

Jaganmohan Palace, Mysore



Chapter 12

● Dewan C.V. Rangacharlu

Though, after rendition, as the first Dewan of Princely Mysore, C.V.Rangacharlu administered the State for a short period of less than two years, he left a clear mark on the development of the State and in every important sector during his Dewanship. His discerning eye observed every branch of public life and tried to improve it. He laid the foundation for the growth of Mysore as a 'model state'. Sir M.Visvesvaraya also appears to have followed his guidelines of a liberal and democratic mind.

Early Carrier

Before his appointment as the Dewan of a native State, he served the Madras Presidency after a bright career as a student. Born at Kelattur (1831) in Chingalpet district, in a Srivaishnava Brahmin family, he was a bright boy and highly talented in games like chess and playing cards. He lost his father early and had his early education at Pachchiyappa School of Madras and Madras High School. The President of the latter school, E.B.Powell was aware that the boy had lost his father, and paid from his own pocket for his education. Appreciating his studious nature, he arranged for a monthly scholarship of Rs.14. Rangacharlu was a voracious reader of general books which included science, history and fictions. In 1849, he secured the status "Proficient" by studying Mathematics, English and other subjects like History and Bacon's Essays. He also won an award instituted in memory of former Governor Elphinstone by writing an essay and secured five gold *mohurs* as the prize. In the essay he expressed sorrow on the vanishing Indian industrial products like muslin and that western technology had not reached our people. D.V.Gundappa was surprised over this 18 year old boy's unique genius to

visualize the impact of contact between people of different races and countries to the need for the spread of modern education, mechanization of agriculture and industry and need for a printing industry and spread of book culture. Rangacharlu also wrote a highly valuable article on the administration of Cantonments in 1857.¹

He passed the Public Service Examination and worked as a clerk in the Madras Collectorate and at the Chingalpet and Salem Collectorates. His deep public spirit and knowledge of the working of the government machinery made him write an article on 'Bribery' when he was just 25. His next postings were as Tahshildar and District Tahshildar. Noted European officer G.N.Taylor, impressed by the experience and diligence of Rangacharlu, appointed him as Special Assistant in the *Inam* Commission of which he was the President. Later, the Railway Commission appointed him as special assistant of its President.²

In 1855, he passed the Public Service Examination, stood first and won a cash prize of Rs.500. While in the Railway Commission, Rangacharlu had to visit Kolkata, which caused some flutter among his orthodox friends and relatives. But, being a liberal reformer with a modern outlook, he ignored this reaction, though he himself was a strict adherent of *Sanatana doctrine*.³ In 1864, he took charge as Deputy Collector of the Treasury at Calicut (Kozhikode).

Meanwhile a political situation arose. The ruler, Krishnaraja Wodeyar III died in 1868. He and the Queen had adopted Chamarajendra Wodeyar as the heir, and the young boy who was to succeed to the throne, had to be provided with proper care and guidance. Major Elliot, who was in charge of these matters, wanted an experienced native assistant and G.N.Taylor suggested the name of his able assistant Rangacharlu. On 3rd September 1868, the young prince was crowned as the heir apparent and in December of the same year, Rangacharlu took charge as the Controller of the Palace (taking charge of the treasury as well as assistant of the Guardian to the young prince).



Prince Chamarajendra Wodeyar X

Col.Haines, and later Malleson and James Gordon, all guardians of the prince, were highly impressed by the work and diligence of Rangacharlu. Jayarama Rao was one of the notable scholarly assistants of Rangacharlu. All palace properties were listed, verified, jewellery and other costly items were checked and strict discipline was enforced in handling all palace functions and rituals.

The debt of the previous Maharaja was carefully scrutinized, verified and settled. Payment to palace employees was made in British currency, instead of

¹ Gundappa D.V., *Shettypunyam Veeravally Rangacharlu*, C.I.E. (Kannada), 1937, pp:24-42. (Henceforth D.V.G.)

² *Ibid.*, p.43

³ *Ibid.*, p.46

gold coins. Major Elliot while leaving office paid rich tributes to Rangacharlu for his skilful handling of the most complicated tasks.⁴

Rangacharlu took care of the Prince with fatherly affection, supervised his education, made him take interest in games and horse riding, use of weapons including guns. He also helped him shaping his behaviour and manner and supervising his dressing habits. "The Prince had all the devotion one should have to one's teacher and father towards Rangacharlu. This is proved by his behaviour and his letters," says D.V.Gundappa.⁵

More interesting was the 'purge' Rangacharlu created in the palace where there had been 619 members of the royal family and 9,678 servants. The latter included priests, pundits, musicians, medical men, messengers, assayist (*golla*), policemen, mace-bearers, sepoys, wrestlers, *mahuts*, torch-bearers, dancers, instrument players, jesters and a host of other huge retinue. Employed in 24 departments, their annual salary totalled almost Rs.7 lakhs. Many of them were the cause for wasteful expenditure. Many of the palace servants were of doubtful character, including some of the female retinue. Rangacharlu evaluated the usefulness of each one of them and reduced this huge staff retinue by paying gratuity or pension to many, thereby bringing the expenditure down by two-thirds. This exercise took 3-4 months and Elliot fully supported Rangacharlu. All these achievements were reported with admiration by Commissioner Bowring to the Supreme Government in 1868.

