered his uncle's head to be placed on a pike so that it could be seen by the entire Mughal army. By 9 O'clock on the morning of the 4th December 1750, all fighting ceased and Muzaffar Jung occupied the State tent as the new Nizam.³⁴ He was ready to receive homage from the Mughal nobles. The French army commanders were the first to compliment him on his success. The conspiratorial trio of Nawabs tried to surround Muzaffar Jung and seize the

Muzaffar ordered Nasir Jung's head to be placed on a pike so that it could be seen by the entire Mughal army



treasury of the late Nizam but they were effectively prevented from doing so by the French commander. The trio demanded exorbitant sums from Muzaffar Jung for their assistance. The latter put them off by saying that he would settle the matter after going to Pondicherry. Thereupon, the Nawabs withdrew and encamped at about 4 miles distance from the French camp. But behind the making and unmaking of these Nizams, a formidable foreign shadow was clearly discernible. It had a certain French flavour to start with, at least in 1750 CE.

1.4 THE SHORT-LIVED NON-NIZAMS

On 26th December 1750, Muzaffar Jung arrived in Pondicherry amidst great pomp and revelries.³⁵ He was received at the gate by Chand Saheb and Dupleix. Thereafter, Dupleix triumphantly entered the town seated in the same palanquin as Muzaffar Jung. As everyone knew, Dupleix was the master of all ceremonies. Chand Saheb after receiving the news of death of Nasir Jung was so much overwhelmed with joy that he ran through the streets of Pondicherry. He embraced and almost stifled Dupleix in his embrace.

In the midst of revelries, Muzaffar Jung unburdened his soul to Dupleix. He feared the trio of Nawabs who had proved traitors to his uncle. The trio soon arrived the very next day and put up their demands before Dupleix. It included exemption from paying the arrears of tribute to the Nizam due from them for the last three years and addition to their territories out of areas belonging to late Nawab Nasir Jung. Dupleix firmly told them that their demands are exorbitant and it was impossible for Muzaffar Jung to comply with them. Instead, he suggested the fifty-fifty division of the Nasir Jung's treasury between Nawabs and Muzaffar Jung. The trio cringed. Dupleix stood firm. Seeing no alternative, Nawabs agreed with the proposal and swore on

**He was
grateful to
the Almighty
and Dupleix
in equal
measures**



Quran to observe loyalty to the new subedar, Muzaffar Jung.

Destiny had brought Muzaffar Jung, the grand son and favourite of old Nizam from prison to the throne. He was grateful to the Almighty and Dupleix in equal measures. He appeared everywhere in public with

him and showered every honour and respect. The treasury of Nasir Jung was supposed to contain 2 crore rupees, while his jewelry was estimated at Rs.50 lakhs. On the 31st December 1750, a grand darbar was held in Pondicherry where Muzaffar Jung was installed as Subedar of Deccan. Dupleix dressed in the native costume was first to render his homage.³⁶ There was a chair placed next to Subedar's musnad where he declared Dupleix to be the Nawab of all the country south of river Krishna down to Cape Camorin, including Mysore and the whole of Carnatic. Besides, granting a jagir yielding one lakh rupees per year, he was made Mansabdar of seven thousand horses with the right to bear the insignia of fish - the royal symbol of Asaf Jahi seal. The territories of Masulipatnam, Divi and Yanam were also granted. The revenue of these grants was estimated at Rs.3.6 lakhs.³⁷ Nizam further promised to be guided in all things by his advice. As the new Nizam exhausted all possible favours he could bestow upon Dupleix, the new master was too wise to accept all these favours.

Dupleix presented Chand Saheb to Nizam and asked him to be appointed as Nawab of Carnatic. This was done. Dupleix had become the King maker of Deccan and Carnatic, at once. The Pondicherry currency was made the legal tender throughout the Carnatic country and Dupleix was empowered to collect its revenues. Finally, the title of Zafar Jung was conferred on Dupleix. Madame Dupleix, who was always around was given the title of Jahan-ara-Begum. Muzaffar Jung, technically speaking was only the Subedar of Deccan and he had no right to give away the territories without the permission of his liege lord, the Mughal Emperor. But, the Emperor at that time was only a figure head and his firmans were respected by the people, only when it suited their purpose.

After prolonged revelry and celebrations, Muzaffar Jung expressed his intention of returning to Hyderabad and asked for a trusted force as his body guard.³⁸ Dupleix gladly did it, just to keep his link with the Deccan alive. Accordingly, M. Bussy was appointed with a force of three hundred Europeans, two thousand sepoys and ten field pieces to accompany Nizam as his personal guard. Muzaffar Jung, accompanied by his French escort and followed by his army commenced his march to Hyderabad. The French shield around subedar at Deccan would

protect their strategic interests. Dupleix suddenly became the virtual master of the whole of south India.

On the 7th January 1751, Muzaffar Jung left Pondicherry for the Deccan. Monsieur Bussy was commanding the French detachment and Kerjean, the nephew of Dupleix and Vinceus, his stepson was accompanying as second and third commandants.³⁹ The carefully chosen team was to secure not only the military needs of Nizam, but had to fulfil the political designs of Dupleix.

The trio of Nawabs, in spite of receiving rewards remained disgruntled. They had conspired and assassinated Nasir Jung but were jealous of unusual French influence upon the new Nizam. These ingredients were enough for a fresh conspiracy. Dupleix, having come to know about their intrigues had advised Muzaffar Jung to placate them by fair words, till suitable opportunity should occur to crush them. The caravan of Muzaffar Jung's army reached the village Rayachoti near the Lakkireddypalli pass, a village 25 miles south of Cuddapah. Here, some of the Mughal officers, set fire to the neighbouring villages. The Nawab of Cuddapah who was on the lookout for such an opportunity, seized the moment and asked his followers to take revenge on Nizam's men.

On 3rd February 1751, a disturbance was organized in that part of convoy where Mughal ladies were quartered. It was attacked by some of the Cuddapah ryots. Nawab supported his ryots while Muzaffar Jung came up and reproached him for the disturbance.⁴⁰ It was a great affront and Muzaffar Jung wanted to attack, but Bussy pacified him and sent an envoy to negotiate. The envoy returned with a provocative response saying that Nawabs waited for him, sword in his hand. Muzaffar Jung, stung to the quick at once marched in spite of Bussy's remonstrances, leaving the French behind.

The French soon joined Muzaffar Jung with their artillery and succeeded in putting the opponents to flight. In the ensuing struggle, the Nawab of Savanur was killed, while the Nawab of Kurnool was severely wounded. Finding that Nawab of Cuddapah was trying to escape from the battlefield, Muzaffar Jung pursued him, leaving his men behind. Perceiving this, Kurnool Nawab, closed in with his men and charged against the elephant of Muzaffar Jung. The latter, greatly

enraged lifted his sword to strike him down. Just at the moment, Kurnool Nawab struck Muzaffar Jung on his head with his javelin, while he himself was cut down by the sword of Muzaffar Jung almost at the same time. The dead body of the latter was conveyed in a sitting posture into the camp in such a manner that it gave the impression as if the man was alive. His reign had lasted just about six weeks.⁴¹ Most of the time was spent in revelry in Pondicherry where he was appointed as Nizam. He was not destined to see his capital ever.

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The sudden and unexpected death of Muzaffar Jung created great panic and confusion among the Mughals who were yet to recover from the shock of Nasir Jung's death. The pay of the army was greatly in arrears and the nobles feared that the army may revolt any time. The French party, too became anxious about their future chances of having a say in the affairs of the Deccan. Bussy, the courageous and innovative French commander rose to the occasion. He assembled all the nobles and generals in the camp and declared that Salabat Jung, the son of Nizam-ul-Mulk be accepted as the subedar of Deccan. Salabat Jung was following his brother in a sort of honorary confinement. All those who mattered concurred. The other chiefs presented their nazars. The army march was resumed with the new ruler, Salabat Jung. He was chosen by the French, without any reference to the Mughal Emperor at Delhi.

This change of Nizams made French even stronger. Their security ring enveloped Nizam. He too felt reassured against any possible disturbance; especially from his elder brother Ghazi-ud-Din's intention to claim Subedari of Deccan. Salabat Jung's first act was to confirm all concessions and privileges granted by his brother to the French. In addition, he gave them Kondavid, Nizampatnam, Narsapur and some villages around Masulipatnam. The French were allowed to rebuild their fort at Yanam, which was originally destroyed by the orders of Nasir Jung. That apart, a huge sum of money was spent in distributing presents to Bussy and other French officers in the camp. After grants were conferred, the march continued. At this juncture, Governor Dupleix was the most powerful man in the peninsular

India. He was the maker of Subedars and Nawabs. His fame reached as far as Delhi. The Mughal Emperor, Ahmed Shah himself sent him a sanad confirming all that had been granted by Nizam. Dupleix, the French was at the peak of his power.

Salabat Jung was very mild by disposition, and neither Bussy nor Dupleix rated him highly. In fact, Dupleix went to the extent of calling him a 'duffer'. Notwithstanding his IQ, he happened to be the eldest among the three brothers who were in the camp.⁴² That was acceptable to the nobility. Moreover, he was more pliable than his more efficient younger brother, Nizam Ali Khan. This fact appealed to French to carry out their ambitious future designs.

Dupleix was greatly elated at the dexterous manner in which Bussy procured so many benefits to the French. He wrote to Bussy, "Keep it foremost in your mind that you are the law maker in that army. Your whole object and mine should be to retain the possessions of the company and increase them wherever possible. Bussy responded with

**"All our
energies have
to be spent
extending the
glory of the
French name
& welfare of
the Company**



equal fervour. I think that moment for us to achieve great things has come. From the highest to the lowest, the whole army trusts in you alone and in the French nation. If you but make up your mind, the treasure of Golconda will be ours. It is too late for us to withdraw. All our energies have to be spent extending the glory of the French name and the welfare of the company. I am sure we will never meet a better opportunity."⁴³

The correspondence between Dupleix and Bussy show their ambitious designs and rosy vision to dominate south India. On 11th March 1751, the Salabat Jung's caravan arrived near Kurnool. A local rebellion orchestrated by the faithfuls of the slain Kurnool Nawab was put down by French troops. Smelling an opportunity, Peshwa arrived with an army of 20,000 and camped in the vicinity of confluence of Krishna and Tungabhadra. The Nizam's caravan was still 15 miles away down south. If a prolonged march had fatigued Nizam's troops, the Peshwa troops were not too keen either for battle but their main objective was to extract maximum ransom. In the ensuing negotiations, it was agreed that the Peshwa's should be paid 17 lakhs of rupees to secure

their neutrality in the ensuing war of succession. A sum of Rs 2 lakhs was paid upfront and the balance was guaranteed by the bankers.⁴⁴ The Peshwas further agreed to give up their claim to Khandesh and to the territory that lay between Aurangabad and Burhanpur for consideration of a further sum of 3 lakhs of rupees. After settling with Marathas, the army moved and reached Hyderabad on 12th April. Finally, they made a triumphal entry into Aurangabad on 29th June.

The mild and pliable Salabat Jung

On the 29th June 1751, Salabat Jung reached Aurangabad.⁴⁵ He pleaded with Bussy to remain in the capital along with his French contingent. The timorous ruler showered liberal presents upon Bussy, apart from gifting him a sum of 25 lakh rupees. A Firman was issued assuring payment of rupees one lakh per month to the French contingent. Deferring to those arrangements, Dupleix wrote to French East India Company, "You will find in them an event which I had not anticipated and which is altogether the work of Mons De-Bussy. It is a question of securing the Arcot government for the nation for the power of regulating the annual payment to the Royal treasury. This affair is of highest importance to the nation, deserves the closest attention. For, it will dispense with the need of sending funds to India for your investment."

The predominant position enjoyed by French in the Deccan was bound to fire Dupleix's ambitions. No wonder, Malleson wrote, "What a vista it did not hold out to a patriotic ambition? What dreams of Europe, what visions of Imperial dominion? Possessing the Carnatic by this policy, gaining the Deccan, the minarets of Jami Masjid and the jeweled ornaments of the peacock throne seemed near enough to excite the fancy and stimulate the irresistible action."⁴⁶ Dupleix was not satisfied by merely a grant of Firman from Salabat Jung. Bussy was asked to obtain the confirmation from the Mughal Emperor. It was duly obtained on the 13th September 1751.

The understanding reached between Marathas and Salabat Jung during March 1751 on the banks of Krishna was not meant to be taken seriously by any of the sides. In the meantime, the news came that Ghaziuddin, the eldest son of Nizam-ul-Mulk, along with Maratha help was approaching Deccan to claim his father's masnud. Bussy, the

master strategist advised Salabat Jung to march against Poona, the seat of Maratha power. On 15th November, the Nizam's army left Aurangabad, crossed the Godavari and continued their march towards the north ravaging the Maratha country on the way. The Peshwas commenced their march towards south with an army of 40,000 cavalry, ravaging their own villages on the way, so that the Mughal might not get any provision.

In the meantime, Bussy's disciplined contingent attacked them at night on moon eclipse day when Hindus were engaged in worship. Marathas were humbled and Bussy gained immense booty apart from enhanced reputation. This victory was a watershed in Deccan warfare where a small but disciplined force succeeded in annihilating an army ten times its strength. In spite of Nizam's forces enjoying some initial successes, after two months of desultory fighting, Bussy was convinced that it was difficult to defeat the Peshwa in a decisive battle. Negotiations ensued and hostilities were brought to an end by the Agreement of Singwa on the 6th January, 1752.⁴⁷

English merchants were at Madras and their influence appeared to be waning, but not yet. Robert Clive, a young English Lieutenant had just joined. He led a strong force into Trichinapoly. Chand Saheb supported by French under General Law seized the Fort but were forced to surrender it to the English in June 1752. The French favourite, Chand Saheb was taken prisoner and put to death by the army of the Rajah of Thanjore, an ally of the English. The English protégé Mahammed Ali was made the Nawab of Carnatic. Suddenly, Carnatic had slipped away from the grasp of French and Nizam of Hyderabad as well. Dupleix urged Bussy to come to south to his aid. Bussy was willing to go to Carnatic but Gaziuddin's imminent arrival in the vicinity of Aurangabad along with his Maratha allies put a spanner in French plans.

French prestige suffered in Carnatic, but their influence grew with Nizam. Salabat Jung was a man who had been brought up more or less in confinement. Without any soldier's training, he was raised to the throne. As he devoted his full time to pleasure, Bussy and his French force did everything to justify Nizam's trust. His force was kept in strictest discipline. They were lodged in Aurangabad Fort. No soldier was allowed to leave barracks except at a fixed time. There were no quarrels

or disturbances with town's men. As the troops policed the town, the rich displayed valuable goods without threat and fear from any side.

Before affairs in Deccan could settle, Ghazi ud Din, the eldest son of Nizam ul Mulk became keen to recover his father's kingdom. He was busy in Delhi durbar since his father's death in 1748 CE. But, Mughal Empire in Delhi was repeatedly being hammered from North west by Ahmed Shah Abdali. He was an Afghan adventurer who had accompanied Nadir Shah during 1739 CE Delhi's invasion and subsequent plunder. After Nadir Shah's assassination in 1748 CE, he crowned himself as the King of Kandhar and soon became a potent threat to India's peace. His repeated invasions debilitated the empire in Delhi. With diminishing fortunes there, Ghazi ud Din now decided to move towards Deccan, which just three years ago, he was not at all keen to lay his claim on.

On 28th September 1752, Gaziuddin arrived at Aurangabad at the lead of a formidable force of 1,50,000 men supported by Maratha allies. On hearing this, Bussy along with Salabat Jung retired to Hyderabad and then proceeded to Bidar. They sent Saiyyad Lashkar Khan to open negotiations with Gaziuddin and Maratha allies. As negotiations were on, Ghazi ud Din was invited by the widow of Nizam ul Mulk and his stepmother. She prepared a dish with her own hands and persuaded Ghazi ud Din to partake. It contained poison. Ghazi ud Din died that night. The widow had mothered Nizam Ali, her only son. The doting mother had an ardent desire to see him on the viceregal throne of his father. This sudden and unexpected development removed the necessity of any further negotiations with Bussy. This happened on 16th October 1752.

She prepared the dish with her own hands, persuaded Ghazi-ud-Din to partake. It had poison & Ghazi-ud-Din died that night



The sudden death of Gaziuddin removed the claimant to the Deccan throne but Marathas, who had accompanied Gaziuddin were left high and dry. Salabat Jung and Bussy were also returning towards Hyderabad. The Marathas started harassing the Mughal forces and completely surrounded them at Bhalki. Salabat Jung was forced to open negotiations with Marathas through Bussy. Marathas wanted to

be given the same grants which were promised by Gaziuddin. Salabat Jung agreed to these terms and the treaty of Bhalki was concluded on 22nd November, 1752. By this treaty, the Nizam ceded to the Marathas, the western half of Berar, between the river Godavari and Tapti situated in Khandesh province. Bussy deemed it wiser to cede this outlying portion than to risk a war. The Maratha's right of collecting chauth and Sardeshmukhi was also recognized. It occurred at the end of the year 1752 CE.

Bussy had brought a certain agreement between Maratha's and Salabat Jung. Now it was his turn to demand the French share. Bussy requested to grant Kondavid and territories adjacent to Masulipatnam. Salabat Jung willingly agreed and granted Kondavid for life to Bussy. Afterwards, both returned to Hyderabad in January, 1753. By then, the French position, for all outward appearances was firmly established in Deccan. It was however, resented by the nobles, in whose eyes, the French were mere upstarts.⁴⁸ The future held quite an exciting possibility, amidst the galore of glorious uncertainties.

1.5 THE DECLINE OF FRENCH

Salabat Jung was as warmly attached to Bussy as ever. But his unusual power and influence ignited jealousy amongst his nobles. Diwan Saiyyad Lashkar was one of them. He was on the side of doting mother of Nizam Ali, whom they secretly wished to enthrone. The same mother had taken great pains to cook special food with her own hands to poison and ensure Ghaziuddin's death.

On the 23rd January, 1753, Bussy left Hyderabad for Masulipatnam to recoup from his ill health, leaving Monsieur Goupil in-charge of the French detachment.⁴⁹ This was Saiyyad Lashkar's opportunity. French contingent was always paid well in time till Bussy was around. But now, Lashkar told Goupil that treasury is empty and suggested to send small detachment of French soldiers to collect revenue arrears from recalcitrant poligars. Goupil, the mild man fell into the trap. French forces got scattered. Some collected money; others collected more money while many deserted their posts. All in all, people were disgusted and they demanded justice against the French.

The mild nature of the new leader coupled with financial stress upon

Salabat Jung's treasury soon had a regressive impact upon various aspects. Arrears of salaries to French troops forced the ruler to raise loans to soften their rebellion. This ignited more discontent amongst native troops who refused to undertake Carnatic expedition unless their arrears were also cleared. Even nagar beaters and camel drivers took solemn oath not to proceed till their salaries were paid. There was a common talk amongst Mughal soldiers that the French were robbing the Nizam of his family riches accumulated for the past sixty years; while the subjects of the Nizam were starving.

The court intrigues at the top made the matters even worse. The Diwan Saiyyad Lashkar Khan was getting disillusioned of French support. In fact, he was in secret correspondence with English since April 1753.⁵⁰ He opened a correspondence with Mr. Saunders, the English Governor of Madras with a view to send French back to Pondicherry. Saiyyad wrote, "Have no fear of the result; for I have arranged the mode in which to rid myself of your enemies. The plan is in action and with the assistance of providence; the result will be what you wish. I expect to be with you at the end of the rains and to arrange then everything in a satisfactory manner".

The secret letter fell in Dupleix hands. He got alarmed and wrote to Bussy, even begging him at the risk of his health to return to Hyderabad. The faithful commander left Masulipatnam on 25th June and arrived in Hyderabad on the 15th July 1753. On his arrival, he found that the French commandant Goupil was busy elsewhere collecting the revenues.⁵¹ Seeing the general confusion and disorder, he raised money from local bankers and chipping from his own private chest, cleared the pay arrears of the troops. Bussy, then called upon Goupil to submit accounts of the money, so far collected by the French troops. He found that over collection, and gratuitous extortion from Nawabs and polygars had become the norm. Dupleix was duly informed about the ground reality. He admonished the irksome procedure of his officers as, "extremely harmful to the transactions of the company as also to the glory of the king and the nation."

Bussy, unlike Goupil was a strategic thinker. The image of French soldiers had taken a beating while the court intrigues against them

had only multiplied. The assured payment of their salaries on regular basis was the crux of the matter. Bussy wrote to Salabat Jung in advance about his arrival and reached Aurangabad in November 1753. He entered the city in full battle array.⁵² After exchanging courtesies following the due protocol, Bussy demanded the conferment of northern Circars. They constituted the fertile coastal strip being watered by three important rivers of the Deccan, the Krishna, the Godavari and the Gundlakamma. Saiyyad Lashkar Khan was loath to part with these fertile regions and he sounded Bussy, whether he would not be satisfied with the territorial grants in the interior. Bussy remained adamant. Salabat Jung had to give way.

On 23rd Nov. 1753, a grand Durbar was held at Aurangabad and the treaty was signed between Salabat Jung & the French



On the 23rd November 1753, a grand Durbar was held at Aurangabad and the treaty was signed between Salabat Jung and the French. By this treaty, the four northern Circars namely Ellore, Mustafanagar (Kondapalli), Rajahmundry and Chicacole were granted to the French. The grant of Circars was personally conferred on Bussy towards the maintenance of French troops. They yielded a revenue of Rs. 24 lakhs per annum. Soon after receiving the patent for the salaries, Bussy instructed his agents to take charge of the new territories. To ensure effective control, he also despatched 150 Europeans and 2,500 sepoys to Masulipatnam.⁵³

Bussy now proposed to take the Governor's place, not as a tributary to Nizam but on behalf of French Government, and in return, to maintain the French contingent. This was a complete departure from existing arrangements between a native and European power. Hitherto, they were content with small coastal settlements, attached with a few towns and villages which were used for trading purposes only. Now, for the first time, the French were made the practical rulers of a province with a huge tribute amounting to forty lakh rupees every year. The country was divided into numerous jagirs and zamindars who considered Nizam as their overlord. Under the new arrangements, the overlordship was transferred to French and Bussy's position at Nizam's court was almost that of an independent ally.

The windfall had placed a contiguous territory of 470 miles of sea coast in Bussy's lap. The territories were also known for their economic

wealth. Masulipatnam was noted for its dyeing and printing industry; Rajahmundry abounded in thick teak forest while Chicacole was a rice producing area. The shield of Eastern Ghats made the region safe from outside attack. The Eastern Ghats abounded in thick bamboo forests, and in the days of infantry and cavalry warfare, it was difficult for any enemy to penetrate through them. A secure territory, an assured revenue to maintain French contingent in Salabat Jung's service and 470 miles of a free sea board were the triple advantage extracted by the visionary Bussy through a single treaty. His French DNA could anticipate the strategic importance of a free sea board; especially in view of their ongoing tussle with the English in Carnatic.

Bussy's windfall shocked everyone, including the Diwan. He was clamouring for a conflict between Nizam and Bussy. With this aim, he ill-advised Nizam to put his two brothers, Basalut Jung and Nizam Ali in confinement. Diwan argued that if it is not done, Bussy would place one or the other Prince on throne and extract more concessions from them. Nizam confined both the princes, but Bussy was too clever to fall in the trap. As Bussy maintained his utter neutrality in Nizam's family affairs, Saiyyad Lashkar smelling failure got disgusted and resigned. Shah Nawaz Khan, a noble man of high character and believed to be attached to the French interests, succeeded him.

These changes at the top, however did not improve the financial position of Salabat Jung. He told Bussy of his bankruptcy. The latter suggested that government posts may be auctioned and given to the highest bidder. It served two purposes. The treasury was replenished with 19 lakhs of rupees. Moreover, only those who were favourably disposed of towards French became the successful bidders. Bussy quietly succeeded in digging his teeth deeper into the Deccan flesh.

The financial hurdles remained in place, in spite of a new Diwan presiding over a new recruitment policy based on open bidding. Bussy's interference in court affairs, without any restraint became more galling. Bussy wrote to his company, "The French are the protectors, friends, arbitrators and mediators at one and the same time, I am highly pleased to note that my ceaseless toil for the

Financial hurdles remained in spite of a new Diwan presiding over a new recruitment policy based on open bidding



last four years during which the most singular events which occurred and all my deeds crowned by the most beneficial results have secured to the company some wealthy settlements and have guaranteed the throne of his father to Salabat Jung.”⁵⁴

Quite contrary to Bussy's perceptions, the new Diwan was hemmed in by financial straits. He dissuaded Nizam to undertake the southern expedition along with Marathas as advised by Bussy. Instead, he made Nizam write to Dupleix for advancing a loan of ten to fifteen lakhs of rupees. Dupleix, himself facing financial difficulties could not relieve Nizam. Even after acquiring circars, Bussy did not find the going easy in Deccan. The revenues of the circars were insufficient to meet the growing expenses. Even Shah Nawaz Khan refused to entertain any further demands for money from the French. Conditions in Pondicherry were far from happy. The French have lost heavily in their wars in Carnatic and the company Directors were thinking of recalling Dupleix. It would appear that, Nizam, Bussy as well as Dupleix were in a deep financial soup and none was in a position to help the other.

Bussy's absence from Circars had slackened the discipline and the zamindars were found wanting in remitting their tributes in time. He therefore decided to take matters in his own hands to restore the administration of the circars. On the 9th June 1754, he left Aurangabad for Masulipatnam. All the zamindars of circars came forward to tender their submission, including Vijay Rama Raju from Vizianagaram. The latter was also in touch with English. Raju wrote to English that he was not genuinely attached to French but he submitted to Bussy more for reasons of expediency, than because of the actual desire to acknowledge the French authority.

While Bussy was engaged in settling matters in the circars, the tide was turning against French in Carnatic. They had failed to take Trichinapoly and a great portion of Carnatic had fallen into the hands of British. Dupleix tried to retrieve the matter by making certain strategic alliances. They not only failed but resulted in a greater loss to French financial interests. The French Government, anxious to put an end to this ruinous run decided to replace Dupleix. In August 1754 the new appointee, Monsieur Godehen arrived in Pondicherry and relieved Dupleix. On 14th October, Dupleix left Pondicherry for his country.⁵⁵

His government and others owed him one crore rupees. He received not a rupee and died a few years later, in poverty. This was the unhappy tale of one of the most brilliant and daring Europeans who ever came to India. He had, single-handedly, laid the foundations of a new empire for his country. In return, he got ingratitude. The seed he had sown, however, did not go waste. His rivals, the English stepped in and reaped the harvest, later.

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1.6 CURTAIN FALLS FOR FRENCH

In August 1754, the new French Governor Godehen arrived in Pondicherry and soon entered into a truce with the English. It is called the convention of Sadras which was finalized on the 11th January 1755. Among other things, both companies, French and English agreed not to enter into alliances with or intervene in the internal affairs of the native powers in India.⁵⁶ The French violated the trust reposed in them by the Nizam. Naturally, the news was received with surprise and perturbation in Hyderabad. Dupleix's recall itself was a great shock to Salabat Jung and his nobles. The Diwan, Shah Nawaz Khan had then observed, "I cannot recover from the surprise which the news of the recall of the Governor Bahadur had caused me. I cannot imagine what the French are at, but by that act they will lose their honour and territories. I cannot conceal from you that we can arrange nothing from the new Governor who has not the least knowledge of our affairs. Besides, it appears that the French are neither so powerful nor so generous as they would have us believe and that the English have the absolute mastery over them. I will not hide from you then that I am about to negotiate with the English."⁵⁷

Instigated by Shah Nawaz Khan, Salabat Jung wrote to Bussy, who was still in circars to hasten to Deccan and assist him in his campaign against the Mysore Rajah, who had neglected to pay his tribute after the death of Nizam-ul-Mulk. Bussy arrived and found the atmosphere in Nizam's Court hostile towards the French. Even Salabat Jung was alienated from him. He inveighed bitterly against the new policy that had been inaugurated at Pondicherry. "Your Sovereign," said he,



Charles de Bussy

“promised to support me against my enemies to establish my authority and to make it respected. Of this, you yourself have given me assurances on which I have always depended. Yet now I hear that it is the king of England who especially concerns himself with the affairs of India, even with those that affect me.” Bussy endeavoured to put the best possible gloss upon the proceedings of Godehen. The Nizam and the minister heard him but without being convinced. They were indignant that the fate of Carnatic should have been settled without reference to Nizam. “You have put me,” said Salabut Jung, “in the balance against Mohammed Ali; you have allowed to be placed at the head of one of my tributary provinces a man whom I have never employed and who has always rebelled against my authority. Nay, if I were to proceed to Carnatic to drive him out of it, English would support him; and you, on account of this truce, would hold back. You, who are engaged to support me on all occasions, would aid me neither against the English nor against Mohammed Ali.” He then went on to say, “You know that the state of my affairs necessarily demands the support of a European power; on this condition I am able to govern. Either you must remain here or I must enlist the English in my interest. Are you disposed to render me the services which you have rendered hitherto? I must do you the justice to say that I am grateful for them, but it would appear now that you have neither the power nor the inclination.”⁵⁸

The conversation tells it all. Salabut Jung was surrounded by enemies on all the sides. Marathas were nibbling at his territory in the west. Hyder Ali, the new Mysore star had his eyes upon Bellary and Cuddapah. Further south, Ahmed Ali remained an ardent enemy. Salabut Jung's position was very critical and he feared that if French leave, he would be attacked by all enemies at once.

Salabat Jung was surrounded by enemies on all the sides



Salabat Jung, as the representative of Emperor of Delhi was supposed to collect tribute from Mysore. This tribute was paid on and off, depending upon Nizam's strength to compel its payment. Salabut Jung, now determined to use his French troops demanded this tribute. Mysore army was busy in Trichinapoly. Though, Bussy was on terms of alliance with Mysore, he must help Nizam, otherwise the seed of suspicion regarding French loyalties would grow. Bussy wrote to Mysore and organized payment of seventeen lakh rupees in cash and jewels with bills of thirty-eight lakhs. The army, after completing Mysore operation returned to Hyderabad in July and remained there till the end of 1755 CE. As the mutual trust was restored, Bussy's influence upon Nizam increased even further. So did the envy of his enemies.

The opportunity did not take long to arrive. In February 1756, Nizam resolved to subdue the Nawab of Savanoor. He was one of the three Nawabs who eliminated Nasir Jung and Muzaffar Jung, the previous two rulers through treachery. Since then, he was in an open rebellion against the Nizam. The later, in alliance with Marathas, confronted the Nawab of Savanoor, and brought him to terms. Nizam left negotiations to Bussy. Savanoor was in possession of a bond given by Dupleix for his services to eliminate Nasir Jung. Bussy, on behalf of his own country, wished to have this bond cancelled. Therefore, some concessions were given to Nawab, in which Marathas also shared. In April 1756, the latter recognized Salabat Jung as his overload once again. In scramble for spoils, Bussy ensured that the arrears and over dues of the French Company were written off. Many of the Mughal nobles felt that Bussy preferred the interests of his own nation, while Nizam got only nominal recognition. Shah Nawaz Khan advised Salabat Jung to dismiss Bussy from his service. The latter was asked to leave the Nizam's services and retire to French territories. The Diwan assured him that Nizam's

troops would not molest the French while the latter were retreating. He also wrote to Madras Governor to send upon English force, apart from suggesting to Peshwas that Bussy should be assassinated.

Bussy receiving the orders of dismissal soon realized that Shah Nawaz Khan was the master behind anti French plots and it was he who had influenced Salabat Jung to issue such orders. Bussy, of course, was quite equal to the occasion. A message was spread that he intended to proceed to Masulipatnam, after a few days stay at Hyderabad, in order, to collect all his effects.⁵⁹ In the meantime, he sent urgent letters to Pondicherry for help. He claimed that he still regarded Nizam as his master. He established himself on the northern side of river Musi in an old palace known as Char Mahal. Bussy, the sure-footed French could not be dislodged from the Deccan, so soon.

His appeal for help was promptly attended to by M. Law, the French Governor at Pondicherry. In July 1756, he dispatched one hundred sixty Europeans, seven hundred sepoy and five guns. Reinforcement reached within fifteen miles of the city. Here, terrain was hilly, country difficult and Nizam's army together with six thousand Maratha horses were drawn up to meet them. Law was on the eve of giving up the attempt. But, Bussy was a soldier possessed. He ordered Law, "In the name of the King", to push on at all hazards. This was done. After three days of hard fighting, he reached Haithnagar, about six miles from Hyderabad.

By 10 AM on the 17th August 1756, the French reinforcement had arrived with enough troops at Hyderabad against all odds.⁶⁰ Then he marched into Bussy's camp in Char Mahal. A relieved Bussy was now master of the situation. The Nizam's forces lost heart and decided to sue for peace. A conference was arranged between Bussy, Salabat Jung

**Bussy
attended the
Conference in
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fully armed**



and Shah Nawaz Khan. Bussy attended the conference in military gear and fully armed. Bussy's conduct made it appear that peace or war were the same to him. He was appealed to forget the recent events and behave as though nothing had happened to rupture the friendship that existed between the two. On 20th August, 1756, he was reinstated again to his former position by restoring all his former titles and honours.⁶¹

Bussy, the victor was really glad to have forced peace upon Salabat Jung. He had practically no money to pay for his troops. At first, he raised money on credit; later on, he gave receipts to the bankers on the revenues of northern circars. But, the zamindars in the circars encouraged by the letters of Shah Nawaz Khan had withheld sending revenues to Bussy. Seeing this, Bussy decided to go personally to the circars and bring them under French hegemony once again. On the 16th November 1756, he started for the circars taking with him 500 Europeans and 4,000 sepoys. He left behind 200 Europeans and 500 sepoys to guard the person of Salabat Jung. The latter too left for Aurangabad towards the end of November 1756.⁶²

Bussy may have achieved some kind of a victory in Deccan, but Pondicherry realized that it was impossible to remain for long in Deccan in a hostile atmosphere. Bussy's position in the court of Nizam was summed up in a letter from Pondicherry to the Controller General of the French East India Company. "Since the rupture of our entete with Salabat Jung, it is no longer necessary for Monsieur Bussy to reside beside the subedar. Bussy still continues to be dreaded there, but he is no longer loved and the people long for his departure. I wrote to him to move to our provinces. This arrangement is in accordance with the wishes of the Nawab, who desires that we should remain Jagirdars. That is to say we shall be obliged to send him troops and go to his help, if he calls. Mr. Bussy, has sufficiently drained us, for the upkeep of the Nawab's army, of arms, munitions and money without much profit to us."⁶³

Bussy was not only facing opposition of Deccan nobles and coastal zamindars but also from his company. The French company, based in Pondicherry had of late weakened in Carnatic and therefore were finding their hold in far off Deccan quite untenable. Bussy arrived and all the coastal zamindars, except the Rajah of Bobbili paid their homage to him. Vijay Rama Raju, the most prominent Raja of Vizianagaram had collected 10,000 men under him along with some local chieftains, in leading this homage brigade. There had been some ancient enmity between the houses of Bobbili and Vizianagaram over some canal waters. Taking advantage of Bobbili's absence, the Vijay Rama Raju succeeded in poisoning Bussy's mind that Bobbili was

inimical towards French. A combination of other events witnessed the Bobbili's fort under siege on 24th January 1757.⁶⁴

It was here that the famous and the most ferocious battle of Bobbili was fought. The chivalry of Raja Ranga Rao of Bobbili, his brave defence against the numerical superiority of Vizianagar forces aided by the deadly French artillery, the tryst of the entire womenfolk with death to save their honour and the entire garrison defending the fort till the last man, so much so that the ditch surrounding the fort, because a veritable pool of blood, have all entered the popular folklore. When the French troops entered the fortress, Bussy was horrified to see fire and desolation all around. Yet, to be on a safer side, a general massacre of the population was ordered. Fortunately, the young son of the Rajah was saved by the devotion of the maid servant, Lakshmi. On him Bussy conferred all those territories that he had offered to give to Vizianagaram Rajah in place of Bobbili. On the night of 3rd February 1757, Vijay Rama Raju was surprised and killed while sleeping in his tent, by Tandra Papaiah, the faithful sardar of Bobbili Rajah. Bussy got 2 lakhs of rupees from the revenues of Bobbili zamindari. With the fall of Bobbili, the French authority was sufficiently restored in the circars.⁶⁵

But, far beyond Bobbili, the destiny of India was taking a new turn in Bengal. Siraj-ud-Daula, the Nawab of Bengal was challenged by the English East India Company under the ambitious Robert Clive. Siraj-ud-Daula sought Bussy's help who dispatched M. Law in advance with 61 men to Bengal. Law reached Rajamaharaj, but before Bussy himself could proceed to Bengal, it was all over. Siraj-ud-Daula was defeated and Robert Clive was the new Lord there. The seven years' war between the French

**Siraj-ud-Daula
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there**



and English was on, and therefore, as a retaliatory measure, Bussy captured Vizagapatnam fort from English in June 1757. This remained in French hands till October 1758.

Bussy's tango with Deccan, it appeared was not yet over. He arrived in Aurangabad in February 1758 and remained there till July 1758.⁶⁶ Salabat Jung was the ruler

but his two younger brothers, Nizam Ali and Basalat Jung were equally keen to rule. That apart, there were old Diwan Saiyyad Lashkar Khan, the new Diwan Shah Nawaz Khan and Bussy's Diwan, Hyder Jung. To

complicate matters, there were Maratha groups flaunting their might to offer support for a price. The internecine conflict laced with deceit, double talk and cold-blooded murder consumed all the three Diwans. After eliminating potential threats to the throne through liquidation, Bussy reached Hyderabad on the 15th July 1758. On his arrival he found a letter from Lally. The latter viewed with total disfavour the French entanglement in the Deccan. Bussy had to comply with the orders of Lally, because French needed all their forces to converge in Pondicherry to lead an attack against English at Madras. Bengal had already slipped away from the French hands in 1757 CE after the Battle of Plassey.

The very thought of Bussy's departure frightened Nizam. He was now shaken to his core. As Bussy prepared to leave, Nizam held a large durbar. He embraced Bussy with every show of affection and grief. He called him the guardian angel of his life and fortune. He foreboded the unhappy fate to which he would be exposed after his departure. This foreboding was destined to come true. On the 18th July 1758, Bussy left Hyderabad, with a heavy heart. On the 3rd of August 1758, he handed over the charge of circars to De' Conflans and set forth to Pondicherry via Ongole.⁶⁷ With his departure, the power and glory of the French also departed from Deccan. Bussy promised to return but when Nizam said good bye to him, he did so for ever. Bussy never set his foot again in Deccan where for nearly seven years, he had only enjoyed a series of victories and successes. He was leaving for another theatre of action with a totally different scenario. As the French force left with Bussy, Salabut Jung was left alone to face the latent heat of plots and intrigues around him. The French influence in Deccan was thus broken. The door was now wide open for a new influence. And it did come from the wide swathe of coastal plains abutting the Bay of Bengal, before long.

He embraced Bussy with every show of affection and grief. He called him guardian angel of his life and fortune



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2. The Statecraft & Economy during Nizam-ul-Mulk times

This chapter describes the Asaf Jahi state, its governing structures and the economy. The overall state structure along with court culture of Asaf Jahis was almost a replication of Aurangzeb's tradition with its schedule of working, official action, procedures, etiquettes and regulations. The testament of the founder, Nizam ul Mulk contains all ingredients of those times.

In 1652 CE, Aurangzeb was appointed as the Viceroy of Deccan for the second time. Murshid Ali Khan had accompanied him. "He was a native of Khorasan, who came to India and transferred his allegiance from Persia to India. His meteoric career commencing from a faujdar in Punjab to master of the stables to the bakshi of Lahore, finally peaked as Diwan of Deccan. His tenure laid the foundation of land revenue reforms in the Deccan kingdoms. Appointing a proper chain of officers including wise amins and honest surveyors, a comprehensive record of all individual land holdings (raqba) was put in place. His services to Aurangzeb were as laudable as those of Todar mal during Akbar's reign, way back in mid sixteenth century.

Land revenue was the chief source of income to the state and it was the same canonical principle as followed by Islamic rulers in Deccan; be it Bahmanis, Qutb Shahis or Asaf Jahis. "One half of the gross produce from each ra'aya belonged to the state." There were other taxes known as Rahadari, Peshkash, Bagat, Customs, Salt, Diamonds, Mines and Mints. Jamabandi, or the annual settlement of revenue dues from each cultivator was fixed.

The machinery of land revenue collection was based upon a graded hierarchy. It had suba at the top with sarkar (district), paragana (talukas), mahal (a group of contiguous villages) and villages at the bottom. The administration was based upon the edifice of an institution called "mansab". It meant an instrument of appointment to any member of military, revenue, executives, ecclesiastical and nobility. The Nizam ul Mulk was the ultimate authority to appoint these "Mansabdars". A proven merit in the battlefield coupled with

total loyalty to the throne was the yardstick of these appointments. Maintenance of revenue records was done by functionaries appointed on a hereditary basis. Persian was the language in which these records were maintained.

During the first half of the eighteenth century, frequent wars interspersed with equally frequent famines took a heavy toll upon the economy. 50% of the gross produce as tax realisation, especially during famine years, using coercion, if necessary, emaciated the peasantry and impoverished the rural landscape. Industrial and commercial vigour was already lost during the closing decades of the seventeenth century. The only places where grandeur showed up was around the court, palaces, harem, karkhanas and garrison. The per capita income at constant prices declined by 6.97% between 1700 CE and 1750 CE.

In 1748 CE, Nizam ul Mulk died. His last words were that, "Due to some measures, certain people are not happy. It is possible that those who had been suppressed may rise again." This prophetic warning was to prove right. His progeny faced violent uprisings and lost Carnatic and Northern circars just in next thirteen years by 1761 CE. The future was going to be even more uncertain.

2.1 SYSTEM OF LAND REVENUE

Victors arrive with a sense of mission. Aurangzeb, however had arrived in Deccan some five decades before his victories. In 1652 CE, he was appointed the Viceroy of the Deccan for the second time. Murshid Ali Khan had accompanied the Prince as Diwan of Balaghat. On 28th January 1656, he became the Diwan of the entire Deccan, when Paiynghat was also added to his charge. His tenure is considered most important, as far as the land revenue reforms are concerned in the Deccan. Mandated by the Viceroy, the diwan got down to the work of overall revenue reforms. He appointed a proper chain of officers including wise amins and honest surveyors to prepare the record of individual holdings (raqba). The arable land was distinguished from rocky soils and water courses. After measurements, the system of sharing of the actual produce was imposed. In short, the entire blue print of a new revenue system was put in place.

In short, the entire blue print of a new revenue system was put in place

The Mughals subdued Bijapur in 1686 CE and Golconda in 1687 CE. After achieving military supremacy in the



battlefields, they imposed their own system of revenue administration in these dominions. After Aurangzeb's death, the 'Boy Swordsmen', soon evolved as an alter ego of the Mughal Emperor. Conferred with the title of Nizam-ul-Mulk, he held the Subedari of Deccan thrice from 1713-15 CE, 1720-22 CE and finally from 1724-48 CE, till his death. The foundations of land revenue assessment had already been laid firmly by the Murshid Ali Khan. The same were implemented seriously as the safety and sustenance of the Deccan Suba needed a regular flow of income; partly to satiate Maratha infringement but mainly to feed a gargantuan military, bureaucratic and political superstructure.

The taxes levied in the Mughal suba of the Deccan under Nizam-ul-Mulk can broadly be classified under two heads i.e., Mal and Wujuhat. The latter is further divided into Jihat and Sair Jihat. Mal was the tax imposed on cultivated land as per the scheduled rate of assessment. Jihat were the taxes levied to meet the expenses of the government incurred in making the assessment of Mal. Sair Jihat were the other taxes realized from the market and transit duties.

Land revenue, of course was the chief source of income to the state. There were three kinds of rates. Where the crop was rain fed, a full half of the gross produce was imposed upon the cultivators as state's share. Where the crops were well irrigated, the share was one third for grains but one ninth to one fourth in case of grapes, sugarcane, plantain and other intensive horticultural crops. Where the field was canal irrigated, the share was approximately equal to the ratio fixed for well irrigation. The revenue was fixed based upon the quantity and quality of the crop, from seed to harvest and its market prices and collected in so many rupees per bigha. In due course of time, this fixed revenue came to be known as 'the dhara of Murshid Quli Khan'.

There were other sources as well. 'The various sources of income under Nizam-ul-Mulk were as follows:

1. Mal, Mal-o-Jihat, Sairjihat
2. Rural taxes and exactions other than land revenue Wujuhat (jihat and sairjihat), Rahdari, etc.
3. Peshkash from various personnel like Zamindars, officials, semi-officials, private persons etc.

4. Baghat (irrigated lands, especially gardens)
5. Customs from the ports.
6. Salt monopoly at Machlipatam (Mahal-i-Shura-wa-namak)
7. Diamond, mines and mint'¹

‘The total revenue accruing from the entire dominion of Nizam-ul-Mulk, consisting of six subas covering almost the entire Deccan peninsula, amounted to Rs.18,97,02,985 and 11 annas.’²

For administrative purposes, these subas was further subdivided in 93 circars (districts) and 1228 mahals or paraganas (Tehsils or Talukas). The table shows the suba-wise revenue assessment.

