



## Chapter 11

### After the Rendition

The period of Dewans' administration (1881 - 1947) after the Rendition in the former princely state of Mysore has many lessons to teach. It is the story of a medieval State transforming itself into a modern one, opening its doors to modern, liberal and also democratic ideas and making efforts to welcome economic changes brought about by the efforts of farsighted statesmen. The people too were equally enlightened to usher in modern ideas, though slowly.

The Rendition laid down that the Maharaja was to rule with a Council headed by the Dewan and two members. Generally, people with tested loyalty to the British Crown were appointed as Dewans. The earlier Dewans like Rangacharlu and K.Sheshadri Iyer, were from Madras Presidency service, known for their loyalty to the British and also for their administrative talents. To guide and check them the British Resident was appointed and later they appointed a British Private Secretary to the Maharaja to regulate his thoughts. The Maharajas were loyal to the British. They had secured the throne with the grace of the British after the fall of Tipu. Though Krishnaraja Wodeyar III was freed from administrative responsibilities in 1831, he remained loyal to the British overlords and tried his level best, using all means, to get the throne back to his family. Even during the 1857-58 uprising, he stood like a rock in his loyalty to the British. There were rumours that there had been efforts to woo him to the cause of the Uprising, but he did not move even a finger to support the cause of the anti-British forces.

A majority of the Dewans who came to power had the most modern minds. They wanted to industrialize the kingdom, as no country could progress depending only on agriculture. This was because a major part of the Mysore plateau is in a rain shadow area, and failed monsoons could cause drought

## Jewels of Administration





and famine. The worst famine was evidenced in 1876-78, killing nearly nine lakh people in the State. If that was the worst famine, smaller such famines haunted some regions of the State frequently causing hunger, death, misery and loss of revenue, making it difficult to meet the expenses of running the administration.

Suspension of agriculture due to famine left thousands unemployed, and this unemployed workforce was utilised to desilt and improve tanks; lay or improve roads, and more importantly for the construction of railways. The Bangalore-Mysore Railway was the 'legacy' of the 1876-78 famine.



*KGF*



*K R Sagar Dam*

Irrigation works were undertaken to end much dependence on the rains. Gold mining at KGF by European miners proved to be a boon in more ways than one. It not only brought royalty to the State, but also the required electric power for production with cheaply generated hydro-electricity. This was the first major initiative. To supply the increased demand of power to the gold mines, the unique **K.R. Sagar Dam** was raised. It not only supplied power but also made the Southern Districts of Mandya and Mysore bloomed with greenery. The sugar industry was also started and the demand for more power was met by undertaking the Shimsha power project.

Power also brought industries. **Bangalore** secured **Electrical power** in 1905 and not only did old industries benefit from it, but new industries were also started. It also brought **Indian Institute of Science** to Bangalore, as power was available in plenty. The Institute's capacity for scientific research helped the sugar, sandal oil, soap and several other industries where the technology was once out of reach of Mysore.

Literacy and spread of education was found to be absolutely necessary to open the minds of people to new ideas and modern techniques and the Dewans strived to open not only schools which taught the 3R's, but technical schools which taught them new skills by strengthening their capacity to work with their hands. New techniques in agriculture, animal husbandry, sericulture, horticulture, floriculture - every



*Shivasamudra*

branch which can add one more arrow to the bows of agriculturists and diversify their crops and productive talents were popularized through training

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*Indian Institute of Science*

centers and other means of disseminating new knowledge and methods. Schools with units to teach sericulture were set up to impart technical training.

To improve sericulture, experts from France, Italy and Japan were invited and encouraged to conduct experiments in local conditions and improve the local silkmoth population, as the female was supposed to be very fertile and hospitable to foreign male bee varieties with special productive strains. Repeated failure in experiments and repeated attacks by epidemics were discouraging; but effort to develop this agro-based industry which required intensive man-power, was not given up. During the II World War, Mysore was the only major supplier of silk for British airmen for their parachutes. All other major silk producing countries were under the control of the enemy powers and India, and chiefly Mysore, was their major source for silk. Mysore Silk is a brand today as a result.