There were rumours spread and representations made by people who were subject to the 'purge' at the palace and many officials, who were unhappy with the success of Rangacharlu alleged that, he had misused his powers and caused losses to the palace etc. Even a charge of theft of jewellery was foisted on him. Newspapers, local and those in England also wrote on these matters. A publication of 1876 criticizing the Mysore administration was also quoted. All this was done with a view to prevent Rangacharlu from being selected as Dewan, when the Prince was to attain the age of 18. In April 1878, Gordon was appointed Chief Commissioner and the post of the Guardian in the palace was filled by Porter, a college teacher from Kumbakonam as per Rangacharlu's recommendation.⁶

In 1874, a booklet '*The British Administration in Mysore*' was published by Rangacharlu anonymously under the name 'A Native of Mysore' from London. It was a strong criticism of the rule of the Commissioners, especially Bowring. This booklet has been reprinted in the *Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society* with a prefatory note by S.V.Deshikachar. He called it 'One Man Commissioner's Administration.' Rangacharlu's intention was to point out the serious shortcomings in their administration with a view to improve matters and prevent them from using foreign models.⁷ A brief summary of Rangacharlu's criticism is reproduced here.

4 Chandrashekhar, N.S., *Dewan Rangacharlu*, 1977, p.44-49. (Hence forth N.S.C.)

5 D.V.G., pp.49

6 *Ibid.*, p.47.

7 *Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society*, Vol.79, No.1-2 (Hence forth QJMS)

Rangacharlu's Criticism

Rangacharlu presents a long list of lapses in administration of this period. He tried to set them right during the short period of his administration, or made serious efforts in that direction.

As far as civil justice was concerned, he felt that the judicial system had been placed in the hands of the revenue officers from 1862-63 (against the principle of separation of powers). In fact, before that it was in the hands of native courts, and it continued to be so, as in Punjab. He suggested that the conduct of professional pleaders should be brought under regulation. (*QJMS*. Vol.79, No 1-2).

He welcomed the system of registration of documents but the complicated procedure was expected to result in cheating of the illiterate population (*QJMS*. Vol.79, No 1-2 p.21). He was also critical of the introduction of the practice of criminal law administration prevalent in British provinces being introduced into Mysore. The district magistrate had to detect the crime and also administer criminal justice. "What inducement may it not afford for false conviction and clean sheet of undetected crime?" he asks. (*QJMS*. Vol.79, No 1-2 p.22)

He also criticised the introduction of the Moffussil police force as found in the Madras Presidency under European supervision. The old establishment in Mysore had the merit of traditional ideas of duty and responsibility, he felt. Attempt to build up a new department "with strong materials of all classes is totally inadequate to infuse the necessary moral force." (*QJMS*. Vol.79, No 1-2 p.23)

Though he was happy over the land revenue collection increasing to Rs.105 lakhs, it had become almost stagnant and there was a chance of it coming down, he warned. There were no items of cultivation which could be sold in plenty to regions outside the state. Mulberry cultivation had declined. But increase in garden cultivation like coconut was a "good sign". Forest wealth and coffee cultivation were new sources. (*QJMS*. Vol.79, No 1-2, p.25 – 26).

The Survey and Settlement provided security to the cultivator over his title for the land but the reports of the survey officers were not scrutinized. There should have been a perpetual assessment suited to average and unfavourable years as well (*QJMS*. Vol.79, No 1-2, pp:27-28).

He was also critical of the survey department with more than 15 European officers whose salaries amounted to Rs.Two lakhs annually and the appointment of a similar *Inam* Commission as these were all a drain on the government treasury (*QJMS*. Vol.79, No 1-2, pp:30-31).

He was also unhappy over the introduction of heavy court fees, stamp duty on documents executed and fees on registration, all in imitation of the British Presidencies, which added an additional burden on the people.

These are some illustrations, given only to point out how Rangacharlu before becoming the Dewan had full knowledge of all branches of State administration, whether it was economy, agriculture, revenue, administration of justice and

innovations made by the Commissioners. He was especially critical of Bowring. He wrote about the *Abkari* (excise) income from arrack and other sources, problem of forest conservation, multiplicity of sections in the Public Works Department etc. He even wrote of the civil engineering department failing to attract local youth who considered the job as manual work and so on (*QJMS*. Vol.79, No 1-2, p.46-47).

