



Chapter 13

● K. Sheshadri Iyer

The ancestry of Sheshadri Iyer can be traced to Kozhikode (Calicut), to where his family had migrated from Ganapathi Agraharam near Tiruvayur in Tamilnadu, where the great saint and music maestro Tyagaraja had lived. Kumarapuram, an obscure village in Tamilnadu was their original home.



Madras University

Sheshadri Iyer was born on 1st June 1845, and his father Anantakrishna Iyer was a *Vakil* at Kozhikode. But Sheshadri Iyer was just six months old when his father died. He was taken care of by his stepbrother who was also a *vakil*. Sheshadri Iyer studied in a private school at Calicut, and after learning the three R's, he moved to Ernakulam, Cochin, Calicut and Trivandrum. In all these places, there were good teachers who encouraged him, recognising his potential. In 1863, he passed matriculation and joined Madras Presidency College where he secured a B.A. degree from Madras University in 1866. "Coming from a family of modest means, brought up by his elder stepbrother, Sheshadri Iyer is a classic example of the impact of modern education on a boy coming from traditional family," says N.S.Chandrashekhar. ¹

He was married at the age of 20, even before he graduated, to his bride Dharmasamvardhini, who was then 15. "As the responsibility of maintaining a family had descended upon him, he immediately set out in search of a job."

1. Chandrashekhar N.S., Dewan Sheshadri Iyer, New Delhi, 1988, p.4-5. (Henceforth N.S.C.)

Jewels of Administration

He got the job of a Translator in Malabar Collectorate at Kozhikode (or Calicut) in 1866.

Rangacharlu had joined the Mysore service in 1868 and was working in the Mysore palace before he was promoted as Public Prosecutor in Ashtagrama Division in 1872. He also secured his Law degree (B.L.) in 1874 from the Madras University. He was for some time in-charge Controller of Palace and worked as Deputy Commissioner. When Rangacharlu was appointed Dewan, he got Sheshadri Iyer posted as Special Assistant in the Dewan's office. He "entered upon his new duties with great earnestness and wisdom and proved himself a man of undoubted talent," says M.Shama Rao.² Before the completion of two years of Dewanship, Rangacharlu expired, but he had suggested that Sheshadri Iyer be appointed his successor. He was appointed Dewan on 12th February 1883.



Chamarajendra Wodeyar X

The period of Sheshadri Iyer's administration as Dewan was a very eventful one marked by the death of Maharaja Chamarajendra Wodeyar in 1894. However, he continued as the Dewan under the Regency of Queen Kempnanjammanni Vanivilasa Sannidhana when Prince Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV was a minor.

Fear of famine, serious financial problems and continuation of the Railway Project were the main tasks facing Sheshadri Iyer when he took over as Dewan. "Measures to provide against a recurrence of famine occupied the foremost place in his policy. Railways and irrigation works were recognised as the most important agents to this end," says C.Hayavadana Rao.³ He undertook a unique experiment of producing hydro-electric power at Shivasamudra which was a gigantic risk and novelty in India. Gold mining at KGF was another bold step. The State had to face the catastrophic plague which held up progress in every field of developmental activity. He founded the Taluk Board,



Maharani Kempnanjammanni



Binny Mills

Departments of Geology and the Muzrai Department. New mechanised industries like Binny Mills were started at Bangalore during his Dewanship and the road and rail network was expanded. He paid great attention to irrigation and the Marikanive project, under which Vanivilas Sagar was established. Extension of railways to Gubbi, Hindupur and Harihar (the last named linking Bangalore to Pune and Bombay) was an outstanding achievement in this period. Providing Bangalore with piped water in 1896 was another notable decision. A great

² Shama Rao, Modern Mysore 1936, p:83 (Henceforward Shama Rao)

³ Hayavadana Rao, C., Mysore Gazetter vol.II, p.2981. CHR



deal of extraordinary administrative skills had to be applied to achieve these as these could not have been fulfilled in any normal course.