The **Mysore University** was founded, despite opposition from the Madras University, and grew to be a great center of learning. The **College of Agricultural Sciences**, the **Engineering College**, the **Veterinary College**, all helped the potential in their respective fields to bloom. The story of the starting of the **Hindustan Aircrafts Ltd.**, is almost legendary; but it was the perseverance of the men connected with Mysore that could make it possible. Items like electric transformers, sulphur, phosphorous, ammonium sulphate and many more, were produced in Mysore for the first time in India. There was opposition from the British government to start industries because they would compete with English industrial products. Mysore appeared far more advanced than their own presidencies which were backward, and British legacy made some old



*Mysore University*





1947 HAL Airport - Bangalore

presidencies like Orissa or Bihar, limp in progress even decades after British leaving the country. Opposition to establish an automobile factory at Bangalore which finally resulted in the starting of the aircraft factory is a classic case. The latter could be started because the British were in acute need of this.



Sir M. Visvesvaraya

Luckily for Mysore, the Dewans had a modern outlook. To develop the State, they not only looked at England but also Australia, Holland, Japan, America and other advanced countries. Experts in sericulture were invited from Japan and Italy. The Americans came to help produce electricity, Iron and Steel and also aeronautics. Factories were started at a time when State (public) enterprise was rare in India. Though Sir M. Visvesvaraya started this, Sir Mirza used it on a broader scale with over a dozen enterprises.



Sir Mirza Ismail

This atmosphere of technical excellence, infrastructure and government's enthusiasm over industrialization was inherited by the Mysore Government even after Independence and many Central Government industries like HMT, ITI, BEL, BHEL, and other such ventures made their way to Bangalore and Karnataka. Later Bangalore excelled in IT, BT, aeronautics and in technology connected with space research, and the latest being nano technology. The policies followed during this period by progressive Dewans paved the way for such progress.

Alongside, there was a strong national spirit that developed in the common people. The demand for responsible government was a manifestation of nationalism and democracy. The agitators loved the Maharaja and they said

that they wanted a “Responsible Government under the aegis of His Highness the Maharaja”. Responsible government in some form or the other was functioning in British Presidencies partially after the Minto-Morley Reforms (1909), Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms (1919) and very widely after the Federal Act (1935) by which popular governments came into existence in 1937 in all Presidencies.

The movement for responsible government became very strong after the Shivapur Congress session of 1938. The movements launched for nearly 10 years did not allow the Mysore government to function with comfort and ease. It is the divine right theory of the Maharaja which proved to be the bane. Many smaller States like Aundh, Sangli and Jamkhandi founded responsible governments which were functioning smoothly. They were small States, but the ministers were Gandhians and were guided by national leaders like Gandhi, Nehru, Patel and others. If the agitation for responsible government in 1939 was of a purely local initiative, without the full blessings of the National Congress leaders, the Quit India Movement was inspired by the national spirit, to see the British out of the country. They were not bothered about the Maharaja. They did not allow even the Dasara Jumbo Savari (procession) to be conducted. The presence of the monarch was not representative of free India. To them, the king was only an instrument to shackle the country.

There was no freedom to form trade unions. Only some freedom was given in 1941 after a strike by the textile workers, that too as an exigency, as they realized that a strike would hamper war supplies. Sadly, a right was doled out for the success of the war and not for the welfare of labourers or to add to their bargaining power. Press freedom and many other liberties were curbed. Those were the rights enjoyed by subjects in British India, but not in the ‘model state’. “The government may be good, but good government is no substitute for self-government,” as said by Gandhiji. All important leaders of Mysore Congress, mostly lawyers, knew this well and the newspapers of Mysore also wrote about this.

Sir M.Visvesvaraya had advised the establishment of a responsible government in 1928 itself in his report on ‘Bangalore Ganapati Disturbances’. But his advice was not heeded. Was there a more responsible statesman than him to advise the Mysore Maharaja? Strong and positive contribution of Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV, for the substantial progress of the Backward Classes is another interesting development during this period. The Maharaja was lucky that some of the Dewans he chose were extremely capable.

This period of nearly seven decades (A.D.1881-1947) of Mysore State is really a fascinating one. It provides an idea of the lustre of the gems that administered Mysore, their love for the country, their honesty, their ingenuity, their toil and their dedication for the welfare of the people. Each one of them had these qualities in different degrees. All that can be observed and gauged after reading the following pages.