Rangacharlu wrote that “Real progress came with the introduction of peace and order and the first element of regular government” and all ideas of ‘further development’ depended on this. Thus new departments were introduced one after another, on the lines of those in the advanced British territories, but ‘with much less life, without any grasp of their real principles and without any comprehensive attempt to adapt them to circumstances of the province’ (*QJMS*. Vol.79, No 1-2, p.62). This gives an idea of the direction in which Rangacharlu was thinking. He was very worried over the rise in the cost of administration. This booklet not only gives an idea of his thinking but in fact guided all future Dewans in some form or the other.

There was no effort by successive Dewans to change the system evolved by the Commissioners. “In the years following the reinstatement of Mysore’s native rulers in 1881, the administrative structure (the form which resembled that of Madras Presidency) and other institutions in the state remained more close to the external influences,” says James Manor.⁸ But there was every effort to improve the state and make it prosperous. Some British officers saw Mysore competing with the Madras Presidency. This caused many problems to the Dewans and the Durbar.

Deshikachar says that though the Viceroy admonished him, no action was taken against Rangacharlu, despite the British knowing the authorship of the critical booklet. He was held in high esteem and promoted from the position of the Palace *Bakshi*.⁹

In May 1879, Gordon appointed Rangacharlu as the Revenue Secretary, but Rangacharlu continued to take care of the Prince. As Rangacharlu had to work in Bangalore, the Prince had to stay at Bangalore though the Queen Mother was not willing for this change. Rangacharlu always kept an eye on the Prince and supervised his education closely. Whenever the prince went on a ride in a coach, Rangacharlu joined him and would gently warn him not to drive fast. He would stop the carriage and tell the Prince about the importance of the place where the carriage was stopped and its surroundings. All along the ride he would take an opportunity to tell the Prince about whatever he should know, on history, public life or administration.¹⁰

As Revenue Secretary, he brought down the expenditure on many State activities and introduced many changes in the administrative set up. He wanted locals to be invested with authority and create a sense of belonging

⁸ Manor, James, Political Change in an Indian State, Mysore, 1917-1955, 1997, p.14.

⁹ *Q.J.M.S., Ibid*

¹⁰ *N.S.C.*, p.51.

and responsibility in them. The public official should not be a mercenary who works in the State for some time and leaves. He should know local conditions and the pulse of the people. A foreigner would not always have those qualities. Natives should be trained for the jobs. He dispensed with the services of many foreign officers especially those in the Education, Forest and Public Works Departments and appointed natives in their places. Even for the native officers, he reduced their salaries. For example, the Deputy Commissioner who drew a salary of Rs.1000 and above (one drew Rs.1666) were made to work for Rs.700 to 1000 as pointed out by D.V.Gundappa. The services of eight Assistant Commissioners were dispensed with, out of 27 such posts. He was keen on undoing the loss caused by the disastrous famine of 1876–78. Not only had revenue collection fallen, but famine relief and public works like Bangalore-Mysore Railway had to be undertaken and feeding centres had to be continued. Nobody was bold enough to oppose the effort to reduce the financial outlay as the atmosphere was tense. In the year 1879-80, he recorded a saving of Rs.2.5 lakhs. The Government of India conferred on him the CIE (Companion of the Order of the Indian Empire) in 1880.¹¹

As Dewan

On 25 March 1881, the Prince attained the age of 18, and the Government of Mysore was transferred to him according to an Instrument of Transfer. At the Durbar held in the palace on that day, the Maharaja announced the creation of the “Council of His Highness, the Maharaja of Mysore”. It consisted of the Dewan as the President and three members. Rangacharlu was appointed the Dewan, T R A Thamboo Chetty as Judge, was the *ex-officio* member, Purna Krishna Rao and A Ratna Sabhapathy Mudaliar were other members. The Council’s term was for three years (or at the Prince’s pleasure) and the Mysore State’s administration was vested with this Council.

Rangacharlu’s responsibilities were arduous. The State had witnessed the most disastrous famine. There was a paucity of labour to undertake agricultural operations. Most of the craftsmen had given up their vocations and sold their tools. Many farmers who had migrated were slowly returning to their villages and restarting their operations with great difficulty due to lack of livestock, implements and seeds. The State had borrowed Rs.80 lakhs from the Supreme Government which had to be returned at the rate of Rs.4 lakhs annually and with 5 percent interest. The State revenue which was Rs.109 lakhs prior to the famine in 1874-75 had come down to Rs.101 lakhs in 1880-81.¹²

On his appointment as Revenue Secretary, Rangacharlu had brought down the expenditure to the tune of Rs. Two lakhs per year. On becoming the Dewan, he abolished two districts and nine taluks. Similarly four Munsiff courts and three sub-courts were abolished and the number of jails reduced from nine to three. Some travellers’ bungalows had their staff reduced. The