Sheshdri Iyer's administration had far-reaching repercussions. Power production is one such act of his. Later, in 1905 when Bangalore was supplied with electric power, this helped in the establishment of the Indian Institute of Science at Bangalore (1909) and subsequent growth of many industries, as hydel power was cheap and in abundant supply. The calamity of plague led to the creation of new vast extensions like Basavanagudi and Malleswaram in Bangalore. He expanded education, encouraged female education, opened Panchama Schools for the socially neglected, and increased the membership of the Representative Assembly.

Though he was not orthodox, he was deeply influenced by the Theosophical Society and was progressive in social matters. "His work is written largely on every page of Mysore history of that time," said Lord Hardinge, the Viceroy.

Financial Problems

Poor financial conditions of the State was the first problem that Seshadri Iyer had to face as Dewan. "The financial situation of the state when Sheshadri Iyer assumed his office was grave," says N.S.Chandrashekhar. "The retrenchments begun in 1878-79 and continued even after the Maharaja came to power, but this did not yield a saving of more than Rs. Eight lakhs a year. The average annual revenue as then developed was not expected to bring more than Rs.102 lakhs which included the cost of collection of Rs.10.50 lakhs," points out Shama Rao.⁴ The Dewan himself in a letter which he wrote to the Maharaja says that shortly before "I became Dewan the treasury was empty and the first instalment of subsidy could not be paid punctually."

⁴ Shama Rao, Op.cit, p.83.

Subsidy, Civil List, Interest on Famine loan and Railway loan together amounted to Rs.48 lakhs. When the British took over the Civil and Military Station area (Cantonment), the surplus revenue (tax collection over and above the administrative expenses, was surplus) secured from that area was also lost. "The average total expenditure of the State could not be less than Rs.99.50 lakhs," as pointed out by Shama Rao.⁵ The State had a deficit of Rs. Seven to Eight lakhs as a result. Economy practised by the earlier Dewan had resulted in many departments such as Land Revenue, Forests, Excise, Mining, Police, Education, Muzrai, Legislation etc. being concentrated in the hands of the Dewan.

Despite the fact that he was a capable person, the work of these departments was bound to suffer. Many European officers who had been looking after these departments were removed and some of the local secretaries were not so efficient. The shadow of the famine (1876-78) still loomed large on the finances of the state. But he took courage and wrote to the Supreme Government and the Secretary of State for India to pay the surplus revenue of the Civil and Military Station. Though there was no positive response, the surplus due on this account was permitted to be appropriated towards a partial payment of subsidy.

The subsidy payable as per earlier arrangement was Rs.24.50 lakhs which had been increased to Rs.35 lakhs. But on appeal by Rangacharlu, pointing out the financial difficulties of the state, the extra amount (Rs.10.50 lakhs) to be paid had been suspended for five years. But, as already three instalments had been paid. Sheshadri Iyer pleaded for the remission of the remaining dues of two years and presented figures of annual collection for the past decades.

The average annual revenue of the first three decades of the 19th century was Rs.86.75 lakhs (1810), Rs.86.25 lakhs (1810-20) and Rs.76 lakhs (1820-30) respectively. But between 1831-41, when the British assumed administration, the average annual revenue was Rs.70.25 lakhs, and for subsequent decades (1841-51) and (1851-61), it was Rs.76 lakhs and Rs.84.50 lakhs respectively. During 1860s, the revenue had reached Rs.105 lakhs. This was due to the Cotton Boom caused by the American Civil War when some regions in the State had raised cotton crops. American Cotton could not be supplied to England and there was demand for Indian Cotton but this was not normal.

In addition, due to the new salt policy of the Supreme Government, the Mysore State was paying a salt tax of Rs.12 lakhs to the Supreme Government. Sheshadri Iyer calculated it to be Rs.2.25 per head. Thus there was no scope for levying any new tax. Famine's toll was so heavy on the State that it might take another 50 years for the State to recover from it. Agricultural operations in the State depended upon rainfall which was known for its uncertainty and there was a remote chance of increase in revenue. Payment of famine loans and railway loans, increased civil list and augmented pension, remuneration to village servants in substitution of *mirasi* rights are all obligations that the

⁵ *Ibid*, SNC., pp: 53-55; Shama Rao, p.81

State could not forego. The railway line extended upto Harihar was also a part of famine relief. The Dewan prepared the petition due to his deep knowledge of revenue matters and sound logic.