Statement showing Revenue Assessment (Jama) of Six Subas of Deccan (1705–1707 CE)

Sl. No	Subas	No. of Circars	No. of Mahals	Total Jama Muqarrara (Rs)
1.	Khujistabunyad (Aurangabad)	12	138	1,27,43,502/14/6
2.	Muhammadabad (Bidar)	7	76-74 (for 2 Mahals not available)	75,04,565/11/3
3.	Khandesh	4	134	57,04,023/02/6
4.	Berar	10	202-196 (less 6 Mahals Ghairamali)	1,04,30,479/03/9
5.	Darul afar (Bijapur)	18	281	7,84,61,817/01/6
6.	Farkhundabunyad	42	405	-
	Total	93	1228	18,97,02,985/11/0

Source: Nayeem MA, 1985, p98³

The land revenue administration of the Deccan under Nizam-ul-Mulk consisted of two stages:

- 1) Tashkhis i.e., assessment of revenue.
- 2) Tahsil i.e., its actual collection

Any revenue assessment, fixed at a certain point in time always undergoes some changes. Nizam-ul-Mulk, realizing that the figures fixed during Aurangzeb's time had become outdated, ordered for re-fixing the demand called 'jamabandi'. Lala Mansaram stated that during Nizam-ul-Mulk's times, revenue fixation (tashkhis-i-jamabandi) was

done every year, alongwith the statement of Jama-Wasul-baqui. In fact, it is nothing but the Demand, Collections and Balance (DCB) statements, with which we are so familiar now a days.⁴

A comparative statement of jamabandi figures for various circars in Hyderabad Suba for 1705-07 CE are given below:

**Jamabandi figures for various Circars in Hyderabad Suba
(1705-1707 CE)**

Sl. No.	Name of Circar	No of Mahals	Muquarrarjama (Rs)
1	Elgandal	21	12,27,036/08/9
2	Rajahmundry	24	6,85,529/10/6
3	Ellore	12	5,63,645/11/0
4	Mustafanagar	24	10,74,179/09/6
5	Murtazanagar	5	11,69,505/14/9
6	Sikakol	2	8,40,827/15/0

Source: Nayeem, MA, 1985, p101-103⁵

The principle of 50:50 sharing of the gross produce of farmers by the state had been stated clearly by Nizam-ul-Mulk in an order with his own seal. The orders stated that the Jagir Mahal of Md. Mukarram has been granted to Abdus Samad and he was directed to act as per the rules for the welfare of the people and development of agriculture and was directed to fix the jamabandi as follows: One half for the ra'aya and one half of the Circar. The transliteration of the document reads as follows:

'Jamabandi paraganath ka nisf hissa sallam bara'aya be rasad wo nisf dar sarkari aayad karda mush akhas namud'⁶

While in principle, half the gross produce belonged to the ruler, its actual realization became flexible from year to year. It was realized that jamabandi cannot be a fixed amount for any territory for any fixed period of time. The assessment could be revised and therefore jamabandi was conducted once a year. Sometimes, it could be revised within a period of one year also. Yet another reality during those times was jama-i-kamil or simply kamil. This was always higher than the jamabandi. The difference between the two was the share of the zamidar for his livelihood. Kamil or jama-i-kamil was the original first figure fixed during the reign of Aurangzeb. They became the basis for

assessing (tashkhis) and then collecting (Tahsil) the revenue assessed. The term 'jama' signified the amount collected. The kamil figures got established and remained in vogue for several decades. The jamabandi figures of Nizam-ul-Mulk's time were far below the Kamil figures during Aurangzeb's times. It is obvious that revenue demand itself was fixed at lower levels.

The entire exercise began with the estimated income figures fixed during the reign of Aurangzeb; known as Jama-i-Kamil. This Kamil figure was the edifice of Nizam-ul-Mulk's revenue demand. Mansaram informs us that Tashkhis-i-Jamabandi was made every year along with Jama, Wasul and baqi i.e., Demand Collection and Balance Statement. The earliest document mentioning the Jamabandi conducted during 1726-27 CE to the 25 villages of Udaimari paragona, a mahal of Jagir of Khuwaza Lutfulla on the basis of papers and records of Jagirdar are available. The Kamil amount is stated as Rs.27,880/12/3, while the figures of Jamabandi is Rs.7,800/8.⁷ This works out to 27.9 per cent of Kamil figures. This amount includes the share of Jagirdar at Rs.5,851/1/14 and the amount of Chauth at Rs.1,950/10.

In the following year in 1727 CE, the regular Jamabandi of the revenue accruing from Mal-wa-Jihat and Sair-wa-Jihat was made for the same villages on the basis of the same Kamil amount. The Jamabandi was fixed at Rs.14,000/- i.e., at 50 per cent of the Kamil amount. Out of this, 50 per cent of the value of land revenue was left to the Ra'aya (cultivators) and zamindars while the balance 50 per cent was collected as the state's share.⁸

It is important to be careful about the share of various stakeholders. For example, let us assume that Aurangzeb fixed Rs.100 as the assessment. Then, Nizam-ul-Mulk, keeping the ground reality in view, fixed Rs.50 as Jamabandi. While the state took away Rs. 25 for running the system, the balance Rs. 25 got further divided. After meeting zamindar's share along with Maratha's Chauth, the cultivator was left with a mighty sum of Rs.12.5 with him.

The procedure of binding a zamidar for paying a certain amount of revenue assessment was simple. The amount was stated on paper and their signatures obtained along with their seal. It was done in

the presence of deshmukh, deshpandias, etc., and they had to affix their seal as well. Finally, the qazi would authenticate the document with his seal along with an endorsement – baiqrar-i-zamindaran muharnamudashud (with the approval of the zamindar, the seal has been fixed); or baiquarar wa dustakhat deshmukh wo deshpandia muhar namuda (with the approval and signature of the deshpandia and deshmukh, the seal has been affixed).⁹ The endorsements of the Zamindars were in Marathi, Modi or Telugu scripts and were located in the margin or bottom portion of the main document which was in Persian. The revenue assessment was made separately, twice a year at the time of kharif (autumn) and rabi (spring) harvests. But, in the documents, the two periods were suffixed with the Turkish cycle. The

Rulers impose their own language and administrative systems and even the seasonal cycle prevailing in their distant native lands



period was mentioned as beginning from Fasl-i-Kharif Tawish-khan-eel or uda-eel rabi paraseel, fasl kharif tankuz-eel sijqan-eel etc. The months of the Turkish cycle are : 1)Sijqan-eel 2)Uda-eel 3)Paras-eel 4)Tawish-Khan-eel 5)Poli-Toe-eel 6)Elan-eel 7)Yuni-eel 8)Beech-eel 9)Takhagu-eel 10)Eet-eel 11)Tankuz-eel.¹⁰ Rulers impose not only their own language and administrative systems, but also the seasonal cycle prevailing in their distant native lands.

The various types of Wujuhats levied and collected in the Deccan during the Nizam's viceroyalty were Abi (tax on irrigated lands); Baghat (tax on garden lands), Bhat, Bhant, Chahurram, Dastur, Gumashta (agent's fee), Itlaq (fee for delivering summons), Kalali (fee for payment to servants employed to collect dues), Khurakh (food charges), Mahsuldari, Muhtarfa (tax on trades, professions, shops, stalls and implements), Muqtadari (agent's fee), Muqarrari or Patta Muqarrari, Patti Qusur, Rahdari (transit fee), Rusum, Rusum-i-Sardeshmukhi, Sarf-i-Sihbandi, Siwai-teh-bazari (market fee), Srideh, Srisad, Tabi, Tahir, Tasarruf-i-amil, Tehbazari (storage) etc. These levies were exacted differently at different places, depending upon the actual mix of various economic activities.¹¹

The method for the assessment of irrigation tax (dasband) was quite simple. It was a flat 10 per cent when government provided irrigation

water from government reservoir or tank to cultivators.¹² Private persons were also encouraged to construct these water bodies with their personal funds. The amount so paid by the government to private owners, mostly zamidars was the same 10 per cent. It would imply that any capital expenditure, either by the government or private person for constructing a tank or pond was expected to be recovered within 10 years flat. Hence, it is called dasband. Its actual implementation whether based upon area irrigated or upon the gross produce obviously varied from place to place.

Though Baghat literally means gardens, in the Deccan it implied land irrigated by water supplied from wells and growing useful and edible vegetables and fruits etc. On the basis of documents, it seems that the assessment of Baghat varied from 26.7 per cent to 50 per cent.¹³ The total revenue receipts from the Baghat from Hyderabad suba for the year 1746-47 CE amounted to Rs.1,53,000/. Md. Nafis Khan, the owner of these Baghat lands was an important official. The intensive cultivation, supervision, manpower and marketing was possible only for such resourceful persons living in urban areas.

Intensive cultivation, supervision, manpower and marketing was possible only for such resourceful persons living in urban areas



Revenue from Peshkash was another source of revenue: Peshkash was the amount collected from a person before appointing him to a particular post.¹⁴ The appointment to any post was not based upon any merits. It was based upon a system of quid-pro-quo. It was customary to part with a reasonable sum of money in the name of peshkash. A part of the Peshkash was paid up-front with the mention of a condition that after issuance of sanad (appointment letter), the balance would be paid in instalments within a specified time period. Sometimes, the amount of peshkash along with instalments were left to be decided by the appointing authority himself. Peshkash at the rate of 1/6th of the pay was also exacted from the salary of certain officers. In one case, the Chaudhuri of the animals, on an amount of Rs.7,714, Rs.618 per month was exacted till 1/6th portion of the share of Peshkash was realised.

The most important functions of the village zamindar were two, namely to ensure the cultivation of all cultivatable land in his zamindari and the collection of the assessed land revenue. The zamindars who paid land

revenue on the basis of assessment of the individual holdings of the peasants were called hereditary Zamindars. The hereditary Zamindars right could also be obtained by outright purchase. Sometimes, these hereditary Zamindars refused to pay the assessed revenue, especially during turbulent times. A suitable loyal person was appointed as Zamindar by the state, just to somehow collect the revenue and pay it in the treasury. They seem to have been subject to dagh and tashiha regulations, but in certain cases, an exemption was made from these regulations.

It must be understood that all the Zamindars were not equal. Some among them, were more equal than others. Peshkashi zamindars paid peshkash but were not subjected to detailed assessment of the land revenue actually under cultivation in their jurisdiction. The other category was called mal wajib zamindars, who just collected the revenue and paid it to the government. The governmental control on the former gradually reduced over a period of time. The Nayaks of Karnataka and Poligars of South India belonged to the Peshkashi zamindars. During the Eighteenth century, they were not entirely under the control of rulers. No wonder, they were ceded to the British control in the beginning of the Nineteenth century. The gradual loss of control over the right by the rulers to assess and collect revenue over an area today is a precursor to losing the territory itself, at some future date.

2.2 THE MACHINERY OF LAND REVENUE COLLECTION

Nizam-ul-Mulk adopted two methods of collecting land revenue, direct and indirect. The direct method of collection was through government officials called the amalguzar or the Amil; and indirect method was by the system of izara or revenue farming. The important revenue officers in the subas were Diwan, Amalguzars, Amins, Amils, Tahsildars, Waqai Nawis, Karori etc. In addition, the hereditary revenue officers of Sardeshmukh, Sardeshpandia, Deshmukh, Deshpandia, Patwari, Qanungo, Muqaddam Deshkulkarni etc. were continued in order to maintain continuity in the maintenance of local records.

The chief officer of revenue at Circar was Amil or Amalguzar. He was

assisted by a number of junior officers such as Bitikchi or recorder, Khazanadar or treasurer, Shiqdar or executive officers of the paragona (group of villages); karkun, an accountant and other minor officials. The Amil fixed the assessment, supervised the work of his subordinate officials and sent fortnightly reports of the income and expenditure to higher authorities. As soon as two lakh dams were collected, he arranged its transmission to the Amalguzar of the Circar who in turn sent it to the treasury. The Amils were not to collect the full amount of Kamil or the jamabandi, but a lower figure as Ta'ahud amount. The difference of jamabandi and Ta'ahud was allowed as margin for Amils for rendering his duties.

Besides the Amils, special Tahsildars were appointed to collect Chauth amounts. This was the understanding Nizam had with the Marathas that instead of their agents collecting Chauth, Nizam's appointees would do the same. The amount so collected was handed over as lump sum to Maratha chiefs. In Khalisa Sharifa areas, Karoris were appointed for the purpose of revenue collection.

The system of Izara was rare, but nevertheless was practised in the Khalisa or the Jagir of the ruler, Nizam-ul-Mulk himself.

All the officials who undertook the responsibility of collecting revenue on behalf of the government had to execute ta'ahud, promising to deposit regularly in the treasury the amount due to the government after deducting the expenditure of Sihbandi, if permissible. In certain cases, Sihbandi was not allowed. The income derived in the name of Sihbandi was sufficient to maintain the Sihbandi of the mansabdars and they saved own expenditure towards their maintenance. For this benefit, the mansabdars holding executive posts rendered this additional service to the government and effected prompt collection of revenue, as they knew local officials and were effective within their own jurisdiction.

For the purpose of collecting land revenue, several mahals/paraganas were grouped together and were termed ta'aluqa. Each one of the ta'aluqa was placed under the charge of an Amil. Thus, in 1748 CE, forty-one mahals in the Suba Mohammedabad were divided amongst various Amils as follows:

List of Amils in Muhammedabad Suba – 1748 CE

Sl. No.	Name & Area of Taluqa	Name of Amaldar
1	Paragana Nirmal	Anant Venkat Ram
2	Paragana Bodhan and Balkonda	Hasamullah Khan
3	Paragana Madhol	Muhammed Hussain
4	Paragana Andwar	Rajeshwar Rao
5	Paragana Hasanabad	Sahuk Chand
6	Paragana Warawal	Sharmi Rao
7	Quiladaar Antagiri	Shamarullah Khan
8	Paragana Bhainsa	Shaikh Ali Khan
9	Paragana Chincholi	Aimullah
10	Paragana Hardi Mohammedabad	Md. Adil
11	Paragana Yalgaras	Ghulam Hussain & Abdul Nabi
12	Zamindar ParaganaKankerli	Malla Reddy
13	ParaganaKhandar	Mir Mirza Khan
14	Paragana Latur	Yalgar Beg

Source: Nayeem MA, 1985, p 105¹⁵

From the sample table, it is clear that even a quiladar of a fort and a zamindar were appointed as Amil. To add to the confusion, even the territorial units under the Deshmukhs and deshpandias were also termed as ta'aluqa.

An Amil before his appointment was to execute a deed (qabuliat) accepting the responsibility of collecting and also depositing a part of the revenue in the government treasury. In 1723-24 CE, Anwaruddin was appointed the Amil of the Circar Sikakul. He accepted the responsibility of collecting Rs.35,000/- accruing as revenue from all the sources. He also agreed to deposit half the amount in the government treasury, while the remaining half he promised to spend towards Sihabandi troops. The amount shown in qabuliat was ta'ahud amount for the collection. It was less than the Kamil or the jamabandi figures already fixed during Aurangzeb times. For the same Amil, the ta'ahud amount for four years (1733-36 CE) was Rs. 11,90,000/- while

the Kamil amount already fixed was Rs.16,12,258/1/. This works out to 73 per cent, leaving the balance 27 per cent as margin for Amil.

Staff of the lower ranks like the Tahwildar, Tahsildar, Mushrif, Fatahdar, Karkun and Mahir etc., belonged to non-Mansabdari category of officials. They were not assigned any Jagirs but were given monthly cash salary for the services rendered by them. The Tahwildars were paid from Rs.15 to Rs.30 per month. The Fatahdar including his assistant was paid Rs.25/- per month. The Mushrifs were paid Rs.10 per month. The Khazandar of the treasury was paid Rs.7 per month. A Farrash was paid Rs.5 and one anna per month and daftarband was paid Rs.5 per month.

A huge amount was consumed by the gargantuan bureaucratic structure, where entry was through peshkash and continuation, apart from performance needed the lubricant of nazarana. The Chauth and Sardeshmukhi were a regular feature to be collected and paid in lumpsum to the Maratha chiefs. Last but not the least, there was a huge army of foot soldiers and cavalry with their own appetite which remained uncontrolled due to frequent movements across the Deccan geography spanning hundreds of miles to keep the dominion intact. **It would not be an exaggeration to say that the entire politico administrative super structure of Nizam-ul-Mulk, consisting of less than one per cent population was drawing its sustenance by imposing a heavy burden upon the vast peasantry.**

Division of the Land Revenue

Nizam-ul-Mulk controlled six Subas of Deccan from 1724 CE till his death in 1748 CE. The territory and the revenue accruing there from may be divided into four broad categories. They are Jagirs, Khalisa, Paibaqui and the last being Inam and madad mush lands. The Jagir lands can be further classified into three groups, namely Jagirs of the mansabdars called jagirdars, Jagir of the Circar (Nizam-ul-Mulk) and Jagir of the Ahsham or Sihbandi etc.

The Jagirdari was a unique system, mandated during Aurangzeb's time and continued by the Nizam-ul-Mulk. The system assigned the revenue accruing from certain lands to the Mughal officials i.e., mansabdars, in lieu of their salaries was known as Jagir or Jagire tankhwah. The

assignee was called a 'jagirdar'. It must be understood here that 'mansab' is a 'rank' and Jagir is a sort of 'tankhwah' (salary). None bestowed the ownership of land in either mansabdar or jagirdars. Mansab and Jagirs were creation of the rulers which can either be bestowed or taken away. Land, on the other hand was the eternal ground reality whose ownership fell in a different socio-economic bracket. Political diktat by rulers from time to time had always transformed relationship between the land, its produce and its reallocation amongst various politico-administrative classes.

The share of Jagirdar in the revenue receipt had varied from 2.4 per cent to 22.4 per cent. The rate of Chauth was a consistent 25 per cent. But, the rate of jagirdar's share had varied from 9.4 per cent to as high as 73 per cent in another cases. It simply implied that there was no rigid consistency in jagirdar's share in the Land Revenue. It could be due to the reason that, being appointed by Nizam-ul-Mulk himself, there was a possibility of wide variation. But, Chauth being the share of Marathas, who were posing to be semi-lords over Nizam-ul-Mulk's dominion, was always 25 per cent; nothing more, nothing less.

It was rare for a jagirdar to default in making payments to the ruler. The jamabandi was conducted quite often which fixed the share of the government, jagirdar, ra'aya and chauth to Marathas. While the season was favourable and yields were normal, everyone received the prefixed share. However, in a difficult year, and they were very many, all the agencies other than ra'aya had power to extract their share at the source itself. The final hit, and quit often a fatal hit was reserved for the ra'aya, the cultivator of the good earth standing at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder. His overall lot was the least to invite envy, from any quarters.

Sometimes, Jagirs were assigned on whole (darobast) or part (shirkat) basis. There was no restriction or limit on the assignment of Jagirs. None of the Jagirs made a mention of the period for which they were assigned. In theory, Jagirs were not hereditary. As soon as the jagirdar died, it was resumed as paibaqui. But, in practice, when the sons of the deceased behaved properly and approached for the grant of their father's Jagir, it was normally granted to them. In scheme of political arrangements, the sons of a ruler were successors to their father's throne.

Therefore, the same principle was found to be quite convenient and easy to implement for jagirdars class as well. By the end of Eighteenth century, the jagirdari system had almost become hereditary.

The jagir of the circar referred to the topmost mansabdar of Deccan. He was none else other than the ruler, Nizam-ul-Mulk himself. His Jagir was bound to be most extensive in area as well as revenue receipts. His total Jagir amounted to 18.20 crore dams of which 16 crore dams went towards his personal pay and the balance went towards the services (mashrat wo bilashart), he had to perform as subedar of Deccan.

Jagir of the Ahsham and Sihbandi was meant for proper maintenance of troops posted in different forts, for whom a regular source of finances was a must. Therefore, certain Jagirs and the revenue accruing therefrom was assigned to them. The Jagir area and the revenue were proportionate to the strength of troops safeguarding a particular fort.

The lands whose revenue were reserved for the expenditure of the government were called Khalisa lands or Khalisa-i-Sharifa. For example, in the Circar of Rajahmundry, there were 24 mahals and the total revenue of Kamil was 6,85,529/1/6. Out of them, 19 mahals with the revenue of Kamil 4,91,219/12/ dams was reserved as khalisa. It would appear that around 70 per cent of land revenue in Rajahmundry was reserved for governmental expenditure during the eighteenth century. Khalisa lands were quite preponderant in Hyderabad suba. The revenue of khalisa sharifa amounted to Rs.67,51,081/1/3 out of a total revenue receipt of Rs.1,62,79,000/14 during the closing decades of the Eighteenth Century.

The Paibaqi lands referred to the Jagirs confiscated after the death of a jagirdar or resumed into governmental control on transfer of any jagirdar. They were available afresh for assignment amongst the mansabdars. These paibaqi lands with the revenue value of Rs.3,78,99,664/- were available in Deccan during the first half of the Eighteenth century. Whenever, the ruler went on a camp in his dominion, the prospective political entrepreneurs seeking mansab or Jagir or both were always crowding around throughout the route, for a share in this paibaqi lands.

The Inam Jagirs were rent free allocation of lands which were exempted from payment of all cesses. This had no correlation with either mansab or any service obligation. The entire transaction was in the nature of

Inam (gift), free from all encumbrances. When a jagirdar died without a successor, the Inam Jagir to the mother or wife of the deceased was given. For example, the Jagir of Bahadur Khan, on his death was resumed as paibaqi. Later on, it was granted as Inam to his mother Khadija Khatoon as Inam for an amount of 1,20,000 dams. On the death of Turrebaz Khan, his Jagir was granted as Inam with an amount of 5,50,000 dams to his wife, when Pilaji Gaikwar died, his Jagir of the value 1,60,000/- dams was granted as Inam to his son Danaji Gaikwar. Nizam-ul-Mulk, Asaf Jah himself held the Jagir of Petah Ghaziabad as Inam which was assigned to him by Mughal rulers of Delhi after his father Ghazi-ud-din's death.

Wajifa and Madad-i-Ma'ash were the systems which evolved during Mughal's rule. Following their footsteps, Nizam-ul-Mulk conferred benefits to holy saints, centres of worship and learning. The allowances were granted as wajifa (pension) and madad-i-ma'ash (outright grant). Men of wisdom and learning, holy religious devotees, men of noble birth but economically poor apart from destitute and weak were granted wajifa. Widows and children of the deceased who had served the state loyally were given subsistence allowance. Madad-i-ma'ash involved transference of the governmental right of collection of land revenue and other cesses to the grantee. It was made hereditary when it was assigned to the heirs of the deceased grantee.

2.3 THE SYSTEM OF ADMINISTRATION

The institution of mansab was the edifice upon which rested the entire pyramid of Mughal administration, which was entirely replicated by the Nizam-ul-Mulk in Deccan. The word 'Mansab' literally means the place where anything is put or erected. It also means to place, to

A Mansab being a status symbol defined the administrative rank & social status symbol of any person in the system

fix, to appoint and then, as a secondary meaning, the state or condition of holding a place, dignity or office. The system of Mansab was all embracing. It included members of military, revenue, executive, ecclesiastical and nobility. A Mansab, being a status symbol defined the administrative rank and social status of any person in the system. A Mansab by itself did not mean any particular office. It defined the recipient's order of



precedence or position in society as well in public service i.e., rank in a general sense.

A mansabdar was entrusted to perform a particular function, as assigned by the Nizam-ul-Mulk himself. That is why all the mansabdars owed their direct subordination to the Emperor only and none else. The mansabdars were paid salary in cash or through Jagir, according to rank. The officers engaged by mansabdars did not become mansabdars automatically. Each mansabdar was given a rank which had two dimensions. The Zat rank denoted the personal position and determined his pay. The Sawar rank indicated his military obligation and an expectation of maintaining the required number of contingent out of the emoluments paid separately for the purpose. The mansabdars were further classified into three categories which indicated their position in the nobility. The ordinary mansabdar having rank between 20 to 400 were at the bottom. The Umra mansabdars having rank between 500 to 2500 were in the middle. Umra-i-Azam mansabdar sharing rank between 3000 to 7000 were at the top of the pyramid. Nizam-ul-Mulk too was the mansabdar, with the highest rank of 9000.

The Mughal ruler was the sole authority for appointing or dismissing a mansabdar. He alone could increase or decrease his rank. There was no rigid rule in either granting a mansab upon a person or increasing or decreasing his rank. Rank in turn did not correspond to any particular post. A mansabdar may be asked to perform military, civil, revenue, ecclesiastical or a combination of such duties. The perception of loyalty of a person at a given point of time to the ruler was rewarded with a mansab. Mansab, like Jagir was not hereditary. However, in practice, Nizam-ul-Mulk showed quite consideration for the sons and near relatives of mansabdar after the latter's death. Mansab to a person was normally for his life. There were hardly any cases of demotions of mansabs. There was yet another feature of mansabdari system. As each mansabdar owed his very socio-administrative position and rank to Nizam-ul-Mulk, the entire class of nobles expressed themselves as 'Asaf Jahi'.

In 1724 CE, after winning the decisive battle at Sakhar Kheda, the new ruler, Nizam-ul-Mulk without wasting a moment, commenced his administrative arrangements. Those who served him loyalty were

rewarded immediately. Iradat Khan was appointed diwan of the entire Deccan replacing the existing Diyanat Khan. Akil Khan was appointed diwan of Burhanpur, dismissing Ali Akbar Khan. The victor commenced his march and while camping at Bidar, Mir Kalan Turani was confirmed in his Qiladar's post. At Bidar, information came that Kazim Ali Khan, faujdar of Bhongiri and a favourite of Mubariz Khan (who had revolted and lost to Nizam-ul-Mulk at Sakhar Kheda) had organized a resistance with the help of Appa Rao, a big zamindar of Telangana. A force under faithful Khansaman was despatched. The rebels were neutralized and replaced with the loyalists. After reaching the outskirts of Hyderabad, overtures were made to Khwaza Ahmed Khan, Nazim of the city. A compromise was affected by involving elders. Some of the new arrangements were as follows:

Names of Appointees by Nizam-UI-Mulk - 1724 CE

Sl. No.	Post	Person
1.	Nizamat of Hyderabad	Khairullah Khan
2.	Qiladar, Golconda	Himmat Khan
3.	Faujdar Chicakole	Hafiz-ud-Din Md Said Khan
4.	Faujdar Raichur	Talib Moiuddin Khan
5.	Faujdar Bijapur	Mirza Ali
6.	Mutasadli Masalipatnam	Ihtida Khan

Source: Nayeem M.A., 1985, p 109¹⁶

Those who switched their loyalty in favour of Nizam-ul-Mulk, were pardoned. Khaja Rahamtullah Khan and Khaja Abdullah Khan were diwans of the circars of Chicacole and Rajahmundry respectively. Both of them, originally appointed by Mubariz Khan crossed over, were pardoned and reinstated in their original position. Ellore and Mustafanagar were placed under Faizullah and Agha Moin. Ihadullah Khan was confirmed as Fauzdar of Murtazanagar.

Nizam-ul-Mulk, then moved to Karnataka. Following the same policy of rewarding loyalists and cajoling rebels was followed. Abdul Nabi Khan was confirmed as Faujdaar of Cuddapah and Ruknudaullah Khan as faujdar of Karnul. Sadullah Khan, Nazim of Arcot crossed

over, expressed his loyalty and was confirmed in the same post. Tahir Mahamud Khan and Abid Khan, the powerful faujdars of Karnataka also crossed over and submitted to the new ruler, before being reconfirmed in their posts.

Securing strategic forts and ensuring their safety, had always been the lifeline of Mughal's authority. With the fall of Bijapur and Golconda in 1686 and 1687 respectively, the victors inherited a large number of forts. The suba-wise inventory was as follows:

Suba-wise Inventory of Forts

Sl.No.	Suba	No. of forts
1.	Aurangabad	144
2.	Khandesh & Berar	19
3.	Bijapur	120
4.	Hyderabad	54
	Total (4 Subas)	337

Source: Nayeem MA, 1985, p111¹⁷

The importance of these forts depended upon the threat perception in a particular area. They were garrisoned by army with adequate provisioning for their upkeep. Qiladars were appointed to command each fort and its garrison. Needless to say, these Qiladars were chosen from amongst mansabdars. A sample list of Qiladars of some important forts was as follows:

Qiladars appointed for important Forts

Sl. No.	FORT	QILADAAR
1.	Parenda	Allah Khan
2.	Ahmednagar	Siadat Khan
3.	Hoskote	Dargah Quli Khan
4.	Antur	Baql Ali Khan
5.	Devarkonda	Imam Virdi Beg
6.	Balapur	Ali Kuli
7.	Ellichpur	Md. Ali
8.	Warangal	Khwaza Burhan-ud-din

Source: Nayeem M.A., 1985, p 113¹⁸

The institution of Qiladari, in some cases became hereditary. In 1738-39,

the Qiladar of Warangal died. His son Md Kasim Ali, on his request was appointed to the same post. For the upkeep of these forts and Qiladar, certain Jagirs were earmarked exclusively for the purpose.

Administrative Structure

The overall control was always exercised by Nizam-ul-Mulk, first from the capital Aurangabad and after its shift, from Hyderabad. The principal departments at the headquarters were four; namely Finance, Military and Intelligence, Religions and Judicial and finally households and the karkhanas.

The next in the hierarchy was suba. There were six subas, each with its own separate headquarters. The arrangement was as follows:

Subas and their Headquarters

S. No.	Suba	Headquarter
1.	Aurangabad	Daulatabad
2.	Khandesh	Burhanpur
3.	Berar	Ellichpur
4.	Mohammeda bad (Bidar)	Bidar
5.	Bijapur	Bijapur
6.	Hyderabad	Hyderabad

Source: Nayeem MA, 1985, p 115¹⁹

The Hyderabad suba extended all the way from Chicacole to Thanjavur, covering almost the entire east coast. The principal officers at the suba headquarters were seven in number. Nazim or the subadar was called 'Hakim'. Then, there were diwan, Bakshi-e-diwan, the Sadr and Kazi, the Kotwal, the Khansaman and the last being Daroga-i-Dakchanki or of the harkaras. Each one of these officers were assisted by their naibs or deputies. For revenue purposes, each suba had only one sardeshmukhi located at its headquarters. The revenue hierarchy included Diwan, Amalguzars, Amins, Amils, Tahsildars, Waqai Nawis, Karori etc. In addition, the hereditary revenue officers of Sardeshmukhi, Sardesh'pandia, Deshmukh, Deshpandia, Patwari, Qanungo, Muqaddam Deshkulkarni etc. were continued in order to maintain continuity in the maintenance of local records.

Who were the sardeshmukhi of Deccan? As per Maratha's claim, Shivaji and his successors were the sardeshmukhis of Deccan. They

also claimed 25 per cent (chauth) of the total peshkash fixed for the entire dominion, consisting of six subas. Whether the amount was remitted or not depended upon the balance of power between Nizam-ul-Mulk and Maratha rulers, especially Baji Rao. The Asaf Jahi rulers' strategy to seek the support of French or British in subsequent decades was in a major way dictated by an urge to get rid of this Maratha albatross.

As per Maratha's claim, Shivaji & his successors were Sardeshmukhis of the Deccan



The next levels were circars (district), Paragana (Tahsil or Taluka) with the village forming the base of the entire pyramid. There were mainly two streams. One was administrative in nature and faujdar was at its fulcrum. The other was revenue in nature and Amaldar was at its fulcrum. A sample list of faujdars in Hyderabad Suba is as follows:

Faujders in Hyderabad Suba

Sl. No.	Territory	Faujdar
1.	Elagandal	Ghulam Hussain Khan
2.	Devarkonda	Md. Sharif Khan
3.	Environs of river Manjira	Rajagopal Singh
4.	Circar Ellore	Fazullah Khan
5.	Circar Cuddapah	Abdul Nabi Khan

Source: Nayeem MA, 1985, p 124²⁰

Faujdar was the administrative head of a Circar, working directly under the control of subedar. His main responsibility was to maintain law and order. He commanded troops to suppress rebels and unruly elements. The safety of roads and highways, were his prime concerns. He was also the supervisory authority over Thanas in Paraganas. He was to forbid making of guns and ammunitions and prevent the construction of new forts and repairs of the old ones by over enthusiastic zamindars. In addition, he was to help the Amil or the amin in the collection or assessment of revenue. He had the power to compel the recalcitrant zamindars forcibly to pay their revenue dues. He was indeed the symbol of the state, clothed with all its authority at the level of a Circar.

The chief officer of revenue at Circar was Amil or Amalguzar. He was assisted by a number of junior officers such as Bitikchi or recorder,

Khazanadar or treasurer, Shiqdar or executive officers of the paragana (group of villages); karkun, an accountant and other minor officials. The Amil fixed the assessment supervised the work of his subordinate officials and sent fortnightly reports of the income and expenditure to higher authorities. As soon as two lakh dams were collected, he arranged its transmission to the Amalguzar of the Circar who in turn sent it to the treasury. A sample list of Amils in part of Hyderabad Suba was as follows:

Amils in Hyderabad Suba

Sl. No.	Circar	Amaldaar
1.	Murtazanagar	Muhtara Khan
2.	Elgandal	Saiyyad Abdul Razak
3.	Mustafanagar	Ghulam Ahmed
4.	Khammam	Sahib Ram
5.	Warangal	Mohammed Darwesh
6.	Ibrahimpattam	Bhau Singh
7.	Muhammed Nagar	Abdu Makaram
8.	Madhole	Md. Hussain

Source: Nayeem MA, 1985, p 132²¹

Besides Faujdar and Amalguzar, there were two other officials at Circar level, Qazi and Kotwal. They were in charge of religious and justice affairs.

At the paragana level, the shiqdar was the Chief Officer. He combined the duties of both, faujdar and kotwal. The revenue aspect was separately looked after by Amaldar. His territorial jurisdiction was neither confined to Paragana nor restricted to Circar. It varied considerably from place to place, and more importantly, from person to person or let us say from one mansabdar to another mansabdar. His job was facilitated by deshmukh and deshpandias who were collecting agencies for peshkash. Each paragana, with a fixed amount of peshkash was the area assigned to the team. Sometimes, the names of deshmukhs and deshpandias were not mentioned. The amount of peshkash was fixed on an ad hoc basis, without actual measurement of the land and assessment of the revenue. The amount of peshkash, therefore varied for each Circar and paragana, in fixing assessment

as well as realization. After the death of a deshmukh, another person was appointed with the order of Nizam-ul-Mulk. For example, after the death of Abdul Rasul, deshmukh of a paragana haveli Kalyan and Partabpur, suba Muhammadabad, Gokul Sate was appointed by Nizam-ul-Mulk. Peshkash could be given in cash as well as in kind (elephants, horses etc.). Sometimes, the peshkash was collected under two heads; one to the Mughal Emperor (Hazrat Zille Subhani) and other to the subedar of Deccan (Bandahgan-i-Aali). For example, after the death of Sarmaji, his brother Lokoji had succeeded to the zamindari of Thanjavur. Sadatullah, the Nawab of Karnataka sent an arzi (petition) before his death in 1732 CE to Nizam-ul-Mulk, recommending the succession of Lokoji. The arzi states clearly that Lokoji had agreed to pay the fixed peshkash (qalmi peshkash) of Rs. 2 lakhs to the Mughal Emperor and Rs.5 lakhs as Nazr to Nizam-ul-Mulk, subedar of the Deccan. It further mentions that Lokoji had consented to pay all the arrears pending since the death of Sarmaji, provided hereditary Zamindari rights are confirmed of Lokoji and Ekoji, the latter being the son of the deceased. Nizam-ul-Mulk had agreed to the overall arrangement. The system of collecting separate peshkash was introduced from the beginning of the year 1722 CE.

Who were the persons manning these posts at various levels? Well, they were all, as a matter of rule without exception picked up from amongst mansabdars. The latter, as we have seen were granted Jagir tankhawah as emoluments. They were also paid cash tankhawah every month, which they received through their wakils from mutasaddis. Mansabdari system was like an unbroken chain which linked every post at each level. There was never one to one correspondence between a post and a person. A person carried his mansab, with him, not the post. At times, a single person could hold three different officers of revenue, military and executive.

Maintenance of Revenue Records

For maintaining the stability and continuity of the land records, several persons were appointed on a hereditary basis. Sardeshmukhi, sardershpandias, deshmukh and deshpandias were at the apex level of subas and circars. But there were Patwaris, quanungo, mukaddam and

deshkulkarni at the lower levels of a paragana etc. The quanungo was the revenue record keeper and maintained the statistical information regarding assessment, hasil and baki (Demand, Collection and Balance). Deshmukhs and Deshpandias, mostly influential zamidars were the chosen appointees of the Mughal rulers. The Mughal Firmans and parwanas relating to land revenue affairs were addressed directly to them by addressing them by name. Peshkash and a certain territory was fixed for each one of these functionaries. For their services, they were assigned rent free land as inam and several other perquisites or rusum were sanctioned. Sometimes, a deshpandia or the zamindar could even hold the office of darogha, an office usually held by a regular government employee.

Sometimes, various posts were combined and held by a single person. The three posts of amanati, faujdari and shiqdari were combined together and held by a single person. The combination was possible because the person was not expected to be physically present at the offices he held. Most of the work was managed through the Naibs or deputies or assistants.

There was no gradation or principle for the promotion of a mansabdar or his transfer. Any mansabdar of any rank, high or low could be appointed to a post. The post itself did not carry any scale or pay. Its importance was dictated by the rank of a mansabdar. Moreover, there was no fixed period of tenure of office. An office could be enjoyed for several years at the will of Nizam-ul-mulk.

2.4 THE COURT CULTURE & THE TESTAMENT OF NIZAM-UL-MULK

Lala Mansaram's family had been associated with Nizam-ul-Mulk's ancestors for three generations. His grandfather Balakrishna had served under Khwaza Abid Khan, the grandfather of Nizam-ul-Mulk. His father, Bhavani Das had similarly served under Ghaziuddin, Nizam-ul-Mulk's father. So, Mansaram served Nizam-ul-Mulk, literally till the ruler's last breath. Being Peshkar-i-Sadarath (Prime Minister) of the six subas of Deccan, his knowledge about the court and its culture was intimate and comprehensive. Based on his prolific works in Persian, a glimpse of those times would be appropriate.

The overall court culture in Deccan was replicated, as far as possible in the tradition of Aurangzeb with its schedule of working, official actions, procedures, etiquettes and regulations.²² The very entry in the court was regulated. None could enter the court without signing the name slip. Anyone not wearing headgear was prohibited to enter. The visitor was given a briefing about the dress and etiquettes. One tailor and one barber with two guards were at hand to trim the long dress or moustaches or beard, if needed. If anyone opposed their action, police help was sought. None could enter without a belt on the waist and carrying something like a shawl over the shoulders. The wearing of jewellery was restricted. Cost of clothing had to be modest so that everyone could afford it. None could enter with a walking stick, including old people. However, a straight sword was allowed. The visitors carrying armour had to deposit it with guards and the same could be taken back on return. The dress was to be such as to have a long extension in front, in order to receive and tie in it any gift, if presented by Nizam-ul-Mulk.

A glimpse of the official procedures would also be interesting. 'There were several writers and fair copyists for drafting in different styles of writing. Important drafts regarding wars etc., would be seen and signed by Nizam-ul-Mulk.'²³ Whenever, he composed verses, the same was sent to one of his sons, Nasir Jung who would reciprocate with his own verse. This system of correspondence was in vogue between father and son. Except five or six special persons, no one was allowed to enter the private chambers and those persons too attended by rotation. The public audience lasted usually for not more than ninety-six minutes and the minimum time was forty-eight minutes. To maintain time discipline, an officer announced that the time for meeting was nearing an end and they should conclude their talks. The persons dismissed or transferred were told not to appear in the court on that day. The robe to the newly appointed person was not to be given in the presence of the one transferred or dismissed. The practice was to avoid any embarrassment. A glimpse of tax procedures also would be appropriate. Any businessman paid the tax on goods at one place and got the receipt, without the necessity of paying it again, anywhere. Silver was kept in the personal treasury of

Nizam-ul-Mulk while gold was kept in district treasury and the remaining was kept in the treasury of villages from where it reached the district where it was deposited. The revenue collectors sent monthly accounts and annual accounts to the office of Nizam-ul-Mulk. Government officials received salaries in cash on a monthly basis from the accountant through their agents and representatives who were present everywhere. The practice of night patrolling in cities and towns was normal. The sweepers apart from their mundane task were acting as silent informants. City dwellers were instructed to keep their children away from flying kites and playing fireworks on the roads or in the markets.

Women could not ride a horse. However, Maratha women were permitted as they rode in their country. In the court, nobles never wished each other in the presence of Nizam-ul-Mulk. Every week, the rates of grains were fixed by the Market Officer. The same was published. If any difference was noticed either in rate or weight, the headman was compelled to ride a donkey and the shop where the difference was noticed was looted. During his entire rule, Nizam-ul-Mulk never ordered anyone's execution. As far as possible, close relations of Nizam-ul-Mulk were appointed to important positions. He used to say that first to ours, then to theirs. But his policy towards land and its revenue was different. He used to say that land is meant for everyone; everyone had to be benefitted by it; in the loot, why differentiate between friend and foe. As military camp moved from place to place, the duration was never more than eight months. If it did not succeed, he would order for its lifting after six months and return to work for the welfare of his people. On Id day, all the officials, qazi and Nizam-ul-Mulk attended prayers in full strength.

Nizam-ul-Mulk stated that when the Brahmins became revenue officers, they also made the government beggars. Every week, there were two holidays - on Tuesdays and Fridays. On other days, the people attended office at 9 AM in the Diwan-i-Khas and in the afternoons, returned home. At the end of the day, the people came for an audience with the Nizam-ul-Mulk. **At the ripe old age of seventy-eight years, his wasiyat has recorded, "because of humanly weakness, I have done a thing in my old age, which I should not have done. I have taken unto myself a wife at this age."**²⁴

The ruler fell ill in Burhanpur. Intuitively, he summoned his son Nasir Jung to the bedside and in the presence of a select few, which included Mansaram, he dictated the following testament:

1. "It is binding on the part of Rais-i-Deccan (Subedar) to maintain friendly terms with the Marathas for safety and prosperity of the Deccan as they are zamindars of this part of the country and as far as possible he should not break terms on his own.

2. The lives of the people are not like grains of wheat or rice; hence it should be protected. A criminal should be handed over to the qazi but he himself should not take any decision to kill the criminal.

3. Our life and the administration of the country depends on tours and travels. The experience and benefits of travelling should not be given up. However, a period of leave from military camps should be given to allow relief to the people and the animals. The posting of soldiers should be near their homes so that they can easily visit their families.

4. The business of the public should be uniformly distributed without keeping one self idle.

5. It should be known that the foundation of our Government is due to the wishes and prayers of the elders; as is my example. From the beginning the office of sadrath was connected to our family. Now even at the time of death, I give importance to the prayers of the ulema, masha-i-qeen and the poor.

6. No one should be deprived of his right.

7. The Deccan includes the administration of six subas and at one time there was a ruler for each suba. Now the administration of the entire land is entrusted to one person. After my death, people from each family should be contacted and they should be given opportunities, sometimes to the Muslims and sometimes to Hindus also. Each officer should be considered a gem, without discrimination of caste and creed.

8. Nasir Jung was advised to consider his younger brothers like his own children and they should be encouraged to show their abilities.

9. No ordinary person should be appointed for a high

No ordinary person should be appointed for a high post & a person of high caliber should not be appointed to a lower post



post and a person of high caliber should not be appointed to a lower post. By the appointment of Puranchand, revenue administration has been bettered and if any Government arrears were due, he would extract it in a nice way. He should not be removed for another two or three years. Afterwards, it is your will.

10. The administration of the Deccan depends on the will and pleasure of the Mughal Emperor; he should be respected and never displeased. When Nadir Shah of Iran came to India, he offered the administration of Hindustan to me. I told him that since generations, we are servants of the Mughal Emperors; if I betray him, it will be disloyalty.

11. As far as possible initiative of war should not be taken even though the army of the opponent is small or big.

12. It has been observed by experience that the people of Burhanpur and Bijapur are selfish and are friends only for their selfish motives. They are not reliable. Like the people of Gujarat and Kashmir, precaution is necessary in dealing with them (people of Burhanpur and Bijapur).

13. God has given everything and His blessings are there. If administered properly, the country and its treasures would last for generations otherwise they will be lost in two years.

14. Treasures in the treasury are for the welfare and satisfaction of troopers. The presence of saucars' treasures is also beneficial by which the enemy forces are discouraged.

From the beginning to the end of my administration, I never kept arrears of pay of the troopers for more than two to three months. In spite of this, I am afraid of my own troopers, more than the enemy forces. They should not be annoyed at any time as they are always helpful and are the strength of the administration.

15. Any undesirable act that may have been committed by me in this old age may be forgiven by the people when new administration takes charge.

16. Ram Das and Mara Pandit deserve killing as they have been trying to dislodge the century-old administration. They are under arrest and should not be released.

17. Skilled people should be posted at the karkhanas.

Now hardly few hours are left. God is your protector.” Nizam-ul- Mulk called his son (Nawab Nasir Jung) and said, “It is no use crying. Due to some measures, certain people are not happy. It is possible that those who have been suppressed may rise again.”²⁵

It is no use crying. It is possible that those who have been suppressed may rise again



In 1748 CE, Chin Qilich Khan, Nizam ul Mulk, the founder of Asaf Jahi dynasty died. His last words were to prove prophetic. Nasir Jung, his son, was going to face violent uprisings, sooner than later.

2.5 ISLAMIC LAW IN INDIA AND DECCAN

Islamic faith emerged in 7th century CE and Muslim rulers invaded India in 11th century when Islamic jurisprudence was slowly sown on Indian soil. However, a tangible perception of Muslim law could be seen during Mughal period in our country. After the collapse of Sultanate of Delhi in 1526 CE, Mughal empire expanded and the emperors showed interest in justice and set up a separate justice department called ‘Mahakum-e-Adalat’ for administration of justice. Muslim law is largely based on Holy Quran according to which King i.e., Sovereign is the faithful servant to carry out HIS Will.

Structure of Courts system

A systematic gradation of courts existed in the capital, districts, Paraganas and villages. At the capital city of Delhi, there were three types of courts:

a) The Emperor’s Court – controlled by the emperor and highest court. It has jurisdiction over both the civil and criminal cases, and supported by Daroga-e-Adalat, Mir Adil & Mufti when hearing the cases as a court of first instance. The Emperor presided over a bench consisting of the Chief Justice (Qazi-ul-Quzat) and other chief justice court Qazis while hearing the appeal.

b) The Chief Justice’s Court – is presided by the Chief Justice and assisted by two Qazies appointed as puisne judges. The Court has jurisdiction and also the discretion to hear civil and criminal cases (original) and appeals from provincial courts. The Chief Justice court had supervisory authority over the Provincial tribunals.

c) The Chief Revenue Court – is court of appeal pertaining to revenue cases, assisted by four officials namely Daroga-e-Adalat, Mir Adil, Mufti and Muhtasib. In addition to these three important courts, Delhi already had two courts. Qazi-e-Askar court was a court that was especially where military matters were determined. The court travelled with troops from place to place.

d) Provincial Courts – divided into smaller units are called Subahs and there Subahs were divided into three types:

1. Adalat-e-Nazim-e-Subah i.e., Governor's Court presided over by the Governor (Nazim) and deal with all matters of Province and hear lower court appeals. The courts were attached with one Mufti and a Daroga-e-adalat.

2. Qazi-i-Subah court – The Provincial Chief Appeal Court coexisted with the court of Governors and heard appeals from the decisions of the district Qazi. It has also original jurisdiction in civil and criminal matters. Mufti, Muhtasib, Daroga-e-Adalat-e-Subah, Mir Adil, Pandit, Sawaneh Nawis and Waque Nigar were the officers attached to this court.

3. Provincial Chief Revenue Court - At the imperial capital, this court was taken over by the Diwan-e-Subah who possessed original as well as appellate jurisdiction. Peshkar, Daroga, Treasurer and Cashier were four officers annexed to this court.

District Courts, called as Sarkars are divided into four types -

District Qazi Court

Qazi-e-Sarkar presided over the district's chief civil and criminal court. This court had the authority to try both civil and criminal cases. The Qazi-e-Sarkar's appeal from this court was the district's chief judicial officer. Daroga-e-Adalat, Mufti, Mir Adil, Muhtasib, Pandit, and Vakil-e-Sharayyat were appointed to this court with six officers.

1. Faujdaar Adalat

This particular court was usually presided over by a Faujdar who had the authority to prosecute riot and state security cases. From this court's rulings, an appeal lay before the court of the governor.