¹¹ D.V.G., p.54-55

¹² N.S.C., *Ibid*, p.84.



boundaries of some taluks and districts were altered to make it convenient for the people to reach their taluk or district headquarters. The *Siledar* (lancer) regiments were reduced from three to two. With all these steps, the annual savings of Rs. Two lakhs were affected.¹³

“Government wishing to adjust their expenditure to revenue should direct their efforts to the retrenchment of the expenditure,” Rangacharlu said. “The impoverished country cannot afford to yield any increase in revenue.” Giving impetus to industry alone could help improve the position. However, this could not be done immediately. The Commissioners had incurred a lot of unnecessary expenditure during the famine. Such recurring expenditure was reduced by him while he negotiated with the Supreme Government and had the interest on the loan reduced from Five percent to Four percent. He made them agree to pay the annual loan instalment of Rs. Four lakhs per year in the course of 41 years. The subsidy that was payable at the rate of Rs. 35 lakhs per year to the Supreme Government as per the conditions of the Rendition was also postponed for a period of five years with reduction at the rate of Rs. 10.5 lakhs per year. This amount had been increased over the previous subsidy of Rs. 24.5 lakhs. This concession was granted in view of the grave financial condition following the severe famine. During the rule of the Commissioners, in the name of famine relief, they had incurred unnecessary expenditures and the money lent by the Supreme Government was often wasted. He convinced his superiors and succeeded. His persuasive powers were responsible for all these concessions.¹⁴

Railway Lines

Despite the financial pressures, the progress of the construction of the railway line taken up between Bangalore and Mysore was not stopped. The work which started as famine relief work continued and was completed in 1882. Rangacharlu, who had worked in the Railway Board in Madras, knew the importance of the rail link for the growth of commerce and help increase the return on agricultural and garden crops by transporting them. He set aside Rs. Five lakhs for the railway line which was opened in February 1882.

“His Highness’ Government regards the opening of Railways as a necessary preliminary to the development of resources,” Rangacharlu said in his address to the Representative Assembly in October just before the opening of the Bangalore-Mysore line. He also stressed the need to start a line from Bangalore-Tumkur-Tiptur and on to Tarikere. This line would help tap the coffee and arecanut producing districts of Hassan, Kadur (present Chikkamagalur) and Shimoga. Cartage from these areas to Bangalore was difficult as good draught cattle were scarce. He also thought of having railways to reach Wynad and Coorg (Kodagu) as these were coffee districts and negotiated with English railway companies over the matter.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, D.V.G., p.60.

For the Bangalore-Tiptur line, Rangacharlu raised a public loan of Rs.20 lakh on Five percent interest. In 1882, Rangacharlu “inaugurated a measure of great financial importance which marked a new policy of obtaining capital for profitable undertakings,” says M Shama Rao as this was a novel experiment in the State.¹⁵ Tenders were received from private men, both English and natives from as far as Calcutta, Allahabad, Karachi, Ahmedabad etc., and even merchants from Shimoga, Tumkur and Kadur showed interest.

Rangacharlu was also keen to develop railway lines as he wanted people from other States to come and settle down in the Mysore State to help increase its prosperity. Land in Mysore was plenty as were water resources. It required men to tap these resources and manpower had been highly depleted due to the famine.

Representative Assembly

Rangacharlu was a liberal and also influenced by democratic notions. He believed that participation of men in public life and administration with a sense of belonging was essential for the all-round development of the state. They must be educated over the affairs of the state. He therefore started the Mysore Representative Assembly.

Commissioner Gordon had suggested in 1878 itself that if the royal family was to rule the State peacefully, there had to be a machinery by which the pulse of the people was felt and their views and feelings on administration ascertained.¹⁶ Rangacharlu, being a close associate of Gordon, must have discussed the issue with him before. D.V.Gundappa feels that he had studied works of Aristotle, J.S.Mill, Lord Grey, Sir George Louis Comte and other pro-people writers and experts in parliamentary affairs. Charles Dickens and Thackeray were the novelists popular with him. These and other writings helped him to develop the democratic spirit.¹⁷ If such a machinery was not there, there could be outbursts of people’s unhappiness creating law and order problems as witnessed during the Nagar Uprising of 1830-31.

Rangacharlu, being a senior statesman boldly created such a machinery. An order issued on 25th August 1881 announced, “His Highness the Maharajah is desirous that the views and objects which his Government has in view of the measures adopted for the administration of the province should be better known and appreciated by the people for whose benefit they are intended. The Prince is of the view that for this purpose an annual meeting of the representatives, landholders and merchants from all parts of the province be convened. The Dewan must place before them results of the past year’s administration. This was sure to convince the people that the administration was run in their interest and there were able men toiling to increase the State’s prosperity. Such a meeting was to be held soon after the Dasara festival at

¹⁵ D.V.G., p.60, M.Sharma Rao, *Modern Mysore*, 1936, p.77. (Henceforth *Modern Mysore*)

¹⁶ D.V.G., *Ibid*, p.65.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p.120-121

Mysore. Dasara was to be an additional inducement to attend the meeting,” the order said.¹⁸

The first such meeting was held on 7th October 1881 attended by 144 persons, nominated by the District officers. Nomination by Local Fund Boards from among its members had to be considered. They must represent the landed group. About 3-4 leading merchant representatives from each district were also selected.¹⁹

“The atmosphere in the State was not at all favourable for the introduction of such a bold and novel experiment,” says N.S.Chandrashekhar.²⁰ The Supreme Government was also not favourable for such a move, despite Gordon supporting it. “The people were not prepared or educated to make use of such an arrangement,” said the critics of the Dewan. This ‘hazardous’ experiment was



Jagan Mohan Palace - Mysore



launched by the Dewan to gain popularity among the local people, the Dewan himself being an outsider, was another comment. D.V.Gundappa says that at a time when England had a constitutional monarchy, the idea was not popular in India, nor were the Indians widely informed about it. There was limited monarchy in England. But there was no such arrangement, model or set up in India, when the Representative Assembly was founded in Mysore. “In the administration of the State, the people were given an opportunity to be partners. This shows Rangacharlu’s foresightedness and affection towards the people. How much can you praise him for this?” He further adds that this shows Rangacharlu’s pro-people attitude by taking sides of people in his own

¹⁸ N.S.C., p.99.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 100

²⁰ *Ibid.*

time and the arrangements of the administrative set up with which he had to work. This was a major step towards popularising a democratic tradition. Over the comment of people not being trained for such an experiment, Rangacharlu said in his address to the Assembly, “If the spread of any high degree of education among the great mass of people were to be insisted upon, we may have to wait for ever.”²¹

Proceedings of the Representative Assembly

“The Assembly of Representatives Raiyats and Merchants from all the Taluks of Mysore State” was the name given to it. The Assembly was commenced on 7th October 1881 when all the 144 nominated members attended the Assembly, though attendance was voluntary. Rangacharlu in his long address stressed the need of procuring from the agriculturists, all the surplus after consumption. This could be possible by applying machinery and capital. He stressed the need for irrigation. He gave an account of the state’s income, deficit in income, steps taken to fill the gap, efforts to complete Bangalore-Mysore Railway and all other future plans to add to the prosperity of the state including the possibility of starting industries. A coffee planter from the Sakleshpur area, the only European member, R.H. Elliot wrote that the Assembly provided an excellent means for dissemination of information on Government matters. (Elliot R.H., *Experiences of a Planter*).

The only serious matter raised by the members in the Assembly was a request to collect the revenue after the harvest. The Dewan after a short consultation with the officers, announced the acceptance of the request. This was received with loud applause. Elliot points out, “The chief revenue and settlement officers afterwards told me that it was the most important point gained by the Assembly.” The participants also realized the usefulness of attending the Assembly by this instance.

In fact, there was no representative body of the kind anywhere in India including the British Presidencies. “Rangacharlu was far ahead of his times in conceiving and convening such an Assembly. It was a step of political courage.”²²

This proved to be a precedent. “It was a matter of gratification that after the Representative Assembly was instituted, the Government of India resolved upon a comprehensive scheme of extending self-government in local matters throughout British territories in India,” says M.Shama Rao.²³ He refers to the despatch of 8th May 1882. In fact, Rangacharlu introduced a new era in Indian administration by initiating people’s participation.

In the first session of the Assembly itself, the members acquainted themselves with the legislations and enactments related to Revenue, Forests and other departments. They also realized that they could expose the misdeeds

²¹ D.V.G., p.82.

²² N.S.C., *Op.cit.* P.102

²³ *Modern Mysore, Op.cit.*, p.75

and tyranny of the bureaucracy. Rangacharlu himself had spoken of “the crushing influence of officialdom” that could prove to be a hurdle to people’s initiative towards progress. In the first meeting of the Assembly, an official tried to snub a statement of a member on agriculture. Rangacharlu’s reaction was, “Officials at best can do routine jobs with some efficiency. If they are given a new kind of work, they are like fish out of water. But an independent farmer and businessman and merchant are self-independent, their minds broader and their aptitude for things are not narrowly limited as that of the officials.”²⁴

This gave confidence to the Representatives and the people at large. One official complained over the Dewan pampering the members. A day might come when the officials had to bribe the members as a result of such a leniency, the official said. “If the day comes when such officials have to bribe agriculturists, I will welcome such a day,” was Rangacharlu’s reply, illustrative of his pro-people attitude. He was far ahead of his times.²⁵

Regarding the conditions and prospects of industries, Rangacharlu stated in his address in 1881, “The development of various industries on which the prosperity of the country is dependent equally demands our attention.” He pointed out that industries could not face foreign competition without the aid of machinery. He spoke of the cotton textile industry, which could not be developed due to the limited cultivation of cotton in Mysore. He was enthusiastic about sheep wool industry, but felt the need for application of machinery to it. Production of paper on a small scale was mooted. Over the items of export, coffee flourished due to English planters and he suggested the raising of cinchona by the busy planters.