2. Kotwali trial

A Kotwal-e-Shahar presided over this court ruled on all minor criminal cases. That court's appeals lay with the Qazi-e-Sarkar.

3. Amalguzari Kacheri

This court was chaired by an Amalguzar who decided revenue items. An appeal by this court lay with the Adalat of Diwan-e-Subah.

Vakil, Mukhtasib, Chief Qazi and Kotwal were the important officers for administration of justice.

Crime and punishment in Mughal Administration

Two Muslim codes, namely Fiqh-e-Firoz Shahi and Fatwai-i-Alamgiri, governed the judicial procedure. Proof has been categorized into three categories:

1. absolute corroboration
2. single-person testimony
3. admission including confession

The court has always preferred full backing to other classes of evidence. Muslim criminal law classified crimes broadly into three types:

- (i) crimes against Allah (God)
- (ii) crimes against Shahenshah (King) and
- (iii) crimes against individuals.

Trial as occurred in Hindu Period during the Muslim Era was forbidden. The courts have then executed three kinds of punishment under Muslim law for above three kinds of crimes -

i) Hadd (Fixed Penalties)

It is the type of punishment imposed by the law of the cannon that could not be reduced or changed by human agency. Hadd has meant specific punishment for particular offences. Thus it offered a fixed penalty for crimes such as stealing, rape, whoredom (zinah), apostasy (ijtidad), slander and drunkenness as laid down in Sharia law. It applied equally to Muslims and non-Muslims. The State was under an obligation to prosecute all Hadd culprits. Under it no compensation has been given.

ii) Tazir (Discretionary Punishment)

It was another type of punishment that meant prohibition and applied to all crimes not classified under Hadd. All offences against King or the Shahenshah were offences for which Tazir was fixed. It contained offences such as gambling, injury-causing, minor theft etc. Under

tazir the kind and the sum of punishment was left solely with the wish of the judge; which meant that courts had the discretionary power to create new methods of punishment.

iii) Qisas (retaliation) and Diya (Blood money)

In fact, Qisas meant life for life and limb for limb. Qisas has been applied to cases of wilful killing and certain types of serious wounding or mutilation characterized as crimes against the human body. Qisas was considered the victim's personal right or his next kin's right to inflict on the wrongdoer like injury as he had inflicted on his victim.

Administration of justice

The Hindus and Muslims have tried both civil and criminal cases at the Qazis. When attempting the Hindus cases, they were expected to take their customs and use into consideration. They were required to be "just truthful, unbiased to hold trials in the presence of witnesses and at the courthouse and government headquarters, not to acknowledge gifts from the individuals they served, nor to attend any and everybody's entertainment, and they were asked to know poverty as their glory." Despite this ideal, their powers were abused by the Qazis in general and "in Mughal times the Qazis departments became a word of reproach."

The Qazis were mainly judges but also performed other duties to fulfil political, religious, and clerical responsibilities. He acted as a revenue official while performing the function of the "jizya" collection and that of the advertising treasury administration. The registrar's employment in the registry of sale-deeds, mortgage deeds, conveyances, gift deeds, and the like, and the magistrate's recognition of bail-bonds, sure-bonds, certificate farmers, and documents are also relevant to his office. He had also been expected to perform a wide number of varied nature religious functions. His judicial work must have been severely impaired by the huge diversity of functions.

The justice system was criticized for not showing any distinction between public and private law; criminal law was seen as a branch of private law and criminal law was illogical, Diya's clause being unjust as the killer was absolved from punishment by paying money. Minor kin of the person murdered had to wait till the attainment of age of majority to seek punishment to murder or claim blood money.

There was no decentralization of authority that slowly contributed to maladministration of the legal system. Warren Hastings rightly said “the Mughal legal system was a very simple and often barbaric and inhumane structure”. (Ref: <https://blog.ipleaders.in/judicial-system-time-mughals-india/>).

The Mughal legal system was a very simple, often barbaric and inhumane structure



Islamic Law in the State of Hyderabad

To construct the history of law and justice in Deccan and Telangana is no easy task in view of the utter lack of material pertinent to courts and their system of functioning during 14th to 19th century. A great deal of historical material is buried under conflicts, rival claims and misrepresentations of writers. However there has been considerable research work on the socio-political and cultural system then existing and also the legal system followed by Muslim rulers during that time. A lot of material relating to historical facts and administration of justice is yet to be unearthed. According to Dr. Lucky Khan, Hyderabad or the Deccan of the Mughal times consisted of the six Subas namely, Khandesh, Bidar, Berar, Bijapur, Hyderabad, Aurangabad, which were placed under the Viceroy, whoever appointed to the post. For convenience of administration and effective control, the Mughals divided the Subah into administrative division like; Sarkar (district), pargana (smaller division), and the Deh (villages). As the representative of the Mughal emperor, the Nizam followed the same pattern in the Deccan. Another division Mahals was for the fiscal purpose.

It is pertinent to note that Hyderabad State was a ‘Successor State’ of the Mughal Empire and hence adopted the Mughal system of justice administration under the early Nizams subject to the necessary changes according to the needs of time and suited to the local conditions and variations.

Administration of Justice in Hyderabad State or Deccan

During the rule of Sultans, the Prime Minister was invested with the judicial power but the Mughals disapproved this ‘Abbasid’ procedure and later gave up the same. Under the sultans, the department of Qaza or Justice was under the ‘Sadr’ but Akbar was not in favour of giving so

much authority to one person and thus separated the justice from the 'Sadr' which was a sign of separation of judicial powers from revenue powers. The power and duties of the prime minister were limited to the executive matters while those of judiciary to chief justice.

Bashir Ahmad in his 'Administration of Justice in Medieval India' has discussed in detail the nature and pattern of the administration of Justice under the Mughals but there is no substantial study done in order to understand whether there is a break or continuity in the pattern of the administration of justice in the 'successor states'.

In fact, the grandfather of Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah came to India in 1654 CE during the reign of Shahjahan and there had been several frequent appointments and changes by Mughal emperors like Aurangzeb, Roshan Akthar etc. During the reign of Farrukhsiyar (1713-1719 CE), Nizam-ul-Mulk was given the Subedari of Deccan, which he retained till 1713-1715 CE.

Nizam-ul-Mulk, also known as Chin Qilich Kamaruddin Khan, Mir Qamar-ud-din Khan Siddiqi Bayafandi, Asaf Jah, and Nizam I, was the first Nizam of Hyderabad and a loyal nobleman and General of Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb. Following Aurangzeb's death in 1707 CE, the Mughal princes engaged in an accession war, during which Asaf Jah maintained a neutral stance, supporting none of Aurangzeb's sons.

By the first half of the twentieth century, Nizam-ul-Mulk was credited with laying the groundwork for what would become one of the most prominent Muslim governments outside of the Middle East. Hyderabad State lasted from the time of British control till India's independence and upto 1948, and it was by far the most populous. The Mughal Emperors conferred the titles "Nizam-ul-Mulk" and "Asaf Jah" on him, and his descendants reigned as "Nizam of Hyderabad," and the dynasty became known as the Asaf Jahi Dynasty.

The first Nizam (1719-1748 CE) is stated to be the person who tried to maintain the system of administration of justice established by the Mughals. Later, there were changes made by the successors of First Nizam, Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah and also by the British Resident when they came to the Deccan after the signing of the Subsidiary Alliance.

The last Testament of Nizam-ul-Mulk is very significant as it throws

light on the Nizam's views on administration and the other aspects related to the wellbeing of the population. The noble sentiments which Nizam-ul-Mulk expressed in his testament regarding the independence of Judiciary and the responsibility towards it are very significant. He fought against the corruption and endeavoured to weed out the corruptive Qazis. The Nizam was no respecter of ranks where transgression of justice was concerned. Hakim Muhammad Ali Khan, who was the Nizam's personal physician, was taken to task when the former caused intervention in the dispensation of justice.

Briggs Henry George writes that "the original provisions for the administration of justice are as fair and rational under the Nizams, as they are under most other governments. The Darul-Qaza-e-Balda-e-Hyderabad occupied more or less the position of the highest court of appeal. The cases of complicated nature were referred by the Sarkar and pargana courts to the Qazi-e-Balda. The Qazi-e-Balda was appointed by the Nizam. At the time of appointment, the Qazi was conferred with a robe of honor by the Nizam.

Any statement or petition was authenticated by the Qazi with his seal. Every year the statement of revenue and expenditure which was transmitted to the office of Diwan from every village was to be authenticated by the Qazi with his seal.

There were separate office buildings for the Qazis under the Nizam, they were known as either Darul Qaza or the Adalath or Mahkama.

The dais on which the Qazi took his seat was known as Masnad-e-Ahkam-e-Shariat. The attached officers of court were Darogha-e-Adalat, Mufti, Mohtasib, Waqai Nigar and Khufia Nawis. Darogha-e-Adalat was to receive applications to be filled in the court. He was appointed by Royal Sanad-e-Darogha-e-Adalat-e-Badshahi which was issued by Wazir. Mufti gives legal advice or opinion but not to deliver any judgement. Kotwal did his inquiries and referred them to Qazi-e-Balda, he was to imprison or release criminals only if the Qazi so ordered.

In addition to the Darul Qaza, the state had an ecclesiastical court in every city and big town. At Hyderabad, it was known as Sadarath-ul-Auliyah-e-Deccan, presided over by Sadr-us-Sudur. In the Sadarath-ul-Auliyah cases related to religious stipends of such dignitaries as Qazis, Mashaikhs and

Khatibs were decided. These courts delivered oral verdict only, and no appeals against their decision were permitted. Usually the offices of *sadr-us-Sadur* and *Muhtasib* were combined in one person. A Qazi of a city on *Sarkar* could aspire for the post of the *Sadr-us-Sudur* of the city of Hyderabad. A *Muhtasib* performed the duties of religious censor.

In all criminal cases the Muslim law prevailed. In civil cases the Muslim law was applied to Muslims only. Disputes between Hindus were transmitted to a *panchayat* comprising members drawn from the Hindu community only. In criminal cases, if any Hindu plaintiff lost his confidence in any Qazi, he could refuse to file his case before him and could submit a petition to the Nizam to permit him to fill the suit before *panchayat*. This shows that Nizam might allow the *Panchayat* to handle the criminal cases as well. The civil cases filed by the Hindus in the local *Panchayat* were decided by arbitration.

At the *Sarkar* level, there were Qazis to whom the *Amil* ought to refer cases relating to civil cases. The Qazi of the *Sarkar* or *pargana* like the Qazi-e-Balda led the Friday and Eid prayers. He could be promoted to Qazi-e-Suba or even to chief *Muhtasib* or *Sadr-us-Sudur*. Nizam never inflicted death sentence even in the case of treason, *Moru* and *Ramdas* whom, he regarded as the rebels of his dominion were confined in the fort of Ahmadnagar. However, he strongly impressed upon his sons that in their continued confinement lay their wellbeing.

In the administration of Justice, the Early Nizams maintained Islamic law. In fact, the Nizam's dominion, being a part of the Mughal Empire followed the Mughal judicial administration for which the Islamic judicial system served as a model. *Sharia* does not make any distinction between citizens and officers. The position of officer does not accord any person or community from the rigor of the law. By and large, *Sharia* was in Vogue.

Until the capital punishment was abolished by Siraj-ul Mulk, the Nizam's like the Mughals uniformly maintained the Islamic law in respect of punishments. Nizam-ul-Mulk was however, critical of the capital punishment. Therefore, special care was taken by him to inflict capital punishment and prefer only if *Sharia* permitted. The classical exposition of the abolition or prevention of capital punishment is found in Nizam-ul-Mulk's Testament. He advised his sons to be cautious in exercising

the power of inflicting capital punishment. He preferred to hand over the criminal case to the Qazi for a proper investigation and proper trial in accordance with Sharia. His contention was that in inflicting capital punishment the ruler should be sympathetic since human beings are not like barley, wheat and maize which will grow new every year. Nizam-ul-Mulk had a strong disinclination for the capital punishment and he did not suggest it even to those who commit treason.

Khafi Khan remarks “Nizam-ul-Mulk had never moved a hair’s breadth in opposition to the Mughal Emperor, but in all his undertakings, he had shed a new glory on the house of Taimur”. Shahnawaz Khan in his work ‘Masir-ul-Umara’ remarks “The Nawab was one of the imperial nobles at the court of the Emperors of Delhi from the reign of Khuldi-Makan (Aurangzeb) to the death of Firdus Aramshah (Muhammad Shah 1719-1748 CE). For nearly thirty years the six Subas of Deccan were governed under him. He was a remarkable personality endowed with ‘Angelic qualities’ and in his government the fakirs, the learned and deserving people received their share according to their desires.

Hindu Law & Muslim Law remained unchanged

Despite forces for introduction of English notions of Law and Justice into Hindu Law, Hindu Law was not really changed under the influence of foreign laws. English common law was territorial while Hindu Law was not territorial, but depended mostly on religion. Cowell observed: “The laws which Hindus and Mohammadans obey, do not recognize territorial limit. The Shastras and the Koran revealed religion and law to different people each of whom recognized a common faith as the only bond of union, but were ignorant of the novel doctrine that law and sovereignty could be coterminous with territorial limits.”²⁶

The Judicial complexity and advancement in Ancient India are noteworthy and its rich legal works are still considered as pioneers. Kautilya’s **Arthashastra** is one of the tremendous examples. The legacy of such a rich legal system was made more relevant with the coming of the Medieval Period, where India witnessed the ruling of non-Hindu Dynasties on its land (Ref: <https://www.thelawbug.com/the-indian-legal-history-from-the-times-of->).

2.6 THE ECONOMIC TRENDS FROM 1700–1750 CE

The first half of the eighteenth century was witnessing the eclipse of Golconda kingdom and the consequent emergence of Asaf Jahi rule. The previous centuries had witnessed the Mughal rule covering almost the entire Indian subcontinent. Political fortunes of the Golconda kingdom notwithstanding, what we know for sure is that its economy was fully integrated with the Indian sub continental economy. The movement of goods, services and people was quite free across the borders. Economically speaking, it can be reasonably stated that the Golconda economy was a subset of the superset called Indian economy. The same equation continued during Asaf Jahi times as well.

Beyond political rulers, what is more striking is the similarity of the overall policy framework of the two dominions. The state craft, governance, fiscal policies, trade and industries and agrarian scenario in Asaf Jahi kingdom was almost a replica of Mughals ruling from Delhi. Therefore, it can be reasonably deduced that Asaf Jahi economy was a representative subset of the sub continental economy.

**Asaf Jahi
economy
was a
representative
subset of
the sub-
continental
economy**



It must be stated that while various economic trends at sub continental level are available from several sources, a similar exercise has not been attempted for Asaf Jahi economy. It would be appropriate to have a look at these trends for the Indian subcontinent, before looking at its applicability to the Asaf Jahi economy.

Famine and Warfare takes its toll

During the first half of the eighteenth century, the loosely structured Maratha confederacy expanded and stretched from Southern Thanjavuru sweeping western territories all the way up to Sutlej in the North West. There were successful rebellions against the Mughals by Sikhs and Rajput in the northern and north western geographies. In 1739 CE, the Persian invader Nadir Shah captured Kandahar and Kabul followed by his invasion of Delhi. He sacked the city, ordered mass slaughter (Katile-Aam) and after decimating capital's populace, took away its vast treasure back to Persia. The tottering Mughal imperium was given a body blow by Nadir Shah. The warfare was also accompanied, by famines and spread of diseases. "There were

about sixteen serious famines between 1700 CE and 1760 CE, many of them in the northwest and Deccan, and some related to conflict.”²⁷ It was time for regional potentates to break free. The Deccan, Carnatic, Bengal, Gujarat and Awadh became autonomous by the middle of the eighteenth century. The power shift was accompanied by substantial dissipation of men, material and financial resources across the new emerging political boundaries.

The Economic Decline from 1700–1750 CE

The golden age of India's past has been a matter of strong conviction as well as controversy. The travelogues of Europeans to India in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries often described great wealth and opulence as reflecting their contacts with the ruling classes. The apex class certainly enjoyed a luxurious lifestyle, with consumption of high-quality food, clothing and ornaments, as well as imported luxury goods. The middle class consisting of merchants and rich peasants too enjoyed a reasonably comfortable lifestyle. However, most travel accounts of Mughal India and the Deccan also noted that the majority of Indians, especially in the countryside lived in poverty. The labouring classes were seen as living in mud huts with thatched roofs, eating coarse grains, wearing rudimentary clothing and the use of foot wear was relatively unknown. The tropical climate may explain these consumption patterns, but most writers were in little doubt that the population at the bottom of the pyramid lived in poverty.

There is substantial literature, starting from 1595 CE, which charts Indian living standards over time. The reign of Akbar is usually seen as the peak of economic wellbeing and is well documented in *Ain-e-Akbari*, which meticulously reported wages and prices in the region of Agra. Broad berry and Gupta have estimated the Indian GDP from the output side for the period 1600–1871 CE, and combined the figures with the population data. The findings are consistent with a relatively prosperous India at the height of the Mughal Empire during Akbar's reign upto 1600 CE. However, much of this prosperity had disappeared by the eighteenth century. The post Akbar period saw a secular decline of per capita income from a level of 782 international dollars in 1600 CE to 661 dollars in 1750 CE, slightly before the Battle

of Plassey. This shrinkage of around 15.5 per cent during this phase is not insignificant. In the coming century, with the advent of British East India Company, the decline continued unabated from 661 dollars in 1750 to 526 dollars in 1871 CE. This further shrinkage of 20.5 per cent reduction in per capita income of India brought the Indian economy to its knees by mid nineteenth century. These findings are more in tune with the recent revisionist work on Europe, which suggests that Maddison (2007) has substantially underestimated living standards in the pre-modern world.²⁸

**Indian Population and GDP per Capita – 1600-1801 CE
(1990 INTERNATIONAL DOLLARS)**

Year	Millions	Indian GDP per capita
1600	142	782
1650	142	736
1700	164	719
1751	190	661
1801	207	639

Source: Derived from Maddison, 2007, cit.f. Broad berry & Gupta. 2006. p12²⁹

The process of de-urbanisation can also be dated back to 1600 CE. The declining per capita income and de-urbanization were going hand in hand, commencing from post Akbar times.

Urban Population in India – 1600-1801 CE

Year	Population (millions)	Urban share (per cent)	Urban population (millions)
1600	142	15	21.3
1650	142	15	21.3
1700	164	14	23.0
1751	190	13	24.7
1801	207	13	26.9

Source: Visaria and Visaria, 1982, p519³⁰

Most writers seem to accept the idea of a downward real wage trend during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries before recovering during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This pattern was suggested by Mukherjee (1967) and confirmed by Broad berry and Gupta (2006).

Real wages of Indian Unskilled Labourer (1600 –1801 CE)

Year	1871=100
1600	207.9
1650	179.8
1700	171.9
1751	140.7
1801	120.8

Source: Broad berry and Gupta, 2006. p14³¹

It would appear that decline of per capita income, de-urbanization and decline of real wages for unskilled and skilled workers commenced simultaneously from 1600 CE onwards. The unfolding triple tragedy held disturbing portends for the future.

The Indian sub-continent including the Golconda and Asaf Jahi territories, especially to most of the foreign visitors still appeared to be a land dotted with opulence and riches, as viewed from the ruler's court. The overall riches of its people had however shrunk from a high of 24.4 per cent in its global share in 1500 CE to 20.9 per cent in 1750 CE.³² The graph of Indian prosperity was on a slow yet certain decline. The nadir had not been reached yet, at least by 1750 CE. The 'Battle of Plassey' was still some years away.

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3. The Asaf Jahis subjugated by the British

During the period from 1761 CE till 1800 CE, the Asaf Jahi rulers lost more than half of their territories to the British Company. The architect of this major territorial surgery was Robert Clive, the (in) famous Lord of the British. A brief background would be appropriate.

In 1744 CE, Robert Clive arrived in Madras as a teenager to work as a writer (clerk) in East India Company. In 1751 CE, he captured Arcot, followed by Trichinopoly in 1752 CE from the French control. The enriched wonder boy also picked up a bride, before returning to England in 1753 CE.

In 1755 CE, he returned to Bombay and humbled Marathas who were supported by the French at Gheria fort. In 1756 CE, he reached Madras and soon found himself leading a campaign towards Bengal. The famous battle of Plassey not only humbled Siraj-ud-Daula and provided a firm hold to British Company on Indian soil; it also set in motion the eclipse of French influence in the subcontinent. In 1759 CE, Clive plucked northern circars from the grip of the French and Asaf Jahi rulers.

In 1760 CE, he went back to England and returned to India in 1765 CE for the third time. During his stopover at Madras, he looked at the map of India, especially its eastern board and pointed out the need to secure the entire coastline between Calcutta and Madras. As per Clive's design, a sannad was obtained directly from the Mughals at Delhi after bypassing the Nizam. He returned to England but his political design continued to bear fruits. Due to the English policy of sustained thrust, between 1759 CE and 1800 CE, six treaties were forced by the British company upon the hapless Nizams. They related to excision of circar of Masulipatnam in 1759 CE; lease of Guntur circar in November 1766; cessation of Guntur circar in July 1788; double alliance with Marathas and Nizam in July 1790; disbanding of French contingent in September 1798 and finally the treaty of subsidiary alliance in October 1800.

The Clive's dream of securing the entire coastline between Calcutta and Madras, while looking at the Indian map in 1765 CE was achieved within half a century. The successive Nizams were the consistent losers; losing half of their dominions to the British masters.

3.1 ROBERT CLIVE & ANNEXATION OF THE NORTHERN CIRCARS



Robert Clive

In 1744 CE, Robert Clive had arrived in Madras after a long and fateful voyage lasting fifteen months from England. He was eighteen years old and employed to work as a ‘writer’ (clerk), in East India Company.¹ He arrived in debts with no useful connections and was prone to depressions. As a boy, he was adventurous, famously climbing the outside of the church tower in his home town of Market Drayton.

“I have not enjoyed one happy day since I left my native Country...” He found writing up ledgers very dull and eight months after arrival, wrote to his cousin, “I have not enjoyed one happy day since I left my native country.” The perception of Clive was to change suddenly, a year later by the arrival of French army.



After the surrender of Madras, the British had been allowed to leave, provided they gave an undertaking not to fight against the French. Some of the company’s men refused to do this. One amongst them was Robert Clive. He and his companions disguised themselves as Indians by darkening their faces and wearing black stockings on their legs.² They moved south, beyond Pondicherry to the company’s fort at St. David. There, Clive volunteered for military

service. He also continued his private trading business which was a normal and authorized way for the underpaid company's men to make their fortunes. He invested in handkerchiefs and ruffles. He also did well in military by repelling two attacks by the French. He was given a commission as an ensign.

Following the peace with the French, Madras had been returned to the company. Clive applied for a promotion as captain in the company's army but failed. He decided to return to a civilian post, became a steward at Madras, responsible for provisioning the settlement and its garrison. A highly lucrative appointment with plenty of commissions, it also taught him how to provision an army. In 1751 CE, Clive was in charge of the supplies at Trichinapoly debacle. He had returned to Fort St. David and volunteered to join the army without extra pay, provided he was made a captain. He succeeded and shortly afterwards, was given command of the expedition to attack Arcot.

On 22nd August 1751, Clive and his men left Madras towards Arcot, some sixty-five miles away.³ Halfway to Arcot, he learnt that garrison there was far stronger than he had been led to believe. He sent a message to Madras requesting for more cannons, but continued to march. His detachment was hit by a thunderstorm, but Clive's march continued. The enemy was demoralized because they, learning from their spies about undaunted march, in spite of heavens opening up, considered it some sort of super natural force. On the morning of 1st September, he arrived at the gates of the fort. To everyone's amazement, they encountered no resistance. The garrison of over one thousand men had fled. 'The British took over the town. Its population of over one lakh remained calm as Clive's men followed the injunction, 'not in any shape to molest or distress the inhabitants.'⁴

The garrison from Arcot which had fled, soon reassembled and moved their camp closer and closer to the fort. Clive decided to attack them at the dead of night. Most of them were asleep when the British arrived. Before anyone could flee, Clive's men opened fire inflicting huge casualties, before returning back to the fort, without losing a single soldier. By now, two large cannons that Clive had requested had arrived, together with 300 cattle for sustenance.

By now, around 10,000 besiegers around the fort were confronting Clive's 120 European soldiers and 200 sepoys. The very size of the fort, with a mile-long perimeter walls made it difficult to defend. Three times during the siege, the sergeant who accompanied Clive on his rounds was shot dead.⁵ The outlook was grim but help arrived from an unlikely source. A Maratha army with 6,000 soldiers was camped in the hills to the west. Clive asked for them to help and after settling remuneration, they commenced moving towards Arcot. The news spurred the besiegers into action. They delivered an ultimatum to Clive, offering him honourable terms of surrender. Otherwise, they were threatened with storming the fort with a sure death to each man inside the fort. Clive, as ever, held his nerves and didn't give in.

On 14th November, the attack began.⁶ **Clive was well prepared.** Elephants charged towards the fort gate. Well directed musket fire made them turn in panic and trampled their own men. It was said that in one hour, Clive's men fired 12,000 shots. One daring commander was able to advance and plant a flag. Soon afterwards, he was shot and killed. His death demoralized the attackers. Gradually, it became clear that the attempt had failed. Truce was called to collect the dead. The attacking army departed, leaving behind most of their artillery. As the siege came to an end, Clive and his men could smell a sweet success against the French and their allies. A congratulatory message from Madras read, "I am informed the mullahs are writing a history of the wars of Arcot, wherein you will be delivered down to future ages."

Clive returned to Madras, where Stringer Lawrence, a senior officer had returned from England to take command. The later had already shown confidence in Clive. The twosome team, Lawrence and Clive, with their men arrived close to Trichinapoly by the end of March 1752, to confront French (Who else?) and their ally, Chand Saheb. Using a building for cover, Clive managed to move closer to enemy and rake them with his artillery. Chand Saheb's cavalry commander's head was blown off by a canon ball and his men retreated in disarray. Lawrence and Clive entered Trichinapoly.

To the north of the town, the river Cauvery divided into two streams with the island of Srirangam in between the French together with Chand Saheb's men thought it highly defensible and took it over. The British

decided to mount a blockade of the island. The access from the south was sealed and Clive went across the river towards north to stop any supplies reaching the island from Pondicherry. He was nearly killed when a French detachment surprised his camp one night, but they were beaten back. A French relief column from Pondicherry was destroyed by Clive's men. The latter's artillery fire defeated the last of Chand Saheb's troops north of river and also rained havoc upon those camped on the island. The constant barrage demoralized Chand Saheb's men. The French troops surrendered. Chand Saheb was captured and beheaded. Mohammed Ali, the protégé of British was declared the undisputed master of the Deccan. By corollary, British became the king makers. Their wonder man, Clive just 26 years in age was destined to travel far.

After the victory at Trichinapoly, Clive fought a couple of minor battles and then resumed his post at commissariat in Madras. He became ill, due to stomach problem but recovered soon and began to look forward returning to England. He even booked a single passage back home. That is when, fate intervened. Shortly before his departure, Clive married Margaret Maskelyne. She had come out to visit her brother who was one of those who had escaped in disguise with Clive from Madras. It was an impulsive gesture. The couple sailed from Madras in March 1753 and arrived in England in October.⁷ After a decadal stay in India, Clive was now wealthy, having made £40,000 in the commissariat and some extra by his private trading. The newly acquired bride was the icing on the cake.

Shortly before his departure, Clive married Margaret Maskelyne



Clive was in England for eighteen months. He stood for parliament, got elected but was unseated due to political machinations. He paid off most of the mortgage on the family home. The company presented him a sword with a hilt of gold set with diamonds. He was paraded as the poster boy by the East India Company. He entered into a five-year contract with the company to return to India as the Deputy Governor of Fort St. David with the right to eventually become the Governor of Madras. He was also promoted to lieutenant Colonel.

During October 1755, Robert Clive returned to India and reached Bombay carrying three companies of artillery and several hundred British

soldiers.⁸ The company's intention was to move against the French in Deccan, but their authorities in Bombay were busy in capturing coastal forts possessing booty. A small company fleet under Commodore William James had just captured the Angre fort at Suvarnadurga. It just proved that against competent professional leadership, the Marathas were not invincible. Emboldened by the successful thrust, it was time to push ahead against Gheria, a more formidable fort. Commodore James ships were joined in by six ships of Royal Navy along with the landing craft for Robert Clive's 1,400 soldiers. The tested and formidable professional had arrived in Bombay, just in time.

The company's arms reinforced by Royal Navy arrived at Gheria. They found Marathas army already besieging the fort. British, however, were determined to take the fort themselves, even though they were committed to returning it to Marathas afterwards. Smelling the formidable booty, it was rumoured that the British officers had already decided to divide it amongst themselves and their men. The battle opened up with massive barrage from 150 cannons atop British ships. Amidst raging fire, surrender talks began. As per original understanding, Maratha men tried to gain entry into the fortress. Clive's men, as per their own understanding stopped them and took possession of fort next day, all by themselves. The search for booty began. The official value of the seized gold, silver and jewel came to £ 1,30,000 and this was divided among the British. Picking his share of £ 5,000, Robert Clive reached Fort St. David in May, 1756. The enriched plunderer was now second in command in the company, just next to Governor of Madras. His arrival coincided with the brewing crisis for the company in Bengal.

A month before Clive's arrival at Madras, the Nawab of Bengal, whose territories also included Orissa and Bihar had died. His successor and grandson, Siraj-ud-Daula was not quite comfortable with the rising arrogance of company's officials. Calcutta, their baby had grown prosperous just too soon. Its fortifications were continually being enhanced, with or without Nawab's permission. Its size was threatening the Nawab's capital, Murshidabad. He ordered the company to demolish latest improvements to Calcutta's fortifications. Roger Drake, the Calcutta governor dismissed the Nawab's envoy with disdain. The Nawab was

furious. 'What honour is left to us, when a few traders, who have not yet learnt to wash their bottoms reply to the ruler's orders by expelling his envoy?'"⁹

"What honour is left to us, when a few traders, who have not yet learnt to wash their bottoms, reply to the ruler's orders by expelling his envoy?"



Siraj-ud-Daula, moved fast. His army captured Cossim bazar, the company's outpost, overran artillery batteries before setting fire to the town and bazar. Drake lost his nerve, escaped and abandoned many of his garrison. Some were confined in a small dungeon and on the night of 20th June, most of them died from overcrowding and suffocation. The infamous 'Black hole of Calcutta', which were to convulse British consciousness actually consumed more than twenty but less than forty souls. The news of Calcutta's fall reached Madras on 16th August 1756.¹⁰

On 16th October, Robert Clive, commanding a relief operation sailed for Bengal, with 800 European soldiers and 1,000 Indian sepoys. Adverse winds delayed their entry in river Hoogley. On 15th December 1756, the fleet anchored at Fulta, forty miles downstream from Calcutta. With the help of British fugitives, contact was established with Siraj-ud-Daula and his commanders with civil exchange of messages. The strategy was to gain time while waiting for a favourable tide, high enough to enable them to go upstream and reach Calcutta.

On 27th December, 1756, the tide arrived and the expedition moved towards Calcutta. A detachment of Nawab's army was neutralized half way. Advance continued with Clive and the European troops aboard the ships and the sepoys marching along the river bank.¹¹ On 2nd January, 1757, they reached Calcutta. After a brief exchange of fire, the small garrison of Nawab's troops fled. The town was severely damaged. Its bazaar was consumed by fire and European houses and their churches had been destroyed. Clive was determined that Siraj-ud-Daula should compensate the company for its losses. The British warships were sent up the river Hoogley to bombard the fleeing troops of Nawab. As a finale, the British, before departing, plundered and set fire to the town and its surrounding areas.

Siraj-ud-Daula arrived with his formidable army, about 1,00,000 strong. He was shocked by the damage the British had brought and became more belligerent.¹² Clive decided to launch a night attack

on Siraj-ud-Daula's camp with a hope to incapacitate or take away Nawab's cannon. But, due to delays, it was not before dawn that the

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British attacked. The element of surprise was lost and Clive might have been defeated. But heavens intervened as fog descended and provided cover. Clive and his men were able to cut a swathe through the Nawab's camp. They lost 50 men and killed 1,300 of Nawab's men, but failed to capture cannon. Nawab would have fought on, but he received intelligence of a greater threat of Afghan army marching towards Bengal. He promptly agreed to a peace treaty and took his army away. British could not believe their luck and Clive could not be more grateful to the Almighty - God.

Around these times, the seven years' war had started in Europe. News reached India that Britain and France were enemies, once again. Clive was not confident that Siraj-ud-Daula would respect the treaty. He was apprehensive that Nawab might forge an alliance with the French in future to overwhelm the British. He had two possible options before him; either to agree to a treaty of neutrality with French at Chandranagore or to capture that settlement. Nawab had left some troops behind to aid the French, if they were attacked. Clive was the past master in such situations. Nundcomar, the Nawab's representative was bribed to remain neutral in any conflict. After buying him cheap, Clive captured the town and laid siege to its fort. The ensuing battle was hard fought with British losing about 200 men, mostly sailors, on board the ships that were brought in close to cannonade the French. Their efforts were decisive as French surrendered on 23rd March 1757. It was a body blow to the French company, as most of its profit came from Bengal.

Siraj-ud-Daula's relationship with the financial elite of Bengal was rather strained. Nawab had insulted some of them for not being Muslim. But others were concerned about their future, as the financial fortunes came from dealing with the European exporters. Omichand was one of the principal businessmen of Calcutta.¹³ He got in touch with Clive and advised him those powerful bankers in Murshidabad believed that if the Nawab were to show hostility to the British again, it may be polite to have him removed. Suddenly, Mir Jafar was chosen by the conspirators to

replace the Nawab, if British would support Coup-D'État. Clive summoned Omichand, showed him a display of military maneuvers and sent him to report to the Nawab. Omichand complied and told Nawab that Clive intended to attack his capital the next day. As the threat from Afghans had receded, Nawab ordered Mir Jafar to march his army towards Calcutta.¹⁴

Omichand threw matters into confusion by demanding a fat percentage of Siraj-ud-Daula's money and jewels amounting to millions of rupees. It was suspected that he would reveal the plot to Nawab, if not placated. Clive was a man made to tackle such unforeseen situations. He had two documents drafted, a red one for Omichand which would give him Rs.2,00,000 and a white one, the real agreement, with nothing for Omichand. Mir Jafar was told that white document was the genuine treaty and both parties signed both the papers. After diplomatese, it was time for action. On 13th June 1757, Clive marched towards Murshidabad with about 1,000 European troops and 2,000 sepoys and eight pieces of light artillery.¹⁵

Siraj-ud-Daula's army was far more numerous. He had around 40,000 infantries, who were mostly untrained and many were armed with only pikes or bows. There was around 18,000 Afghan cavalry with swords and lances. Finally, they were 50 pieces of artillery. There were very large guns, and operated by French gunners, who having escaped from Chandranagore, were eager to avenge that defeat.

On 20th June 1757, a messenger brought a note to Clive from Mir Jafar. Rumours were rife that Mir Jafar had reconciled with Siraj-ud-Daula and the two had pledged friendship on Quran. The note confirmed it and said that Mir Jafar couldn't fight against the Nawab. However, he and his men would stand aside from any battle. Heavy rains set in. The river began to swell. If British crossed the river, they would find themselves marooned on the island. With Mir Jafar's support doubtful, Clive began doubting the whole enterprise. A council of war was convened. It was evenly divided between those who were against immediate action and those who favoured it. Clive prevaricated. Just then, a letter arrived from Mir Jafar, which gave him hope. It ended, "When you come near, I shall be able to join you. If you would send two or three hundred good fighting men, the upper road towards

Cossim bazar, the Nabob's army would themselves retreat. Then, the battle will have no difficulty. When I am arrived near the army, I will send you privately all the intelligence. Let me have previous notice of the time you intend to fight." Clive replied, "upon receiving your letter, I am coming to a resolution to proceed immediately to Placis." That evening, Clive's army crossed the river.¹⁶

On 23rd June, at 1 AM, Clive's men marching in darkness over the sodden ground reached plassey. The leader had occupied a substantial hunting lodge between the river and the orchard, where his army was encamped. At dawn, Robert Clive stood on the lodge roof and watched the Nawab's army of 58,000 spread across the landscape. A company factor, Luke Scrafton, who was present described the scene, "And what with the number of elephants, all covered with scarlet cloth and embroidery, their horse with their drawn swords glittering in the sun; their heavy canon drawn by the vast trains of oxen, and their standards flying, they made a most pompous and formidable appearance."

At 7 AM, Clive sent a message to Mir Jafar as nothing was heard from him and one was not sure that he would stand aside from the fray. The message read, "Whatever could have been done by me, I have done. I can do no more. If you will come to Dandipore, I will march from placis to meet you. But, if you won't comply even with this, pardon me, I shall make it up with the Nawab." In fact, Clive was firm in his belief that an audacious confrontation might win the day.

The action commenced with artillery fire from both sides. The guns of company were too light to damage the heavy cannon of Nawab. No doubt, some infantry was killed but Clive too was losing his own men. With a much smaller force, he could not afford many losses. He

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withdrew his troops into the orchards. At noon, there was a tremendous thunderstorm. Much of Nawab's ammunition was soaked and their firing became intermittent. Thinking that Clive's men were similarly affected, the Nawab's best commander, Mir Madan charged with his cavalry. The British had protected their ammunition with tarpaulins. As they maintained their fire, Mir Madan was hit and fatally wounded.

The Nawab was deeply shocked by the loss of Mir Madan. He called for Mir Jafar, placed his turban at the traitor's feet and begged him, in the name of Allah to help. Mir Jafar advised Nawab that it was too late to attack that day and suggested to recall his troops.¹⁷ Another conspirator in the loop of Mir Jafar gave the same advice. As Nawab's troops withdrew, Clive went into the lodge to change into dry clothes. Returning refreshed, he summoned his troops and launched another attack. The Nawab's troops, backed up by French artillery counter attacked. Heavy downpour had shifted the strategic advantage in Clive's favour. Nawab's heavy artillery couldn't be drawn in slush by the battery of oxen. Moreover, unable to negotiate slippery terrain, some elephants stampeded. Then, ammunition was soaked and after the loss of Mir Madan, the morale was low. As more officers of Nawab's army were killed, the troops began to lose confidence.

But, Nawab's army, deployed to his right was yet to be drawn in any action since morning. They were quite fresh, so to say. But Clive knew that they were the troops commanded by Mir Jafar and his co-conspirators. All of them remained frozen in their positions. Confident of his conspiratorial deal with Mir Jafar, Clive called the rest of his troops to attack the Nawab's army in front. The later and his soldiers soon realized that they were losing the battle and fled. The Nawab himself took a fast camel back to his capital. By 5 PM, the battle of Plassey was over. For such a massive confrontation, there were very few casualties. The Nawab lost about 500 men. The British losses were only four Europeans and sixteen sepoys.¹⁸

Who was the victor of the day? Was it Robert Clive? No. It was the treachery of Mir Jafar that had won the day. Who was the loser of the day? Siraj-ud-Daula, without any doubt whatsoever.

On the morning after the battle, Mir Jafar visited Clive. The two embraced and Clive hailed him as the new Ruler of Bengal. It was time to discuss money. Omichand, having discovered the superior chicanery of Clive had removed himself from the scene by committing suicide. The treasury was partly emptied by fleeing Nawab and sundry looters and it was not as full as expected. But Clive was a master strategist. It was agreed that Mir Jafar should pay at least half of what had been agreed

before and the remaining balance can be settled in instalments over three years. Seventy-five boats were loaded up, each carrying a large chest containing Rs.1,00,000.¹⁹ They headed down the river Hoogley to Calcutta, escorted by the British Navy and serenaded by music and drums. Clive received money due to himself as Commander-in-chief, as a member of the committee and as privately promised by Mir Jafar. Altogether, it came to nearly a quarter of a million pounds sterling. In all, the equivalent of one year's total revenue of Bengal found its way to Britain. **Plunder of Bengal had commenced.**

What about Siraj-ud-Daula? After the debacle on the battlefields of Plassey, he disguised himself and together with a favourite wife and daughters along with a eunuch, made for Patna where he thought he still had support. He was recognized by Mir Jafar's brother, captured by him and soon brought back to Murshidabad as a prisoner. Within a few hours, he was stabbed to death, his corpse paraded around the city on the back of an elephant, before the final burial.²⁰

Clive's agreement with Mir Jafar had stipulated that the company would be allowed to import and export goods without paying any duty. It allowed company and its employees to undercut the Indian merchants and seize control of much of its trade. Their profits were sent back to England. Economy of Bengal was getting asphyxiated. And, after plunder of its wealth, Bengal's coffers were empty. It was time to replace Mir Jafar with a stronger Nawab. His son-in-law, Mir Qasim was readily available to offer his services. He surely did so by generously rewarding the new governor, Vansittart and his colleagues. Furthermore, several districts of Bengal adjacent to Calcutta were ceded to the company.

Mir Qasim was capable and he tried to improve his administration and army. But the depredations of company's men severely hampered these reforms. The new protégé tried to abolish all duties so as to reopen trade on a more equal basis. He even seized an illegal shipment of arms by company and detained some of its men. How dare a company's appointee even think of even doing so? A company officer attacked Mir Qasim's men at Patna. He was captured. The company declared war, pronounced Mir Qasim unfit to rule and reinstated Mir Jafar as

Nawab. But payment this time was just the half of what was received before. Keeping in view of overall financial stress, the company was quite compassionate to Mir Jafar this time.

Mir Qasim retreated west, linked up with the viceroy of Awadh and the Mughal Emperor. The holy league of faithfuls along with their combined armies were defeated on 23rd October 1764, at Buxar, a town at the western edge of Bihar. As company's shadows extended beyond Bengal, they could dictate terms to the losers. Mir Qasim fled to Delhi and eventually died in poverty.

In 1765 CE, Clive returned to India for third and the last time.²¹ He decided to allow viceroy of Awadh to resume office and give some of his land to the Mughal Emperor. In gratitude, the later bestowed the 'Dewani' of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa on the company. This made them the legal rulers with a right to collect all the revenues. This momentous document was delivered at Benaras by the Mughal Emperor himself. He handed it down from a makeshift throne erected by taking a chair from Clive's tent and put it atop on an English dining table that had been covered with an embroidered cloth. The holy land of Benaras witnessed this not so holy capitulation of Indian ruler to the East Indian Company under Clive in 1765 CE. British rule, along with its compulsive plunder had begun in India.

Holy land of Benares witnessed this capitulation of Indian ruler to East India company under Clive in 1765. British rule had begun in India



And what about Clive himself? In 1760 CE, the hero of Battle of Plassey, had returned with vast fortunes. Back home, he was given an Irish peerage, became an M.P. and was given an honorary Doctorate by Oxford University. But, this time in 1767 CE, Clive returned to England by adding even more precious jewels in the crown. After Buxar war, he was keen to augment his officer's modest official salaries. An Exclusive Company was established whose profits would be distributed amongst company officials according to their seniority. Clive himself was given the largest number of shares. It would have an exclusive monopoly to make whatever profits it could on tobacco, betel nuts and salt. During three years before London forced its closure, it made a profit over Rs. 6 million. Basic wage in Bengal was Rs. 1 or Rs. 2 a month. All this wealth left Bengal for Britain.

**Being
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During his successive forays, the East India Company under Clive's leadership was a consistent winner. The hero of Arcot, Trichinapoly and Plassey was able to transfer unimaginable wealth to his mother country. He was decorated with several titles including that of the 'Lord'. Be that as it may, the so-called Lord Clive is remembered somewhat differently by Indians. Being consistent losers, they simply remember him as the Lord of Plunderers. Quite an appropriate title, is not it?

3.2 ENGLISH ENTER, FRENCH EXIT, NIZAM WATCHES

By mid 1758 CE, Bussy reached Pondicherry along with the entire force as directed by Lally. Clive, the young English commander had humbled Carnatic and obtained a crucial foothold in Bengal the previous year. Eastern coast from Chicacole to Masulipatnam was with French for maintaining an armed contingent to protect Nizam, Basalut Jung. Therefore, the battle for supremacy between the French and English in Deccan was evenly poised. It was watched by all the native rulers with utmost interest.

As French troops headed south, the vacuum in Deccan and Circars unnerved Rajas, especially in Vizianagaram. He never forgave Bussy for his affront on his father's memory. Anand Raju wrote to Clive for sending troops so as to clear French from Circars. The letter reached Calcutta in August. It was at once laid before the council. But Bengal was not yet settled. Mir Jafar's behaviour remained uncertain. If an army contingent had to be sent, it must go to Madras. So, the majority opined that dispatch of such expedition to Vizianagaram would be hazardous.²²

But Clive was different, and so was his way of thinking. He opined that invasion of Circars would compel French to divert their forces from Madras. That would soften seize and would thus help the garrison. Accordingly, Clive over ruled majority opinion and accepted Anand Raju's proposal.²³ Promptly, an expedition consisting of five hundred cavalry, two hundred sepoys, six field pieces, a howitzer and an eight-inch motor was dispatched under Lieutenant Colonel Forde. Leaving Calcutta by September end, the expedition reached Vishakhapatnam on

20th October. The fort was in possession of French. Anand Raju attacked it, took it without difficulty and handed it to the English. It was the first gift offered by Raja of Vizianagaram to English, as their arms joined.

On 1st November, joint armies moved towards Rajahmundry and sighted the French forces on 3rd December 1758 at Gollaprolu. The French under M. Conflaus with heavy encampment were having more guns. English occupied Chebrolu, then moved on to the village of Chandurti, only 4 miles from French camp. French occupied Vodula Penta. Forde opened fire on moving French army and routed them. On 7th December 1758, the famous battle of Chandurti was fought.²⁴ French were beaten and they fled towards Masulipatnam. They could not be followed at once, as some disagreement arose about sharing the spoils between Forde and Anand Raju. It took some time to settle and the march resumed.

The understanding was that the plunder should be equally divided. The conquered countries were to be delivered to Raja and the sea port and the towns at the mouth of the river should belong to the company. English brains were at work in London. Importance of trade through peaceful waterways was considered as an essential ingredient of 'Wealth of Nations'. The famous English author, Adam Smith was to postulate the same, a little later.

On 6th February, armies reached Eluru and neared Masulipatnam by 3rd March. In the meantime, Conflaus, the French commander after his retreat from Chandhuri begged Nizam for help.²⁵ He along with his brother Basalut Jung immediately marched with an army of three thousand men to Bezwada. By now, Colonel Forde had reached Masulipatnam and commenced its seize. With the Nizam's army fast approaching from Bezwada, Forde pushed the seize as quickly as possible. After nine days of hard fighting, the town finally capitulated on the 8th April 1759. Prisoners taken in this war far exceeded the troops. Battle of Chandhuri and taking of Masulipatnam was a crowning glory to English arms and leadership. As English entered Coramandal coast, French was to exit.

The unexpected invasion from Calcutta alarmed the

Battle of Chandhuri and taking of Masulipatnam was a crowning glory to English arms and leadership



French. A body of troops was detached from Madras. It weakened Lally's seize and he was compelled to abandon it. Clive had anticipated it. French troops were to join hands with Nizam's army, but English were in control of Masulipatnam by now. Power had shifted too swiftly. Accordingly, the new equations were bound to emerge in Deccan.

The Hyderabad Nizam, Salabat Jung could see the fresh writing on the wall. He retreated and a treaty was drawn up with English. French alliance was finally relinquished. In this treaty dated 14th May 1759, Nizam ceded the whole of Circar of Masulipatnam, together with eight districts as well as Circar of Nizampatnam and two other districts as an inam or free gift together with the sanads which had been given to the French. Nizam also undertook to drive the French out of Deccan within fifteen days and retire them to the south of Krishna and deny them any settlement in his country in future. Raja of Vizianagaram was to continue to pay tribute in future. Past arrears were however remitted. Both parties agreed that they would not assist the enemies of the other or give them protection of any kind.

This was the first occasion when Nizam was brought into direct relations with English. In return, he received nothing. English occupied a higher position than French. They controlled a long coast line with assured revenue of forty lakhs, without any arms commitment to Nizam. Bereft of any gain, he returned. French troops had already left. Salabat Jung was deprived of the only shield against enemies. His brother Nizam Ali had grown stronger and could not be ignored any more. Salabat Jung had to accept him as his Diwan.

In 1759 CE, Salabat Jung returned to Hyderabad. Nizam Ali, his younger and ambitious brother, though holding the office of the Diwan was the real power at Hyderabad. Both the brothers reconciled and decided to fight against Marathas who had occupied the fort at Ahmednagar. In 1760 CE, the battle of Udgir went in favour of Marathas. Salabat Jung, forced to conclude a treaty ceded the fortresses of Daulatabad, Sevnerece, Asirgarh, Bijapur, a part of Bidar and also the subah of Aurangabad. The territories yielded an annual revenue of more than 62 lakhs of rupees. Soon after this treaty, the Marathas suffered their historic defeat at the battle of Panipat at the hands of Ahmed Shah

Abdali in January 1761 CE. The Peshawa, Balaji Baji Rao, unable to bear the shock died in June 1761 CE.

If Panipat shocked Marathas, the loss of Udgir had shocked of Nizam Ali



If Panipat shocked Marathas, the loss of Udgir had shocked Nizam Ali. It rankled in his heart and he was waiting for an opportunity to take his revenge. Seeing the Maratha grief stricken, weakened and demoralized, Nizam Ali Khan tried to cripple it further by striking at Poona, the nerve centre of Maratha State. He captured Naldurg, destroyed two Hindu religious centres at Toka and Pravara Sangam and also dug up the Scindia Palace at Srigonda for hidden treasures. Madhava Rao, who had just succeeded to the Peshwaship became nervous and appealed to English East India Company at Bombay for assistance. The English promised to help provided certain strategic islands were ceded to them. The proposal could not materialize. Nizam Ali's march continued; so, did his destruction of Hindu temples on the banks of Godavari. The looting of Shadeshwara temple alienated some of the Hindu chiefs, who left Nizam Ali's camp and joined the Marathas.

On the 15th December 1761, the battle ensued at Shrigonda. Marathas had hemmed in Nizam Ali but he continued to march undaunted and reached Dummergaon, a place about 3 cos away from Poona on the 21st December 1761.²⁶ Here, he received the news of the death of Tara Bai, the chief partisan among the Marathas. In January 1762 CE, a treaty was concluded whereby an annual revenue of 27 lakhs of rupees was ceded to Nizam. He returned to Bidar where he was received with great honour by his brother Salabat Jung. In spite of apparent filial bond, Nizam Ali contrived to imprison his elder brother Salabat Jung on the 6th July 1762 and ensured his murder some fifteen months later.²⁷

The treaty of Udgir was haunting Nizam Ali. He started looking towards the rising power of the English, who were equally keen to cheek the overgrown and dangerous power of Marathas. In fact, the company was strategizing for 'driving the Marathas out of the province of Cuttack by joining the Mughal government and attacking them on all sides.' James Alexander, the chief of Masulipatnam tried to get sanads confirming the grants already made by Salabat Jung to Col. Forde. Nizam Ali was averse to confirming these grants but the revenge for Udgir propelled

The peaceful penetration of English in the northern circars had begun in the guise of Hussain Ali's friendship



him to cede the middle circars to English. He deputed Hussain Ali Khan to Madras armed with sanads to procure English assistance. English, in turn entered into an agreement personally with Hussain Ali, without any reference to Nizam. The peaceful penetration of English in the northern circars had begun in the guise of Hussain Ali's friendship.

Nizam Ali, naturally was incensed. He dismissed Hussain Ali and demanded the return of sanad from English.²⁸ They complied with this but retained the fort of Rajahmundry till the expenses of the troops lent by it to Hussain Ali were made good. On 21st June 1763, the expenses were paid-off and the company troops withdrew from the circars. Around these times, Nizam Ali suffered a defeat at the hands of Marathas at Rakshas bhavan in 1763 CE and was forced to conclude a disadvantageous treaty. The disgraced Hussain Ali Khan, thirsting for revenge against Marathas once again looked towards English for assistance.

In 1765 CE, Clive returned. During his stopover in Madras, he looked at the map of India especially its eastern board and pointed out the need to secure the entire coastline. The Forde's treaty with Nizam had given them only Masulipatnam and a few districts as inam. Then, Vizianagar still paid tribute to Nizam as his nominal sovereign. Clive was thinking quite differently, as usual. Nizam was bypassed. Sunnad was applied directly to Delhi's emperor and obtained. The company was jubilant but prudence prevailed and they refrained from publishing it, lest it should raise the ire of Nizam Ali. In 1766 CE, while Nizam was busy in fighting the Marathas, the sanads were published. General Cailland took possession of the circars and occupied the fort of Kondapalli to prevent any aggression on the part of Nizam. Nizam was informed and he hastened to Hyderabad. After fretting and fuming and even thinking of going to war with English, his financial embarrassments brought him to normalcy.

Local facilitation was provided by Kandregula Jogin Pantulu who opened negotiations with Nizam. His role was very crucial. Jogin Pantulu was a well-known dubashee (Fluent in two languages, English and Persian, Telugu being his mother tongue) of the northern Circars.

He had great influence in Hyderabad and was held in high esteem by Diwan Ruknuddaula. Initially Nizam was reluctant. Jogin Pantulu persevered in his attempts. Then Nizam went to Rajahmundry along with his Diwan. Dubashee patiently followed them. There was mutiny in Nizam's troops at Gollapudi as they were demanding salary arrears. Nizam was in a critical situation. Jogin Pantulu, helped by Ruknuddaula persuaded Nizam to lease five northern Circars to the company for a sum of fifteen lakh rupees. He also persuaded Nizam to lease Guntur even though it was to be with Basalut Jung till his death. A treaty was signed by Nizam on 17th November 1766.²⁹

The important document commences thus, "A treaty of perpetual honour, favour, alliance and attachment between the great nawab, high in station, famous as the sun, Nawab Asaf jah Nizam ul Mulk, and the Hon'ble East India Company. Under this treaty the two contracting parties solemnly engaged themselves to mutual assistance and to treat the enemies of one, the enemies of the other and contrariwise, the friends of one, the friends of the other. In return for the gracious favours received from His Highness consisting of the sunnads of the five Circars as a free gift, the British undertook to maintain a body of troops to settle the affairs of His Highness's government and only to withdraw the same in the event of the peace of the Carnatic being threatened, and that only after timely notice to His Highness. As a consideration for this free gift the company undertook to pay for Rajamundry, Eluru and Mustafanagar five lakhs of rupees yearly, and for Chicacole and Mustafanagar, when obtained, two lakhs each, or a total of nine lakhs. Chicacole was to be taken possession of at once, but Murtazanagar, or Guntur, was to remain in possession of the Nizam's brother, Basalut Jung, unless he or his agents should create any disturbances, in which case the company was authorised to take possession at once. The nine lakhs referred to were to be used for the payment of the troops which the company engaged to maintain, and the company was to account to the Nizam for any balance. If the expense should fall short of that sum, but must themselves bear any excess. These troops, however, were to be maintained only when required by the Nizam, and when not required, the payment as fixed above was to be made annually in three instalments. The Nizam promised to give three months' notice

when he required the troops, and on his part, promised to assist the company with his own troops, reserving to himself the same right of withdrawal on necessity occurring.”

**Talented
dubashees
also
persevered
and did their
bit to seal the
final deal**



A weak Mughal Emperor gave sunnads. A weaker Nizam is further emasculated by treaties. On 17th November 1766, English suddenly came to occupy a broad swathe on the eastern coast. Talented dubashees also persevered, and did their bit to seal the final deal. Their multi lingual proficiency did not go waste. It was put to some use, by English at least.

3.3 CESSATION OF GUNTUR CIRCAR

The treaty of 1766 CE between the Nizam and the English, apart from other aspects have agreed to place an indefinite number of troops at the Nizam's disposal, which he could use against any power. Nizam, without wasting anytime requisitioned English help against Hyder Ali. Already displeased with Hyder Ali's policies on the Malabar coast, the English did not require a great deal of persuasion to join the Nizam. In March 1767, the combined troops of Nizam and English went to Srirangapatnam. Peshwas, were also roped in as a partner in this alliance.

Hyder Ali, realizing that odds were against him sued for peace. He agreed to pay Rupees Thirty-one lakh as tribute to Peshwas and also Rupees Eighteen lakhs as peshkash to the Nizam. Nizam, feeling uncomfortable by the treaty of 1766 CE with English was persuaded by his own courtiers who were friendly with Hyder Ali.³⁰ An agreement was concluded between Nizam and Hyder Ali by which the former agreed to recognize Tipu, the son of Hyder Ali as the Nawab of Arcot in place of Muhammad Ali, the protégé of English. Reversal of Nizam's agreement with the English so soon and dismissal of English troops which accompanied him at Mysore disgusted them with his unpredictable behaviour.

English reacted fast and occupied the strategic fortress of Khammamet. Nizam now sent peace overtures to the English through his Diwan, Rukun-ud-Dawla.³¹ English were visionary just as Nizam Ali was petulant. In spite of their frustrations due to flip flop of Nizam, they realised the value of his strategic alliance against the formidable

Marathas. On 23rd February 1768, a new treaty was concluded at Madras.³² Apart from Nizam and English, Nawab of Arcot was also made a party to this joint agreement. Apart from other aspects, the new treaty recognized Muhammad Ali Khan as the rightful ruler of Carnatic and he was released from all dependence on the subedar of Deccan. By this treaty, Nizam lost his grip over Carnatic as well as surrendered circars to the English.

This treaty not only confirmed the provisions of the previous treaty of 1766 CE but went beyond. Grant of northern Circars was confirmed with the exception of Murtazanagar (Guntur) which was to be held by Basalat Jung till his death. Rajas and Zamindars were to recognize the English company as their sovereign in future. The terms of payment were reduced to two lakhs. The stipulation about mutually assisting with troops was omitted. It recognized Mohammed Ali as Nawab of Carnatic and concluded by declaring “Hyder Naik” to be a rebel and a traitor.

On the whole, the treaty was less favourable to Nizam. He recognised the validity of Emperor’s sunnads of which no mention was made in the former treaty. Payments were reduced and finally, he was made to recognize Mohammed Ali as the independent ruler of Carnatic. Advantages gained by English in the short war with Hyder Ali were considerable. Nizam yielded to temptation, broke alliance, faced defeat and entered a less favourable treaty. While repenting it, he never again entertained the slightest idea to even look anywhere except English masters. A chastened Nizam Ali was once bitten, twice shy.

By the treaty of 1768 CE, the English had agreed to the retention of Murtazanagar (Guntur) circar by Basalat Jung during his lifetime. The latter was the younger brother of Nizam Ali and resented the usurpation of all powers by him. The silent animosity between the blood brothers had witnessed misalignment of their perspectives. As Nizam Ali entered in alliance with British, the French troops dismissed by him found employment with Basalat Jung. The location of Murtazanagar was strategic as it broke the continuity of line of communication from Madras to Ganjam. The English Company was keen to control Guntur circar. With this object in view, certain negotiations were opened with Basalat Jung in 1772 CE, which proved abortive.³³

In 1775 CE, the English became anxious about their possessions due to presence of French troops under Basalat Jung.³⁴ The English moved the matter with Nizam and solicited his help to induce Basalat Jung to do away with the services of the French. Nizam responded in a positive manner but reminded English about the treaty wherein company had committed not to take possession of Murtazanagar till the death of Basalat Jung. The Nizam also appealed to Basalat Jung not to employ the French in his service. As Nizam got engaged with Marathas, his advice to Basalat Jung went unheeded.

In the meanwhile, Hyder Ali's aggressive postures created apprehensions in the mind of Basalat Jung. He approached English directly and an agreement was reached on 27th January 1779.³⁵ It enjoined Basalat Jung to dismiss French from his services, release Guntur circar to English for a certain rent and the English promised to assist him with troops and defend his territories. The English, in turn leased the Guntur circar to the Nawab of Carnatic Mohammad Ali for a period of ten years. The Nizam on hearing this arrangement without his knowledge was incensed against English. He promptly started engaging the French soldiers, dismissed by his brother. Fearing the antagonism of Nizam, Mr. Holland was deputed to his court to conciliate and convince him of English friendship and sincerity towards him. He reached Hyderabad in April 1779.³⁶

Nizam's annoyance was conveyed to higher authorities in the Bengal government. The English, on account of their hostilities with Hyder Ali needed the Nizam's support and friendship. Hence, Warren Hastings, the British Governor General wrote a placating letter to Nizam while severely condemning the action of the Madras Government. Orders were also passed for the immediate restitution of the Guntur circar. Nizam was mightily pleased.

In the year 1782 CE, Basalat Jung died. The Nizam ordered his officers to seize the Guntur circar because English had not yet settled the arrears of tribute due to him from circars. In 1784 CE, Mr. Johnson, the English representative met Nizam and found him greatly dissatisfied with the Alliance. He wrote, The Nizam, would have remained as I found him fearfully polite and hearty inimical. He alleged the English

policy to have been unjust, though successful through force. He stood deprived of his rights. Johnson tried to prevail upon his higher ups to see the logic of Nizam Ali. They did not agree and Johnson was called back. In the meanwhile, Warren Hastings left India, and he was succeeded by Lord Cornwallis as the new Governor General.

The court of directors instructed the new Governor General to take up the question of Guntur circar immediately after reaching India. But he temporized. In 1787 CE, he wrote, "The business of the Guntur circar is very delicate one, and requires the most mature reflection. Our demand of the Circar from Nizam in the hour of his distress would not only appear ungenerous but would undoubtedly hurtle him in the negotiation for a peace with Tipu."³⁷

In 1788 CE, the atmosphere became more favourable. Peace prevailed between the court of Versailles and London. The Nizam and Marathas had forced Tipu to conclude the treaty of Gajendragan. Tipu was not expected to embark into hostilities so soon after entering into the latest treaty. All these factors made Cornwallis depute Capt. Kennway, a gentleman well acquainted with the country, languages and customs; to the Nizam's court. He demanded the cessation of Guntur circar based on the force of his arguments. Cornwallis had also made necessary military preparations to meet any unforeseen situation. The Nizam was helpless against the twin aggression. Unable to withstand the English demand, he ceded the Guntur circar to the company in July 1788.³⁸

He sent Mir Alam to Calcutta to negotiate the question of arrears due from the company. After setting the arrears, Cornwallis wrote his famous letter to the Nizam on the 7th July 1789. Cornwallis gave a new interpretation to Article VI of the treaty of 1768 CE, that empowered the Nizam to receive English support, the support that he failed to get against Marathas. Cornwallis now interpreted the clause as meaning that the English military support would be given to Nizam, only against those powers who did not happen to be the allies of the English. Nizam had to remain content with this new interpretation. Victors prevail in an armed combat; so, they do while interpreting treaties.³⁹

**Victors prevail
in an armed
combat, so
they do while
interpreting
treaties**



Nizam Ali humiliated at Khurdla

The British alliances with Indian Princes were made with a certain strategic objective. However, the Indian Princes, especially Hyderabad rulers excelled in tactical maneuverings. The manner of taking away Guntur circar had left a bad taste behind. So, he simultaneously opened negotiations with Tipu's court. In 1787 CE, Nizam's emissaries reached Srirangapatnam. Tipu added a condition of matrimonial alliance between his own son and one of the nieces of the Nizam in order to cement this political alliance. Tipu's father, Hyder Ali had begun life as a soldier from common stock. But Nizam claimed a long line of descent from The Prophet. Negotiations broke off much to Tipu's disgust. One Hafizjee, at Srirangapatnam had been the ambassador and he became special object of Tipu's hatred since then. As the negotiations broke down, the offer of Cornwallis looked that much more attractive.

To avoid any misunderstanding between Nizam and Marathas, the English now proposed fresh alliances with each one of them through separate treaties. On 29th March 1790, the Marathas were bound by English. On 4th July 1790, yet another treaty with Nizam was signed at Pangal.⁴⁰ This double Alliance of 1790 CE was meant to confront and reduce their common enemy, who happened to be Tipu at that moment. Tipu, realizing that he would soon be hemmed in by all these powers tried to wean away Nizam and Marathas from this alliance, but all his efforts were in vain.

The double alliance was put soon into action. Cornwallis, not to leave it to any chances himself led the operations. The Nizam's army was accompanied by Capt. Kennway. His own son Prince Sikander Jah soon joined the operations. The siege of Srirangapatnam commenced on 15th February, 1792,⁴¹ and finding that odds against him were heavy, Tipu signed a peace treaty on 24th February 1792.⁴² This was followed by cessation of hostilities. Tipu agreed to surrender to the allies over half of his dominions and to pay an indemnity of three crores and thirty lakhs of sicca rupees. Nizam's share in this treaty included the territories of Gurramkonda, Cuddapah, Gandikota, Kambam, Bellary and the districts between the rivers Krishna and Tungabhadra. Accession of this valuable territory enhanced Nizam's prestige and it pushed him deeper into English embrace.

Tipu's scorn for the Hafizjee was also avenged. During the campaign, Nizam's contingent was passing through his old possessions in Cuddapah. An important fort was Gurramkonda where Hafizjee found himself alone. As the fort fell, Tipu dispatched an army of twelve thousand men under his own teenaged son Futteh Hyder assisted by Ghazi Khan and Ali Raza. This army surprised Hafizjee who was taken prisoner to pay for Tipu's scorn. He was stripped naked, taunted and mocked before finally been put to cruel death. Lest we forget, Futteh Hyder was the same young prince for whom Tipu had desired a Hyderabad bride. Hafizjee failed in this matrimonial mission for Sultan's son. Tipu avenged it, in some manner.

**He was
stripped
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cruel death**

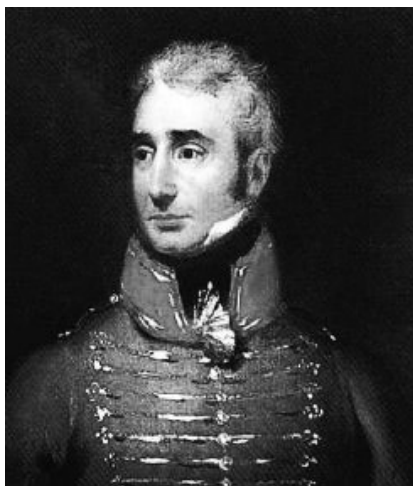


The series of incessant campaigns against Hyder Ali, Marathas and now Tipu had an adverse impact upon the economy and general prosperity of the country. Severe famines and scarcities had brought miseries untold upon the general populace. Rice was sold at the rate of 2 seers per rupee, and there were frequent riots among the people. On the 15th June, the people continued their riots up to the limits of Golconda, plundered the bazaars, burnt the gates of Golconda and even surrounded the Nizam's palace. They retreated only when armed forces were used against them.⁴³

The eighteenth century in the history of India is very bleak. It is a period that presents a picture of petty jealousies and intrigues among the Indian Princes. Added to this, the active power politics of the English and the French East India Companies made the political conditions in the country very fluid.

The bond of unity remained intact till operations were going on against Tipu. But once he sued for peace and the allies got their share of booty, it was time for old hostilities to be revived. Marathas had never renounced their claim for Chauth and sardeshmukhi since its grant by Saiyyad brothers in 1714 CE. Nizam preferred to ignore it and Marathas also let it lapse for some time. But, it was never given up and whenever the appropriate situation cropped up, Marathas demanded all the arrears of Chauth and sardeshmukhi from Nizam. Nizam had

no other choice but to look upon English help to remove this Maratha albatross round his neck. To reinforce his position, Nizam had raised a European detachment under the command of Mons. Raymond. On 12th February 1794, young Mohodjee Scindia suddenly died. He was by far most powerful and ambitious prince. He over awed the Peshwa himself. Nizam, smelling an opportunity declared war. British found it impossible to lend him any forces and the Resident, Captain Kirkpatrick used his battalions just to preserve internal peace whilst Nizam's army was engaged in the campaign.



Captain Kirkpatrick

Trained contingents on either side created a strange spectacle of French officers fighting on both the sides, in some instances aided also by private English adventurers. The residents at both the courts also accompanied the armies. Sir W.C. Malet was with Peshwas and Captain Kirkpatrick with Nizam. The two armies met midway between forts of Parendra and Khurdla near the river Manjera. It was almost a skirmish, ending in some night firing, followed by panic and the flight of Nizam's troops. Raymond's infantry stood firm. But as Nizam's cavalry retreated, he ordered Raymond to return, which he did most reluctantly. He was preparing to fight the next day.

An accident occurred during the night. A small patrol of Marathas came in search of water for their horses. Nizam's troops intercepted and firing commenced. Raymond's troops who were close by, loaded

their muskets and commenced firing. As alarm of a general attack was raised, Nizam escaped in haste and took refuge in the small fort of Khurdla. Marathas surrounded the prized catch. Nizam was released after three days, only when all Maratha demands were met. Capitulation of Khurdla on 11th March 1795, dealt a crushing blow to Nizam's power.

**Capitulation
of Khurdla on
11th March
1795, dealt
a crushing
blow to
Nizam's power**



Historians have questioned his courage on this occasion.

As it was usual for the Mughals, Nizam was accompanied by his harem to the battle field.⁴⁴ One account says that the Nizam's favourite wife, Bakshi Begum was frightened by the booming of the cannons and at the sight of men falling down dead. So, she called the Nizam and threatened him saying that she would expose herself to public gaze, unless he retired to Khurdla. Apart from the anxiety for safety of his ladies, Nizam's army had two contingents of women. They were called 'Zafar Paltans' or victorious regiments. They were generally used as guards for the palace, especially zenana. They were regularly armed and drilled by French. They went through the exercise with many shouts of amusement and much laughter. Nizam accordingly complied and retreated to a small fort at Khurdla. Trapped in this way, Nizam had to submit to most humiliating terms. He had to yield a large slice of western portion of his dominion including Daulatabad, Ahmednagar and Sholapur with a revenue of thirty-five lakhs rupees and an indemnity of three crores. He also had to send to Poona court his principal minister Azim ul Umrah as hostage before the fulfilment of this treaty. Poona's plunder in 1761 CE was avenged by Marathas in 1795 CE at Khurdla.

The unfortunate war took its toll. Nizam was bitter and disappointed for zero English support who were in his pay. He told the Resident that their services are not required. English forces were withdrawn. British influence plummeted. Nizam, after war decided to entirely depend upon French troops to confront the growing power of his arch rivals, Marathas.

Extrication of French Pheonix

During the Khurdla episode, the Nizam possessed a body of well trained and disciplined troops, commanded by Monsieur Raymond, a remarkable French man. His brief background is as follows:



Monsieur Raymond

In 1775 CE, Michel Joachim Marie Raymond came to India at an age of twenty. His father was a merchant who sent him with a consignment of goods to Pondicherry. He sold, earned profit and resolved on a career of adventure. Starting as sub lieutenant in Hyder Ali's army, he fought British in Trichinapoly. In 1783 CE, he joined Bussy when he came to India for the second time. Bussy had grown obese, stout and was in poor health and had no energy of his younger days. In January 1785, when Bussy died in Pondicherry, Raymond went to seek employment in Deccan. He joined the French corps at Guntur with Basalut Jung. After five years, the corps was dissolved and passed on to Nizam Ali at Hyderabad. Raymond was placed at the head of this force. He injected efficiency, dynamism, discipline and purpose in his men. In 1795 CE, it consisted of fifteen thousand men and one hundred twenty-four European officers. Raymond was assigned a few districts near Bidar whose revenue ensured regular payment to troops. The corps possessed storehouses, workshops, arsenals, gun foundries powder mills and was self-sustaining in all respects. Malleson thus sums up Raymond's character: "No adventurer in India ever stood higher than he did. He was brave, magnificent, generous, affable and vigilant. To great abilities, he united the most consummate prudence. The one dream of his life was to carry out by the means still open to him the schemes of Dupleix, of Lally, and of Suffrin. He deserves to be ranked with those illustrious warriors in the hierarchy of patriotic

Frenchmen". It was upon this disciplined force that Nizam principally depended in the approaching struggle with Marathas.

Nizam Ali had become old, sick and infirm. After Khurdla episode, he became bitter and disappointed. English forces were withdrawn. As French battalions advanced, the British resident protested. Nizam disregarded them and sent French corps to occupy the districts of Cuddapah and Cumbum. They bordered Madras presidency. An alarmed Governor General wrote, "The measure itself had a suspicion, not to say criminal appearance" and the strongest representations were ordered to be made to Nizam to recall the French detachment. In case of refusal, Nizam was threatened with march of English troops to his frontier.

Moreover, Nizam's advanced age was giving ideas to younger and excitable nobles. Misled by them, Nizam's eldest son Ali Jah rebelled, fled to Bidar and was soon joined by a number of dissatisfied chiefs. Sadashiva Reddy, the zamindar of Medak supported the prince. The sudden rebellion achieved a few successes in a short time. That attracted more followers and the Prince advanced toward Aurangabad. Raymond with his disciplined corps put down the rebellion. Prince was pushed back to Aurangabad, chased and captured. Nizam dispatched his minister to bring the rebellious son back to his presence. During the long journey, the minister ordered the Prince's elephant's howdah to be covered with a veil or purdah, as in the case when women travel. Call it shame, indignity or fear to meet his enraged father, Prince Ali Jah poisoned himself to death on 22nd November 1795. He could never return to the capital from where he was dreaming to rule just a few days ago.⁴⁵

French influence, rose like phoenix in Nizam's court. But, the hand of providence was against French. When success seemed almost within their grasp, tragedy struck. On 25th March 1798, Raymond suddenly died.⁴⁶ Destiny was playing strange games at the close of eighteenth century. It was to impact the future of Hyderabad. Piron succeeded Raymond. A man of modest tacts and reduced influence over his troops, his command over Nizam was limited. And, the Marquis of Wellesley was to arrive as British Governor General in India. The long voyage, had given him ample time to reflect and resolve. At Cape of Good Hope, he confabulated with Captain Kirkpatrick at length, who

had come from Hyderabad to recover his health. The incumbent was thus thoroughly posted with the conditions of Deccan. Therefore, when the new Governor General landed in India, he had already resolved to crush the power of Tipu, once and for all.

A look at geo-political map of the country, especially Deccan would be appropriate. Three great powers in this period were Tipu, Nizam and Marathas. They occupied the whole of territory from Carnatic up to Delhi with a long line of sea board on western coast extending from Cochin to Gujarat, excepting the Portuguese ports and the British dependency of Bombay. On the eastern coast, the provinces of Cuttack and Orissa divided the Madras presidency from Bengal and afforded an outlet to sea. Carnatic was with British, its nominal ruler Mohammed Ali staying mostly at Madras, totally under British influence. Tipu had grown powerful and looked menacingly dangerous. Husbanding his resources, sharpening his army, burning with revenge to recover his lost territories in 1792 CE, he looked upon French as his natural allies. Then, Tipu had taken some two hundred volunteers into his service from Isle of France. British, being their hereditary rivals just couldn't digest it.

Nizam, though reduced in his territory, power and influence, was still in possession of an extensive kingdom. After Khurdla episode, his stock was low. Left to himself, he may have aligned with Tipu, just to confront his arch rivals, Marathas. The latter were controlling more extensive territory. But internal jealousies debilitated their collective strength. By now, they had built up large claims of arrears upon Nizam and were ready to enforce its payment through arms.

In such a triangular power equation, the new Governor General was instructed to maintain balance of power as it stood in 1792 CE at the close of first Mysore war. But the balance had been materially altered by the Khurdla catastrophe. Nizam was the weakest link in this power triangle in Deccan. And he was helped by the ambitious French General, Napoleon, and their dreaded enemy who had astonished Europe by his sudden victorious burst.

The new Governor General, Lord Wellesley first decided to dissolve the French contingent at Hyderabad and substitute it with an English subsidiary force to prevent Nizam from joining hands with Tipu.

The Resident was directed to use every persuasion with the Nizam to disband French contingent. Minister Azim ul Umrah was partisan to English. Nizam was clueless. Then, the Marquis took a bold decision to remove Nizam's doubts. He pledged himself to support Nizam against any unjust demand from Marathas and increased British troops from two to six battalions. He was risking offending Marathas. But French troops had to be extricated from Deccan. On 1st September 1798, this treaty was signed and Nizam agreed to disband the French corps.⁴⁷

Disbandment of fourteen thousand men was bound to generate discontentment. Raymond, their brilliant leader was no more. As his successors excelled in rivalry, men were mutinous due to pay arrears. Nizam was reluctant to use force against his erstwhile saviours. But it was a cruel duty and British performed it as a matter of necessity for their own survival. It was humiliating, both to the French party and the Hyderabad court.

Resident Kirkpatrick and Major Malcolm completed arrangements for the disbandment. Fresh English brigades had just arrived. They covered the front and rear of the French camp. Compressed from all sides, mutiny broke out amongst men. Piron, their commander was seized. When Malcolm reached the lines, violence was at its peak. They crowded tumultuously around him and threatened with violence. But some mutineers belonged to Malcolm's company who after deserting had joined the French corps. They knew him well, remembered his kindness, gathered around, and lifted him up on their heads and rescued him from the grip of infuriated mob. Malcolm returned safe but mutiny spread. Force had to be used and that is what British commanders did the very next day.

Malcolm led a party of fifteen hundred horses to meet the French sepoys. Captain Green with five hundred horses had covered the other side. French sepoys were in an extreme state of alarm. They feared attack, but Malcolm assured them protection. A deputation of subedars came out and declared that they were ready to do anything that was ordered. Malcolm assured them safety and protection if only they laid their arms in peace. By now, French officers were released by mutineers and they had joined Malcolm, who drew up his detachment on the heights fronting

**Not a shot
was fired,
Not a drop
of blood was
shed and
12000 armed
men thus,
dispersed in a
few hours**



the French lines. Suddenly, English looked as friends and deliverers. The sepoys left their guns, laid down their arms, carried their property and moved out with their families. Not a shot was fired. Not a drop of blood was shed.

Twelve thousand armed men were thus dispersed in a few hours.⁴⁸ And by sunset, the entire cantonments with all their arsenals, store houses, guns, foundries and powder mills were in the British possession. The celebrated French corps of Hyderabad had passed into history.

As French troops were extricated from Deccan, Nizam threw his lot with the British. He trusted their protection and was solely guided by their advice. The decisive power shift created a profound sensation throughout India. Ground was now ready for the new Governor General to realize his dream, which was to crush the power of Tipu, once and for all.

3.4 CESSATION OF CEDED DISTRICTS

After disbanding French contingent, British were poised for a war with Tipu. Peshwas as one of the signatories of the Tripartite treaty of 1790 CE were expected to help them. But Bajji Rao estimated Mysore hostilities to prolong, as in the past. He was rather reluctant to join the fray too soon and therefore waited. But, he waited, for rather too long.

In the meantime, British forces in Hyderabad with six thousand five hundred men with an equal number from Nizam's army marched towards Mysore. They joined the main army under General Norris at Vellore. Lord Wellesley had come down from Calcutta to Madras and was supervising in person. He proposed to send ambassadors. Tipu refused to entertain them. War was declared. A second British army advanced from the western coast. All arms combined and seized Srirangapatnam. Tipu had thrown himself within its fort. Assault was kept ready, delivered and Tipu fell, fighting bravely till his last breath. In 1799 CE, the Mysore tiger was defeated and his dominion was divided.⁶⁰ The central portion was made over to the same Raja whom Tipu's father, Hyder Ali had displaced. The remainder was subdivided between allies. The partition treaty was bound to be equal for Nizam

and more than equal for English. The areas procured by the British were richer and more strategic while the residuary areas were given to Nizam. Marathas got almost nothing from this deal.

The great enemy of British power in Carnatic who allied with Napoleon was annihilated. In the Deccan, Nizam had become their devoted ally. He looked upon them for support against his rival, Marathas. The latter still ruled from Poona to Delhi, but it was a house divided and therefore doomed to ruin. From Carnatic to Cape Camorine, British influence was supreme.

British were ascendant, but not complacent. Wellesley, realizing that the showdown with Marathas was inevitable, entered in yet another treaty with Nizam on 20th October 1800. It is popularly known as the Treaty of Subsidiary Alliance. It records, "The affairs of the two nations should be considered as one and the same in interest, policy, friendship and honour." British agreed to add to the already existing subsidiary force in perpetuity two battalions of sepoys of one thousand each, regiment of cavalry five hundred strong and a due proportion of guns and artillery men, so that the whole force should consist of eight thousand firelocks, two regiments of cavalry (or one thousand horses) with the requisite artillery fully equipped to be stationed in His Highness's territories.

In order to ensure punctual payments to this enlarged army, Nizam ceded in perpetuity four big districts viz., Ananthapur, Bellary, Cuddapah and Dharmapuri (also called ABCD districts). In the event of a war, he agreed to support the above force with not less than an equal number of infantry and nine thousand cavalries, so as to form an army of a strength of twelve thousand infantry, two battalions of the infantry being reserved for the defence of His Highness's person apart from and ten thousand horses, and to furnish as many more, as he possibly could. A similar obligation rested upon the company. This is an important clause because it was to form a ground later for establishment and maintenance of the Hyderabad contingent.

The Nizam undertook not to enter into negotiations with any other power without consulting the company, to commit no act of hostility against any power whatever, and to submit all differences to the company's government for adjustment. In their turn, the company declared that they had no manner of concern "with any of His Highness's children, relations subjects or servants, with respect to whom His will is absolute."

This treaty was a complete break from the past. In former treaties, there was an alliance. British provided troops. Nizam paid for them. No cessation of territory was mentioned anywhere for payment of these troops. Troops could be deployed when needed and also dispensed with. In 1795 CE, Nizam actually dispensed them after Khurdla campaign. In 1798 CE, this subsidiary force increased substantially but still no arrangement was made for their pay by assigning any territory. But now there was a solid increase in troops, cavalry and equipments. And, concrete arrangement was in place for their assured payment by assigning four large districts. This was not an alliance. This

This was a 'Subsidiary Alliance' entered by Nizam with the Principals, British in Oct 1800 CE



was 'Subsidiary Alliance' entered by Nizam with the principals, British in October 1800.

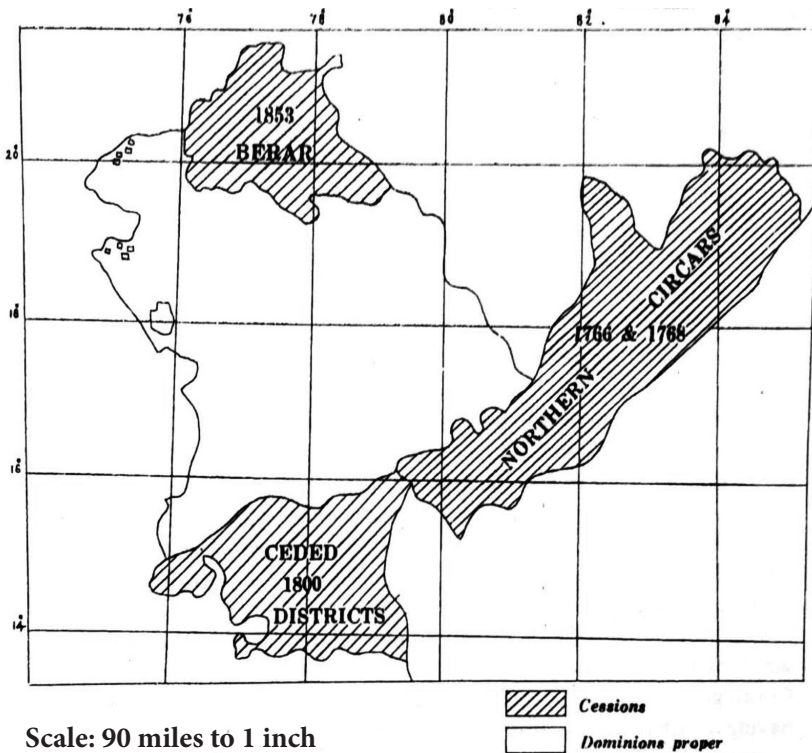
It was certainly the fruition of a successful British policy. Its preparation was afoot for quite some time. On 6th November 1799, a secret dispatch was sent to the Resident, wherein the treaty was outlined. But he was strictly enjoined not to approach Nizam at once, but to wait until his decease should appear to be imminent

and then to make the execution of this treaty a condition of placing his son, Secunder Jah, on the throne. The dispatch continues, "Such is the outline of the terms upon which I propose to support and maintain the succession of Secunder Jah, whether he would obtain the previous nomination of his father or not, or even if it should be pretended that His Highness had declared in favour of some other of his sons. You will prepare without delay an instrument in the Persian language in conformity to the foregoing outline, in order that Secunder Jah (at the moment of his father's death, or when that event shall appear to approach) may be apprised of the terms on which we are ready to support his cause and may be enabled, by immediately executing a formal instrument, to accede to my propositions in a regular manner. Secunder Jah must not be allowed to procrastinate in his determination. If at the end of a stated and short period he should not determine to accept the preferred treaty, you will proceed in concert with Azim ul Umrah and Meer Alam to place one of the younger sons of the Nizam on the Musnud, previously stipulating that the Prince succeeding to the Musnud shall fulfill all the

conditions of the treaty proposed to Secunder Jah.”The mailed fist of the British left no chances for anyone else to succeed, except themselves.

The treaty of 1,800 CE reduced Nizam to the position of a subservient ally. He not only lost his external sovereignty but his internal suzerainty was impaired to a great extent. The English forces, came to be known as Subsidiary Force. It was a great and perpetual drain upon the economy of the country. In the year 1802 CE, the British entered into a commercial treaty with the Nizam. It was agreed that the goods produced or manufactured in the territories of either power should be allowed to enter the territories of the other on payment of a 5 per cent duty. The duties on the British imports were to be levied at Hyderabad and from henceforth, they were exempted from all other rahadari duties.

Rough map of the Territories assigned by Hyderabad to the British Crown for Defence Purpose



Source: Noorani, AG, 2013, p21

In August 1803, Nizam Ali died. Mr. Briggs writes, “So passed an eastern monarch, evincing great promise in early years for usefulness

from his energetic character, but who, with increasing years, relapsed into that apathetic life which seems peculiar in an oriental climate. His career would have been one of uninterrupted success but for the disaster at Kurdalah; and that no other great calamity overtook him must be attributed to his alliance with the British Government. He was the first of his family who sought the English; and that he did not make more out of his connection was, whatever may be asserted to the contrary, in consequence of his unbounded faith in his ally. He is said to have excelled in duplicity, and that he should more than once have been caught

“You found the influence of the British in the Deccan gone. You have planted its power in the very centre of the mountains which hold India together”



breaking faith with the Marathas is not so surprising as the assertion of his minister, Rukun ud daulah, that his master had been thrice duped by the Marathas”.

In 1803 CE, Lord Wellesley sailed out of India. He had reasons to be satisfied having accomplished far beyond he had resolved when he sailed in via Cape of Good Hope after confabulating with Colonel Kirkpatrick, the Resident of Hyderabad in 1798 CE. His statesmanship had decisively brought the wavering Nizam Ali into the firm grip of British as their Faithfull Ally. No wonder,

Sir John Austruther wrote to him, “You found the influence of the British in the Deccan gone. You have planted its power in the very centre of the mountains which hold India together.”⁴⁹

3.5 MAHALAQA CHAND – A COMET IN THE DECCAN SKY

Asaf Jahi rule in Hyderabad State from its inception in 1724 CE till the arrival of Salar Jung in 1853 CE constitutes a distinct and important watershed in Deccan’s history. Political contours during the reigns of successive Nizams had been studied at length by several authors, but the description and appraisal of women’s role within the socio-political matrix is rather scanty and mostly invisible. This is quite poignant in view of the famous Mao Tse Tung’s assertion that women on the planet earth hold half the sky. If that is true, then their participation is a must in various areas of human endeavour. With this objective in view, an effort has been made to unearth their contribution. Those times were difficult. The polity was unstable. Ruler’s authority as well as their territories were

shrinking. In spite of these uncertainties, a couple of women dazzled like comets in the sky. The axis of their achievements is purely based on their individual merits. Their story from rags to riches is quite fascinating.

During the first half of eighteenth century, Zohera in the Moghul's court at Delhi and Baji Rao Mastani at Peshwa's court at Poona had already made their mark amongst the high and mighty. During the second half of eighteenth century, two women poets rose on Hyderabad horizon as first-rate poets in both Persian and Urdu. The first is Lutf Unnisa Imtiyaz Aurangabadi, wife of the poet Asad Ali Khan Tamanna Aurangabadi. She composed her Urdu Diwan at Hyderabad. It shows that she had full command over Persian and Urdu language and literature. She praised the ruler Asaf Jah-II, she wrote Qasida, Ghazal, Mathnawi, Rubai, Qita and Musaddas etc. The second poetess was Mahalaqa Bai Chanda. She, being a unique and phenomenal personality needs appropriate coverage. Before delving deep in the achievements of Mahalaqa Bai, a brief background regarding ecosystem of Courtesans would be appropriate.

Courtesans

Courtesans, in Indian context, can be defined as women who are paid to dance in royal courts for the entertainment of royalty. These women were financially independent, and there were many who had high status within society due to their beauty and talents. They were also considered carriers of culture because besides dancing, they had to be proficient in other skills such as painting and singing.

This institution came to an end with British colonial rule and the end of Nawabi patronage. The British divested them of their earnings and forced them into the abysmal ghettoized life of red-light areas which ultimately resulted in the birth of the tawaif or prostitute with all its negative connotations and exploitations. This image of the Tawaif was further strengthened by iconic Bollywood nautch girl through a series of popular films like *Mugal-e-Azam* (1960), *Pakeezah* (1972), *Umrao Jaan* (1981) and *Devdas* (2002), where the tawaif cannot escape the degrading life of prostitution in the kotha (brothel), where she undergoes a series of misfortunes, including the tragic loss of her lover, and is destined to remain alone forever, marginalized by Indian society. The term 'courtesan' hardly captures the regard and the affection in

The medieval grandeur of 'Courtesan' is quite different compared to the colonial and modern image of Tawaif.



which these learned and accomplished women were often held. Nor does the translation give us a sense of the wide circle of other artists and connoisseurs of culture to which some of them belonged.⁵⁰ Therefore, the medieval grandeur of “Courtesan” is quite different compared to the colonial and modern image of Tawaif. Let's get back to the medieval times.

A courtesan or Tawaif in medieval Deccan was a woman of stature and culture, who was associated generally with wealthy, aristocracy or nobility as a prostitute or dancer to entertain them. A courtesan literally means, a woman of the court. In medieval times the courtesan was an embodiment of a culture and artistic talents well versed in music and dance. A variety of lively and playful paintings were executed under the patronage of Qutb Shahis and Nizams in the Deccan and we have a number of these focusing on the courtesans. The pictures of courtesans were illustrated mainly with royalty within harem and few depicted individual beauties of these courtly sensual figures in palace-frontiers and outdoor-settings. These miniature paintings throw light on the luxury and cultivated leisure of the sultans and the importance given to courtesans in royal houses of the time and also by the artists of the times, who depicted them.

The courtesans in the pre-modern period were the few women who came to public space by crossing the boundaries of private. Most of the respectable women were confined to the four walls within the homes. It has been conventionally defined that the women's place was primarily in the home and it's her destiny to organize the household and to rear children. Thus, the early women were by and large in private domain. In rural societies women were participating in the agriculture fields along with their men. Whereas in urban centers 'courtesans', 'tawaifs', 'annas' and 'mamas' (zanana servants) came to the public domain in order to earn bread for their families. In Dakhani context the word tawaif was coined for singing and dancing girls and not for prostitutes.⁵¹ These women were trained in the longstanding tradition of skilled entertainment. During any happy occasion it was these tawaifs who provided entertainment and performed especially on marriage and birth of male child among aristocrats and elites. Hence,

they were known to be artists with skills. The Nizam patronized tawaifs by establishing office known as 'Dafter-e Arbab Nishat'. In the Asaf Jahi court during the period of Nizam Ali Khan, a sum of rupees twelve thousand per month was spent towards salaries of tawaifs.⁵² The tawaifs held very respectable position in Nizams' society, they were looked up as artists therefore it was compulsory for tawaifs to sing in the marriage functions and after the nikah a group photo was taken for the sake of remembrance and in the group tawaif also given place. Tawaifs were an integral part of various festivities - marriage celebrations, Bismillah ceremonies and Urs (death anniversaries of Sufi saints). Kazmi talks of marriage ceremonies in which there is a takht-e-rawa, which was a movable throne on which the tawaifs used to sing and dance.⁵³

Tawaifs were an integral part of various festivities - marriage celebrations, Bismillah ceremonies and urs



Tamkeen Kazmi postulates that there are two kinds of professional women in this period - prostitutes and tawaifs. Even though tawaifs might not always be "married and never contact another man" but they were usually, "highly cultured women, very disciplined, and trained in etiquettes and mannerisms... they were also teachers in mannerisms."⁵⁴ In Hyderabad society tawaif was known for decency, politeness, manners and culture. They had their own place of pride; many elite families send their boys to their doors for the learning of culture. Umda Jan, Elahi Jan of Meerut, Jaddan Bai, Akhtar Jan of Surat, Benazir Jan, Nazir Jan all came from North India and established themselves in Hyderabad. In suburban area of Hyderabad there were 20,000 registered tawaifs at this time and an annual budget of 3,24,000 rupees was used for their salaries.⁵⁵

The singing and dancing girls performed in mehfiles and behind from purdha the ladies of zenana also enjoyed, especially on occasions such as marriage and the birth of male child. All these proved to be entertainment of high class, especially to Muslim aristocrats. "It was through a very lavish and luxurious life style that the Nawabs of Hyderabad become financial bankrupt."⁵⁶ The general public was not cautioned about this and had no inkling. One of the correspondences collected in Hyderabad in 1890 and 1891 CE: Comprising all the letters of Hyderabad Affairs written to the Madras "Hindu: by its Hyderabad correspondent during 1890-1891 CE reads, "I wrote to you some time ago about how a prominent nobleman in the city amused himself

at times... I am informed of a game of chausar which is played by the means of three dice and eight wooden pieces representing equal number of men and women...his way of playing the game was so original... he hates having to deal with inanimate objects and picked women and men from dancing girl class and eight men from his companions - all in flesh and blood.”⁵⁷

Mahalaqa Chand

In 1763 CE, the Asaf Jahs shifted their capital from Aurangabad to Hyderabad. In such situations, the entire state paraphernalia including court dancers, nautch girls and courtesans among others followed the rulers. One such family, having originally migrated from Gujarat went to Burhanpur, Aurangabad and later to Hyderabad. In the midst of these translocations, Mahalaqa Bai was born. The extended family of her mother, aunts and stepsisters raised her. After receiving education in literature and training in fine arts, she started blossoming as a poetess in Persian and Urdu. The formidable combination of knowledge sharpened by quick wit, beauty and dancing was destined to carry Mahalaqa far beyond her family.