Rangacharlu was happy over the revival of mulberry cultivation after a period of deterioration of worms. “The wealth and intelligence of people should be encouraged to seek honourable employment in productive industries.” But the atmosphere was such, that no industry worth the name could be started. Yet he informed the representatives, “The old idea that India must confine itself to growth of agricultural produce is giving way to the more correct theory that no country can prosper unless its agricultural and manufacturing industries were equally fostered.”



Mulberry Cultivation

Second Session

His second address (1882) was concerned with gold mining leases, improvement in the working of forest and sandal sources etc. A private woollen

²⁴ N.S.C., *Op.cit.*, p.105

²⁵ *Ibid*

manufacturing factory had been started in Bangalore. “Steam began to be utilized in Europe as a motive power for manufacture only at the beginning of the present (19th) century.” India then used to export cloth to England. England’s progress in technology was possible due to the Industrial Revolution by the efforts of various individual craftsmen devoting their intelligence to effect small discoveries and improvements in their several equipments. Anyhow, in his short period of administration, he would not lay the foundation to any industry. But he gave a call to the Representatives “to arouse the people to a sense of their true interest of the importance of manufacture”. This was his ardent desire.

Viceroy Lansdowne, who visited Mysore later in 1892, said the following about the Representative Assembly: “I have watched with utmost interest the valuable experiment which His Highness has instituted, known as the Representative Assembly. I understand that only the largest landholders and the most representative merchants and traders but also in certain cases the possession of a high education has been recognised as in itself a qualification.”

²⁶ The Viceroy further says that, “It is one which possesses a particular interest for me, because you are aware, the Government of India at this moment itself is engaged in a very interesting attempt to increase the numbers and enlarge the functions of its own Legislative Council.” This tribute goes to Rangacharlu who had started the experiment in 1881. The British took this as a model in India.

Being a democrat and liberal, the Dewan helped newspapers and associations to grow. He encouraged the Madras Native Association to start a newspaper and promised to foot its newsprint bill. ²⁷ He was a



M. Venkatakrishnaiah

close friend of M. Venkatakrishnaiah, the social worker and later journalist of Mysore. This ‘Grand Old Man of Mysore’ stated that Rangacharlu was his *Guru*. In Bangalore, the Dewan encouraged the starting of the Mysore Literary Union and lectures and discussions were often attended by him. He also encouraged publication of books in Kannada language.

The Maharani’s School was started in Mysore by Ambil Narasimha Iyengar, the Palace Bakshi in 1881 and the Dewan encouraged him. In an address to the school students on 21st March 1882, he said, “The managers of this institution should content themselves with sowing the seeds of knowledge in the pupils’ mind under the healthiest influences and to leave them to develop in their own way and in accordance with their natural instinct. Everything should be done to preserve in the minds of the pupil the natural respect for opinions of their elders”.²⁸ He admitted two of his daughters to this school. He encouraged the teaching of music and gave attention to education,

²⁶ *Ibid*

²⁷ *Ibid*, p.118.

²⁸ *Ibid*, p.111.

Maharani's Girls School - Mysore



especially English and college education. "Education was considered as a handicap in their profession by the farmers, as the children after education did not take interest in their hereditary job," felt Rangacharlu.



Basavappa Sastry

This view had been expressed by Bowring earlier. He planned to strongly stress the importance of education by giving scholarships to the bright pupils. Policies were framed accordingly. His love for literature, music and stage were considerable. Jayarama Rao, a great linguist and scholar was made Principal of the Raja's School in Mysore, founded by Krishnaraja Wodeyar III in 1833. When the Marathi Drama Company from Sangli came to Mysore during the days of severe famine and returned with a huge collection, he seriously reflected on the lack of talent in the Kannada people. He coaxed the *Asthana Vidwans* (scholars of the palace) to write Kannada plays and helped the founding of the Palace Drama Company. Of the dozen plays written by palace scholars, Basavappa Sastry's *Kannada Shakuntalam* was famous. The Dewan honoured him with title '*Abhinava Kalidasa*'.²⁹ "Of the Kannada writers, M.S.Puttanna and M.Venkatakrishniah were very close to him," says D.V.Gundappa.