Maha Laqa Chanda Bai

She had already compiled her first collection of poetry and attained fame when legendary Urdu poet Mirza Ghalib was just a year old. As

per Dr. Shahid Naukez Azmi, "There are a number of women poets in the Deccan and Mahalaqa Bai Chanda was the first Sahib-e-Dewan, woman poet of Hind. In the recent research it has been proven that Lutf-un-nisa Imtiaz was the first women poet but the crown in still on Mahalaqa Bai Chanda's head."⁵⁸ Various sources suggest that Mahalaqa was born in 1766 CE. Her father Bahadur Khan belonged to an illustrious family. Her mother Maida Bibi also came from a family of repute in Gujarat. Maha Laqa grew up in the lap of her elder step-sister, who raised her in a mansion called Zenana Dewdi. She must have received the best aesthetic education that money and prestige could buy. She was taught Persian, wrote poetry in Urdu, learned dance and studied classical music under her Ustad, Huş Hal Han Kalawant. He was a Shi'i musician who, as indicated by his title Kalawant was an exponent of Dhrupad and Khayal styles. She also associated with her mother's old friend, Şah Tajalli 'Ali, the poet, historian and illustrator. As she matured and began to Courting 'Ali. She was given the name of her maternal grandmother Chanda Bibi. Her paternal grandfather Basalat Khan was a noble. According to Rahat Azmi, her name was Chanda Bibi and the title Mahalaqa was bestowed on her by Nizam-II and her poetic name was Chanda. Bai was added because it was profession.

A whole lot of powerful rulers found themselves gravitating towards Mahalaqa. She was strong enough to maintain a smooth relationship with patrons like Asaf Jah-II, K. Rukun ud Daula, Arastu Jah, Mir Alam, Chandulal, Raja Rao Rambha as well as the English Resident at Hyderabad. She was the court singer of Nizam-II, Nizam-III, Prime Minister Arastuja, Mir Alam, Raja Raurambha, Maharaja Chandulal Shadab. Mahalaqa's jagirs included Adikmet, Sayyadpalli, Hyderguda, Chandapalli, Pallepahaad, Alibagh.⁵⁹ Various tawaifs along with Mahalaqa Bai Chanda, Hasan Laqa Bai, Husn Afza Bai, Mama Chameli constructed a number of buildings at and around the mount of Hazrat Maula Ali. A significant indicator of Mahalaqa's status in her contemporary society was that she was very close to the Nizam-II. She used to accompany him on his travels. She also went with the Nizam to the battle of Pangal.⁶⁰

A significant indicator of Mahalaqa's status in the contemporary society was that she was very close to the Nizam-II

Rulers apart, she was a natural magnate to poets and calligraphers. The famous Persian and Urdu poet Mirza



ali lutf was attached to her court. She herself wrote Urdu poetry under the pen name, 'Chand'. She learnt music and singing from Ghulam Mehdi Shah Nazir, Pannalal Bhaant. Her contemporary poets Shah Nasir, Shah Mohd. Khan, Imaan Hafiz, Siddi Qaiz, Mir Alam, Goin Baksh Ziai, were all well acquainted with her. All of them applauded her poetry. Also Mir Alam, Imaan Hafiz and Jauhar wrote poetry on her. Mahanama or Tariq-e-Dilfaroz written by Ghulam Husain Khan Jauhar revolves around Mahalaqa — it's about her ways, morals, mannerisms and character, while poet Shah Kamaal is believed to have said, "How should I not call Mahlaqa a rare and precious pearl, her lips put rubies to shame... and anyone who sees her all decked up would lose their minds" (*"Mahalaqa ko nayaab aur kimti moti kaise na boloo, inke honton ko dekh kar laal kimti patthar bi pareshan hai...aur uski saj dhaj dekh kar koi bhi deewana kaise na ho?"*).⁶¹

Even noblemen like Chandulal were completely in her spell, "I have no respite without seeing you Mahlaqa, I am thirsting to see you, show yourself to me." (*"nahi hai chain bin dekhe mahalaqa tujhko, daras ko mai to pyaasa hoo, daras apna dikha de mujhko"*).⁶² Her poetry, filled with "Religion, music and fun" (*"mazhab, mosiqui, masti"*) was collected and published after her death, as Gulzar-e-Mahalaqa (Mahalaqa's garden of flowers). A copy of her Urdu divan that has 125 ghazals, which was compiled and calligraphed by herself is preserved in the British museum in London. This tomb was built by Mahalaqa when her mother had died. It was built at a cost of Rs. 1 lakh way back in 1792 CE. An Ashur-khana, 'baodi', naqqar-khana and dalaan were part of the complex. After her death, she was buried beside her mother's grave.

Beyond personal qualities, Mahalaqa was an institution builder too. She held her own literary court, also called Diwan. She also commissioned historians to write the narrative of her city, Hyderabad. Under her patronage, Ghulam Hussain Jawahar wrote his Tarikh-i-Dil Afroz or (Heart Dazzling History). It was completed in 1814 CE and is considered as one of the finest histories of Hyderabad. The book is also known by other titles such as Tajjalliat e mah (Manifestations of the Moon) or simply Mahanama (Moon Chronicle). She had a good library with a number of calligraphers. Mahalaqa's library was well-

known for her collection of rare books and manuscripts. She had a number of writers, 'Kaatibs', in her personal service, for copying texts for her library. Whenever she heard of a new or rare book, she would somehow get hold of it and ask the Kaatibs to prepare a fresh copy for her library. She built mosques like Masjid Baitul-Atiq a hospice for Musa Qadri, baradari for Sufi Taar Shah other than construction of dalaan for the pilgrims at Maula Ali shrine. Rahat Azmi, who painstakingly collected details about Mahalaqa Chanda's life writes that this famous Urdu poet of Deccan was a contemporary of renowned poets like Mir Taqi Mir, Sauda and Dard in North India. Mahalaqa had received early education under the watchful eyes of Nawab Ruknuddaulah, Madarul Maham of Asafia dynasty. Apart from fine arts and training in music, she also learnt horse riding and was imparted military training. She became adept at dancing and music. She was the staunch upholder of shite piety in a kingdom that was recently conquered by the sunni overlords after the Mughal invasions in 1688 CE. She helped to create a dignified place for shite devotion in a sunni court through her poetry, patronage and personality.⁶³ Because her poems were written to be performed in dance and were informed by the experiences of women performers, her gazals speak of feminine sensuality more boldly than that of men gazal writers. The poem presents the female beloved as embodied, with her pale silvery bosom, her radiant gaze like moonlight her silvery lips. Her grace affects the male lover so deeply that it ironically inverts the reality of social power. The man declares that he is her slave and she is his lord, where as in reality the dancer who might perform these couplets was raised as a slave girl and elevated by her skill and artistry to a courtesan.⁶⁴

She was renowned for her mastery on dhrupad apart from khayal tappa. A prominent personality, she lived in Khasa Mahal with hundreds of khadims at her disposal. She was a generous woman who spent lavishly on the preparations for Khat Darshan Mela and Gyarahvin Sharif. For Muharram and Jashn-e-Haidari, she prepared for months in advance. She threw banquets in the honour of visiting poets and also patronized poets and artists. This form of patronage is not imperial or sub-imperial patronage but a different form of patronage that has not been problematised or analysed well. Once she accompanied Asif Jah-II to Madhav Rao's court

in Pune. When she saw Nana Phadnavis turning away a French trader who had brought rare breed of horses for sale and Phadnavis refusing to pay more than Rs. 1,500 a piece, she offered him Rs 12,000 and bought all the six steeds. There are several such tales about Mahalaqa.

William Dalrymple aptly says, “She is widely regarded as Hyderabad’s greatest contemporary poet whose works were collected as far away as Delhi and Lucknow. She built a famous library filled with books on the arts and sciences and commissioned the Mahanama, a major new history of the Deccan. Later she became an important patron of poets.” He continues, “Such was Nizam’s reliance upon her wisdom that among women in Hyderabad, she was given in her own right the rank of a senior Omrah, so that she could attend the Durbar and advice the Nizam on the state policy. She also accompanied him in war, dressed in male clothing and gained reputation for her riding skills and accomplishments with bow and even with the javelin. She was a combination of body and soul.”

In 1792 CE, at a rather young age of only 26 years, Mahalaqa lost her mother. The dutiful daughter built a tomb for her at Moula Ali. After dazzling on Hyderabad horizon, a little longer, Mahalaqa died in 1824 CE. It is said that she died during the outbreak of an epidemic in Hyderabad. She too was buried by the side of her dear mother. Even after lapse of around two centuries, the posterity remembers her as a beautiful dancer, poetess, librarian, historian apart from an accomplished horse rider, fighter and advisor to Nizam. Why so many memories? because that was the magnetic personality of Mahalaqa bai ‘Chand’.

Courtesans and their lot

Courtesans and dancing girls also played a major role in the life of Nizams, Nawabs, Jagirdars and people of Hyderabad. Famous among them were Kaminiji, Muradji and Muneeraji. They used to get a monthly salary from Nizam and nobles, and often gave public performances. From the records of Kanchan kacheri, it can be said that they were exempted from tax and payment of Nazarana in the city and districts. The nautch girls of Qutb Shahis on the other hand had to register but paid no tax for their professions. The Asaf Jahis established an office known as Daftar-e-Nishat or Kanchan Kacheri. The superintendent of this office was lady called Mama Sharifa, who held a

high status in the palace and society. And was very influential among all Mamas of the palace during Nizams-VI reign. She was assisted by a Jamadar and four other subordinates. All cases relating to prostitutes were presented before Mama Shafira. The patronage leading to respectable and prosperous life for these dancing girls of Hyderabad attracted many such women from Northern India; the increase in their numbers changed their position and the profession was no longer respectable. Later on, they adopted prostitution. They came and performed on a number of occasions.

**Asaf Jahis
established
an office
known as
Daftar-e-Nishat
or Kanchan
Kacheri**



Nawab Rafat Yar Jung Bahadur turned his attention towards this evil, which none of his predecessors had ventured to face in the past and raised his voice against this evil practice. Nautch women adopted girls with the immoral motive of benefiting by them in later years. The Nawab first ascertained whether such girls related to the nautch women or were obtained during famine or in any other way. According to the information obtained, he compelled them to deposit securities whereby they were forced to bring them up in a decent manner and later arranged for their marriages with worthy persons. On marriage, they were given a few useful articles, clothes and a little cash to start their fresh lives.

However, this profession continued both at societal and royal levels and in particular they remained as an important component of royal harem, with whom royalty passed their leisure hours and hence, the paintings of the time depicted such themes highlighting the activities, features, garments and ornaments of these women, who remained as part of sexual life of royal sphere.

Among the early women strict pardah was prevalent. During the early years of Nizam rule, the practice of pardha was prevalent in every class of women's especially among elite class. Even the 'mama' (maid servant) wore pardah while going to the market. The pardah was very strict in Hyderabad, but the unmarried daughters of the Nizam were exempted from its rule. They attended palaces and residency parties and accompanied their father in race. They did not participate in any public functions.

Asaf Jah courtly norms confirmed the earlier position of the courtesan in Qutb Shahi times and continued to grant them a space in the court. As dancers and musicians, they participated in public rituals and

moved into the zenana mahal (women's quarters) to entertain the inmates. Often, they were incorporated into the household through contract marriages. This practice continued well into the eighteenth century. Nawab Wazid Ali Shah of Oudh, known as an accomplished poet and musician, turned his entire harem, embedded with more than three hundred beauties into a dancing school which he called the Pari Khana (the place of fairies). Every dancer was connected to the Nawab through the contractual form of muta marriage.⁶⁵

Yet the courtesans were not the only persons involved in the profession of commercial sex. Lower than the tawaifs in rank and accomplishments were two other categories of women known as thakahi and randi who lived in the market area and catered for lower class clients including the labourers. A courtesan was usually part of a household establishment under the chief courtesan or chandhrayan. The latter owned and maintained extra apartments, having acquired wealth and fame through her beauty and musical and dancing abilities. Typically, a wealthy patron, often the King himself, would set her up in agreeable quarters and support her household in the style in which he wished to be entertained and she would recruit budding young singers and dancers to compete with other reputable establishments... Every reputable house maintained a team of skilled male musicians who were often connected to famous lineages or gharanas of musicians thereby enhancing the prestige of the establishment. Doormen, touts and other male auxiliaries screened the clients at the door.⁶⁶

Hence, to conclude, we can say that the world of courtesans, tawaifs and their likes was like a gilded cage for the chosen few and resembled an iron cage for the rest. The hierarchy of political power and harem power had certain parallels, with multiple cross connections. In due course of time, harem population grew due to their multiple progeny and cohorts joining them. Mahalaqa Chand was a unique and an unusual exception who rose like a comet, dazzled for a lifetime and vanished behind the regressing power of Asaf Jahs during the early nineteenth century. **Posterity would remember her as Haseena-e-Jamal (most beautiful creation of Almighty on the planet)- forever.**

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4. Subsidiary Alliance and Fiscal Plunder

In 1800 CE, the British imposed a 'Subsidiary Alliance' upon Asaf Jahi rulers. It was akin to 'Inquiadnama' (The instrument of submission) imposed by the Mughals upon Qutb Shahis in 1636 CE.

The treaty mandated to create a 'Subsidiary Alliance Force' to be controlled by the British. And as it was supposedly protecting the Nizam's authority, it was to be paid from his treasury. Moreover, to appoint his Prime Minister, Nizam needed the prior permission of the British. They were the protectors and Nizam was their protectee.

In 1808 CE, Chandu Lal, a known British partisan was appointed as Peshikar in Nizam's court. As a true puppet, he oversaw the plunder of Nizam's treasury till his death in 1846 CE. The modus operandi was simple. An armed formation called 'The Hyderabad Contingent' was created. It was controlled by the British Resident. It needed assured payments. To get over Nizam's uncertain finances, a private banking company called 'Palmer and Company' was created. They advanced loans to Nizam to ensure 100 per cent regular payments for the contingent. For the amount advanced, an annual rate of 24 per cent was charged. After 1818 CE, with the defeat of Marathas, Nizam did not require the force to protect him. But, British thought otherwise and it continued; so, did the plunder of Nizam. About the years 1817-18 CE, the cost of this force had risen to over thirty lakhs of rupees per annum.

In 1820 CE, Metcalfe joined as Resident and soon realized that the existence of the banking firm "Palmer and Company" has become dangerous to the political equilibrium of the state. The entire debt of Rs. 160 lakhs due to the firm was taken over by the British Company. The tribute of Northern Circars hitherto paid to Nizam was abolished in perpetuity. Two years afterwards, the company went bankrupt. Thereafter, the payment of Nizam's contingent devolved upon Chandu Lal.

Some Residents, starting with Metcalfe tried to streamline the administration and finances but they were torpedoed. Nizam's authority melted and the sovereign grants and sannads issued by him lost their value. Wahabis also threatened the authority of

Nizam, but were put down. The contingent's appetite and Chandu Lal's profligacy fed into each other and it was draining three lakhs per month by 1830. By 1840 CE, the contingent was costing Rs.40 lakhs per annum. The costs kept mounting with every passing year. The total amount drawn from the Nizam's treasury to maintain the contingent come to a humongous figure of Rupees eleven crores and twenty lakhs of Hyderabad rupees. The finances kept sinking and to get over the crisis, the sovereign jewels were mortgaged in 'Bank of Holland'. Some partial payments were made to reduce the debt burden, but to no avail.

Then arrived Dalhousie and without much fanfare, he plucked away Berar (a cotton rich territory) from Nizam's grip to redeem all the debts in 1853 CE.

4.1 SIKANDER JAH ASCENDS, CHANDU LAL ENTERS

In 1800 CE, Nizam Ali had entered a treaty of subsidiary alliance with East India Company. He became subordinate, lost his sovereignty and could no longer conclude treaties with other powers. Even to appoint his own Prime Minister, Nizam had to obtain prior approval from company's head quarters in Calcutta.

On 11th August, 1803, Sikander Jah, the eldest surviving son of Nizam Ali ascended the throne. From the day the treaty was concluded, a subtle power shift had occurred between the British and the successive Nizams. The ascendancy of British Resident on account of the vice like grip of the subsidiary forces over Nizam's country rendered him helpless and indifferent towards state affairs. It was said about him that, "He had always entertained and seldom failed to express the most inveterate jealousy of the British power and its particular influence over the councils of the state and considered everyman to be his enemy, who was attached to the British Government and every man to be his friend, who was hostile to the British."¹

A letter from the Court of Directors to the Bengal Government was quite revealing, "The Subsidiary Alliance force absolutely constitutes a part of our own army, is entirely under our own control, and can be changed, or even withdrawn at the directions of our own government, and although it is supported at the expense of our allies, affording them protection and authority, whilst in amity with us; it gives them no strength in the event of hostile disposition."²

After ascending the throne, Sikander Jah promptly confirmed all the treaty engagement. Shortly thereafter, the second Maratha War broke out between the Company and Marathas. The Nizam, as per the Treaty was expected to assist the British with a force of 6000 infantry and 9000 cavalries. He did not send his full quota of troops and to show his displeasure, sent an assorted band of troops under Mahipat Ram. These troops mostly consisted of the erstwhile French Corps that were disbanded at the instance of the Resident Krikpatrik. Naturally, their loyalty towards the British was rather lukewarm.

The British general Wellesley demanded his quota of troops. Mahipat Ram responded that he was waiting for funds from Nizam. Without receiving funds or troops from Nizam, the Marathas were defeated at Assaye on 23rd September 1803.³ During the battle, the Mughal forces were actually engaged in plundering the baggage of their allies, the British. Wellesley wanted to send his sick and wounded troops to the fort at Daulatabad. The Qiledar refused to admit them ostensibly due to lack of instructions. Another Qiledar of Badnapur in Aurangabad district fired on the British detachment during the campaign.

All these behavioural aberrations on the part of Nizam invited appropriate British response. On 25th November, a strongly worded dispatch from the Governor General was read out to the Nizam in the open Darbar. It mentioned, "Viewed by all ranks, in the subedari dominions, the existing connection with British power with jealousy, distrust and aversions, His Highness, the

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Nizam on 15th
Dec 1803**



present Subedar is not altogether free from this contagion; A distinct intimation to His Highness Sikander Jah that he owes his elevation to the musnud and that he owes his life entirely and exclusively to the support of British power.”⁴ The net result of these remonstrances was to impose yet another treaty upon the Nizam on 15th December, 1803. An additional article was added by agreeing that in the time of war, all the forts and the territories to either of the allies would be available, to the armies of the allies. It was also specifically envisaged that the officials, civil or military belonging to either

of the allies should cooperate wholeheartedly, in carrying on the various operations of war.

Notwithstanding the bitterness generated during the second Maratha War, Nizam received Berar territory as his war booty. But, the tide of events in the coming decades was to snatch it away from Nizam's grip. That is where the British strategy and diplomacy always won, in sharp contrast to tactical maneuverings by all the nobles in the Nizam's Court.

On 12th April 1804, the Diwan Azim-ul-Umrah died. The Resident felt that, "Any advantage to be derived by the British from an alliance with the Hyderabad State depended on placing its resources under the control of a minister who should owe his elevation exclusively to their influence,"⁵ and recommended Mir Alam, the faithful ally during the Mysore wars to the post. Nizam, reluctant to cause fresh annoyance to the British at this juncture acquiesced and as a counter, endeavoured to get his trusted friend, Mahipat Ram appointed as the Naib of Mir Alam. In October 1805, Mahipat Ram arrived in Hyderabad to gain favour of the Resident.

Mahipat Ram told Resident that, if appointed, he would make Nizam fully aware of the alliance with the British. Shortly after this, Nizam invited the Resident, apparently to see the new palace he was constructing. During the ensuing conversation, Nizam told the Resident that owing to the efforts of Mahipat Ram, he had been able to perceive clearly the benefits of the Subsidiary Alliance. Mir Alam grew alarmed and asked Resident to ask Mahipat Ram to return to Berar. The Resident reassured Mir Alam not to entertain any fears adding that Mahipat Ram would be asked to return to Berar, once his daughter's wedding ceremony was over.

At this juncture, the office of Peshikar fell vacant. Nizam desired that Mahipat Ram should become the Peshikar. Mir Alam thought that his son-in-law Munir-ul-Mulk should occupy the coveted post. There was also a dark horse, in the person of Maharajah Chandu Lal. In this triangular tug of war, even the widows of Nizam Ali Khan and other court nobles were dragged in. British had been the past masters in such complicated situations. To ease the situation, the Resident

pointed out that Mahipat Ram should maintain the army in a fit and efficient manner, so that it may cooperate with the Subsidiary forces, whenever required. Secondly, he was asked to promote the prosperity of Berar by not extorting oppressive taxes. And thirdly, he was told not to indulge in clandestine correspondence with the court with a view to impairing the happy relations that now existed between the Nizam and the minister.

Mahipat Ram's daughter's marriage was over. Resident's orders were quite clear. He had to depart to Berar. Shortly after this, the dark horse Maharaja Chandu Lal was appointed as the Peshikar.⁶ With Mir Alam as the self-appointed partisan of British interests and Maharaja Chandu Lal, as their new protégée, the centre of gravity of power in Nizam's Court had decisively shifted in British favour.

Certain Omrahs in Nizam's Court had a certain Maratha tilt. Mahipat Ram was one of those, who was in touch with Holkars and Scindias. Any axis building up around Maratha sympathizers was an anathema to the British. The Governor General asked Resident to insist on Nizam that Mahipat Ram must be deprived of the command of Berar troops. On 4th December Nizam agreed to transfer Mahipat Ram from Berar to Sagar which was far-off from Hyderabad. It was also agreed to appoint only those persons who enjoyed the confidence of the minister and the Resident. To impress his servility to the British, he addressed his friends in the presence of the Resident, "You will understand that the safety of my state depends upon the friendship of the British Government, and that it is the just wish of my heart to cultivate and improve the alliance which connects us. You have witnessed in the example of Mahipat Ram and Ismael Yar Jung the dangerous consequences of opposing the united interests of this state and that of the Company. You will be careful to conduct yourself in such a way as may not render yourself to the suspicion of the British Resident whom I consider to be my best friend. Be careful, what you say and what you do and bear in mind the examples of Mahipat Ram and Ismael Yar Jung."⁷

On 28th February 1808, Mir Alam died.⁸ It revived the dormant question of finding a new Diwan. It was a struggle for internal

supremacy in the state between the Nizam and the British. While the tussle for Diwan's post was on, the Resident wrote to the Governor General, "The effect of this arrangement would be to leave the internal administration of the country to the general superintendence and control of Chandu Lal. Of all the men of any consequence at this court, the Peshikar is the only person in whom I can place any confidence. He is the only man at Hyderabad who appears to me to have formed a perfect conception of principles and objects of an alliance with this state and a just estimate of the nature and extent of our power in India. Whoever might be the minister, it would be for our interests that Chandu Lal should profess the largest share of active influence in the administration and as long as he held a confidential situation about the Nizam, we might almost be assured of the security of our interests at this court."⁹

After more than six months of haggling, Munir ul Mulk was appointed as the Diwan, but he was compelled to sign a written agreement to take no part in administration, while enjoying a stipend of about six lakhs of rupees per annum. The authority of the government was vested in Chandu Lal under the designation of the minister's deputy. Chandu Lal became the sole medium of contact between the British and the Nizam. The loss of power rankled at the heart of Munir ul Mulk and supported by palace Begums, he tried to poison the mind of Nizam against the Peshikar. The Nizam demanded that Chandu Lal should render all accounts of the state from the time he assumed office as the Peshikar. The British stepped in and opined that, "Any specific measures either to limit the authority of Chandu Lal's office or openly to fix upon him the weight of the Nizam's avowed displeasure must be considered to constitute an unquestionable prognostic of his down fall and cannot therefore be allowed to pass without manifest injury to the stability of our interests."

Chandu Lal descended from a Khatri family of Lahore. Born in Hyderabad in 1776 CE, he claimed descent from Raja Todar Mal, the famous revenue minister of Akbar. His phenomenal rise as Peshikar in Hyderabad court dazzled everyone, included Nizam. He was to remain principal power in the state for around four decades. A man

of great ability, he was intimately conversant with all the intricacies of the Hyderabad court. His policy was to make himself as amenable as possible to the British resident. Simultaneously, adequate funds provided to Nizam kept him contented and he troubled himself very little about public affairs. He was left to his own amusements, within the seclusion of his own palace. Chandu Lal's policy ensured an active and sustained support of the Resident and therefore, the Government of India.

When the cold war was going on between the two allies, Nizam decided to forget the etiquette of embracing the Resident. The latter found Nizam remiss in his courtesy towards the British representative. Nizam took the stand that it was never the custom to embrace the Resident. Chandu Lal, however pointed out that in the olden days, the etiquette of embracing was scrupulously followed. Nizam was forced to concur with the Peshikar's ancient wisdom. Quite exasperated, Nizam then asked Chandu Lal "if there was any treaty Article that bound Nizam to embrace the Resident?" Emboldened by Peshikar's wisdom, the Resident demanded an unqualified response from the Nizam to the effect that he would embrace the Resident on every occasion he happened to visit the Darbar.

The determined attitude of the Resident forced the Nizam to observe the practice of embracing but his latent struggle against the British power and his own failure coupled with a feeling of utter helplessness told on the nerves of Nizam. He fell into a state of melancholy and became seriously ill. After recovery, he stopped taking interest in the details of administration. The Resident wrote, "His original defects of character, the habits of his life, his dislike of his own ministers and his jealousy of our control have gradually withdrawn him into a sullen and total seclusion." The Resident added, "The entire stop that has been put to every appearance of show in state and the Nizam's sullen seclusion of himself from all established forms and ceremonies is very offensive to the whole body of Omrahs and to all those persons who have any feeling of either pride or interest in the parade and splendour of the Court"¹⁰



Mahlaqa Chanda Bibi and Chandulal Shadan

The entire state power got concentrated, apparently in Chandu Lal's hands, who had rendered himself a mere tool in the hands of the Resident. About the year 1810 CE, Chandu Lal received a secret message from the Sikh ruler, Maharaja Ranjit Singh informing about the intention to form a confederacy with certain potentates like Scindia, Holkar and others against the British.¹¹ Instead of rendering his frank opinion to Ranjit Singh, Chandu Lal went to the Resident, showed the secret letter and asked about the nature of reply he should give. With such pusillanimous Peshkar, Resident got emboldened and took up the reorganization of the Nizam's forces.

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4.2 THE HYDERABAD CONTINGENT & PALMER & COMPANY

By the turn of the Eighteenth Century, the Nizam's troops presented an assorted picture, lacking focus and discipline. The total army of Nizam consisted of seventy thousand men, under three separate commanders namely Nizam, Diwan and the premier nobles known as Shams ul

Umrah. After entering into subsidiary alliance with the British, the Nizam didn't pay much attention to his army, known as Sarf-e-Khas force. As indiscipline seeped in, the army became inefficient. In 1803 CE, it was evident during second Maratha war where British won, in spite of their support.

The Diwan's troops consisted of assorted elements. First, there were Arab settlers of Deccan. Next, there were other adventurers from North, Awadh, Sind, Baluchistan etc. They were generally known as Rohillas. Then there were linewallahs who were remnants of the force organized by French for Nizam. All put together, this horde of irregular troops, infantry and cavalry was maintained by other noblemen who were assigned lands for revenue purposes. Almost, all the noblemen resided in Hyderabad where the Nizam held his court. Quite a vast sum of money was spent in profusion and display. Bulk of revenue of the country poured into capital and scarcely anything was spent in the countryside for roads, communication and irrigation.

As early as 1804 CE, General Wellesley had drawn the attention of the British Resident about the general inefficiency of the Nizam's troops. Their lackadaisical performance during the second Maratha War and the necessity of reorganizing them on efficient basis was highlighted. The Resident proposed a scheme of maintaining ten thousand silladar Horse with a regular payment assured from the entire Berar revenues. Nizam, smelling British interference had rejected the scheme. The condition of Nizam's troops including cavalry was pathetic, to say the least. The countryside was a frequent prey to freebooters and marauders like Pindaris and the Bhils. Many of the zamindars also took advantage of the general slack and carried on their own depredations in the countryside.

In March 1811, Henry Russell became the Resident.¹² As Subsidiary troops could not be used to quell the internal disturbances in Nizam's Dominions, he suggested a slew of reforms. He wanted number of British officers to be increased, disciplined on the British model and also purchase arms and ammunitions for them from British stores. While these reforms were underway, two rebellions broke out in the Nizam's army. The infantry regiment stationed near Residency tied their commander Major Edward Gordon to the muzzle of a

gun and threatened to blow him to pieces unless their arrears of pay were cleared. Gordon was subsequently released and the ring leaders of the mutiny were executed. Another mutiny broke out at Indur (Nizamabad). The arrears of pay however were not the main reason for their rebellion. The real reason was that the reforms were introduced by the Resident in the Nizam's army and the local people were averse to the idea of the Indian troops being controlled by British officers, who were responsible not to the Nizam, but to the British Resident.

The mutiny in the Nizam's troops hastened the formation of 'Russell's Brigade'. This force was permitted to purchase ammunition and stores from the company arsenal at Secunderabad. Arrangements were already in place, courtesy Chandu Lal, for regular payments of these troops from the Peshkash, amounting to nine lakh rupees a year, which was paid to Nizam by the British for northern Circars. This Russell brigade laid the foundation for future Hyderabad contingent.

It is important to understand its genesis. In 1809 CE, Captain Sydenham, the Resident had resigned. He was replaced by Captain Charles Russell, who in 1811 CE was succeeded by his brother, Henry Russell. In the meantime, William Palmer had just retired from Nizam's service in 1810 CE. He formed a large banking house in the name and style of 'Palmer and Company'. The firm embarked in timber trade on Godavari and invested considerably in the cotton produce of Berar. In March 1814, the company sought permission to conduct banking operations in the state of Hyderabad. Henry Russell recommended it strongly. And, on 22nd February 1816, the Governor General gave the permission promptly. Company was free to do business with the Nizam government. Around these times, William Rumbolt, the ambitious son in law of Governor General, Warren Hastings, also joined the firm. His strategic entry added considerable prestige to the firm. Many residency officials including Henry Russell had invested in this firm of fortune.

Banking operation commenced and the 'Plunder of Nizam' began. As Resident himself was an interested party in the firm, Chandu Lal made special efforts to promote its interests. Nizam government borrowed

**Banking
operation
commenced
and the
'Plunder of
Nizam' began**



money from the firm at the rate of two percent interest. The firm advanced two lakh rupees per month to Nizam. In return, the government assigned the revenues in certain districts of Berar yielding thirty lakh rupees annually. Thus, the firm made a huge profit of six lakh rupees annually. Investors reaped a fortune besides the members of the Palmer family receiving pensions amounting to eighty thousand rupees a month from state treasury. None understood the financial jugglery better than the master juggler, Chandu Lal.

In a short time, this commercial firm became the most important factor in Hyderabad state. As its name and fame spread, so did the status of William Palmer and William Rumbolt, the son in law of Governor General. They were counted as the most important citizens of Hyderabad. They kept open a house where table was always laid for at least thirty guests. Lavish in their entertainment, they had open access to Resident's palace. As the firm grew, it over shadowed the Residency itself. Mir Russell was busy in carrying out his reforms. He organized a select and efficient body of seven thousand men formed of all arms. But costs escalated and nine lakh rupees peshkash soon became insufficient.

On 14th June 1817, Russell wrote to Sir Thomas Hyslop, Commander in Chief of Madras Army, "The Russell Brigade is commanded by Captain Hare of the Company's army. The men are chiefly Hindus, natives of the Company's territories in Hindustan. They are disciplined, clothed, armed and equipped in all respects like our own troops. They are paid regularly every month out of the Resident's treasury. They do no duty in the city or with any other troops in Nizam's service, nor do they have any sort of communications with any branch of the Nizam's Government. In fact, they belong to the Nizam's army in name only; they consider themselves as Company's troops and for all practical purposes, they are as much so as those on our own immediate establishment."

In 1818 CE, the Hyderabad contingent participated in the Third Maratha War and played an important role in the suppression of Pindaris and capture of Nagpur. On 3rd June 1818, Peshwa finally surrendered and war concluded by reduction of the celebrated fort of Aseergarh. With this episode, the warfare in Deccan, which had lasted for one hundred and seventy years, almost concluded. Immediate benefit to Nizam was

exemption from debt amounting to six crore rupees which was being claimed by Peshwas. It was, a kind of notional sword whose shadow stood removed forever. In spite of this relief, the rebellion by the local zamindars continued to erupt and contingent from the year 1818 to 1826 CE continued to be called upon to crush them. The overall impoverishment of the state wherein cultivators were unable to bear the burden of taxation, witnessed their fleeing to the nearby jungles.

The British realizing the usefulness of the contingent wanted to expand it. The staff, mostly British were overpaid. The commander received a salary of £ 5000 and others under him were also paid proportionately high salaries. People vied with each other to get a job in the contingent, quite often by underhand dealings. To finance the expanding appetite of the contingent, taxation became more oppressive. Instead of assessing the actual yield of the land and taking a portion thereof as tax was replaced by Chandu Lal. He just fixed a total sum needed to meet the state expenditure on a gross basis for each area. The rent collection was given to the highest bidder. They had the power of life and death over poor farmers, without any recourse to appeal. That was not all. Once, a crop was harvested, the collectors took away whatever they wanted without any reference to the settlement deeds. The deplorable state of affairs caused depopulation. The cost of living was very high, nearing famine prices.¹³

Notwithstanding these miseries, the imperious Resident wrote, "In some degree, the weakness and disorders of the Nizam's Government are the necessary consequences of his political situation. An alliance with us upon the Subsidiary system, however it may contribute to advancement of our power, leads inevitably to the destruction of the state which embraces it. The Nizam is a dying comatose while Peshwa has expired in convulsions, but the destiny of both originated in the same cause and necessarily tended to be the same termination. If we owe the foundation of our empire in the country to the weakness in which we found the native powers, we ought not to complain of the evils which that weakness necessarily produces. If we have reaped the benefits, we must submit to witness the inconveniences which are its inseparable attendants."

As the drain continued, Chandu Lal did nothing. By the year 1818 CE, Russell brigade needed thirty-six lakh rupees annually. The Resident's

reforms were now deforming the State finances. As the drain continued, Chandulal did nothing except taking care of Nizam's needs and Resident's hobby. The consolidated loan of sixty lakh rupees in 1820 CE was sought to be paid in regular instalments and the firm was to get a bonus commission of eight lakh rupees. Resident recommended and Governor General concurred. After this, Henry Russell retired and was succeeded by his friend Metcalfe. The incumbent had worked as private Secretary to Warren Hastings and was fully aware about Hyderabad affairs, especially its embarrassed finances.

Immediately, on his arrival he conveyed the request of Governor General to contribute sixteen lakh rupees towards the improvement of the city of Calcutta. Nizam complied with the command immediately. Chandu Lal borrowed the money, burdening state finances even further. The firm was at the zenith of its prosperity. Profuse in their hospitality, with right political connections with minister and the Nizam, they enjoyed more influence than the Resident. Firm was advancing money to state. It was also acting as general agent for the supply of European goods and luxuries not only to Nizam but also to other nobles who vied with each other in their profusion and ostentation.

The power and influence wielded by the Palmer and Company was so great that Metcalfe wrote, "They have contrived to identify themselves with the British name and when I was in districts, the pillage of which goes to their shop, people always talk as if our government were a party concerned. Their chaprasis range the country with the double power of the Nizam's and British Government and one source of their profit is the buying up at a heavy discount of debts which the rent creditors cannot collect, but which they can by the means of these authoritative messengers."

For the Lord Hastings, Chandu Lal was his blue-eyed boy, who has to be upheld at any cost. The latter was equally anxious to remain in their good books. He not only cultivated their friendship but gave regular pension to the members of Palmer's family from the state treasury. Education of William Palmer's son was sought to be financed by the Nizam's Government. All Residency officials were granted clandestine allowances. The expenses for the maintenance and upkeep of the Residency building which according to Metcalfe was 'a shameful

monument of rapacity, built and furnished by the poverty-stricken state, were borne by the minister. That apart, regular supply of 'dallies' (baskets) of fruits, dinners, etc. kept the Residency officials in good humour. Metcalfe, the successor to Russell remarked, "That they came in such quantities as to give them the appearance of regular supplies, instead of being mere complimentary."

Metcalfe took a lengthy tour throughout the countryside. Near Berar districts, war ravages had depopulated vast tracts.¹⁴ Revenue collection was given to contractors with the highest bid. Hence, land taxes were exorbitant. Peasants had no money and there was no labour to work. Metcalfe introduced some land reforms and put European officer in charge of districts. Tax rates were reduced and farmers were invited to return with the promise of protection.

Metcalfe was convinced about the dangerous influence the finance company was having upon government and the country. He recommended to pay off all state liabilities due to the firm in one single stroke. Firm partners didn't relish the idea at all. William Rumbolt, the son in law used his entire influence with the Governor General to reject the proposal. Father-in-law was not found wanting to do the needful. He rejected the proposal, sided with the firm and hauled up the Resident Metcalfe for his disloyalty. Firm now became even more important than the Resident but he took it stoically. He kept his head high, temper cool and resolve straight and described the contingent as a plaything of the Resident and used for patronage. He was so correct. After the last Maratha war, Deccan was now in state of relative peace. The subsidiary force was more than sufficient to provide internal protection to Nizam. Then why continue with this plaything? It had become an evil. Like an avalanche, the evil grew in volume and weight, the longer it moved on. No one even attempted to apply the knife to the growing sore which was sapping the vitals of the country.

In 1822 CE, Metcalfe wrote another letter to council enclosing all transactions of the firm. Warren Hastings was getting convinced that firm's dealings with Hyderabad government are not sustainable. In early 1823 CE, Hastings left India. Adam, his successor cutting down the debt to 80 lakhs paid it off from the British Residency treasury.

Bonus of eight lakhs and compensation of six lakhs was disallowed.¹⁵ The Nizam was made to cede seven lakhs of peshcush of the Northern Circars to the British Government perpetually. It was done on 4th November 1823. While asking Nizam to cede the Northern Circars to the British completely; Chandu Lal in his most suave manner submitted, "Although I, am but your chobdar (Shoe Bearer) was obliged

**Ship of the
State was
sinking but the
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Chandulal
remained afloat**

by extreme difficulties during the war to contract a debt, yet what I have done has been for the prosperity and stability of your Highness Government."¹⁶ The ship of the state was sinking but the master survivor, Chandu Lal remained afloat.



The Company, anxious to put an end to the painful episode wrote, "Up to the date of the late Treaty, there was an excess of the collections in the districts ceded by the Honourable Company to His Highness the Nizam, above those of the districts ceded by the Nizam to the Company, estimated at twenty lakhs of rupees. Consequently, credit has been taken for the above sum out of the one crore sixteen lakhs, sixty-six thousand, six hundred and sixty-six rupees, given in exchange of the Peshcush. Agreeable to your desire, the sum of seventy-eight lakhs, seventy thousand, six hundred and seventy rupees, nine annas have been paid to them from one crore sixteen lakhs, sixty-six thousands six hundred and sixty six rupees given exchange for the Peshcush." No demand on account of the debt to them has ever been made by the Honourable Company, and none will ever be made, Honourable Company having no concern whatever in the affair."¹⁷

Within a year of the Nizam discharging his debts, this Leviathan firm that threatened to bring about the total ruin of the state, became bankrupt; 'not from any run upon it, but merely from want of funds to meet ordinary demands.'¹⁸

4.3 METCALFE REFORMS TORPEDOED

In 1820 CE, Russell, the Resident left Hyderabad. His description about the court and the people was quite graphic. "They have no objects of hope or ambition. The splendour of the court has faded with

the decay of the Government. The distinction which arose from the notice of the Prince and from the intercourse between him and his nobles have been lost. More than one half of the country is a desert; and even where there is cultivation, the farmer has no interest beyond the supply of his immediate necessities. He must provide himself and his children with bread to eat and more than that, he knows he would not be suffered to retain out of the fruits of his utmost industry.”

The observation of the departing Resident about the pitiable state of Nizam’s administration is no less graphic. “The administration of justice and the collection of the revenues which are nominally committed to the same hands are equally neglected and oppressive. The officer who has charge of a district is considered to do his duty according to the amount of his remittances to the capital. He makes the most he can in a short time, both for the Government and for himself. And the inhabitants are left even without the shadow of a security for their lives and property. Evils produce one another. As a Government becomes weak, it becomes rapacious. It demands more, as it can enforce less. Although the restraints of our alliance did produce the mischief, the removal of them would not correct it. Therefore, we must either continue the same control which we now exercise, or we must lessen it or we must increase it. Of these three cases, the last is perhaps more likely to occur.”

Russell, driven by such pious ideas suggested certain reforms to tone up the administration. It aimed at reducing the public expenditure by retiring useless and unnecessary troops, selecting men of integrity as talukdars on the recommendation of the Resident and reorganizing the land system on the basis of Inam land system. A set of quick steps were taken. Nizam’s son who was confined in Golconda Fort since 1815 CE was set free. A special tribunal consisting of a Hindu Pandit and a Muslim Qazi was set up to administer justice. Russell himself exercised personal supervision over the administration by receiving petitions. A special tribunal was set up at Aurangabad to redress the grievances of people. Even the officers commanding several stations of Nizam’s troops were authorized to receive petitions from the oppressed peasantry.

In spite of implementing these reforms throughout the year 1820 CE,

distress of people was not lessened. Chandu Lal considered the business of receiving petitions by Resident himself as a direct interference in Nizam's internal administration. A Talukdar was appointed by him paying requisite nazar which could at times be equal to annual revenue. Talukdar had the authority but stayed in the capital. His Naib (deputy), had limited authority and inadequate salary but he was the only face of the Government to whom people could refer.

In December 1820, Metcalfe replaced Russell and promptly undertook a tour of Nizam's Dominions. He found people intolerably vexed, taking refuge in emigration or insurrection and suffering from grievous oppression.¹⁹ To improve matters, he demanded from Chandu Lal a factual statement of revenues and expenditure of the state and also an account of actual yield of the Khalsa, Jagir and Jaidad lands, and whether their revenue is managed by collectors or by any other authority. "Metcalf also wanted to know the strength of troops in the employment of Nizam's Government, and also in the employment of the various jagirdars and military chiefs. He also wanted information regarding the various pensions paid by the state to several persons. After making these enquiries, Metcalfe discovered that there was a total deficit of Rs. 10 lakhs in the revenue of the state and that indicated the excess of expenditure over income."²⁰

Understanding a problem does not tantamount to solving it, at least when the right cooperation is amiss. Metcalfe appointed some European officers to make the correct assessment in each village. Chandu Lal too sent his officers to do the same. They were the same old talukdars who were determined to make their own assessment. Metcalfe could see his reforms being torpedoed. He authorized European officers to receive complaints from cultivators. This was construed as naked interference of British in the internal administration of Nizam. Metcalfe was waxing eloquent about the positive outcomes of his reforms. Chandu Lal, the past master of intrigues, spread a rumour that the Supreme Government was not in favour of the reforms introduced by the Resident. Eventually, the Governor General Lord Hastings made his approval conditional. He allowed Metcalfe to experiment with his reforms for the time being and informed that the European supervisors should be withdrawn, as soon as conditions appeared favourable for their withdrawal.²¹

In 1825 CE, Lord Metcalfe left Hyderabad. His successor Martin tried to palliate the feelings of Chandu Lal by consulting him on all important matters.²² In 1828 CE, Lord William Bentinck had become the Governor General. He believed in the policy of non-intervention in the internal affairs of native states. Resident at Hyderabad was already persuaded to withdraw reforms. In May 1829, Sikander Jah also died. His son Nasir-ud-Daula ascended the throne. Soon thereafter, the New Nizam, on the advice of Chandu Lal, requested the Resident to withdraw the European Superintendents brought in by his predecessor, Metcalfe. As recommended by the Resident, the new Governor General readily acceded to the Nizam's request. Carried away by his new policy, he also informed Nizam that he was free to choose his own minister.²³

Scraping the reforms was simple, but administering the kingdom was not so easy. British superintendents were replaced with amins and mansabdars in districts. They were unable to run administration effectively. Slowly and surely, the system slipped into morass of corruption.

Withdrawal of European Superintendents caused further regression in revenue administration. Local zamindars refused to pay the full amount. Whatever they collected was good enough motivation to flee to the neighbouring British territories like Masulipatnam and Bellary.²⁴ Feeling safe in British areas, these refractory zamindars carried on their depredations into the Nizam's territories in a blatant manner. The zamindars of Munugol, Amapalem, Mehsoor, Chintagnee and Hingoli were quite impudent and contingency troops were needed to discipline them. The border taluks were deserted due to an uncertain law and order situation. Gribble captures the scenario eloquently.

"Persons who had claims against government were assigned lands, from the revenues of which they were supposed to reimburse themselves. They knew that someone else would replace them soon with similar claims. Therefore, maximizing extraction of revenue in minimum time became the policy of these assignees. Nazar or bribes were offered to minister for the privilege of farming out one or more districts. These persons stayed at headquarters and naibs or deputies were sent to do the dirty work. Sometimes, the same district was farmed out to more than one person, in view of the nazar paid and

New proverb in Hyderabad was that when a deputy went to join a new district, he rode with his face towards the horse's tail in order to see whether his successor is following him



received. So, it became the proverb in Hyderabad that when a deputy went to join a new district, he rode with his face towards the horse's tail in order to see whether his successor is following him."

In 1830 CE, J. Stewart became the Resident, he wrote, "I can perceive a general spirit of insubordination and violence, which will constantly demand the employment of the troops under our control in the whole country." He even deplored the withdrawal of British interference in the civil affairs of the state. After their withdrawal, the Nizam's Government had replaced them with Indian supervisors called 'Amins' and

'Mansabdars'. This arrangement could have hardly reduced the oppression of talukdars. The general perception in British circles was that as long as the method of revenue administration is not changed, the sufferings of the people would continue. About the intended reduction in the size of Hyderabad contingent, there was a consensus that British advantages would diminish, without any benefits to the economic life of Hyderabad State.