M.S.Puttanna

Rangacharlu was not only a strong administrator, ceaselessly engaged in administrative work, but also was a cultured person who encouraged learning, literary and cultural activities. But he was also very keen on promoting science. When a Principal was to be selected for Central College, he preferred a person

²⁹ *Karnataka Gazetteer, Mysore District, 1988, p.708-9*

with a science background, though the other candidate was highly qualified in arts. Revival of the village Panchayats was his old notion as he had written an article on their revival even when he was working with the Madras Inam Commission. He felt that local functions like street lighting, sanitation, roads, etc. must be handed over to these Panchayats as the State government could not attend to them efficiently. He also wished that small local disputes could be settled at the Panchayat level itself. He planned to establish Panchayat institutions, but could not implement it. The Judicial system evolved by the Commissioners was continued with slight changes in the jurisdiction of courts. He was aiming at separation of powers and evolving a separate judicial hierarchy. He tried to free the revenue officials, as far as possible from judicial administration.

Judiciary

Rangacharlu felt that the size of the Judicial Department was too large when the real needs were considered. Four Munsiff courts had already been abolished (i.e. Closepet - present Ramanagaram - Chintamani, Hunsur and Davangere) and their work was assigned to the nearest neighbouring Munsiff courts. Similarly, two sub-judges courts were abolished. Two district courts (Hassan and Chitradurga) were also closed and the sub-court at Kolar was abolished. Of the remaining five district courts, native judges were appointed and the remaining two highly paid European Judges were proposed to be transferred to the High Court when a suitable vacancy arose. The working of the courts was rationalised so that they would have adequate work and the cost of the judicial administration was reduced. If a client closed his case and wanted to go in appeal, he paid a stamp duty while approaching the higher court. This was when the Munsiff's Court's judgement was upheld by the District Court and the losing party wanted to go for a further appeal. N.S.Chandrashekhar points out that, "The High Court in these cases are to be judged by both fact and law as the restriction of the second appeal to the question of law leads to a considerable failure of justice and deprives the suitors the judgement of a plurality of judges of higher status based on equitable considerations embracing fact as well as law." ³⁰ These changes in the judiciary were estimated to save the exchequer about Rs.2 lakhs annually.

Rangacharlu established a colony for Anglo-Indians at Whitefield near Bangalore by granting them nearly 4,000 acres of land with a view to help them lead a settled life and pursue agriculture or any other occupation. The Dewan hoped that members of this community with their overseas contacts could bring in new innovations.

Rangacharlu was a hard working, workaholic administrator, toiling ceaselessly for the betterment of the



*Our lady of Lourdes
Church - Whitefield*

³⁰ N.S.C., *Op.cit*, pp:152-53.



Waverly Inn White Field- Bengaluru

state. At times his health failed. Once, the Maharaja wanted him to come to the Nilgiris during summer as the Maharaja used to stay there during the summer months. Rangacharlu wrote to the Maharaja politely that the comforts of the Nilgiris were not for him. He was not only a dedicated worker, but wanted others to attend to the state business tirelessly. He was clean handed and had written a pamphlet about corruption when he was in the Madras Service. He was ruthless and high-handed in punishing civil servants found to be corrupt. He never gave scope to nepotism. D.V.Gundappa quotes the instance of a Rangacharlu's relative, a civil servant who sent a petition to him that despite long years of service, he had been denied promotion. Rangacharlu replied that it was the official's misfortune that he was related to the Dewan and was denied promotion. In fact, the official was not straightforward in his dealings and this was known to the Dewan. When any report on the misbehaviour or corrupt practices of an official was brought to his notice, the Dewan would send for him at times even at midnight, and reprimand him severely. D.V.Gundappa describes the Dewan as a nightmare to corrupt officials. "We have characterized Rangacharlu as a democrat. He was also an autocrat in some respects and is more so, when he dealt with officials of a questionable character. He would fine them, transfer them over long distances, and dismiss them summarily. He had an ingenious way of collecting information about Moffussil officers through the leading men of Taluks and Districts," says D.V.Gundappa.

He believed in encouraging native persons and training them in day to day administration. He was very keen on 'Indianising' the administration. Even in Public Works Department, he reduced European engineers and retained only those who could help Indian servants by training them and encouraged Indians to completely learn the job. In education, he wanted science and technology



Old Petromax Lamp -Mysore

Palace for lighting the palace premises may be quoted as typical of his attitude. He encouraged bright students to pursue higher studies outside the state by providing scholarships for studying, science, engineering, medicine etc. Sir M.Visveswaraya was one such student.³¹

If the State's expenditure was Rs.1,09,50,760 in 1878-79 after two years of severe famine, it was Rs.1,00,96,281 in 1880-81. In 1881-82 it was Rs.1,19,33,157 which included Rs.15 lakhs spent on Bangalore-Mysore Railway line for its completion. Regarding income, the respective figures were Rs.1,09,50,000, Rs.1,01,00,000 and Rs.1,08,50,991. On the two occasions that he addressed the Representative Assembly, he made it clear how efforts had been made to increase the State's income under various heads and how unnecessary or excessive expenditure should be reduced. This instilled confidence in the people that the taxes they paid were being carefully spent and getting them maximum benefit.

“Rouse People to Hard Work”

Quoting an example of innovations by private individuals in England which made the Industrial Revolution possible, he felt that the large population in this country could enter a similar career of progress. The one great problem to be solved by Indian statesmen was “How the people could be roused from the crushing influence of officialdom and stirred up to industrial enterprise and progress.” He urged the members of the Representative Assembly to spread these ideas amongst the people “and rouse them to a sense of their true interest and importance.”

Tireless toil for the welfare of people had taken a heavy toll on the health of Rangacharlu. He fell sick and went to Madras for treatment on 20th December 1882 and within few weeks his restless spirit breathed its last on 20th January 1883. Though his Dewanship was hardly for two years – from 25th March 1881 to 20 December 1883, yet he left an indelible mark on the future of Mysore State. He was a pathfinder and firm believer in the welfare of the people. By using modern ideas, he helped develop not only agriculture, but created

³¹ *Ibid.*, p.108-09

a congenial atmosphere for industrial growth. To help economic growth, he extended the railways and had dreams of connecting the state with Kodagu and Wynad. He was a clear admirer of western industrial techniques. Spread of education, especially scientific and technical, in the State was his dream. Spread of primary and secondary education would help awaken the spirit of the people to meet the need of the modern world by undertaking jobs as agriculturists, craftsmen or traders better, was his firm belief. He was a democrat and was a firm believer in people's participation in administration. The Representative Assembly was his innovation and his two addresses to the Assembly illustrate his ideas and vision.

Rangacharlu was a firm believer in 'Indianising' administration. He tried to replace a foreigner when a native person's service could be depended upon. In recruitment to services, he would prefer a native to an outsider because he believed in developing local talents and preparing the State fully to handle the responsibility of running the state's affairs and thinking in terms of its progress. "The wealth and the intelligence of the people should be encouraged in honourable employment in productive industries....", he said in one of his addresses to the Assembly. He wanted the peasants to realise the importance of storing their farm products to meet the needs of the next two years at least. He wanted them to learn from the experience of the devastating famine. Just as he thought of the future safety of the state's affairs, he wanted each family to think of its future security. "He kept a tight rein on administration. A man of unblemished moral character, the most conspicuous feature of his administration was its moral tone," says N.S.Chandrashkehar. "His simple habits and warmth of heart always attracted a large circle of friends," says M.Shama Rao.

As he was an outsider and very strict, Mysoreans did not like him. A local Hebbar Iyengar was considered as the likely choice because Dewan Rangacharlu's selection displeased many locals. But Bjorn Hettne rightly says that Rangacharlu "was an exponent of early Indian nationalism and a critic of British rule".³² He appointed qualified local people in service as far as possible.

He was a liberal in social matters and encouraged education of girls. He encouraged the founding of the Mysore Maharani's School in 1881, which later became a high school and also college. "We cannot altogether trust in the legislation of men for softer sex anymore than in legislation of one class for another. Such legislation is often apt to err as much as on the side of extravagance, as on the disposition, indulging in imaginary ideas of women's rights and other extravagant notions," he said on legislation on women. He thought it must be left to women who could independently think of themselves when properly educated. In an address at the Maharani's School, he suggested, "that the girls must be trained to be good wives and mothers....". He was not much influenced by the concept of emancipation of women.

³² Hettne, Bjorn, *The Political Economy of Indirect Rule, Mysore 1881-1947*, 1978, p.68.

Jewels of Administration

When a Brahma Samaj leader addressed the Bangalore Literary Union, he condemned the caste system and demanded the breaking of caste barriers, as all the social shortcomings were due to it. “I am not sure that our salvation will be attained by breaking down caste system. I do not think that a universal amalgamation of all classes by inter marriage will prove a panacea for all our social evils,” was Rangacharlu’s reaction to the speech. His remedy was “the great importance of cultivating a feeling of universal brotherhood amongst all classes and creeds with an ever ready mind to appreciate and admire moral and intellectual worth wherever it may be found, and of looking upon labour as the honourable occupation of all men.....”.³³ He was not as liberal in social matters as Sheshadri Iyer proved to be later. But he was not conservative in notions like treating oceanic travel as a taboo. Rather, “without visiting foreign countries, how can one improve agriculture, industry, trade or technology? Only by contacts with foreign people could prosperity be achieved,” he firmly believed.

Town Hall -Mysore