The span from 1832 to 1839 CE became proscribed, wherein grants and sunads issued during the period were not held as proof of title, unless collaborated by further evidence. The year 1833 CE witnesses the severest of all the famines of the 19th century. As administration evaporated, local zamindars like Venkat Narsimha Rao of Amlapalem, Kapa Narsimha Rao of Chintagani and Jagannatha Rao of Munagala revolted against the government. They were put down by the contingent forces.

The troops themselves do not seem to have been very satisfied with their lot. In 1827 CE, a mutiny took place at Mominabad in which Lt. Col. Evan Davis, the commanding officer in charge of the troops was assassinated. He was keen to introduce changes in the uniform of the sepoys and also insisted on their shaving their beard. The sepoys refused to comply and when forced, they shot the commandant dead.

In 1835 CE, the odium of maladministration in Hyderabad reached the Court of Directors. They intimated Nizam accordingly and advised him to change the minister, if necessary, so that the administration in the country can be improved. Chandu Lal, the wily fox as he was, on hearing this communication at once conveyed his willingness

to restore European Superintendents. He went a step further and suggested to appoint European Judicial Officers too. For his part, short of giving his control over revenues of the country, he offered to do everything. While showing his apparent enthusiasm for whatever was suggested by the British, Chandu Lal secretly advised Nizam not to accept these proposals as they interfered in Hyderabad's internal administration. Nizam did not approve these suggestions. The system of administration through Amins and Mansabdars continued. As anarchy gripped the state, it also became a victim of Thuggee.

In 1838 CE, when the things were in such a sad plight, General Fraser became the Resident of Hyderabad State.

The Wahabi Movement

In 1838 CE, General Fraser arrived as Resident at Hyderabad and soon after his arrival, he discovered a widespread conspiracy against the British Government known as Wahabi Movement. The Prince Mubariz-ud-Daula was deeply involved in it.²⁵ It is important to understand the roots of the Wahabi Movement.

One Saiyyad Ahmed Shah Bareilvi was the ideologue of this movement. He persuaded the three principal Sufi orders of India, Chishti, Naqsbhandi and Qadiri, to join his revival, which he called the Tariq-e-Muhammadiya, or the Way of Muhammad. In 1821 CE, he established a base in Patna from where a massive network of missionaries spread into rural India. When he left for hajj by boat down the Ganges to the port in Calcutta, the crowds were overwhelming. The welcome he received on his return in October 1823 befitted an imam. His followers had begun to call him a mahdi; he became a symbol of deliverance for Muslims who had lost faith in their kings and elites.

In 1824 CE, Bareilvi visited Afghan tribes around Peshawar, and heard stories of persecution by the Sikhs. He promised a jihad. "On 21st December 1826, a fatwa was proclaimed; in 1830 CE, the holy warriors surprised everyone but themselves by seizing Peshawar. Bareilvi had coins struck in his name. He also declared himself to be Áhmad the Just, Defender of the Faith, the glitter of whose sword scattered destruction among the infidels. One infidel's sword, glittered a little more sharply. A Sikh force captured Bareilvi and killed him

**A Sikh force
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the safety of
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in 1831 CE**



while he was escaping to the safety of Muslim Awadh in 1831 CE.”²⁶

The ideologue died but his thesis of Wahabism spread far and wide. It originally spread amongst Muslim rulers of Northern India and it was widely prevalent in Bengal, North West Frontier, United Provinces and even in the Southern India upto Madras. The thesis was against the predominance of Sikh rulers in Punjab and British in those provinces which were hitherto ruled by Mohammedan rulers. He had appealed to Nawab Sikander Jah that as a Muslim, he should help Mujahids, the name given to the followers of Ahmed Shah Barelvi. The help in terms of funds and men was sought in order to carry on their struggle against the Sikhs and Europeans alike, who had come to wield political suzerainty in India.

But, after the death of Saiyyad Ahmed in 1831 CE, the movement spread to Deccan lands as well. Mubariz ud Daula, the brother of Nizam became its leader and entered into correspondence with Gulam Khan, Nawab of Kurnool. The former wanted to supplant his brother in Hyderabad and both wanted to overthrow the British rule. A brief background about Mubariz-ud-Daula would be in order. In 1815 CE, he was confined to Golconda Fort for opposing the Russell's Brigade. After his release in 1820 CE, he returned to his palace and in the year 1829 CE, once again raised the insurrection against the contingency forces.²⁷ His antipathy towards British was reciprocated in equal measures by their commanders. Colonel Stewart arrested him and once again confined him in Golconda fortress. The Prince tampered with the loyalty of the garrison and tried to appropriate the treasury by preventing Nizam's men from taking it away. Some compromise was arrived at and the Prince took up his residence in the city. Around these times, he got interested in the tenets of Wahabism. The movement leaders, recognizing his potential importance, recognized him as their leader in India. Appropriate titles of 'Rais-ul-Muslimin' and 'Umar-bin-Abdul-Aziz', Naib of the martyred Saiyyad Ahmed were conferred upon him.²⁸

The British were engaged in Afghan Wars and the rumours were that Russia was advancing through Central Asia towards India. Their

spies began to swarm about in the streets of Madras, Bangalore, Kurnool, Hyderabad and Bombay. The attention of General Fraser was drawn to this new menace and probable complicity of Mubariz-ud-Daula by the Madras Government on the information gathered by Mr. Stonehorse, the magistrate of Nellore. Enquiries revealed that the Prince was in correspondence with Nawab of Tonk and the Amirs of Sind. He also roped in Moulvis, who went about the country preaching the tenets of Wahabism.

General Fraser on getting the information about Mubariz-ud-Daula and his confidants surrounded their houses with troops and put them under house arrest. The filial bond on the part of Nizam and intervention by Palace Begums delayed his arrest. The Resident remonstrated and forced Nizam to issue arrest orders. He was duly arrested and brought to Golconda Fort (where else). A joint commission was appointed to look into the charges against the Prince and his associates.²⁹

The commission of enquiry revealed much more than what met the eyes. It concluded that Mubariz ud Daula was guilty of having carried on treasonable correspondence with Indian potentates like the Nawab of Tonk, Kurnool and the landlords of Odiyagiri and Chinnapatnam with the object of overthrowing the British power in India. They were also of the opinion that Mubariz ud Daula was guilty of having tried to tamper with the loyalty of the Indian soldiers to the British and that he wanted to organize a planned rebellion against the British.³⁰ The commission, however admitted that most of the letters of the Moulvies to Mubariz ud Daula spoke of a jihad against the Sikhs, rather than against the British.

The Supreme Government instructed General Fraser to send troops against the Nawab of Kurnool. Military operation were conducted against Kurnool Nawab by a detachment of Madras army and some troops were marched to the northern bank of the river to cut off his retreat. Kurnool was subdued; Nawab was captured, confined and sent to Tiruchirappalli. His Jagir was annexed and administered as 'non regulation province.'³¹

A commission enquired into the complicity of Mubariz ud Daula. He was found guilty and was confined within Golconda. On 25th June 1854, the Prince Mubariz ud Daula died a state prisoner at Golconda Fort.³² The rest of Wahabi prisoners were set free during the course of that year.

The eruption of Wahabi Movement in Hyderabad indicated the deep resentment against the British power by a certain section of people. They resented the loss of political power by the Indians. These ambers were prelude to the conflagration which swept the country in 1857 CE.

4.4 CHANDU LAL GOES, FINANCES KEEP SINKING

In 1838 CE, General Fraser joined as Resident.³³ Chandu Lal was very much there. He wrote to Lord Auckland, the Governor General about the country. "It may appear remarkable that, under the circumstances I have described, the government of the country should have been maintained at all, and that the whole machinery of the State had not been destroyed or its movement stopped many years ago".



Chandulal

And now warming up to Chandu Lal, he wrote, "As long as Chandu Lal lives, I apprehend little or nothing can be done. He is very old (between 77 and 78) and in all human probability, the grave cannot be far removed from him. He has played the game of government for long, and skillfully, a word which I use rather than ably, for I cannot ascribe to him genuine capacity, nor, still less, great talent. We have been the tools in his hand. Adroitly opposing the Nizam to us, or us at other times to his sovereign, as might suit the aim and object of the moment, he has contrived to keep the government – or rather the dictatorship – of the country in his hands for thirty years."

**"As long
as Chandu
Lal lives, I
apprehend
little or nothing
can be done"**



Still, what his motives may have been, and how far so ever actuated by self-interest and determination to uphold his own authority, he has been truly and essentially our friend.”

Fraser found out that the expenses incurred by the Nizam on the contingent amounted to nearly 38 lakhs of rupees per annum. He was asked by the Court of Directors if the Nizam's Government could not be persuaded to pay the salaries of the European Officers also. In January 1840, he informed his Government that the contingent forces are always in four months arrears and generally speaking, dissuaded his government to press for this proposal.

Keeping in view the deepening economic distress in the state, Fraser proposed the Bengal Government advancing a loan of a million sterling to the Nizam government at six percent interest. The proposal was shelved by the Governor General in Council. The conditions in the state began to take a turn for the worse and the economic crisis began to deepen during the years 1841 and 1842 CE. While matters were in such a state, the chieftain of Deodary, Narsingh Rao with the help of the Arab Chief Koharan rose in rebellion. The insurgents took the fort of Badarni that belonged to the Company and plundered the town. It needed the contingency forces to put down the rebellion.

The Resident, finding that it was difficult to obtain an authentic account of state finances from Chandu Lal suggested for his removal in view of his old age. In April 1842, the new Governor General Ellen Borough not only negated the very idea but issued a directive that the Resident must show utmost respect to the native Princes. The long circular was also got translated in Persian language and sent to various Princes in India with whom British had political relations. Buoyed by the circular, the Nizam as well as Chandu Lal began to set aside the advice of General Fraser in the internal affairs of the state.³⁴

Noting this tendency, the Resident cautioned the Supreme Government that the very existence of contingency troops may be in jeopardy, if Nizam and his minister are allowed to exercise complete freedom. In October 1842, a wizened Ellen Borough issued a necessary corrective wherein Nizam was asked to direct the minister to attend to the wishes of the Resident. He was also warned that it would be a great pity if

anything contrary to the former friendship and concord between the two Governments should occur. The reassured Resident tried to impress upon the government of either displacing Chandu Lal or to appoint a person or a body of three or four persons, independent of minister as the Financial Advisors to look after the finances of the state. Among other things, he wrote, "As long as Chandu Lal remains in the office of Diwan, he will never cease to retain or endeavour to retain, in his own feeble grasp, the exclusive power of the Government."

Chandu Lal, on his part was not able to improve the economic situation in the state. In February 1843, he suggested to the British Government for advancing a sum of Rs 75 lakhs to relieve him of the immediate embarrassment in lieu of ceding certain areas to the British.³⁵ Fraser, the Resident made his own enquiries and learnt that the overall debt of the state ran to an extent of two crores of rupees, apart from the pay of the contingent troops running in arrears for nearly five months. In April 1843, Chandu Lal made a formal proposal for a loan of Rupees One crore in lieu of certain territories being offered as securities. The pay of contingent troops was in six months arrears. Chandu Lal, in desperation, appealed to Nizam to advance money from his private treasury to discharge the pay arrears. Nizam refused. Chandu Lal tendered his resignation, hoping that it wouldn't be accepted. The Resident, in consultation with the Nizam, accepted it.³⁶ Now, he turned his ire against the Resident and wrote several inimical letters to the Governor General in Council. All the letters were sent back to Fraser, while reminding Chandu Lal that, the Resident was the proper channel of communication. The heart broken Chandu Lal died in 1845 CE.

Nizam was relieved and was reluctant to relinquish power that had fallen into his lap. For nearly three years, drift continued as no minister was appointed. He appointed Rajah Ram Baksh, a nephew of Chandu Lal as the Peshkar and 'Siraj-ul-Mulk', the son of Munir-ul-Mulk; the former Diwan of Hyderabad as his wakil and the channel of communication to Resident. Nobody was appointed yet as the Diwan. Lord Ellen Borough was clear in his mind about the appointment of Diwan because, "Nizam's Dominions could no longer be considered as

constituting a separate unit since they formed a component part of a powerful Empire, in which unity of thought and purpose are essential to the well-being of the whole.” In 1844 CE, Ellen Borough left India. He was succeeded by Sir Henry Hardinge.

In 1845 CE, Lord Hardinge arrived as the new Governor General. His first act was to address a letter of grave remonstrance to Nizam. Keeping in view the arrears of contingent and effects of maladministration, Nizam was told that “In the event of this state of things leading to serious and unhappy consequences, the British government will not hesitate to put down by force of arms, troubles and opposition to your Highness’s authority, manifestly caused by the oppression under which the people suffer in consequence of the maladministration of your Highness Dominions.”³⁷

The letter had a definite impact. By June 1845, the Resident was able to report that Nizam had paid from his personal treasury about one crore twenty lakh rupees. Raja Ram Buksh, the nephew of Chandu Lal was Peshkar and he was unable to pay four months’ arrears to the contingent. In 1846 CE, zamindars enlisted bands of Rohillas and commenced plundering the countryside. Nizam wanted contingent forces to coerce them. But the Resident declined till a month’s pay was given in advance in addition to four months’ arrears. By September 1846, Surat ul Mulk was appointed as minister on regular basis with full powers. He promised to reduce expenditure by disbanding about 6,000 of the half-disciplined troops. Men refused to take pay or lay down their arms. Others in the line joined them. They arrested their commandant and threatened for his life. Minister applied for military assistance. Troops were called out to overpower mutineers. It was a dangerous and failed experiment.

Fraser, though interested in the welfare of state had become desperate. In 1847 CE, he wrote to Lushington, Chairman, Board of Directors, “The evils of the Hyderabad government and the state of disorder generally prevailing through the country must have been sufficiently well known at the Court of Directors when I was sent here by Lord Auckland. These evils continue as they were to this day. Can it until be the intention of the Court that they should remain so until some crisis

arrives, which may afford a pretext for placing the Nizam's country under a Commission, with our train of English judges and collectors? I cannot believe this to be the intention of the Court, and, if not, surely means ought to be adopted which may avert these consequences. Correction becomes more difficult by every day we remain inactive". Without getting a favourable response, General Fraser went on leave.

By now, Lord Dalhousie had arrived as Governor General in India. He was least interested in either welfare of Hyderabad or its Nizam. He warned ominously that the Governor General will feel himself under the necessity of taking such measures as shall be effectual both for ensuring those objects for which the faith of this government is virtually pledged and for maintaining the security of its own interest. The Resident's policy of friendly interference was emphatically repudiated. In 1849 CE, Dalhousie wrote "I will rigidly act up to the requirements of the treaty with the Nizam. I will give him aid and advice. I will effectually take care that if he chooses to ruin himself in spite of aid and advice, he shall not disturb the peace of British territory, or either injure or play with British interests, but I will not contravene the treaty on the pretence of protecting the Nizam, and I disown the doctrine of our having any moral or political obligation to take the government of his country into our own hands merely because he mismanages his own affairs."

By now, the cost of contingency troops had risen to nearly forty-two lakh of rupees per annum. Some members of the Court of Directors like James Lushington and even the Assistant Resident Col. Low realised the injustice that was done to the Nizam. Col. Low, writing to Lushington has stated that the Company had been guilty towards the Nizam's Government in keeping up for so many years the continued drain upon the revenues of this country of no less than forty lakhs of rupees per annum for the pay of the Contingent in other words, for the purposes of our own, not of the Nizam.

The narrative continued that ever since 1819 CE there has been profound peace in the Deccan, and therefore as it is only during 'war between the contracting parties and any other power' that we can claim to be joined by 6,000 infantry and 9,000 Horse of His Highness's

own troops'. We have had no right by Treaty to demand a single rupee for a Contingent during the whole of that period, upwards of twenty-eight years. In the course of that time, however, we have actually drawn from the Nizam's treasury (not reckoning forty-two lakhs now due to us for advances to the Contingent) the enormous sum of eleven crore twenty lakhs of Hyderabad rupees, of which a large portion has gone out of the Nizam's territories forever so that this huge drain not only exhausts the Nizam's treasury, but tends to impoverish his people by diminishing the amount of species in his Dominions. Under all these circumstances, I know my assertion to be a correct one that a Contingent costing twenty lakhs of rupees per annum would be as useful to the Nizam as the present one costing forty lakhs. My plans would be to annul that part of the Treaty requiring the Nizam to join us in time of war with 6,000 infantry and 9,000 cavalry and instead of it to bind him to keep up at all times a force that would cost twenty lakhs per annum. And if I could get a cession of territory for the payment of the Contingent, I would think that, so great an advantage that I would be quite satisfied with lands that yielded seventeen or eighteen lakhs only, making the Contingent of a corresponding strength. This would put an end to the continual pressure upon the Durbar for money... 'give, give and, give more' is the word perpetually in the Resident's mouth here, and it tends much to destroy his influence in all other matters.

... the enormous sum of 11 crore 20 lakhs was withdrawn from Nizam's treasury...



Such voices were in minority. Therefore, a majority of members of the Court of Directors supported the dominant view and therefore, no changes were made either in size or expenses of the contingent forces. Confronted with lack of support from his government, the Resident turned his attention to reduce the irregular forces of the Nizam. It was also considered appropriate to introduce zilladari system of administration in the country wherein, the zilladar is expected to remain in the district headquarters where he was posted to and not in the capital, as they were doing hitherto. An enquiry into the feudal tenures and the pay of the troops in the employment of various jagirdars was also contemplated. This created a great panic in the minds of the mansabdars, talukadars and jagirdars. All the various nobles of the

court got united as one man to rouse the ire of Nizam against the Diwan, whom they accused to introduce European interference in the administration of the country. The Nizam, on his part looked upon the retrenchment of his irregular army as a measure to diminish his internal power and sovereignty.

The request of a helping hand from Dalhousie was responded with a sharp retort. "If then, His Highness chooses to take advantage of the power which we recognize him to hold, and disregarding our counsel, should take some other capable person to be his minister, he must bear his fate when it comes. But whatever may happen, or may not happen, the Government of India can undertake no great political reform, can neither organize nor instruct a political revolution in the Kingdom of Hyderabad, until the war with the Punjab is concluded, and the affairs of that part of the country are settled. If the Nizam chooses to precipitate his crisis in the meantime, he must go to the dogs his own way, for the Government of India has no time just now to take care of him."³⁸

Smelling lukewarm support from Governor General to the Resident, the nobles of the Nizam's Court started intriguing not only against the minister but also the Resident. He, getting the inkling of the intrigues that were afoot informed the Governor General of the same. The latter reassured the Resident of his full support. In November 1848, Nizam ignoring the Resident dismissed his Diwan Siraj-ul-Mulk. He was replaced by Rajah Ram Baksh, the nephew of Chandu Lal as he promised to pay Rs. 50 Lakhs of rupees as Nazarana to relieve the state of its immediate financial stringency. Lord Dalhousie expressed his pain and surprise in no uncertain terms, "The Governor General is desirous of impressing upon mind of His Highness the grave importance of the circumstances in which he is acting and the fatal consequences of His Highness dignity and realm which may be the result of his acting unwisely at so critical a time.

The State of Hyderabad is oppressed with heavy debts. The advances made by the British Government for the payment of the troops have largely increased. The Governor General desires clearly and distinctly to warn His Highness that within a short space of time, his treasury will be bankrupt, and his whole Kingdom in disorder and confusion."³⁹

In such state of things, the British Government would probably feel itself compelled to exercise a peremptory interference in the internal administration of His Highness Dominions. "The Governor General sincerely trusts that His Highness will give heed to these friendly words, and that regard for the honour and interests in his own realm will induce him to act as to avert the adoption of such measures as must tend to lower His Highness dignity and reduce his power."⁴⁰

With such friendly communications from the Governor General, the Nizam was lulled into a sort of misplaced complacency, while the drain upon his finances due to the albatross of contingency troops continued unabated. By the middle of 1850 CE, the debt due to the East India Company on account of contingency troops stood at sixty-four lakhs of rupees.⁴¹ One more Diwan, Shams-ul-Umrah came and went away in the meantime. Having served for only five months, he soon discovered that neither he is getting powers to reform the administration, nor any financial backing from any quarter to relieve the state of its financial morass. The short-lived Diwan could only manage to pay current salaries to all the troops. Their arrears remained unpaid. Rajah Ram Baksh, the Peshkar could not do any better and payment of the troops continued to accumulate as more arrears. By now, Dalhousie had incorporated Punjab, after the death of Ranjit Singh in the British Dominions. He demanded from Nizam that the whole debt must be liquidated by 31st December 1850. He also warned that if the Nizam failed to do so, he would be forced to take more decisive steps. Everyone knew that it implied exactions of territorial security towards the payment of the principle along with the interest.

4.5 DALHOUSIE ARRIVES, BERAR PLUCKED AWAY

The death of the formidable Sikh ruler, Maharaja Ranjit Singh came as a providential gift to the British company. Within a decade, the strategic province of Punjab was annexed into the British Empire. Liberated from his north-west frontier concerns, the new Governor General, Dalhousie was able to focus upon the Deccan geographies. Therefore, an increased acerbity in his tone towards Nizam of Hyderabad was clearly discernible.



Governor General Lord Dalhousie

Nizam was reduced to a state of continual borrowing. Old debts were cleared by taking fresh loans, at higher rates of interest. The expenditure outflows overtook revenue inflows. The minister Shamsul Umrah found it impossible to carry on the government. In July 1849, he resigned. He was just able to meet the payments of the contingent forces, but old debts continued to increase.

Lord Dalhousie now warned, "That the whole amount should be discharged by the 31st December 1850. If on the arrival of that period, the Governor General's expectations were disappointed, his Lordship would feel it his duty to take such decisive steps as the interests of the British government demanded."⁴² Dalhousie knew that Nizam just cannot pay these over dues. Therefore, a correspondence was at once commenced with the Resident regarding the most suitable territories to be annexed. Dalhousie, the new Governor General was indeed a visionary, an empire builder.

By January 1851, the Nizam's debt to the British East India Company stood at 70 lakh rupees.⁴³ And by April 1851, the Nizam's debts to the British Company increased to 75 lakhs of rupees. Nothing could have been done towards the payment of old debts. The deadlines passed over. A small incident provided the timely handle to Dalhousie. A detachment was passing through Nizam's territory. Some fracas occurred between them and Nizam's irregular troops. Dalhousie felt that it was an affront

to the empire. In June 1851, a strongly worded Kharita was delivered to Nizam, "The Governor General, apart from expressing his disapproval of the state of affairs prevailing in Hyderabad also told him to appoint a Dewan. He also warned the Nizam to check the indiscipline of his Arab mercenaries and prevent them from insulting and harassing passing British detachments. Describing about the indignation by the Government of India, the Governor General wrote that the Government of India's power was such that it could crush the Nizam at its will. When translated into Persian language, it was interpreted as 'The Government of India whose power can make you as the dust under foot, and leave you neither a name nor a trace.'"

The letter hit Nizam like a bolt from the blue. He woke up from his lethargy. Fearing for his very existence, the Nizam promptly appointed Siraj-ul-Mulk as his Diwan, once again on 29th June 1851. On 15th August 1851, he paid Rs. 34,08,485-11-4, i.e., more than half his debt to the British, leaving a balance of Rs 32,97,702-9-2 to be cleared, which he promised to pay off before October 1851.⁴⁴ Promises notwithstanding, Nizam was able to pay only Rs 8,73,547 towards the end of 1851 CE. The balance was sought to be paid by raising money from the local sahu-kars by Nizam giving his personal jewels as security. The people responded with fervour to the novel scheme. Very soon, the necessary capital was subscribed and the Bank was able to advance a loan of Rs Forty Lakhs at six percent interest to the Nizam. The Diwan was filled with joy and he informed the Resident about the formation of the Bank, with one Mr. Dighton as the Director on the Bank.⁴⁵

The Governor General, on hearing about the Bank was filled with anger. He not only forbids the formation of the Banking house but also threatened to persecute Dighton under an Act of Parliament which forbids any European to enter into any financial transactions with native state. Dalhousie was also furious with the Resident for having given his tacit approval for the scheme.⁴⁶ These incidents following so close after each other convinced General Fraser that he no longer enjoyed the Governor General's confidence. His elder brother too had expired. Fraser resigned from his office on 12th November 1852, went home, never to return back.

Dalhousie's refusal to sanction the formation of the bank, created a panic. Nizam held on to the money but Sahukars wanted some jewels as security for their deposits. Mr. Dighton was placed in the most awkward position. He extricated from the dilemma in a very remarkable and thoroughly Hyderabad manner. The jewels were all kept in a safe with three keys, each kept by one interested party. A meeting was called in order to form an inventory of the jewels to see that all was intact. The safe was opened. Tray with jewels covered with velvet cloths were brought before the committee. Jewels were counted and tray was then carried back. But the jewels were poured into a pair of jackboots while the trays, covered with the same velvet were placed empty in the safe. All the members formally locked the safe together.

Jewels in the pair of jackboots were carried to Mr. Dighton's room. He took a palanquin of one of his attendants with a box marked medical comforts. He latched on to jewels worth half a million, reached Madras, boarded a ship, reached Europe and deposited them with a banking firm in Holland. Bank paid money and Sahukars were paid off the entire amount they had deposited in the first place. Salar Jung eventually redeemed the jewels, brought them back to Hyderabad and handed it over to Nizam.

None incurred any loss. But, the honourable conduct of Mr. Dighton and of Salar Jung laid the foundation of trust which the new minister was to enjoy for next thirty years.

Col. John Low succeeded Fraser and took charge on the 7th March 1853.⁴⁷ The debt of the Nizam now stood at more than Rs 45 lakhs and the pay of the contingent was in arrears for more than seven months. The new Resident was chosen to achieve a Mission. On 12th March, 1853, he informed Nizam, "It is necessary that I should tell you that my Government is determined to no longer rely upon promises. Some substantial arrangements must be made that will produce the monthly sum required to a certainly and I really know, no other, that can be relied upon excepting assignment on the revenues of the district for that specific purpose."

The Nizam was taken aback by the bluntness of the demand received so soon after the joining of the new Resident. "He feebly protested that

the Company's army and his father's army conquered the ruler of Poona. After that, there was no war. So why was the contingent kept at all?"⁴⁸ The Resident lamely told that this arrangement continued because the previous Nizam had not objected to this. Nizam interrupted him saying, don't say my father – say Maharaja, meaning Chandu Lal. The Resident began to dictate upon the advantages that would accrue to the Nizam by the conclusion of a new treaty. Nizam exclaimed; God forbid that I suffer such a disgrace! I don't want any new treaty at all, how much so ever you on your persons may fancy it to be advantageous to our interest. He also added that the two acts on the part of a sovereign Prince are always reckoned disgraceful. One is to give away unnecessarily any portion of his hereditary territories and the other is to disband troops, who have been brave and faithful in his service.

The Resident directly asked the Nizam to say "Yes" or "No" to his proposal. "Nizam angrily retorted; suppose I were to declare that I don't want the contingent."⁴⁹ Resident responded that it could be done but in gradual stages but it was imperative on the part of Nizam to lease temporarily territories to ensure regular payments to the troops. Finding the Resident quite obdurate, Nizam sought the advice of nobles. One voice said, "If it is the Governor General's determination to have districts for the pay of the contingent, what advices need we give." On being pressed, Nizam exasperatedly remarked, I would answer in a moment and what is the use of answering, if you are determined to take districts you can take them without my either making a new treaty or giving any answer at all.⁵⁰

Nizam requested the Resident to give him two days' time. On the appointed day, Nizam's delegation requested if Government of India would give him four months' time. The Resident made it clear that, "If His Highness does not forth with depart from his present foolish conduct, he will assuredly hereafter have much cause to regret that folly. But that this will be no fault of mine." The Resident also impressed upon the mind of the Diwan Siraj ul Mulk the necessity of conducting the treaty with the British and also informed him that failure to comply with their demand might necessitate the employment of the force. Nizam was informed that unless he consented to sign the treaty,

British troops would be ordered to enter not only the districts under discussion, but also the capital.⁵¹

To reinforce the message, the Assistant Resident, Major Davidson wrote an informal letter to the Diwan. The latter was informed about his impending meeting with the Resident in the evening and the latter's intent to the Governor General to send more troops by today's post. He continued, "I have a letter from my nephew in Poona mentioning that the 78th Highlanders and Home Minister's 86th Regiment have received orders to be in readiness to march on Hyderabad. Don't suppose military

**"Nizam entered
into the Treaty
of Berar, on
21st May 1853**



operations will be confined to the His Highness, beg of him to save himself and his dynasty by Governor General will most assuredly compel him to accede." During this time, a British Officer was asked to survey the ramparts of the city in an ostentatious manner.

"On 21st May 1853, Nizam entered into the Treaty of Berar,"⁵² by which the province of Berar and the districts of Osmanabad and Raichur were ceded to the British. Hereinafter, the contingent forces of the Nizam were converted into a British Auxiliary Force, officered by the British and it was henceforth called as the 'Hyderabad Contingent.' Siraj-ul-Mulk, the ailing Diwan, unable to bear the shock and humiliation died soon thereafter on 23rd May 1853. He was succeeded by his twenty-four-year-old nephew, Turab Ali Khan, popularly known by his title Salar Jung on 31st May 1853.

The entire transaction which led to the conclusion of The Treaty of Berar was based on fraud, driven by greed and realized by force. The Berar territories, rich in cotton produce were the envy of the company traders. Bruce Norton, commenting about the Treaty, pithily remarked, "Cotton stuffed the ears of justice and made her deaf as well as blind."⁵³

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5. Hyderabad's participation in 1857 uprisings

This chapter covers a rather limited period of just half a decade (1853 – 1858 CE). However, the turn of events was cataclysmic. Nizam's dynasty chose to rule but the paramount power was taken over from the East India Company by the British crown. This was a part of pan Indian power shift too. The Hyderabad state being in the midst of subcontinental geography became crucial for their support or otherwise to the British rulers.

Right from the establishment of the East India Company during mid eighteenth century as rulers of Bengal, various dominions in the subcontinent started falling prey to their political stratagem. Successive Nizams of Hyderabad state were no exception. From mid eighteenth to mid nineteenth century, they lost two third of their territories. They lost political as well as fiscal freedom too. The socio-political ecosystem of the state resented the loss followed by economic decline. It exploded in mid nineteenth century when the spark of rebellion in north was transmitted to deccan lands. Symbols of authority of the company power were hit first. Then came the turn of Civil society, who joined the rebellion. The entire cauldron was extinguished with a heavy hand. The role of Salar Jung was quite crucial to tilt the balance in favour of British arms.

Finally, the paramountcy was taken over by the British crown from the East India Company in November 1858. The Nizam's dynasty was allowed to rule as subordinate allies of the British crown since then onwards.

5.1 THE BACKGROUND

Right since the birth of Asaf Jahi kingdom in the year 1724 CE, the successive rulers of the dynasty have survived under the ever-deepening shadows of political subjugation by one or the other power all the way up to the year 1858 CE. Let us start from the very beginning. In 1724 CE, Nizam-ul-Mulk defeated Mubariz khan (the Deputy

Viceroy of Hyderabad) in the battle of Shakharkheda. The Mughal emperor, Mohammed Shah conferred the viceroyalty on the new ruler with instructions to settle the country, repress the turbulent, punish the rebels and cherish the people. The foundation of Asaf Jahi kingdom, therefore, was laid in the year 1724 CE. The Asaf Jahs ruled over the Deccan lands accepting the suzerainty of the Mughal Emperor. Nizam-ul-mulk had not severed his relation with the Mughal Empire and he referred himself as the Deccan Subedar of the Mughal Emperor.

The victory in Shakharkheda battle was achieved due to prior strategic linkage with Maratha forces under the leadership of Baji Rao. Therefore, as a *quid pro quo* sort of understanding, Baji Rao was always around to demand his Chauth (1/4th share in the total revenue collection) from the founder of Asaf Jahi kingdom. In absence of any written undertaking, between Asaf Jahs and Marathas, the chauth was collected periodically depending upon the power equilibrium. The equation was bound to be tested in a battle field. Nizam-ul-Mulk thought that Malwa has been granted in favour of his son, Gazi-ud-Din. Baji Rao thought that Malwa belongs to Peshwas. To prove his point, in January 1738, Baji Rao swiftly moved with an army of eighty thousand men, crossed Narmada and confronted Nizam near Bhopal. Nizam bought peace without fighting a war by giving away the province of Malwa. In 1740 CE, Baji Rao died and the newly formed kingdom in deccan breathed peace. Thereafter, the Asaf Jahi kingdom witnessed the political shadows of Marathas gone. In 1748 CE, the founder died.

From 1748 till 1761 CE, the Dominion of the Asaf Jahis started disintegrating. It was due to the entry of a foreign force represented by Anglo-European trading companies. The Carnatic territories were the first to break away. The French Company came to occupy a dominant role in Deccan affairs. The ensuing French Tango saw three non-Nizams with their authority reducing progressively. The decisive victory of Robert Clive in Bengal shifted the power balance in favour of the British Company. By 1761 CE, Nizam Ali came to rule Deccan, under the shadows of the British.

After the French, it was now the turn of the British to control and fleece the Deccan rulers. The British heaped innumerable treaties on

the Nizam, slowly but steadily, which resulted in ever mounting debts owed to the East India Company. Gradually, northern Circars in 1766 CE, Guntur Circars in 1788 CE and Rayalaseema in 1800 CE came under the British control in lieu of mounting debts.

In 1805 CE, a treaty of 'Subsidiary Alliance' was imposed by the Company upon the Nizam. The unequal power equation ensured the appointment of Chandu Lal, a partisan of the Company as the controller of Nizam's exchequer. He was propped up for almost four decades. That facilitated the fleecing of the successive Nizams in the name of Hyderabad contingent. This military outfit was a well-armed and well-trained contingent controlled by the British Company to protect the Nizam, his family and the state interests. For their services, the Company was paid, on an assured basis, by a private banking house named 'Palmer and Company' who charged 24 per cent rate of interest per annum towards the advances made to the State. The fiscal drain upon the Nizam's treasury continued because Hyderabad Contingent continued under the watch of Chandu Lal, irrespective of its need.

By January 1851, the Nizam of Hyderabad owed about Rs. 70 lakh rupees to the East India Company towards the maintenance of the contingency forces. And by April 1851, the Nizam's debts to the British Company increased to 75 lakhs of rupees. Lord Dalhousie, the Governor General of India had already informed the Nizam that the entire debt must be cleared by 31st December 1850. Fraser, the British Resident was asked to suggest districts yielding Rs. 35 lakh of rupees annually, which could be taken over by the British East India Company. Nizam could not have possibly made the payment. He dithered. Dalhousie, the expansionist British Governor General did not make any mistake. The ever-mounting debt liability plus interest was eventually met by plucking away Berar, a cotton rich territory from Nizam's grip in 1853 CE. The Nizam was forced to sign the Treaty of Berar conceding the province of Berar and the districts of Osmanabad and Raichur to the Company. After the conclusion of the treaty, the forces of the Nizam were reorganised as Hyderabad contingent and made an auxiliary to the British Indian Army. Siraj-ul-Mulk, who had just taken over as Diwan in 1851 CE, died of shock

and humiliation in 1853 CE. Later, in May 1857, the 4th Nizam of Hyderabad, Nasir-ud-Daula also died. Mir Taihnat Ali Khan Afzal-ud-Daula ascended the throne in 1857 CE, after the death of Nasir-ud-Daula.

Therefore, during 1748 to 1853 CE, the Nizam's Dominion, to start with covering almost the entire Deccan comprising of six subhas (Berar, Bidar, Khandesh, Aurangabad, Golconda and Bijapur) shrunk to less than one third by 1853 CE. Therefore, the rulers and people of Hyderabad witnessed considerable shrinkage of their authority and territories over three to four generations. It was bound to generate and reinforce anti British feelings in their minds.

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Wahabism enters Hyderabad

Hyderabad lands have been situated in the midst of Deccan plateau. Due to this strategic centrality, it has attracted raiders and traders, teachers and preachers from all parts of the country and even beyond. The flow has been sustained, down the ages, irrespective of the ruling dynasties. Like an open house, it has sheltered people of different races, religions and languages. Consequently, its society has absorbed all these influences in its wide bosom. It has certainly made its social texture cosmopolitan. But it has also rendered it sensitive to developments far beyond its borders.

As is well known, the present-day Telangana was a part of Hyderabad State during the nineteenth century. Asaf Jahi dynasty was ruling the State, while the surrounding territories were gradually submerging under the rising tide of the British Empire. Its rulers, being Muslims, didn't stop the penetration of extreme Islamic ideologies in their realm. During the first half of the nineteenth century, as we have already seen, Wahabism in India was one such extreme ideology. Wahabi movement was put down. But, it was just a prelude to the much bigger storm on the horizon.¹

Wahabism, a distant ideological wave had already arrived, but its impact was limited to rulers and pretenders to the throne. It only appealed to those sections of society who believed in Wahabi school of thought.

The broader Islamic society remained immune to the new wave. But during the summer months of 1857 CE, a maelstrom had suddenly

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gripped the northern geographies. The spark was lit by a sepoy, Mangal Pandey, who shot his commandant dead in the Meerut Cantonment on 10th May 1857. All hell broke loose thereafter. Freedom fires appeared almost simultaneously, everywhere. They soon enveloped Ambala, Delhi, Kanpur, Gwalior, Jhansi, Patna and several other places in north. Flowing like lava, they were all converging towards the seat of power in Delhi. Bahadur Shah Zafar, the old Mughal patriarch of eighty-three years

found himself leading the struggle. Innumerable field commanders like Nana Sahib, Tantiya Tope, Mangal Pandey, Rani Laxmi Bai and so many others sustained the conflagration from Amritsar to Patna straddling Indo-Gangetic plains, across one thousand miles. All sections of society, be it Hindu or Muslims, farmers or soldiers and rich or ordinary found themselves sucked into the vortex. With a broad societal spectrum powering the movement, the event is rightly remembered as the **'First war for Indian Independence'**.

5.2 THE INSURGENCY IN ARMED CONTINGENTS

During the summer months of 1857 CE, the wave of freedom movement crossed the Vindhyan mountains effortlessly. A broad swathe of the Deccan, including Hyderabad, Buldhana, Aurangabad, Shorapur, Malkhed and Kopbal and many other towns, was gripped by anti-British uprisings. The vast Deccan geography was witnessing a similar phenomenon just like Northern India. It would be appropriate to have a closer look at this nationalist uprising in Hyderabad State.

"Anti-British feeling in Hyderabad State was not an unknown or a new phenomenon. In fact, it existed since the middle of 18th century, when successive Nizams were forced to enter into several treaties followed by a Subsidiary Alliance with the British East India Company. It also manifested itself in 1839 CE, when the Wahabis declared Jihad and conspired to overthrow the British rule. The anti-British feeling was intensified in 1853 CE, when the Nizam was forced to assign the districts

of Berar, Raichur and Osmanabad to the British East India Company for meeting the expenditure of the subsidiary military contingent forces stationed at Hyderabad. There was a strong resentment among the people against the British. The native troops in the service of the Nizam, with encouragement from Raja Mahipat Ram and Wahabis, entertained strong anti-British feelings. In particular, the Arabs, Rohillas, Afghans and Sikhs in the Nizam's army nursed strong anti-British hatred. The 1857 CE uprising in the Nizam's dominions was spear headed by the Rohillas and Arabs during the reign of Afzal-ud-Daula.”²

Therefore, during May 1857, when freedom movement commenced in the North, the news of early British reverses created a sensation in the city. Inflammatory speeches were made at mosques and placards and posters began to appear on walls at prominent places. They were exhorting people to start ‘Jehad’ (Holy War) against the British. Attempts were made to tamper with the loyalty of the soldiers of the Subsidiary Force. A fakir (mendicant), appearing from nowhere, was found haranguing people to rise against the British and informing them that they would soon be joined by the Secunderabad Regiments. On 18th June 1857, the Resident, Davidson, informed the Government of India that the loyalty of native troops of the Subsidiary Force had completely altered. The Fakir had a body of disciples, but he styled himself as Khamosh Shah (silent ruler). The reported title was due to his remarkable habit of never speaking, except when it was unavoidable.

During June 1857, a big congregation had assembled at the principal mosque. The preacher, Moulvi Akbar, was interrupted by two men. They said, “Why do you babble like a woman? Why do you not inculcate the rising of the Holy Standard?” The Kotwal seized them, but soon they were rescued by several disciples of the Fakir, the silent ruler. Soon, the cry of ‘deen, deen’ (religion, faiths) was raised in the mosque by the rabble. The standard of faith was raised inside the mosque. The Kotwal escaped and the rabble was beaten and dispersed by a party of Arabs, employed for that purpose by Salar Jung, Prime Minister of Hyderabad. The newspaper, Englishman, on 27th June 1857 reported, “the conduct of the Minister and his arrangements do him great credit for the zeal with which he moves along with us, and for the judicious precautions

he has taken to prevent any movement towards an insurrection. Arab guards are posted at all the city gates to prevent the ingress of our sepoys and the egress of suspicious city people. The Arabs sent to drive the insurgents out of the mosque last night were directed to place a guard there to preserve peace and order. Instructions are given to the police and all the station guards, including the newly posted Arabs, to prevent the assemblage of even twenty persons in any one place. One learned Moulvie has been warned to avoid entering into cabals or propagating doctrines to excite insurrection. I hear credibly that overtures were made by some sepoys to the Arab chiefs, who rejected their proposals at once, informing them that they had come to India to make money, and not to fight about religion.”³

Outbreak at Aurangabad

The month of June 1857 had witnessed an uprising amongst Muslim masses in Hyderabad in and around the principal mosque. Before it could be fully contained in the same month, the disaffection amongst the troops at Aurangabad took a serious turn.

In early June 1857, the First Cavalry of Hyderabad Contingent was on the move from Mominabad under the command of Captain HD Abott. While camping just 14 miles before Aurangabad at the village of Chota Pimpalgaon, the news of the disasters overtaking the British in Northern India created a stir amongst soldiers. They believed that now their unit would be asked to march to Delhi, a contingency none of them liked. On 9th June, they arrived at Aurangabad. The discontentment took a serious turn, when sepoys raised slogans “Nizam ke sarhad ke bahar nahi jayenge! Din ke upar kamar nahi bandenge”, indicating their disapproval to proceed to Delhi and fight against the Mughal Emperor.⁴

On 13th June, Captain Abott wrote to the Resident at length. He reported with deepest regret about the serious disaffection, bordering mutiny, in the First Cavalry. Some Sikhs had informed him that both Hindus and Musalmans had taken their oaths and none would fight against their King. The Resident replied that the Government had no intention to call for their services to act against the King of Delhi (Bahadur Shah Zafar), who is himself a supplicant for the protection

of the British Government. He added that whenever their services are required, it will be necessary for the Regiment to obey.

To reassure Captain Abbott, the Resident continued, "The 3rd Cavalry are now in the field against the mutineers; the 2nd are in charge of the Residency; and the whole corps have volunteered to march to suppress the revolt at Delhi. Should your next report on the Regiment not prove satisfactory, the Resident will telegraph to the Commander-in-Chief of the Bombay Army, to march the mobile column, assembling at Malligaum, upon Aurangabad, to coerce the Regiment?"⁵

Soon, the dissatisfaction became apparent in the 2nd Infantry of about 200 soldiers from Oudh. European officers, hardly numbering a dozen, became suspicious that all of them would be massacred, along with their women and children. They were put in a bullock cart, covered with white sheets, to make it look like a zenana cart and safely escorted to Ahmednagar.

The threat perception at Aurangabad was only getting worse. No reliance could be placed on the infantry. The Cavalry looked as if they would attack anytime. And, to compound it further, even the artillery was suspected. British troops were swiftly moving from Ahmednagar. They arrived at Aurangabad on the morning of 23rd June 1857, secured cantonment and proceeded to the 1st Cavalry camp. The mutineers were asked to give up their arms. All, save one troop, gave up. Then, they were allowed six minutes time to reconsider. With no inclination on their part to obey, the artillery opened on them with canister shells. A few were killed and about a dozen or so were cut down by the Dragoons. The remaining troops were dealt in the same manner. In all, 93 men of different ranks were disarmed and placed in confinement on the morning of 23rd June 1857.

A Dafadaar, Mir Fida Ali, fired a pistol at Captain Abbott, but missed the target. He was secured and hanged in a rather telling manner. During the night, gallows was erected in front of the Lines. On the following morning, the British force was paraded; the prisoner was brought out, tried by a drum head court martial, placed on a gun carriage, the rope adjusted and the limber moving away. In a few minutes, from the first appearance of the prisoner, all was over. The

mutinous native infantry and artillery was made to march past the gallows. The execution was witnessed by a great number of people from the city and adjacent villages.

The mutineers were rounded up next. In Captain Abott's words; "These mutineers were without exception, the finest body of men I have seen in India. They are immense fellows, of sixteen or seventeen stones each, and scarcely one of them under five feet ten inches." After summary trial, those found guilty were blown away from guns. The description benumbs senses. "... a frightful sight indeed! His head ascended about twenty yards into the air, and his arms were thrown about eight yards in either direction. I was astonished to see how coolly they received intelligence that they were to suffer death. The man who was blown away only said that witnesses against him would have to answer for this in the next world and begged of them not to tie him to the guns, as he would not flinch at all. The fellow who was hung said that having washed his hands of life, he had washed away all his sins, and the sooner he went to Paradise, the better. We have yet plenty of this work before us."⁶

Of the prisoners taken, two were blown from guns, seven shot by the Dragoons; four cut down in the charge; several hung; between thirty and

It was essentially an anti-British sentiment, enveloping almost the entire country



forty transported and some fifty or sixty others flogged and otherwise punished. The outbreak at Aurangabad was the first serious incident in the State of Hyderabad in 1857 CE, within a few weeks of the outbreak at Meerut in northern India. The spark traveling more than a thousand miles in such a short time, without any swift means of transport or communications, was nothing short of a miracle. The real miracle, if any was the birth of nationalism, bridging social gaps and straddling vast distances. It was essentially an anti-British sentiment, enveloping almost the entire country.

The attack on the Residency

The outbreak of mutiny in the Cavalry at Aurangabad was crushed. Apart from those who died during action, a number of persons were tried and sentenced to death. One person, Meer Fida Ali was hanged;

21 shot dead and three were blown from cannons. A number of people were flogged and turned out of the Army. The serious uprising at Aurangabad, was apparently crushed; or that is what the British believed. But the fond idea was rather short-lived.

The news of uprising at Aurangabad, with a lightning speed, travelled to Buldhana. The troops there, not too sure of the intention of British officers, revolted. One risaldar, 2 jamedars, 3 dafedars, 7 troops and 2 trumpeters deserted the camp at Buldhana and started moving towards Hyderabad. Of the remaining, 1 dafadar and 10 troops were arrested and brought back to Aurangabad. The troops who deserted arrived under Jamedar Cheeda Khan at Hyderabad. An award of Rs.3,000/- (a princely sum in those days) had been offered for his arrest. Soon on their arrival, they were arrested by the Minister Salar Jung and sent to the Resident. This created a wide commotion in the city.

The news of uprising in Aurangabad and Buldhana during the month of June 1857 did not take long to reach the capital city. Soon, wall-posters and wall-writings in Hyderabad city propagated anti-British feelings. Underground activities were also organized, and the Nizam and Diwan were urged to join the revolt. A placard read as follows:

*"The oath of the Almighty is on him
Who does not read this paper?
The aid of the Almighty and his Prophet is
present with Afzal-Ood-Doula Bahadur who
Should not fear or be apprehensive. If fearful
He should wear bangles and sit at home.
Further,
When a Muslim who resolves to kill a kafir, i.e
a Christian and delays will be cut off from
the society and called a descendant of the
Pariah caste, and of a pig and of a dog"*⁷

On the 17th July 1857, a very big congregation gathered at the Mecca Mosque and outside. They decided, after listening to inflammatory speeches, to send four Moulavis to the Nizam to secure the release of these persons from the Residency. In the alternative, they decided to attack the Residency. So great was the commotion and so imminent

seemed the attack that all preparations were made at the Residency to meet the danger.⁸ The Residency had already been reinforced by artillery, cavalry as well as adequate infantry. To prove his unstinted loyalty to the British, Salar Jung sent Arab guards to disperse the congregation. He felt confident enough to inform the Resident that the congregation has been dispersed without any commotion.

The ground reality was not exactly in conformity with Salar Jung's premature judgment. By evening, about 500 Rohillas had broken loose from the city and led by Maulvi Alauddin and Rohilla leader Turrebaz Khan, were heading towards the Residency. The insurgents seemed an ocean of human faces, exhibiting ferocity in its worst form. The Resident noted the attitude of defiance. Every gate of the Residency grounds had been closed and every means of access bristled with bayonets. The insurgents occupied two large upper storied houses with terraced roof belonging to Abbu Saheb and Jai Gopaldas. The nearby garden of Dilsukh was also occupied. Heavy firing ensured from both sides and continued for the entire night. 32 men amongst the insurgents were killed and wounded.

The Arabs were supposed to prevent the escape of these insurgents into the city. However, in the heat of the moment, loyalties became fluid. The Arabs connived with the insurgents and before day break, ensured that survivors were safely lodged in their hiding places in the city. By the day light on 18th July, it was all quiet on the Residency front, so much so that the daughter of the Resident, Mr. Davidson, invited all the ladies of Chadder Ghat to take refuge at the Residency, irrespective of their real feelings or apparent courage. The Residency appeared quiet but the Resident was not sanguine. On 20th July, he telegraphed to Chief Secretary at Fort St. George:

"The Minister has begged of me to have the Subsidiary Force reinforced by another European regiment previous to the Muharram. I am aware of almost the impossibility of European troops being spared, but if a wing of the European regiment could be at once sent to Masulipatnam by steamer and every arrangement for its immediate march here was made, it would arrive in time and probably prevent a revolt here and consequent

upon it, a general rising in Southern India. The Minister evidently doubts the trustworthiness of his own troops, and from the information, I have received since the attack on the Residency on the 17th instant, I am led to suppose that a rising in mass of the whole Muhammedan population against the British government was intended”⁹

On 23rd July, the Resident informed the whole incident at length to the Government of India, at Fort William. A few parts are worth quoting. About Salar Jung, “The Minister is completely puzzled. His intelligence is evidently not so good as my own and he acknowledges he is completely at fault and does not know who he can trust.”¹⁰

About loyalties he says; “Neither the Minister nor the noblemen of the Nizam’s Durbar can at the present moment control their followers and the only way is to meet force by force. I should have no hesitation in meeting the whole armed population of Hyderabad with every armed retainer and follower the nobles could bring into the field with the present Subsidiary force, were we certain of the native troops. But, we must not close our eyes to the fact that they have been tampered with and although the Madras Army has as yet remained faithful, there is no knowing what might happen in the days ahead. I am informed a certain moulavi had meetings with the sepoys at a mosque between the city and Secunderabad and that the party who attacked us was assured by him that they would be joined by the Native Horse artillery and had nothing to fear on their part.”¹¹

About Arabs, he says: “The Arabs cannot be relied on and will evidently only be on our side as long as we are successful. That they could have prevented the escape of Turrebaz Khan is quite clear to me. His Highness states in his note that they returned to the city at 3 o’clock in the morning. It was 11 at night, they were directed by Major Briggs to surround the two houses, where the insurgents were posted. The distance between the city and the Residency is not two miles. Indeed, it was evident to me throughout that they were desirous all the insurgents should escape.”¹² And finally about Nizam: “The Nizam has behaved well on the present occasion and is very angry with his Minister at having been deceived for he had no intelligence. I have no reason to

suppose that Shams-ool-Omrah lent himself in any way or was aware of the outbreak. Salar Jung is, of course, staunch to us indeed. I attribute his unpopularity and his want of reliable intelligence to the knowledge by all parties that he is head and heart with us.”¹³

Tackling Insurgents

Insurgency was tackled. It was time to tackle remaining insurgents, one by one. Both of them were arrested and taken into custody. Turrebaz Khan was arrested at Mogulguda/ Mogiligidda on 22nd July 1857 and was produced before the Criminal Court Magistrate Karamat Ali. The Civil Court Magistrate Fazalulla and Ghalib Jung recorded his statement. According to the contemporary sources, during the trial Turrebaz Khan sounded unrepentant and refused to reveal the names of any of his associates, including Maulvi Allauddin. He took upon himself the entire responsibility for the attack. He told the enquiry committee thus: “I had taken part in riot on my own accord. I do not know any rioter. As the people informed me that the religious flag was hoisted for making Jihad I took part in it.” As per the verdict of the Court, Turrebaz Khan was sentenced to transportation for life. But he managed to escape from jail on 18th January, 1859 “with the active assistance of two sentries, who also decamped with prisoner.” It has been noted by a British official that “there was general sympathy with

His dead body was brought to Hyderabad city and hanged in chains before main gate of the Residency building in Koti



him [Turrebaz Khan], of which I presume his guards partook. We owe this to the moulvies, who found that by their laws his crime did not admit of his being sentenced to death. This I take to be about as bad as any of the bad news I am giving you.” A reward of Rs.5,000 was announced for apprehending Turrebaz Khan.¹⁴ Within a week, one Kurban Ali apprehended Turrebaz Khan. The latter was cornered but would

not surrender. He drew his sword and in the ensuing struggle, died of a shot. His dead body was brought to Hyderabad city and hanged in chains before the main gate of the Residency building in Koti.¹⁵ The latest trophy of the British was to act as a cautionary warning to the potential insurgents.

UPRISINGS AGAINST THE BRITISH ARMY



Source: Photo exhibition by Central Bureau of Communication, MoI&B, GoI, at Parade Ground, Secunderabad on Sept 17, 2022

In the meantime, Maulvi Allauddin who had fled to Bangalore was caught at Mangalampally village and brought to Hyderabad. He was tried and transported to the Andamans (Kala Pani) on 28th June, 1859 as a life prisoner, where he died in 1884 CE.¹⁶

What a terrifying surrealism? Arabs cannot be trusted. Salar Jung cannot trust his intelligence. His people don't trust him because of his support to the Resident. And of course, the Resident does not trust anyone, except his forces. Did he not by its deadly application annihilated all the opponents to British control over Hyderabad State?

5.3 REVOLT IN CIVIL SOCIETY

The principality of Shorapur in Gulbarga district was relatively small in extent and it was ruled by a young prince, Venkatappa Naik. As he was a minor, he was placed under the tutelage of Regent Colonel Meadows Taylor. He assumed independent

authority in 1853 CE. Under pressure from his subjects, local zamindars and the emissaries of the Peshwa Nana Saheb, he decided to participate in the revolt against the British in 1857 CE. His supporters promised that he would become the ruler of the entire southern Maratha territory from Shorapur to Rameshwaram after the successful completion of war against the British power. He recruited a couple of hundreds of Arabs and Rohillas into his army. The ruler of Shorapur was warned by the Nizam of severe punishment if anyone joined the armed forces of the Rajah and the British suspected his loyalties. The Resident commented that “the Rajah has by many acts proved himself entirely unfit to govern his country.”

Salar Jung, the Diwan of Hyderabad state reported to the British Resident that attempts were made by the ruler of Shorapur to recruit Arabs and Rohillas in his army. The Resident informed the Governor-General thus: “Ever since the outbreak of the Revolt in Hindustan rumours of the hostility of the Rajah of Shorapur to our Government have constantly reached me.... I have of late [February, 1857] had frequent cause to regard the proceedings of the Rajah with much distrust and the correspondence now submitted is merely illustrative of a variety of complaints which have come to me from different quarters... the Rajah’s general character is so bad... he is too weak and so completely under the control of the ill-disposed people about him that it is necessary to have him narrowly watched.” Furthermore, “... I see nothing to extenuate the conduct of the Rajah of Shorapur and I therefore conceive he should be dealt with as a rebel who was discovered levying men for hostile purposes against our Government and would arrest, imprison and remove him from Shorapur confiscating at the same time his principality.”

The Rajah was ordered by the British authorities to disband the mercenary troops recruited by him, but he refused to comply. Captain Rose Campbell was sent to persuade the ruler not to participate in the revolt. As Campbell found that the whole situation was going out of control, he issued orders to Captain Windham to march on Shorapur. On February 7, 1858, the troops of Windham

were attacked by the Raja's forces consisting of Bedars, Arabs and Rohillas estimated to be about 5-7 thousand and in the battle that ensued Captain Newberry who led the British forces was killed. However, the Raja could not continue the fight in the wake of the arrival of British reinforcements. He fled to Hyderabad where he was captured and handed over to the Resident. The British forces ultimately confiscated Shorapur and Colonel Campbell was put in charge of its administration.

After capturing the ruler of Shorapur, he was produced before the Military Commission for the trial at Hyderabad. During the trial, the Raja owned up the entire responsibility for the revolt and refused to name any supporters who supported him. Raja Venkatappa Naidu was tried and sentenced to death. The Resident commuted the death sentence to transportation for life and later the Governor General further commuted to a four year imprisonment at the Chingleput Fort. However, while he was being taken there, he shot himself to death. It was remarked that, "unable to bear the indignities of his capture and his subsequent trial as also dreading the prospect of a long period of imprisonment, he put an end to his life at the earliest opportunity." The state of Shorapur later became a part of Nizam's Dominions.

The events relating to trial of the ruler of Shorapur revealed the prevalence of a widespread insurrection in the southern part of Maratha country and the northern Karnatak region. It also indicated that anti-British rebellious sentiment did not subside with the death of the Raja of Shorapur. The chief centers were Miraj, Kolhapur, Nargund, Kopal, Raichur etc. The British forces disarmed the rebels and suppressed the uprisings at Miraj and Kolhapur. The Raja of Nargund was captured, tried and executed. A contemporary newspaper remarked, "These risings are a part of a large conspiracy, which had appointed the month of July for its combined movements, as the ground being then under water, our troops would find a difficulty in acting against them. The rising was piecemeal, as the above two instances, is imputed to the fears of the conspirators, who, conceiving those disclosures respecting

their conspiracy had been made by the late Raja of Shorapur, have been precipitated to take up arms prematurely as their only resource.”¹⁷

Revolt of Gonds and Rohillas

The official documents relating to the revolts in different parts of the Nizam's State and its adjacent regions revealed that along with the local zamindars and Rajas other sections of the population like Rohillas, Bhills, and Gonds etc., continued their fight against the British. The available archival sources cited in the Freedom Struggle in Hyderabad State volumes indicated that the Rohillas in Basmathnagar and Nirmal regions and the Bhills in the Ajanta region created serious trouble to the British during 1858 and 1859 CE. They indulged in looting the British locations and committed robberies. The Rohillas, in particular, refused to be subjects of British power and openly declared allegiance to Nana Sahib. They went round the villages spreading disaffection against the British and displayed placards. A placard declared, “In the name of all the Rohillas, servants of Nana Sahib of poonah. The Nizam (Mogullai) has allied himself with British and does not aid Nana Sahib. For this reason we are plundering the Nizam's country... we shall devastate all the Nizam's Country. “When the Rohillas heard rumours that Tantia Tope was planning to visit the Nizam's Dominions, their numbers swelled. However, the British forces led by Brigadier Hill suppressed them and their leaders Shah Ghulam Hussain and Syed Hussain were hanged. The Bhills in the Ajanta region rebelled under the leadership of Bhagoji Naik in 1857 CE and the Deshpandes of Vaizapur also extended their help. In the Nirmal district, the Rohilla rebels were joined by a strong force of Gond tribesmen under the leadership of Ramji Gond.¹⁸ Ramji Gond was a Gond king who ruled tribal areas which include the present-day



Ramji Gond

The British soldiers captured and hanged him & his 1000 men to death, on a Banyan tree in Nirmal



Nirmal, Uttnoor, Chennuru and Asifabad. Ramji Gond waged guerrilla war against the British and the Nizam's army to preserve his Gond kingdom. British soldiers entered his Kingdom illegally. On 9th April 1860, the British soldiers captured and hanged him and his 1,000 soldiers to death on a Banyan tree in Nirmal. The tree came to be known as Veyyi Purrela Marri Chettu (thousand skulls banyan tree).

The Conspiracy Of Ranga Rao

The Hyderabad contingent forces were engaged in putting down the insurrection of Rohillas, throughout the year from May 1857 till 1858 CE. Before the mutinous conflagration could be contained, yet another plan of insurrection was being hatched by Ranga Rao, a humble patwari and others. Who was Ranga Rao and what exactly was he doing during those tumultuous times? Ranga Rao was an ordinary patwari of Narkhed village. One Sonaji Pandit, a Daftardar in the estate of Raja Rai Rayan, a nobleman of Hyderabad had written a letter to Nana Saheb at Poona and gave it to Ranga Rao for delivery to Nana Saheb. He took the letter, embarked on the long journey, crossed the river Narbada and Jamuna and delivered the letter, safely wrapped in his turban to Nana Saheb, at the village Berwathuda, situated some 10 miles to the west of Lucknow. Nana gave him a sealed letter, written in Marathi containing orders for 'hoisting the flag and creating disturbances.

Sonaji Pandit, a dafedar in the estate of Raja Rai Rayan, a nobleman of Hyderabad, arranged to deliver a letter to Nana Saheb at Poona, through patwari Ranga Rao against all odds...



Nana Saheb's letter reads as follows: "Let it be known that in Hindusthan, the Hindus and the Mohammedans having been provoked to stand up together to defend their faiths, have attacked the camp of the Sahebs and they (the Sahebs) have been slain everywhere. In consequences, it is being made known to you by those present that Shri Ratnakar Page, Narkhedkar and Sonaji Pandit of Hyderabad have been charged with the responsibility of organising effective resistance in these parts. You are

therefore enjoined to act in the name of your faith and destroy the Englishmen wherever they may be found. This is the only way in which Hindus and Mohammedans alike would be able to preserve their faiths. Whosoever will lend his wholehearted support to this cause will live to see his prosperity and will earn our rewards too.”¹⁹

He also gave supporting letters addressed to Safdar-ud-Dowla, Rao Ramba, Gulab Khan and Bajuri. Ranga Rao, an ordinary person, was carrying out an extraordinary mission. He returned and delivered the letters to Gulab Khan and Bajuri at Aurangabad. But other letters addressed to Safdar-ud-Dowla and Rao Rambha were seized by dacoits. Only the letter containing Nana's orders and the letter to Sonaji Pandit remained safe, as they were tucked secure in his turban folds. Sonaji Pandit, in the interregnum had died. Ranga Rao proceeded to Hyderabad. During his journey, he stayed at Madhapur, Halki, Chakli before arriving at Kowlas. He showed Nana's orders 'for hoisting the flag and create disturbances' to anyone who mattered, but except sympathy and occasional financial help, got little else. Ranga Rao was not to lose hope—not yet. He proceeded to Manik Nagar, Nilakar, Ankalska and Umerga. He showed Nana's orders to the Maharaja, got his sympathy, but no action. Already financially exhausted, Ranga Rao ran out of luck, before being arrested by the British army.

The plan of Ranga Rao had roped in several actors in its loop. The main cause of failure was utter lack of finances. The plot was discovered early in 1859 CE. All the culprits were arrested and put to trial.

Ranga Rao was tried by the Resident himself for treason and attempt to raise troops under instructions from Nana saheb. He was sentenced to death in April 1859. The sentence was later commuted by the Governor-General to transportation for life to the Andamans, where he died in 1860 CE. Raja Deep Singh, Safdar-ud-Dowla and others were tried by the courts of Hyderabad. Raja Deep Singh was sentenced to three years imprisonment and deprived of his jagirs which were later restored to his son. Safdar-ud-Dowla's movable and immovable property was confiscated and he was sentenced to

detention for life. Shaik Madar was sentenced to imprisonment for a year. The property of Raghunath Rao was confiscated and he was sentenced to three years imprisonment.²⁰

The law courts held that crimes being political in nature, suitable punishments had to be awarded. This had to be done to set an example to others and to see that the country was saved from disturbances of this kind in future.

The revolt against the British rule, with the support by Hyderabad rulers, was crushed with a heavy hand. The latter, standing on the victor's side found themselves fully protected by their British mentors. But, the idea of resisting the state got embedded in the societal DNA of Hyderabad, with unintended consequence for its future rulers.

Rao Saheb incident

Popular resentment against the British continued in the Nizam's Dominions as evident from several conspiracies and revolts. A contemporary Newspaper Englishman remarked; "There was no want of significant symptoms to point out to us the Nizam's subjects were numerously confederated with rebels, and corresponded through emissaries with their chiefs. The sympathy with the conspirators was almost universal...Times and circumstances have permitted the bold spirits among those who hate us to manifest openly and ostentatiously a hostile spirit towards us, in some cases even by overt acts." The widespread unrest among the people in Hyderabad State against the British was evident by the revolts of Rohillas, Gonds, Koyas, as well as local zamindars. Rao Saheb Peshwa's incident, known as 'Begum Bazar Conspiracy Case' was a case in point. After the suppression of the sepoy mutiny in north India, Rao Saheb Peshwa arrived in Hyderabad and secretly stayed in Begum Bazar. He along with another person, Kishan Rao enlisted the support of local people to organize insurrection in the Deccan. They succeeded in obtaining the support of local Gosain merchants, Brahmins, and landlords. Some soldiers of the British army also supported them. However, the police foiled their plan by arresting their supporters. But both of them escaped. Later in 1862 CE, Rao Saheb was captured in Kanpur and put to death. The

anti-British sentiment in the Nizam's Dominions was manifested by several conspiracies and revolts at Malkhed, Koppal, Bhalki, Nargund, Bhir, and so on.²¹

5.4 REPPRISALS AND SILENCING THE STORM

The fact that after the attack on British Residency by Turrebaz Khan the anti-British feeling persisted among the population in the city of Hyderabad was proved by various incidents like the assassination attempts by some sepoys and conspiracies by rebels. The Resident discovered that some persons in the Nizam's court, "who were most prominent in rank and influence" with feelings of hostility towards the British, tried to influence the Nizam against the British authority. One of the conspirators Mirda Chand, was "a noted bigot. He was one of the insurgents that attacked the Residency on the 17th July 1857. He went to Bolarum, the cantonment of the Contingent, to assist the mutineers who had wounded Brigadier McKenzie. He was the friend and patron of Jehangeer Khan, the assassin". The Resident, Colonel Davidson, compelled the Nizam to dismiss them from his court and capital.

The anti-British sentiment among the local people after the uprising in 1857 CE also manifested in the attempts made on the life of the Resident, Davidson and the Diwan, Salar Jung I. When the British Resident, Davidson visited the Nizam's Court on 8th March, 1859 to present him Inam [gift] from the Governor-General, a native soldier Jahangir Khan attacked the Resident with a carbine loaded with slugs. But finding that it had wounded a servant and not the Resident, he rushed with a drawn sword. However, the assassin was intercepted by the bodyguards and killed on the spot. Captain Hastings Fraser, the second Assistant to the Resident, who was an eye witness to the incident remarked: "There can be little doubt, that the assailant shared in the fanatical feeling of the period against all Europeans.... and that he had expected, by the destruction of the Resident to gain for himself the envied title of Ghazi (champion of the faith)". Similarly, a Cavalry man of the Hyderabad Contingent at Kookatpally attacked Captain Macintire with a sword. The officer received a cut on his arm.

Afterwards the attacker fled, but was brought down by a shot and hanged on the spot.

After the suppression of the revolt in 1857 CE, the Diwan of Hyderabad, Salar Jung was hated by certain sections of local Muslims. A placard read as follows: "The ruler of the Deccan and his officers are misinformed, and the veil of neglect is over their minds. May God Almighty grant Grace: The Dewan is intriguing and suggesting on behalf of the [British] Company that it is advisable that the Star, Effigy, and the title of Knighthood, which have been received from the Company for the ruler, should be accepted without objections? If His Highness the Nizam accept[s] the Effigy and Star, notwithstanding this notice of ours, all of us Mussalmans will make a disturbance against His Highness and the Dewan". The placards also contained hostile references and warned the Diwan thus: "The people are all ruined and in distress and trouble; it is therefore certain that how in a short time all the people will get together and make disturbance against the Dewan". These notices clearly indicated how the general impression had gained ground that Salar Jung, the Dewan was trying to increase the influence of the British in Hyderabad. Hence, some attempts were made on his life, as his pro-British policies made him unpopular among certain sections and created a number of enemies. On 27th January 1868, when Salar Jung was proceeding to the Ramzan Eid Durbar at His Highness's Palace, a person in the crowd fired at him. But the assassin missed the target and wounded the attendants.

The anger and hostility of the people was directed against both the Nizam and the British. Had the Nizam joined hands with the rebels, as desired by them, it was possible to put an end to the British power in the South. According to H.G. Briggs, "Had any of the Moglaee princes or nobles of Delhi taken the initiative... in stirring insurrection, Hyderabad must have given way. I firmly believe that the opportunity alone wanting to make Hyderabad go like Delhi, Lucknow, and other Mohommedan cities". It is significant to note that in the various events of the revolt remarkable unity was witnessed between the

Anger & hostility of the people was directed against both the Nizam & British



Hindus and the Muslims, not just at the level of leaders but among the subaltern sepoys and tribals as well. Even though Arabs and Rohillas dominated the rebel ranks, many Hindus zamindars, chieftains etc., have also played a crucial role. This unity shocked the British authorities, who propounded the theory of animosity/ conflict between the religious groups. The pro-British newspaper Englishman commented, “The Hindus will begin to hate us, and they will begin to love the Muslims”. After the Revolt was crushed, the British felt deeply obliged to the Nizam for his strong support and loyalty. The British government also recognized the importance of Hyderabad and the friendship and goodwill of the Nizam and Salar Jung during the 1857 CE revolt.²²

Salar Jung’s role in silencing the storm

As we have already seen, the sudden storm had built up during summer months in northern Gangetic plains. The fury was expected to reach Deccan, sooner than later.

The map of Hyderabad Dominion under Nizam now engaged the attention of everyone especially the British military planners and strategists in India. With an extent of around one lakh square miles, the dominion was bound by Central Provinces in north, Bombay in west and Madras in south. Hyderabad thus formed the huge buffer between northern and the southern portions of this vast continent. Therefore, the stand taken by the new Nizam at this critical juncture towards British was of utmost importance. If Nizam joined the rebellion, the entire country would be engulfed by the freedom fires. The popular saying in the British strategic circles was, “If Hyderabad is lost, everything is lost.”



Salar Jung was in complete charge of the administration including troops. Everything was controlled and contained, by his clear vision and an iron hand. As rebellion was suppressed, a brigade of Hyderabad contingent was sent with British troops to quell the uprising elsewhere. Over a few months, the eye of the storm lying within Delhi, Kanpur and Jhansi triangle was gouged out. Nana Saheb absconded; Rani Laxmi Bai fought till her last breath.

Bahadur Shah Zafar, the old patriarch of the Mughal power in Delhi was dethroned and sent to far away Rangoon. In 1526 CE, Babur had laid the foundation of the Mughal empire when he captured Delhi's throne after commencing his victorious march from distant Fergana via the battle field of Panipat. In 1857 CE, the same was being extinguished forcibly by the British as its last ruler, Bahadur Shah Zafar was dethroned and dispatched to distant Rangoon. A glorious empire had risen and dazzled before collapsing after two hundred and thirty one years.

About Salar Jung, Gribble has this to say "Hyderabad, at that time was much like a noble ship tossed on a tempestuous sea and nearing perilous breakers, when suddenly master hand of an expert mariner took her helm and slowly and surely steered her to a haven of safety". Salar Jung, the expert mariner had not only steered the state ship to a haven of safety, but also ensured that the much larger ship carrying the British Empire didn't flounder during the maelstrom of 1857 CE.

5.5 CONQUEST & CAPTURE OF DELHI

After crushing the Pan Indian armed revolt against the rule of British East India Company, Delhi was captured. Bahadur Shah Zafar, the last Mughal Emperor was imprisoned and Afzal-ud-Daula, the Nizam of Hyderabad was invited to Delhi to attend and participate in the ceremony. The Nizam of Hyderabad, responded with happiness and love and congratulated Colonel Davidson for this pleasant news. Simultaneously, a ten-point accord was signed between Her Majesty Queen of England and the Nizam Afzal-ud-Daula on 1st November 1857.

The full text of both these Kharita (correspondence) is as follows:

1. Intimation of the Capture of City of Delhi - 9th Oct, 1857

Governor General of British East India Company Lord Canning wrote a letter to Nawab Afzal-ud-Daulah, the Nizam of Hyderabad intimating him that the British forces had captured Delhi by eliminating the revolutionary elements in the Police, Army and the Resident agitators resisting the rise of British hegemony and brought the city of Delhi under his control and imprisoned the last Mughal ruler Bahadur Shah Zafar in his own palace under strict

surveillance and torture and that most of the militants revolting against the British were from Western Punjab, Bengal and other interior of India who were either killed or dispersed elsewhere with the help of the army under Major General Wilson and also the regiments deployed in China and other countries outside India. He further informed Nawab Afzal-ud-Daulah that a large army under the command of Major General Sir James Orman and Brigadier General Havlock stationed at Lucknow (Lakhno) have been despatched to crush the resistance of the revolting elements, and that they successfully completed the given task and have brought the situation under control. He further informed the Nawab that he is invited to attend the ceremony of conquest of Delhi city, and that he has to be present on the given time and date along with this invitation letter. The date and day was specified in another note enclosed with the letter to meet on tomorrow i.e., Tuesday 2nd Nov, 1857 at the appointed official time i.e, one day after the receipt of letter dated 1st Nov, 1857.

In reply to the letter no.1492 of Governor General, Nawab Afzal-ud-Daulah responded as "I received the letter today and as ordained by the Governor General, I would be pleased to be present myself at your office at the appointed time tomorrow i.e, 2nd Nov, 1857 corresponding to 13th Rabi-ul-Awwal 1274 Hijri". He further wrote in his letter addressed to Right Honourable Charles John Lord Wanquet Canning Governor General of British ruled Indian territory on 22nd Rabi-ul-Awwal 1274 Hijri, that he has received the letter written by him with love and happiness regarding the conquest of Delhi city and Patna and the punishment given to the revolting miscreants of Lucknow and that this news was conveyed to him by colonel Davidson was indeed a pleasant news for him, for which he wishes to congratulate him and his brave army.²³

... he has
received the
letter written by
him with love &
happiness



2. Accord between

The Queen of England & Nawab Afzal-ud-Daulah Bahadur

Conclusion of accord (Tahnama) between Her Majesty The Queen of Great Britain and Nawab Afzal-ud-Daulah Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah Bahadur of Hyderabad, C/o Lieutenant Colonel Gibbert Davidson

CB successor of the court as per the authorisation granted by His Excellency Honourable Charles John Garb Canning GCB Viceroy and Governor General of India on behalf of Her Majesties most Honourable Privy Council as an assigned task matching confirmed receipt, on 1st Nov, 1857.

From this side it has been made easier for both the accorders of the accord (Tahnama) of 1835 CE and explained in connection with ongoing process between both the governments, in case any change or alteration in some of the terms and conditions of the said accord and some of the matters not recorded/mentioned in the accord between both of accorders required to be settled and the wish of the Governor General expressed in the meeting of the Council, seriously all of the useful prints brought out and acknowledgement of great value by Her Majesty The Queen of England regarding Nawab Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah Bahadur. Therefore, the clauses as explained below, between Governor General on behalf of The Queen and Nawab-Afzal-ud-Daulah Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah on condition specified ahead.

First Clause

All of the accords and the terms and conditions between both the governments have been fixed, and there is no disagreement with any of the clauses of the accord, and order for permanence and perpetuality prevail.

Second Clause

The Viceroy and Governor General Bahadur in the meeting of the Council handed over the Samsthan of Shorapur with complete authority and permanent governance to Nawab-Afzal-ud-Daulah Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah Bahadur.

Third Clause

Claim of loan of British Government approximately fifty lakh rupees Hyderabad currency given to Nawab Nizam ul Mulk Asaf Jah Bahadur is written off completely.

Fourth Clause

Nawab Afzal ud Daulah Nizam ul Mulk Asaf Jah Bahadur accepted and approved that any of the account of incoming and outgoing amounts of the assigned Taluqas related to past, present and future will not be

called for, but the British Government agreed that after deduction of all of the expenses as per this sixth clause and all of the expenditure in future related to the issues of administration of Taluqas, that have to be spent from that amount with full authority of the British government. If it has to be increased in future, the same has to be done by Nawab Nizam ul Mulk Asaf Jah Bahadur.

Fifth Clause

The Viceroy and Governor General in the meeting of the Council cancelled all of the assigned Taluqas situated in Raichur 'Do Aab' and on the Western border of the dominion of Nawab Nizam-ul-Mulk Bahadur adjacent to Collectorate of Ahmed Nagar and Sholapur under the control of Nawab Nizam ul Mulk Asaf Jah.

Sixth Clause

Taluqas situated in the province of Berar are assigned to the British government as per the Accord of 1853 CE from the past, along with all of the Taluqas of Sarf-e-Khas (Privy Purse) situated within the Taluqas of Berar and other Taluqas adjacent to them, that the raw annual collection of all of these Taluqas mentioned presently is amounting to thirty two lakh rupees British Currency on the basis of payment of Salary to Hyderabad contingent and Chauth payment every year related to Mehpeth Ram and some other annual Mamool recipients as explained in Sixth Clause of the said Accord will be kept as entrustment in estate of British government.

Seventh Clause

The Taluqas of Sarf-e-Khas along with the other Taluqas mentioned in the above clauses are handed over to the British Resident Bahadur until the time of compilation of the accord and signed with seal are received.

Eighth Clause

Nawab Nizam ul Mulk Asaf Jah Bahadur shall hand over all of the Taluqas on the right hand side of Godavari river and Deen Ganga over the meeting point of both the rivers authority for governance. The names of the Taluqas are Rakapally, Bhadrachalam, Cherla Valyaka, Venkur and Saroncha.

Ninth Clause

The to and fro movement of people in and over Godavari river and other

rivers; conjoined with that up to the borders between both the governments shall be allowed without any restraint from the side of the conquered, and no tax or any kind of toll shall be levied on the travellers by any of the accorders coming within the rivers mentioned with goods and articles.

Tenth Clause

This accord consisting of ten clauses has occurred today C/o Lieutenant Colonel Gibbert Davidson Bahadur C.B. on behalf of Viceroy and Governor General of India with Nawab Afzal ud Daulah Nizam ul Mulk Asaf Jah Bahadur completely and compiled by Lieutenant Colonel Gibbert Davidson Bahadur C.B. a copy of this in English and Persian language with his own seal and signature has been handed over to Nawab Nizam ul Mulk Asaf Jah Bahadur with his seal and signature has been given to Lieutenant Colonel Davidson C.B. a declaration confirming the receipt of a copy of this accord after the signature and seal of Viceroy and Governor General will be submitted to the peshi of Nawab Nizam ul Mulk Asaf Jah Bahadur within thirty days from this date with request to acknowledge its receipt and hand over the same to the said lieutenant Colonel.²⁴

What a capitulation of Hyderabad Nizam before the English Queen. So much for the sovereignty of Nizam and political autonomy of his state. Let his soul rest in peace. Amen!

5.6 POLITICAL TAKEOVER BY BRITISH CROWN

In 1858 CE, Queen Victoria's proclamation was read out in all parts of British India. It was read out in Hyderabad too. It promised to all classes of people the observance of their religious rites compatible with justice and fair play. Services rendered by the Nizam, who was still a minor and Prime Minister, Salar Jung who steered the state adroitly during tumultuous storm were duly recognized. The following year, honours were awarded, first to Nizam and then to Salar Jung.

The paramount power hitherto exercised by the East India Company was taken over by the British Crown, in 1858 CE...



Therefore in 1858 CE, the paramount power hitherto exercised by the East India Company was taken over by the British Crown. Naturally, the powers exercised by the Company devolved on the British Crown from now onwards. Simultaneously, the

duties imposed upon successive Asaf Jahi rulers by multiple treaties including subsidiary alliance remain intact to be honoured by successive rulers.

The relevant proclamation is reproduced below:

The Proclamation



ALLAHABAD, MONDAY, 1ST NOVEMBER, 1858

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE GOVERNOR GENERAL has received the commands of HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN to make known the following province PROCLAMATION OF HER MAJESTY to the Princes, the Chiefs and the People of India

**PROCLAMATION BY THE QUEEN IN COUNCIL,
TO THE PRINCES, CHIEFS, AND PEOPLE OF INDIA**

VICTORIA,
BY THE GRACE OF GOD, OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND, AND OF THE COLONIES AND DEPENDENCIES THEREOF IN EUROPE, ASIA, AFRICA, AMERICA, AND AUSTRALASIA.

Queen, Defender of the Faith

Whereas, for diverse weighty reasons, we have resolved, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons in Parliament assembled, to take upon ourselves the Government of the territories in India, heretofore administered in trust for us by the Honourable East India Company:

Now, therefore, we do by these presents notify and declare that, by the advice and consent aforesaid, we have taken upon ourselves the said

government, and we hereby call upon all our subjects within the said territories to be faithful and to bear true allegiance to us, our heirs and successors, and to submit themselves to the authority of those whom we may hereafter from time to time see fit to appoint to administer the government of our said territories, in our name and on our behalf.

And we, reposing especial trust and confidence in the loyalty, ability, and judgement of our right trusty and well-beloved cousin and councillor, Charles John Viscount Canning, do hereby constitute and appoint him, the said Viscount Canning, to be our first Viceroy and Governor-General in and over our said territories, and to administer the Government thereof in our name, and generally to act in our name and on our behalf, subject to such orders and regulations as he shall, from time to time, receive from us through one of our Principal Secretaries of State.

And we do hereby confirm in their several Offices, Civil and Military, all persons now employed in the service of the HONOURABLE EAST INDIA COMPANY, subject to our future pleasure, and to such Laws and Regulations as may hereafter be enacted.

We hereby announce to the Native Princes of India that all Treaties and engagements made with them by or under the authority of the HONOURABLE EAST INDIA COMPANY are by us accepted, and will be scrupulously maintained, and we look for the like observance on their part.

We desire no extension of our present territorial Possessions; and, while we will permit no aggression upon our Dominions or our Rights to be attempted with impunity, we shall sanction no encroachment on those of others. We shall respect the Rights, Dignity and Honour of Native Princes as our own; and we desire that they, as well as our own subjects, should enjoy the prosperity and that social advancement which can only be secured by internal peace and good government.

We hold ourselves bound to the natives of our Indian Territories by the same Obligations of Duty which bind us to all our other subjects, and those obligations, by the blessings of ALMIGHTY GOD, we shall faithfully and conscientiously fulfil.

Firmly relying ourselves on the truth of Christianity, and

acknowledging with gratitude the solace of Religion, we disclaim alike the Right and Desire to impose our Convictions on any of our subjects. We declare it to be our Royal Will and Pleasure that none be in anywise favoured, none molested or disquieted, by reason of their Religious Faith or Observances, but that all alike shall enjoy the equal and impartial protection of the law; and we do strictly charge and enjoin all those who may be in authority under us that they abstain from all interference with the Religious Belief or Worship of any of our subjects on pain of our highest Displeasure. And it is our further Will that, so far as may be, our subjects, of whatever Race or Creed, be freely and impartially admitted to offices in our service, the duties of which they may be qualified, by their education, ability, and integrity, duly to discharge.

We know, and respect, the feelings of attachment with which the natives of INDIA regard the lands inherited by them from their Ancestors, and we desire to protect them in all Rights connected therewith, subject to the equitable demands of the State; and we will that generally, in framing and administering the law, due regard be paid to the ancient Rights, Usages, and Customs of INDIA.

We deeply lament the evils and misery which have been brought upon INDIA by the acts of ambitious men, who have deceived their countrymen by false reports, and led them into open Rebellion. Our power has been shown by the Suppression of that Rebellion in the field; we desire to show our mercy by pardoning the Offences of those who have been thus misled, but who desire to return to the path of Duty.

Already in one province, with a view to stop the further effusion of blood, and to hasten the Pacification of our Indian Dominions, our Viceroy and Governor-General has held out the expectation of Pardon, on certain terms, to the great majority of those who, in the late unhappy disturbances, have been guilty of offences against our Government, and has declared the punishment which will be inflicted on those whose Crimes place them beyond the reach of Forgiveness. We approve and confirm the said act of our Viceroy and Governor-General, and do further announce and proclaim as follows.

Our Clemency will be extended to all Offenders, save and except those who have been, or shall be, convicted of having directly

taken part in the Murder of British Subjects. With regard to such, the demands of Justice forbid the exercise of Mercy.

To those who have willingly given asylum to Murderers, knowing them to be such, or who may have acted as Leaders or Instigators in Revolt, their Lives alone can be guaranteed; but, in appointing the Penalty due to such persons, full consideration will be given to the circumstances under which they have been induced to throw off their Allegiance, and large indulgence will be shown to those whose Crimes may appear to have originated in too credulous acceptance of the false reports circulated by designing Men.

To all others in arms against the Government, we hereby promise unconditional Pardon, Amnesty, and Oblivion of all offences against ourselves, our Crown and Dignity, on their return to their homes and peaceful pursuits.

It is our Royal pleasure that these Terms of Grace and Amnesty should be extended to all those who comply with their conditions before the First Day of January next.

When, by the Blessing of PROVIDENCE, internal tranquillity shall be restored, it is our earnest Desire to stimulate the peaceful industry of INDIA, to promote works of Public Utility and improvement, and to administer its Government for the benefit of all our subjects resident therein. In their prosperity will be our strength; in their Contentment our security, and in their Gratitude our best Reward. And may the God of all Power grant to us, and to those in authority under us, strength to carry out these our Wishes for the good of our people.

What a proclamation from the victorious British crown! Where every word is dripping with pure Imperial authority. It informs all the native rulers (including Afzal ud daula, the Nizam of Hyderabad) to stick to all the previous treaties. It firmly reminds all the defeated subjects about suppression of their rebellion. Finally, it shows mercy upon them and pardons them conditionally – of course, in the name of Almighty God. All in all, it resembled a heavenly commandment from the Goddess, sitting atop the tiny British isles in 1858 CE.

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6. The Economy sinks

From 1757 till 1857 CE, the increasing political control of the subcontinent gave British a unique opportunity; to dictate trade and tariff policies. It was buttressed by a successive wave of technological discoveries. The ginning, spinning and weaving gave rise to textile revolution. Steam engine, railways, roads and telegraphs enabled them to evacuate almost the entire raw material from the subcontinent, to be processed in Britain and then market it globally.

The rising glory of British Empire was more than matched by the sinking fortunes of the Indian economy including the princely state of Hyderabad. Peasantry was groaning under 50 per cent taxation; be it due to Al Kharaj under Islamic rulers or due to Permanent Settlement or due to Ryotwari Settlement under Company's rule. Even the ancestral land of peasants did not exactly belong to them. Evacuation of cotton left weavers workless and worthless. They could never even think about investing in their lands and looms; they were too hard pressed to keep their body, family and stocks alive.

The decline in per capita income, de-urbanization and the decline in real wages for skilled and unskilled workers commenced simultaneously from 1600 CE and reached a nadir in 1850 CE in the Indian subcontinent. The Hyderabad state, ensconced in the belly of the subcontinent shared its (mis)fortune in full measure. Homogeneity of the population and integration of Hyderabad economy with India has been forcefully and conclusively brought out in the seminal work of V.P. Menon, as follows.

"Geographically, culturally, economically and politically, Hyderabad had always been an integral part of India. No natural barriers separated the border areas, the population was completely homogeneous with the population of the surrounding Indian provinces, and the State had been entirely dependent upon India for its railways, its postal, telegraphic and telephonic services and its air communications. Economically, the State had never been an independent entity in any sense of the term, but had always been an integral part of India" (*Menon, VP, 1956, p387*).

6.1 AGRICULTURE, FAMINES AND PANDEMICS

In Hyderabad state, ruled by Asaf Jahis, over half the territory consisted of Khalsa or Diwani lands directly managed by the state and less than one tenth of the total area of the state was known as Sarf-e-Khas, on which revenue went directly to the Nizam's privy purse. The balance area was the ryotwari lands. The revenue demand on all the lands was one half of the gross produce on rain fed lands; two fifth on the lands irrigated by wells and one fourth for valuable crops like sugarcane etc. The taxation rates broadly conformed to the canonical injunctions.

Over one third of the land was held by members of the nobility which included former Hindu rulers like the Raja of Gadwal, Chieftains or nobles who were assigned jagirs (large estates) for rendering military and other services to the state, or former revenue officials like zamindars, deshmukhs and inamdars. This class of nobles not only collected land revenue but also exercised police and judicial authority in their estates. Besides, they held hereditary offices at court. As a result of mismanagement and embezzlement, the state was constantly in debt. The land revenue was farmed out to moneylenders and Arab and Pathan soldiers who extorted as much as they could from the peasantry. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the Hyderabad state was near financial collapse.¹

Prices

Keeping in view the state of communications before the 1850s, the villagers were producing most of their requirements at the local level. Agricultural

The 30-year period of 1820-50 CE may be described as time of cheap grain



prices fluctuated from season to season, in particular during famines or heavy rainfall. But after 1808 CE, and especially after 1820 CE, the prices of agricultural produce started to fall considerably throughout western India. The thirty-year period between 1820 and 1850 CE may be described as time of cheap grain. The index number of wholesale prices of agricultural produce in Poona market, which may be considered as fairly representative of the prices in other areas including Deccan fell from 100 in 1817 CE, to 84 in 1823 CE, to 78 in 1828 CE and to 63 in 1852 CE. In fact, the fall in prices was an all India phenomena.

The prolonged depression in agricultural economy was nothing but

calamitous as far as cultivating classes were concerned. Many cultivators were at a loss to understand as to how to meet the revenue demand. The fall in the prices left almost no profit for cultivators following dry crop tillage. The revenue demand plus interest on borrowed funds and their own need for occasional expenditure needed money. Farmers were compelled to sell off their produce at the beginning of the season at whatever prices ruled in the market.²

Calamities – The Indian Scenario

The second half of the eighteenth century was to witness an accelerated pace of natural and manmade calamities in the Indian subcontinent, including Hyderabad state.

In 1757 CE, the British East India forces defeated those of the Nawab of Bengal. After gaining a firm hold in Bengal, they rapidly increased taxes. Indeed, a goal of the Company was that its exports would be financed from taxation.³

As a result, between 1765-66 CE and 1768-69 CE, the collection of land tax rose by 54 percent. Bengal was devastated by an epic famine, never seen or heard in the living memory of its people. About one third of Bengal's population i.e, about 10 million people perished. The Company officers hoarded grains to mint speculative profits, while the Company purchased grains to safeguard the food supply to its troops. Not only no famine relief was provided, the Company tried to raise taxes even further.⁴ As a result, and despite the devastation caused by the famine, the land revenue collected in 1771-72 CE was only 5 percent lower than in 1768-69 CE. Devastation of such a huge population rendered one third of the land as waste. Hunter thus describes its horrors, "The husbandmen sold their cattle; they sold their implements of agriculture; they devoured their seed grain; they sold their sons and their daughters, till at length no buyer of children could be found; they ate the leaves of trees and the grass of the field; and in June 1771, the Resident at the Durbar affirmed that the living was feeding on the dead. Day and night, a torrent of famished and disease-stricken wretches poured into the great dues".

The land tax was, however, rigorously collected during the years of human sufferings and deaths, perhaps unexampled in the history of

The 2nd half of 18th century was to witness an accelerated pace of natural & manmade calamities in Indian sub-continent ...



mankind. Warren Hastings wrote thus to the Court of Directors on the 3rd November, 1772. "Notwithstanding the loss of at least one-third of the inhabitants of the province, and the consequent decrease of the cultivation, the net collections of the year 1771 CE exceeded even those of 1768 CE. It was naturally to be expected that the diminution of the revenue should have kept an equal pace with the other consequences of so great a calamity. That it did not was owing to its being violently kept up to its former standard."⁵

Famine related mortality and large scale out-migration caused significant depopulation in large parts of Bengal. As late as 1773 CE, the Company officials regarded the revival of provinces' economy as requiring substantial return migration from adjacent territories, especially Awadh. Later, in 1787-88 CE, crop losses, shift in river courses and cyclones also contributed to many famine deaths.

The tragedy was not restricted to Bengal. Other parts of Indian geographies suffered greatly during 1782-84 CE, when there was widespread drought linked to a major El-Nino-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) climate fluctuation. The harvest failed throughout most of north, much of south; a situation made worse by an embargo placed on the grain trade from Bengal and the disruption caused by Anglo-Mysore wars. Referred to as 'Chalisa Famine', it is claimed that between half and two third of people in Doab perished in 1782 CE. It is possible that there were at least as many famine deaths during 1782-1784 CE, as in Bengal during 1769-1770 CE.⁶

There were seven famines during 1790-1793 CE and 1803-1804 CE linked to the occurrence of major ENSO events. The famine of 1790-1793 CE coincided with the third Anglo-Mysorean war. The food crisis of 1803-1804 CE was aggravated by Anglo-Maratha war. No general principles of famine relief, were formulated either by Company or by most of other rulers. Instead, each famine was an isolated, unexpected phenomenon, with which the government dealt hesitatingly and uncertainty, groping in the dark.

The repeated war fares in the Deccan kingdoms were bound to have serious consequences for the agrarian economy. When armies move, they have to be provisioned and when villagers are forced to fight or compelled to retreat, the harvests tend to suffer. Ronald Lordinois cites

a Company official writing in 1791 CE that the ploughs stood still, ripe grains delayed on the ground, and much was lost for the want of cattle to water it, owing to the public service employing their bullocks.

Epidemics of cholera, smallpox and not to mention sexually transmitted diseases due to mobile male columns of armies must have affected the larger population. Furthermore, at a time of disrupted monetary circulation, both the Company and Tipu of Mysore hiked taxes to finance their war efforts. Sumit Guha surmises that India as a whole may have experienced a population reduction of 15-20 percent in the late eighteenth century; while acknowledging that this is almost a conjecture.

The visitations of natural calamities with almost regular frequencies were also taking their regular toll upon the already emaciated population. The ENSO related famine of 1824-25 CE affected around 18 million people in the Deccan, Gujarat and Madras. The food crisis of 1832-33 CE affected northern Madras and many thousands are said to have perished. Land taxes played a role in this disaster. The scarcity of 1833-34 CE, affected Gujarat and the parts of Deccan and North West Province. It was aggravated by the locusts' attack. The severe famine of 1837-38 CE, also linked to ENSO event, ravaged around 8 million people in Punjab, Rajasthan and North West Province and in which around 8 lakh people were said to have died. The famine of 1853-55 CE, which affected around 20 million people in areas of Madras, Rajasthan and Bombay, was caused by drought followed by excessive rainfall.⁷

**The ENSO
related famine
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18 million
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Madras**



The immediate impact of all these natural calamities was widespread deaths spread over a vast swathe of sub-continental geography, including Hyderabad state. Those who survived were rendered extremely weak and vulnerable to disease and pestilence. Women and children, constituting almost 80 per cent of the population must have borne the brunt of these calamities. The added emaciation and death of the countless millions amongst various species of livestock like sheep, goat, cows and buffaloes is something which did not bother the Company rulers. However, its decimation must have had a catastrophic impact upon the rural economy.

The British Company's policy was firmly based on free trade principles,

i.e., non-interference in the markets. The local rulers tried to provide famine relief on a piecemeal basis and undertook for humanitarian and religious reasons. It is unsurprising then, that the mortality associated with famines in India was often extremely high.⁸

Disease and Epidemics – the Indian Scenario

Major diseases and epidemics also became more frequent during this period. In 1812 CE, Kutch was badly affected by an outbreak of bubonic plague which then spread to parts of Gujarat and Sind. The scattered outbursts of plague though confined to limited areas continued in Gujarat, Rajasthan and Sind until about 1861 CE. Between 1820's and the 1850's, the epidemic which spread from Kumaon in the Himalayan foothills is more likely to have been one of typhus.

Cholera thrives in the chaotic and crowded conditions that accompany warfare and famines. The disease made a significant contribution to the overall mortality in the eighteenth century and beyond. In 1783 CE, cholera appeared at Haridwar during religious festivals when it was claimed that about 20,000 people perished. In 1817 CE, a severe cholera epidemic gripped Bengal. Robert Tytler, an Assistant Surgeon at Jessore wrote, "an epidemic has broken out in bazars, the disorder commencing with pain or uneasiness in different parts of the body, presently succeeded by giddiness of the head, sickness, vomiting, gripping in the belly and frequent stools". From Calcutta, the epidemic spread across other continents. By 1822 CE, it had reached the Middle East, East Africa, China, Indonesia and Japan.

The mortality of 1817-21 CE cholera was considerable. William McNeill observes that, an old and well-established pattern for spreading cholera across the Indian landscape intersected the new British imposed patterns of trade and military movements, with the result that cholera overleaped its familiar bounds. In 1831 CE, the Muslim hajis, also disseminated the disease which broke-out in Mecca. Malaria was yet another disease which was responsible for about 2 million deaths each year among infants and young children. The diseases ecology was complex. In much of the north and the west, malaria tended to be an epidemic in form i.e., sudden outbreak every few years. In contrast, especially in vetty areas of the south and

east, malaria tended to be endemic i.e., present throughout the year, constantly sapping people's health and energy.

The British gave utmost attention to protecting their own health and that of their troops. They segregated themselves in privileged residential areas, cantonments, hill stations and civil lines. These places had modest populations and were equipped with sanitary facilities. The wider populations neither got the attention of rulers nor allocation of resources for improving public health. It was easier to envisage India as a place where the population was the harbourer of all sorts of diseases.

The colonial government's basic position was that it was not responsible for the well-being of the general population. It took the view that somehow people should assume responsibility of their own health and sanitary conditions. Regarding taking steps to improve public health, the government's position was essentially hands-off, laissez-faire and miserly.⁹

Famines - the Berar Scenario

In 1818 CE, after the defeat of Marathas by the British Company, the Berar area came to be ruled by the Asaf Jahis. Geographically, the Hyderabad state, including the Berar area has always remained ensconced in the belly of the Indian sub-continent. Therefore, the agro climatic conditions at the state level had broadly been in rhythm with the adjoining territories of Bombay, Madras and to a certain extent, Bengal province. It would be appropriate to have a closer look at the famine and pandemic scenario in the Hyderabad state.

From the beginning of the nineteenth century, reports of food crisis in Berar, began to be registered in the colonial documents. "More than 60 percent of the years for which data is available were periods of high mortality of over 30 per thousands. The unusual growth of mortality rates has a certain correlation with the growing of cotton economy."¹⁰ That frequency suggests that Berar was a part of rhythm of an all India famine cycle.

That frequency suggests that Berar was a part of rhythm of an all India famine cycle



(In) Sanitary Conditions

An accelerated growth in population (Malthusian theory) corresponding to the growth of cotton cultivation led to the rise of several cotton towns. The rapid rise of railway stations in cotton towns along Bengal-

Nagpur Railway line (BNR), created problems of management in towns like Malkapur, Chandpur, Handura, Jalam, Khamgaon, Paras, Akola, Bargaon, Murtizapur, Badrera, Amroati, Chandur and Dongargaon. These towns performed no other function other than just to serve as transit points for loading cotton in railway wagons. A few big emporia like Akola and Amroati did develop a semblance of urban facilities due to presence of colonial army, police, European and Indian merchants, and money lenders. There were almost zero sanitary facilities in other smaller towns. This was a precursor to famine in Berar. The defecation was on open grounds. The outskirts of every village and town were surrounded with overgrown prickly-pears and poisonous weeds. About the availability of water, "Good water is scarce in this district, the wells being brackish, and even the river gravel furnishing brackish water, if pierced to any considerable depth, was the report of Geological Survey of India in 1869 CE."¹¹ The sanitary commissioner reported, "A felid odour of night soil at the approach of every village or town in Berar." Berar is also dotted with shrines in every district. In Bahiram (Ellichpur) alone 60 to 1,00,000 people were attracted to the shrine annually. Absence of any sanitary arrangements left these shrines in a state of great health hazard. The sanitary commissioner reported that the shrine was situated some 500 feet high on the side of the hill and all around were deposits of fecal matter in various stages of decomposition. His desire to improve the conditions was genuine; lack of funding made any planned program impossible. The commissioner's bitterness towards government's indifference was justified; so was the lack of funding by his superior officers. All of them were a part of the colonial hierarchy. Someone proposed; others disposed. The sanitary situation kept deteriorating. A high level of mortality in Berar was the obvious outcome.

Analysing the various factors causing mortality would be appropriate. The mortality in general was caused by the prevalence of several diseases in the region. In general, bowel complaint, dysentery, diarrhoea and cholera contributed to a certain category of mortality, but malarial fever (sun fever, sun stroke, and heat apoplexy), anaemia, scurvy, ulcer of the cornea and ulcer of the extremities also took the toll. Smallpox was generally associated with cotton and was a dreaded disease, known as 'Kapsi Matha' locally. Cholera was introduced when a large mass of labourers was mobilised to build railways. It was a fatal disease which killed a patient within 24

hours. A dramatic case in village Meljanoorea in Buldana district noted, “Gummi, Murd Marotee (Gummi, wife of Marotee) female, aged 16 years was the person first attacked. She was in perfect health previously, worked all day in the field, prepared the usual meal the night before (consisting of dhall and jawari cakes) in which her husband joined her. She took ill at 12 noon and died the next day at 3 pm, and was buried on the banks of the stream running alongside the village.”¹²

The report mentions in details about the Gummi’s death, “Vomited five times, purged six times, attacked by severe cramps in limbs and stomach, urine almost immediately suppressed, voice became husky leading to deafness.”

The people fought these calamities by resorting to traditional methods. One such method was cauterization with hot iron or with a piece of gold. It was resorted to on such a large scale that Mr. Furdoonji Jamshedji, an Indian district official reported that “more than half the population showed the marks of having been scarred on either stomach, back, neck or temples.”¹³ Absence of proper sanitary conditions coupled with export of cotton and food grains caused scarcity and famine in Berar. A major chunk perished due to one disease or the other; of the leftovers, half the population was cauterized.

The causes of Famine

All the colonial officials, from the time of Captain Meadows Taylor (1858 CE) strongly believed that the deep black soil of Berar was naturally rich and therefore did not need much irrigation. “This was to become a standard line of reasoning among officials to oppose any investment on public irrigation projects. And, since cotton did not need too much water, the need for any general irrigation scheme seemed unnecessary and the colonial anti irrigation attitude seemed to be justified. Therefore, the colonial administration was completely surprised at frequent famine cycles which subsequently struck again and again and caught the officials unaware. Almost all the documents of colonial administration have attributed the lack of rains to be the principal cause of famine. In the case of Berar, how can famine occur due to failure of rains if the soil is naturally rich and needs very little water to grow crops?” The colonial reasoning was basically flawed.

Amartya Sen in his work on colonial and post-colonial societies has very forcefully argued that the famines are caused not so much by the actual shortage of food grains as by a “decline of exchange entitlements”. It could be due to inflationary situation of high prices caused due to food grains export or low wages coupled with the government’s inability to respond to the material condition of people. A villager in 1864 CE when asked about the general tenor of life commented, “half a rupee a few years ago, was worth as much as a rupee is worth now. The rise in prices is not confined to grain and cotton, but extends to everything.” The report of the revenue administration commented that the wages of labour were scarcely half the normal average while the prices of food were double the average and the produce of the field half the usual amount. It should be noted that the Berar’s food grains exports averaged 48,000 tons per annum throughout the colonial period.

The colonial literature is quite eloquent about race theories while categorising those famine victims. It was generally believed among the officials that the lower castes and classes were racially weaker and cogenetically lethargic and therefore victims of famine. Mr. J.A. Crawford, an official, directly involved in famine relief operations, openly maintained that, “The Berari is lazy and naturally averse to continuous labour. It is true that many preferred to remain on the lower wage to earning more by doing a fair task; but this was due more to the characteristic idleness of the Berari than to his having other resources.”¹⁴ It was rather cruel and inhuman to expect long hours of labour from the famine victims who come to relief camps, broken in body and spirit. The sanitary commissioner captured a rather dramatic image of the starvation victims during the famine in the following manner.

“Shrivelled and haggard in appearance, arms thin and flabby, legs spindly and wasted in flesh, elbows and knees knobby, flattening of the buttocks, and atrophy of the mammary glands. The skin had a dirty and scurfy appearance, the hair lustreless, and of the colour of dry grass, and the sufferers had often a patient and sad expression on face, like a dumb animal in pain, which was pitiable to see.”

The description of a normal toiling Berari, especially its women get a slightly favourable description. AC Lyell described her in the following manner:

“With a heavy load on her head, an infant wrapped up and slung to her back, the Kunbi women of the poorer classes will sturdily tramp some six to seven miles to market, sell the product of her field there and from the proceeds to buy articles for household consumption, she will then trudge back home in time to prepare the evening meal for the family.”

The Societal Response

In an atmosphere of general scarcity and hunger, the grain trains and carts plying in and out of Berar were targets of thefts, dacoits, robberies and general looting. Grain riots took place in Amroati during the famine years. Peasants resorted to incendiarism to protest against high prices, exports of grain, hoarding and speculation in expectation of higher profits. There were petty riots in bazars, house trespass, and a general rise in offences against persons and property. In the cotton-rich districts of Akola, Amraoti, Ellichpur and Buldana, the bands of people moved at night and attacked merchants and money lenders. The Government's measures to curb crime led to an increase in jail population leading to overcrowding of prisons.

During the famine years, the people from all over Deccan swamped into Berar expecting to obtain some relief from the cotton rich districts. “Those famine wanderers came in particularly large numbers from the central provinces in the north and Hyderabad state from the south. For instance, during the first three months (January-March), more than 1,40,000 famine-stricken people swamped into Berar from Hyderabad state territories. They were rounded up and handed back to Hyderabad authorities in April.” Thefts and dacoitees in the vicinity of relief works suggests the prevalence of general resistance to the transfer of population but force and violence was employed to drive the people back.

Berar, it would appear was experiencing a distinct model of colonization. By the middle of the nineteenth century, other regions like Bengal, Madras and Bombay under British control had developed some manufacturing industries. However, the case of Berar was somewhat distinct. The region devoted almost 35 per cent of its cultivated land for exclusive production of cotton. As a major supplier of raw

During famine years, people swamped into Berar expecting to obtain some relief from these cotton rich districts



cotton, to Great Britain, Berar remained connected to the world economy. The occupation, development and ruin of Berar's economy left its peasantry desiccated and its weavers roasted. It would not be far from truth to state that the entire region of Berar resembled a silent gas chamber, wherein its incarcerated population was undergoing a slow yet certain holocaust under the colonial British rule.

Berar resembled a gas chamber, as its population was undergoing a slow holocaust under the colonial British rule



All the instruments of extracting Berar's wealth were brought in from Great Britain. The standard measurement was undertaken to account for all the cultivatable land in the region. All the necessary technical instruments needed for the purpose of uniformity came from Europe. They were theodolites, the prismatic compass, standard English acre, uniform weights and measures, pluviometer, soil classification and crop experimental solutions. On the top of it were railway lines, telegraph lines and post offices along with ginning and pressing mills. As 91 percent of the raw cotton produced in Berar was evacuated to the mother country by the colonists, it was necessary to ensure that not a single private mill to convert cotton to cloth manufacture was allowed to even take roots in Berar all the way up to 1900 CE.

Even though cotton cultivation was taken up on a mass scale, its pricing was manipulated in Liverpool and Manchester. The primary producer in Berar got just a pittance as a reward for his round the clock hard work. The local economy was caught in a situation of labour abundance and capital scarcity. An economy driven by the forces of external demand and supply, the local economy at best was keeping the body and soul of the producer together. He was producing cotton at the expense of food grains. His returns from cotton were just enough to live a hard life along with his family and animal stock. He grew poor and indebted at the same time. Both these factors compounded his misery in famine years, when he either perished or lived with his body cauterized somewhere in his limbs. Right from the very beginning, the state shied away from spending on irrigation projects. The state had developed a strange argument that as the soil of Berar was naturally rich, it did not need any expenditure on irrigation or other public works. But ironically, whenever famines

did visit Berar, the state pointed to the paucity of rains as the cause for such calamity. If Berar's black soil was so rich, then it should never have required water for cotton cultivation. Then, how come, in a famine year, the calamity was explained due to failure of monsoon. This contradictory logic can be easily interpreted in master-servant relationship. Colonialists were the masters; Indians were their slaves; and the master's logic, in all the situations trumps over slaves' understanding.

Colonialists were masters; Indians were their slaves; and the master's logic, always trumps over slaves' understanding



But the enslaved population had its own logic to explain their (not so happy) circumstance. One such Berari proverb relates to changes in weather during the cotton season. It read:

“Pade swatee kapoos, na mile wati”¹⁵

(Should it rain during swati, October, you will not be able to get cotton for wicks)

It is well known that when Berar came under British colonial rule, severe shortages of all resources were felt. It also included cotton, despite Berar being the largest producer of cotton in colonial India. AC Lyell in his early gazetteer reports many bechireg (lamp less) villages in Berar. The metaphor then can even be applied to the coming of colonialism in Berar, like the rain in October. It took away all cotton and left nothing, even for the wicks to light lamps in the homes. Arrival of colonialists devastated Berar, desiccated its peasantry, roasted its weavers and rendered villages desolate – without any wick to light lamps in the homes.

6.2 COTTON COLONIZATION & ITS IMPACT

For millennia, cotton and textiles had been the priced commodities of the Indian subcontinent. Export of fine cotton textiles to Roman Empire and its craze amongst the aristocratic class is an established fact. During Satavahana and Kakatiya times, the export of cotton textiles has been documented by several historians. During medieval times too, for centuries before the colonial takeover, cotton and cloth had occupied the pride of place in the sub-continent, especially Gujrat, Bengal, Bihar and Deccan territories; the region of Berar being no exception. The travellers passing through the Purna valley

in Berar never failed to notice the endless fields of cotton, like lumps of fresh snow on the plains. It was quite in contrast to the thick black soil on which it grew and which enveloped the region throughout its length and breadth. The white glitter under the bright sun was an overwhelming scenario and no traveller could have failed to notice it.

The white canopy on the ground was brought to life by long trails of Banjara carts originating from Purna Valley and traversing in all the directions carrying the famed Oomra cotton on their back. The ponies and packed bullocks herded by the little boys and men was a common sight throughout the region from Kartik (November) to Vaishak (May) of every year. "The first recorded export of cotton in modern times was made by a couple of Parsi merchants from Bombay and Hyderabad. In 1825-26 CE, Messrs Vikaji and Pestonji, the great revenue farmers made the first exports of Berar cotton to Bombay. They took 1,20,000 Lbs of cotton worth Rs.25,000 in 500 bullock carts."¹⁶ Berar cotton was consumed in central India and also exported to Hyderabad in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. "Berar cotton, in fact went as far as Mirzapur in Awadh Suba on its way to Calcutta at the mouth of the river Ganges. The route covered 500 miles on bullocks to Mirzapur, before loading in boats and floating it down the Holy Ganges to cover yet another 450 miles to Calcutta. The whole journey took almost 100 days, wherein 60 days were accounted by road journey."¹⁷ A sufficient amount of lint was locally consumed. There was a manufacturing base powered by diversified occupational groups like ginner, spinners, weavers and dyers in Berar region. The Berar cloth competed in the neighbouring regions of Dharwad, Nagpur, Central India and north India.

Under the Marathas and then Nizam, much of the cotton tracts were subjected to revenue farming

Under the Marathas and then Nizam, much of the cotton tracts were subjected to revenue farming. Various rulers had taken special care in developing roads and internal communications network, keeping in view its copious revenues, Do Amli or double government system of Marathas and Nizams had come into existence during the late eighteenth century. After Marathas defeat in 1818 CE, Berar was mortgaged by the British to the Nizam. "It was during these times that a unique system of revenue farming developed which came to be known as 'Hoondakuri System'. The internal roads



through which raw cotton moved were auctioned off to the highest bidders, known as Hoondakurs. They were mostly bankers and merchants based in Hyderabad and Bombay. They purchased cotton routes on an annual tax farm basis and exercised control over these routes by appointing their agents. The agents, in turn set-up check-points for collecting transit duties. The traders and merchants who purchased cotton in Berar paid transit tolls to move cotton out of the region. The system which was initially meant to raise revenues by taxing cotton carts was later extended to cover all other commodities.¹⁸ The multi-layered Hoondakuri System ensured that a large amount of raw cotton stayed within Berar for either domestic consumption or for the production of the value-added manufactured goods.

Then came 'The Civil War' between American North and American South in the 1850's. European merchants and manufacturers in Manchester and Liverpool became concerned about cotton supplies. The voracious hunger of the British textile industry demanded a smooth, rapid and efficient movement of raw cotton out of the Berar. A new railway network fed by a new grid of roads soon spread its tentacles to hold the entire Berar geography in its vice like grip. "By 1870 CE, one hundred and fifty miles of rail-road was laid connecting Berar to Bombay in the west and Nagpur in the east. Fourteen stations were built on this line known as the Nagpur branch of the Great Indian Peninsular (GIP) Railways. Metalled roads were built connecting villages with railway stations."¹⁹ On the eve of the inauguration of Khamgaon branch line in 1870 CE, Lord Mayo, the then Governor General openly declared that, "The mills of Manchester, I fear are still working at very short time, and we know that they can take a great deal more cotton than they get. That being the case, our object ought to be to strain every nerve, both to improve quality and increase quantity. All cotton from Berar was destined for England."²⁰

While in Great Britain, the railway accelerated the pace of industrialization, in Berar it became the instrument of extraction. Contrary to triggering industrialization, the accelerated pace of trade brought by the railways, reduced the region to a mere producer and supplier of raw material. The chief articles of export were raw cotton and oilseeds. The chief articles of import were cotton piece goods and salt. Thus, the railways had succeeded in linking Berar to the

world market. Consequently, Berar ended up as the supplier of raw cotton and consumer of finished cloth. The process of deskilling and deindustrialization transformed Berar into a full-fledged agrarian society. The demobilized weavers, spinners and ginners fell on the land for their livelihood. The impact on Banjaras was much more catastrophic. The traditional owners of carts and carriers of cotton, with the full impact of railways, had to give up their old trade and become agricultural labourers.

“The construction of railway network was not a very expensive operation. Mostly famine labour was utilized in building railroads. During times of scarcity, the labour was cheap and plentiful.²¹ The railway primarily served two functions. One, the colonial function of exporting cotton and importing cloth, and two, the imperial function of moving troops and hardware. There is no evidence of any passenger traffic (ie on this line). The total number of employees working for the Nagpur branch of Great Indian Peninsular Railway was miniscule. Compared to the census population of 2,897,491

**Introduction
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in 1891 CE; only 3410 persons were employed in the railways. Even employment was having a racial bias. “The railway order VII read, ‘It will be seen that railways obtain its employees from among Christians, Parsis and Brahmans for the upper posts and from Musalmaans, Kunbils, Mahars and others for the lower posts.’”²²



Introduction of post and telegraph in Berar was another major step for colonial extraction of cotton from Berar.

“The first electric telegraph line was laid in 1862-1863 CE at Sheagaon which was a major railway station on the Nagpur-Bombay branch line.”²³

A cotton merchant sitting in Manchester could send quotations of prices at which cotton was to be purchased in Berar and have the consignment delivered to him within four to six weeks. The telegraph line made instant communication of ‘cotton messages’ a reality. With the perfection of telegraph, the postal system was also geared into action. A chain of runners in Mughal times were replaced with ‘Tonga Daks’. These horses drawn carriages were delivering the mail much faster. The railways soon had a bogie attached to the cotton trains for even more prompt delivery of

letters and parcels. By 1870-71 CE, the postal system was perfected to such an extent that Bombay letters reached Khamgaon at 8 am in the morning and the outward mail closed at 3.30 pm on the same day.

In addition to railways, telegraph, post office and metalled roads there were several minor but equally significant instruments employed for the development of cotton economy of Berar. 'Rain gauge or Pluviometer was keeping an accurate measurement of rainfall in the region. Absence of an organized irrigation system threw agriculture at the mercy of climate. Manchester masters were kept informed by their agents, the cotton commissioner, being their boss. During the cotton season, the cotton commissioner was sending fortnightly reports to the chambers of commerce on the state of the weather and the state of supplies. Advance warnings were sounded on any unfavourable cotton season and these reports were followed with great interest in Bombay and Liverpool. "There is no evidence that these weather reports were made available to the cultivators."²⁴

Yet another aspect which engaged the colonial attention was to modify Berar cotton staple to that of American staple. Manchester machines were designed for the size of American staple which was longer and Manchester men were unwilling to redesign their machines to accommodate any other variety. Elaborate experimental stations were set up all over India and cultivation of exotic variety of cotton seeds were undertaken. In 1867-68 CE, large experimental stations were opened in Sheagaon and Amraoti. The seeds from New Orleans, Sea Island, upland Georgian, Egyptian, Brazilian, Peruvian and all possible varieties were tried. Hybridization of plants was also attempted by impregnating the flowers of native varieties with pollen from the foreign kinds. The seed was provided by Messrs Oakshall and Co. the seed corn growers of Reading in Berkshire. The outcome was not as expected because improvements (in cotton production) all seem to run in the direction of machinery to save labour or methods of resorting the productive power of land by chemical manures. They were all unsuited to a country, broken up into very small holdings, the owners of which live from hand to mouth. The experimental farms in Berar became a mockery in a country sunk in poverty and indebtedness.

“Yet another instrument to control cotton economy was to enact ‘Cotton Frauds Act, 1863. This Act empowered the officials to arrest any person conducting cotton business outside the cotton market committee. These committees were established in all major towns of Berar. Any cotton sold outside the boundaries of these colonial markets was declared illegal transaction and subject to seizure as contraband under the provisions of the Act IX of 1863 of the government of Bombay.”²⁵ The rhetoric of free trade articulated by British intellectuals was in reality imposing monopoly and restrictions on the market place all over Berar.

In order to coordinate the activities of all cotton market committees, a ‘Fiber and Silks Branch’, was created in 1873 CE within the department of agriculture, revenue and commerce. Its job was to collect accurate cotton information from all parts of India for the use by mercantile community. The development of cotton economy under colonial aegis gave a tremendous boost to cotton marketing and trade. The systematic bleeding of Berar had begun.

Bullock carts have been the traditional mode of rural transportation of men and material including grains and cotton in the sub-continent, including Berar. These humble looking carts were powered by animal power for transporting goods and services during the day time. The same carts provided shelter to its owners during the night time. In the pre-colonial period, many different types of carts were in use in Berar. With the rise of colonial trade demanding more cotton to satiate its economic hunger, the cart technology underwent a drastic transformation. The old Berar cart capable of carrying 10 maunds of cotton was replaced with Madras bandy which could carry 15 maunds. Furthermore, the old carts were ‘execrated’ by Europeans, because they did not contain boxes, packages or other civilized domestic commodities. The new ‘bandy’ was sleeker in look, lighter in weight and faster in speed and suited the taste of European firms, who hired them. These new ‘bandies’ were imported and sold in every market fair and bazaar. “During that period, the total number of carts in just four talukas namely Malkapur, Jalgaon, Chikli and Mekhar shot up from 13,962 numbers to 25,610 numbers; a rise of 83.4 per cent.”²⁶ The owners of these new carts were money lenders and European firms.

The cost of each cart was ranging from Rs. 40/- to 60/- and were too expensive for the ordinary indebted person.

Along with transportation of cotton, the value addition chain covered the process of ginning and pressing too. Both these activities were undergoing technological transformation. The first press was introduced in Berar in 1867 CE. In the year 1867-68 CE, the Berar exploded with cotton presses. In 11 towns namely Oomraotee, Buldhana, Akola, Sheegaon, Khamgaon, Karinja, Jalgaon, Moortizapur, Chandur, Nandoorah and Telara, the number of half presses shot up from 32 in 1867 CE to 125 in 1869 CE. During the same period in these 12 towns, the number of full presses shot up from 2 to 19.

Most of these presses were run by steam power and the nearby forest timber was used to ignite its belching chimneys. Never before, were such huge smoke belching chimneys ever seen in Berar. An unusually large number of deaths recorded could be attributed to sudden environmental degradation brought about by colonial technology, like steam engine powering railways and steam gins and presses.

As the tentacles of British policy penetrated all aspects of cotton economy in Berar, its outcome was manifest in various cotton markets. By 1870 CE, one such emporium, which had become a haven for European firm was Khamgaon. It had become the biggest cotton market in the whole of Asia and the British Empire. It had a population of 9000 inhabitants, but its export of 1,00,000 bales worth of 1-million-pound sterling was overwhelming. Khamgaon alone accounted for nearly 40 percent of the total annual exports from Berar. It sucked in almost the last staple of cotton from a radius of 50 to 100 miles. "During the season, the town along with its people was literally buried under cotton overflowing everywhere."²⁷

Under the veneer of visible financial boom, the number of wholesale cotton merchants exploded all over Berar. The fabulous wealth skimmed by these merchants due to export trade caused some discontentment among the general population. This generally manifested in crime. The boom in trade and crime was almost simultaneous. Murders, dacoities, robberies, and arson had increased at a tremendous rate during the period of American Civil War. In Berar, the pattern was the same. The 77 cases of dacoitees in 1863 CE went up to 197 in 1865 CE. Similarly, the cases of

robberies went up from 96 to 224 during the same period. “These robberies and dacoitees occurred against the booty sent by large merchants to large emporia, grain ryots or attack on government treasury.”²⁸

All the towns along with railway line like Khamgaon boomed. However, it spelled doom for the erstwhile colourful small towns and villages like Jalagaon, Teelara, Argaoon, Anjangaon, Rithupur, Warur, Devalghat, Chikh, Fateh Kelda, Malegaon, Digras Darwa, Kehlapur, etc. These innumerable villages were centres of innumerable fairs, festivals and bazaars. The cotton carts during the season avoided these towns as they smoothly wend their way straight to the nearby railway station. Mr. AJ Dunlop, the assistant cotton commissioner, writes in an almost triumphant tone on the demise of these small markets: “I have also given some attention to the smaller markets of Jalgaon, Teelara and Shegaon, the two formers are entirely in the hands of natives, and it would be better for the cultivators to bring their cotton to the large marts. I think that they are gradually coming to see this and I have observed of late a feeling against the way in which, at Teelara especially, they have been treated, and I trust it will gradually lead to the entire desertion of these small markets.”²⁹

The following table shows the export scenario of cotton at the global level in 1866-67 CE.

COTTON EXPORTS

Sl. No.	Country	Bales Exported
1	America	1,500,000
2	India	1,700,000
3	Egypt	250,000
4	Brazil	500,000
5	Other Countries	350,000
	Total	4,300,000

Source: Satya Laxman D, 1997, p 181³⁰

India had replaced America as the largest supplier of cotton to the British Empire by 1866-67 CE. Berar alone supplied nearly a quarter of total annual exports of cotton from British India. Berar supplied on an average 250,000 bales, which was equal to the entire production of cotton in Egypt. The table also shows the

contribution of America falling behind British India. The message is clear. America after civil war was following its own policy after racial war between American north and American south. However, a reverse process was taking place in India. After 1857 CE war, the power grip of British Crown had become vice like and therefore, ever increasing extraction of raw materials, including cotton were imposed upon India to provide raw material to ever hungry Manchester mills and the likes. America was a freed country; India was enslaved; Berar was desiccated.

Price Manipulation

Let us look at the mechanism of pricing of cotton in Berar, by these dominant European firms. A merchant sitting in Liverpool sent orders to his agents in Khamgaon by electronic telegraph and received full pressed bales delivered to him within six weeks of dispatching the order. The prices were fixed by the Manchester chamber of commerce at the rate most favourable to European firms doing business in Berar. "There is practically no such thing as a local price for cotton. The price in Berar is what the price in Liverpool and Bombay makes it, was the common maxim of trade."³¹ The colonial government welcomed these prices and assisted in enforcing it.

The value of Berar cotton was not determined by supply or demand in the world market but by price fixing. Berar's progressive link to the world market was also very dubious. Berar cotton did not really compete in the world market. In fact, Berar was linked just one way specifically to the interests of Manchester chamber of commerce. The chamber's agent wrote in 1869 CE thus, "For, speaking generally, the cultivator who produces and sells the cotton cannot in any way regulate the market price. For this, he is dependent on the home (Manchester) market and the many causes which combine to raise and lower prices in Liverpool, and on the telegraphic notices from Europe the prices which he receives for his crop almost entirely depends."

The price fixing at Liverpool was highly manipulative. The price at Liverpool, say is 10 pence a pound. Orders were sent out to India for so many thousand bales, at about 10 cents a pound price as landed in Liverpool. The agents of Liverpool firms took into consideration

This was entirely due to the India's colonial subjugation by the Great Britain



all charges like transportation, ginning, pressing, railway freight, insurance, shipping, and home commission etc. Deducting all these charges, they calculated that the price to be paid to ryot selling his cotton at Berar only 2 to 3 cents a pound. Although, the demand for Berar cotton was unlimited, and it could be sold anywhere in the world, yet Oomra could never fetch more than 2 to 3 cents a pound in Berar. This was entirely due to the India's colonial subjugation by the Great Britain. In fact, Oomra was selling a little higher than 12 to 13 cents per pound in London and Manchester and there was price differential of 10 cents between Berar and Manchester. The hypocrisy of the *laissez-faire* in theory in fact implied Manchester monopoly in practice for decades after decades. Enormous profits were made by Liverpool traders merely by trading in raw materials.

This price fixation and the demand for the export market pronounced wanton destruction of handloom all over Berar. The disappearance of handloom naturally led to the drying up of the local demand for cotton. In 1867-77 CE, only 7.8 per cent of the total cotton crop was retained for home consumption. The gap was filled by the Bombay or the Nagpur country in the shape of English piece goods. From being self-sufficient in cotton and cloth production, Berar was relegated to a subservient position of the exports of raw cotton and importer of finished goods. Some contemporary western educated Indian nationalists branded this process as the 'drain of wealth' and colonial exploitation of India. This continuous drain, sustained over decades without an end, had its consequences for the economy and eventually the entire society of the region. It subjected the region to debt and credit and subsequently pushed it into scarcity and famines.

General Scenario

To any visitor travelling in those times, Berar looked an epitome of a rather advanced economy in the contemporary world. "A traveller would see long and endless iron lines of railways with steam engines

passing by at regular intervals. Along the railway lines, he would see an endless line of overhead cables buzzing with telegraph messages. He would see post offices and neatly painted red and black postal mail dak carriages going from town to town. He would certainly not fail to see long lines of cotton carts obediently moving towards the railway line. A large steam pressing factories belching smoke into the sky and large monolithic governmental building dotting everywhere would also be noticed. Finally, he would see the union jack, the British flag fluttering at every taluka headquarters. All these appurtenances would probably make him wonder at the progress made by Berar under the British rule.³²

Human judgment, based on visible progress by external appearances is reserved for naïve and foolish people. The ground reality was completely divorced from the external appearances. Berar, as other parts of the sub-continent under colonialism experienced de-industrialization; encroachment into forests; disappearance of waste lands; ecological degradation, disease, demise of bazaars and fairs. Socially, the indebtedness and poverty of the general mass of population, relegated Berar into the depths of economic deprivation and backwardness.

Under colonialism, Berar was systematically de-industrialized. By de-industrialization is meant the destruction of pre-colonial handloom industry as a result of export of almost 90 per cent of raw cotton and import of British manufactured cloth. Additionally, it also meant a continued subjugation of the economy and deliberate legal measures to prevent the growth of fresh manufacturing. Traditionally, Berar had been a great manufacturer of chintz cotton. The salts from the lakes of the Lonar were used to wash and dye chintz. The imposition of salt tax gave a death blow to chintz manufacturing in the region. Similarly, Berar was traditionally famous for its excellent dhotis (waist cloth). The locally manufactured dhoti was worn with great passion not only in Berar but all over south India. Mehkur in Buldowa district was a famous cloth manufacturing center in the pre-colonial times. It was destroyed by pumping cheap manufactured cloth from Manchester. "With almost 90 per cent raw cotton exported, the meagre raw material with its high prices in the retail market prevented the mahars

from acquiring weaving material necessary for making dhotis.”³³ The American Civil War was perhaps the most important event leading to the destruction of cloth manufacturing in Berar. All local manufacture almost dried up as raw cotton disappeared in the local market. The looms, which had been at work for centuries, suddenly came to a halt, and within a few years, they rusted and were gone.

Silencing of looms had a debilitating socio-cultural impact. Weaving in India had historically provided a safe and secure livelihood to around 25 per cent of its rural population. Weavers have, historically been the subject of folk songs, tales, poems and also social protest. The weaving community has, since times immemorial produced a whole array of saints and singers, who openly protest against the oppressive rulers and social evils. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, weavers, singers and poets like Kabir, Nanak, Ravidas and Mira provided inspiration to the oppressed and held a mirror to reflect upon social evils. Their impact was felt on Berar too. “The colonial gazetteers and census report a large number of wandering mendicants and singers all over the region. Bairagis, Prabhus, gondhalis, perkis, Gosais, Sahyasi’s etc. the sufi saints and singers like Khaki Shah Wala and Mastan Shah at Malegaon inspired the message of communal harmony.”³⁴ Weavers, sadhus, mendicants, and the victims of colonial exploitation congregated in these shrines and received inspiration. These shrines also provided relief during famines.

The local loom which had acquired a ceremonial position in every village came under attack from the railways and the British manufactured clothes. It was impossible for the handloom weavers to compete successfully against the skills and energy of Manchester. It was worsened by the mechanism of price manipulation wherein the cotton sold cheap at Manchester while its prices remained high in Berar. The skilled artisans like the dyers, kashris and mahars were wiped out of their traditional occupation during the American Civil War and were forced to become agricultural labourers. These artisans were hitherto seen all over Berar moving from place to place and

selling several different varieties of clothes. “But, with the colonial onslaught, they gave up their looms and seldom went beyond the confines of their villages.”³⁵

The destruction of weaving and spinning communities led to a catastrophic impact upon the general society. As overall purchasing power took a nosedive, the ordinary people were unable to even buy the Manchester cloth. They usually wore their clothes to rags and when it was utterly worn out, the shreds were worn out by their children. These were the same people who had never experienced stark nakedness before. What was so ironical was that in spite of being such a large producer of cotton, half of Berar population went naked. The annual cloth availability was almost decimated to 3 lbs per capita. No wonder that people had to wear their clothes to rags, “Once famous for its cloth, the Berar weaving population was decimated before disappearing completely from the social landscape.”³⁶ Bereft of weavers, the Berar society, at large went half-naked.

The simultaneous destruction of food crops was no less dramatic. The American Civil War had transferred cotton and made it, “The prevailing, absorbing and predominant product. Much of other sorts of culture was replaced to make room for cotton only.” As the acreage under food grains shrank, Berar for the first time began importing large quantities of food grains from the neighbouring country. The Oomraotee Settlement Report in 1870 CE observed that, “Although jowaree, the principal food of the people stands in a reasonable proportion of 2 to 5 to the remaining crops, cotton covers nearly one half of the cultivated area. If the ryots continue to grow cotton to this extent, they must also continue to grow in every alternate year in the same land jowaree too, simply because they have not sufficient land available for a better rotation.”

Rotation was not followed and year after year, the same land was planted with cotton. Yields declined and soil got exhausted. No irrigation facility was anywhere in sight because colonial rulers believed that cotton did not require copious water. As fiber production went up, the hit was taken by grains produce. As cotton average boomed, so did the frequent visitation of scarcities and

famine in Berar. People were constantly complaining about the general decrease in rainfall. "The average annual rainfall during those decades declined from 38.65 inches to 32.82 inches."³⁷ Complaints were also received regarding the drying up of the fresh water springs. In 1874 CE, the Secretary to the Government of India reported that a great number of cattle were dying in Berar yearly for want of water and fodder. He wondered as to what the results would be, when men and beasts are concerned, in the event of a serious and widely extended failure of rains in that province.

Cotton became the curse of Berar

The General Administration Report of 1863-64 CE carefully documented the general feeling of the people about the economy in the following; "Half a rupee, a few years ago was worth as much as a Rupee is worth now. The rise in price is not confined to grain and cotton, but extends to everything."³⁸ Under colonial rule, life for an average Berari was becoming harder and harder and eaking out a living was becoming more difficult.

In conclusion, it is clearly established that despite receiving the most advanced technology of the time, the economic and social conditions of the people of Berar deteriorated. Far from enriching the quality of their life, it left the Berar peasantry in a state of impoverishment and want.

For an outside casual visitor, the visible modern technological wonders like railway lines, telegraphs, ginning and pressing mills altered the physical landscape of Berar's countryside. The Berar cotton prices were linked to global markets like Manchester, London and Bombay. The price mechanism was totally controlled by colonial masters, more often sitting in Liverpool or London. The cotton production in Berar certainly boomed, but almost 91 per cent of it was evacuated to Manchester mills. The primary producer had no say, in the price mechanism of his own produce. Everyone controlling the drain pipe prospered except the primary peasant working in his land holding with his family members and animal stock. The cash crop driven colonial exploitation inflicted

heavy environmental damage which left in its trail disease, famine, despair and a debilitated society in Berar.

The Cambridge Economic History of India has this much to say, “The foreign trade figures suggest that the economic drain was large, and that, south India’s (which included Hyderabad state) major industry, textiles, was hard hit by foreign trade.”³⁹

6.3 THE SINKING OF THE ECONOMY

There is substantial literature, starting from 1595 CE, which charts Indian living standards over time. The reign of Akbar is usually seen as the peak of economic well-being and is well documented in *Ain-e-Akbari*, which meticulously reported wages and prices in the region of Agra. Broad Berry and Gupta have estimated the Indian GDP from the output side for the period 1600 – 1871

CE, and combined the figures with the population data. The findings are consistent with a relatively prosperous India at the height of the Mughal Empire during Akbar’s reign by 1600 CE. However, much of this prosperity had disappeared by the eighteenth century. The post Akbar period saw a secular decline of per capita income from a level of 782 international dollars in 1600 CE to 661 dollars in 1750 CE, slightly

Further shrinkage of 20.5 percent reduction in per capita income of India brought the Indian economy to its knees by mid 19th century



before the Battle of Plassey. This shrinkage of around 15.5 per cent during this phase is not insignificant. In the coming century, with the advent of British East India Company, the decline continued unabated from 661 dollars in 1750 CE to 526 dollars in 1871 CE. This further shrinkage of 20.5 per cent reduction in per capita income of India brought the Indian economy to its knees by mid nineteenth century. These findings are more in tune with the recent revisionist work on Europe, which suggests that Maddison (2007) has substantially underestimated living standards in the pre-modern world (Broad Berry, 2009).

**INDIAN POPULATION AND GDP PER CAPITA - 1700-1871 CE
(1990 INTERNATIONAL DOLLARS)**

Year	Millions	Indian GDP per capita	GB GDP per capita
1700	164	719	1,477
1751	190	661	1,678
1801	207	639	2,142
1811	215	609	2,093
1821	205	580	2,090
1831	216	585	2,176
1841	212	584	2,380
1851	232	586	2,721
1861	244	554	3,065
1871	256	526	3,629

Source: Maddison, 2003, cit.f. Broad Berry and Gupta, 2006. p14⁴⁰

The process of de-urbanization can also be dated back to 1600 CE. The declining per capita income and de-urbanization were going hand in hand, commencing from post Akbar times.

URBAN POPULATION IN INDIA – 1700-1871 CE

Year	Population (millions)	Urban share (per cent)	Urban population (millions)
1700	164	14	23.0
1751	190	13	24.7
1801	207	13	26.9
1811	215	13	28.0
1821	205	12	24.6
1831	216	12	25.9
1841	212	11	23.3
1851	232	11	25.5
1861	244	10	24.4
1871	256	8.7	22.3

Source: Visaria and Visaria, 1982, p 519

Population: Urban share, other years: interpolation⁴¹

Most writers seem to accept the idea of a downward real wage trend during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries before recovering during

the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This pattern was suggested by Mukherjee (1967) and confirmed by Broad Berry and Gupta (2005).

REAL WAGES OF INDIAN UNSKILLED LABOURER – 1700-1871 CE

Year	1871 = 100
1700	171.9
1751	140.7
1801	120.8
1811	106.7
1821	94.4
1831	101.5
1841	109.1
1851	117.5
1861	108.3
1871	100.0

Source: Broad Berry and Gupta, 2006, p 14⁴²

It would appear that decline of per capita income, de-urbanization and decline of real wages for unskilled and skilled workers commenced simultaneously from 1600 CE onwards. The unfolding triple tragedy held disturbing portends for the future.

The ruthless exploitation under British Colonial rule completely devastated India's society as well as its economy. The comprehensive pauperization had its dire consequences for all major occupational groups. The peasantry was desiccated. The weaving community was roasted. A new class of landless agricultural labourers showed up during mid-nineteenth century. The literacy was not even 10 percent. Indian population was subjected to frequent famines, had one of the world's lowest life expectancies, suffered from pervasive malnutrition and was largely illiterate. By mid-nineteenth century, the Indian economy had reached its nadir. Even, a British economist, Angus Maddison has calculated that India's share of the world income collapsed from 27 per cent in 1700 CE (compared to Europe's share of 23 per cent) to a mere 12 per cent in 1850 CE. **It was indeed an era of darkness!**

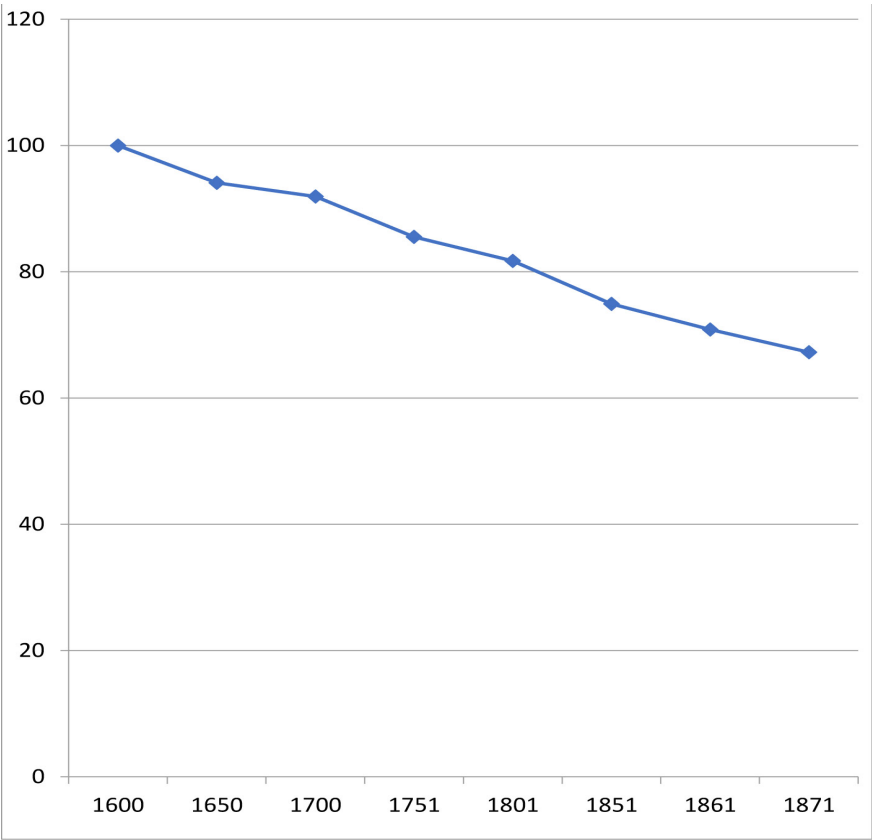
The peasantry was desiccated; weaving community was roasted; literacy wasn't even 10 percent! India's share of the world income collapsed drastically!



**TELANGANA ECONOMY-
PER CAPITA INCOME AT CONSTANT PRICES – 1600-1871 CE**

Year	Index No.
1600	100.00
1650	94.11
1700	91.94
1751	85.53
1801	81.71
1851	74.93
1861	70.84
1871	67.26

Source: Derived from Broad Berry & Gupta⁴³



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Ramji Gond was a tribal leader. He waged Guerrilla warfare against the British. He was hanged along with 1000 soldiers to death on a banian tree in Nirmal town of Telangana. The tree is known as Veyyi Purrela Marri Chettu (thousand skulls banian tree)



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