British Resident J.B.Lyal was convinced of the complications and helped Sheshadri Iyer by speaking to the higher ups on the State's serious difficulties. In 1896 the additional payment of Rs.10.50 lakhs was further postponed for the next ten years. The Dewan's ability in preparing the petition is well exhibited in this case.

Railway Expansion

The Railway construction work was also taken up as one of the famine relief measures and continued. The Mysore - Gubbi line which had been already completed by using its own resources and by raising a public loan, was continued further upto Tiptur. The link to be continued till Harihar was very important for a distance of 121 miles. The survey had been completed. The Harihar line would help the State to have direct link with Bombay, and beyond and increase the State's trade. The Dewan with the help of the British government hypothecated to the Southern Maratha Railway Company the existing lines on terms of its being extended till Harihar by borrowing capital from England. A request to secure foreign capital was placed before the Supreme Government by the Dewan. The Secretary of State for India prevailed upon the Southern Maratha Railway Company, and a loan at Four percent interest was secured from the Company who laid the line. A contract to manage the line for 46 years, till 1932, was signed. In addition to the interest, a Two percent premium on the proceeds from the railway was agreed to be paid to the Company.

The line was opened for traffic in 1889. Another line from Bangalore to Hindupur was completed from the State funds in 1893. The tracks which could not be completed due to financial problems created by the famine could have helped Bangalore and Mysore extend contacts to the north and the east. When there was again the shadow of famine in 1884 and also in 1891, Mysore - Nanjangud railway line was constructed. This helped transport of timber from the south-western forests to Mysore and Bangalore. A line from Birur



Railway Bridge across Kapila River - Nanjanagudu

to Shimoga was also planned. Rail connection from Bangalore to KGF was completed in 1895. C.Hayavadana Rao points out that railways of the length of 58 miles existed at the time of the Rendition and by 1895 the total length

had increased to 315 miles.⁶ Another line from Birur to Shimoga added 38 miles in 1899, bringing the total mileage to 353 miles.

Surveys were also conducted for a line from Nanjangud to Gudalur, Nanjangud to Erode, and Arasikere via Hassan to Mangalore. Later, Birur - Shimoga line was completed in 1899 with a length of 38 miles costing Rs.23 lakhs. In addition, Arasikere - Mangalore line was surveyed and a further survey was conducted for a Mysore - Tellicherry line. Both these railways, if completed, the Dewan thought, would open the ports on the West Coast to export Mysore products like coffee, areca and other items and open the Mysore hinterland to the world markets. A railway line between Doddballapur and Chikkaballapur and another line between Bowringpet (present Bangarpet) and Kolar were also surveyed.

The huge amount (12 lakh pound sterling) raised from England for the Harihara line was a huge relief to the exchequer as it was not possible to meet this bill from the existing revenue of the State. This was a clever method used by the Dewan to increase the State's assets. "The railway system as it stood in 1900, however, provided an infrastructural base for the commercial development of agriculture and internal trade. The most conspicuous lack was between Bangalore and West Coast," says Bjorn Hettne, commenting on the developments. The British it appears, were not willing to permit Mysore to penetrate into the coastal region, because the West Coast comprised their Presidencies. Malabar and South Canara districts were in the Madras Presidency and (North) Canara was under Bombay Presidency. There was always a group which disliked Mysore in the Madras Government. Dewan Visvesvaraya's efforts to secure Bhatkal port and a railway line from Shimoga to Bhatkal was similarly turned down later by the Supreme Government. (Montague, the then Viceroy being not in compliance with the Sir M. Visvesvaraya). Some British officials in the Supreme Government and many in the Madras Presidency were jealous of the development of Mysore overtaking that of the Madras Presidency.

"The construction of the Harihar line was one of the major administrative and financial achievements of Sheshadri Iyer," says N.S.Chandrashekhara.⁷ The arrangement entered into with the Southern Maratha Railway Company resulted in the construction of a very important railway line. It could have been a very expensive project executed without any strain on the State treasury and entirely financed by an external agency. It also led to the discharge of the famine debt of Rs.80 lakhs which was payable to the Supreme Government. The annual instalment of Rs.Four lakhs, which was being paid towards the repayment of these loans was diverted towards formation of a 'Sinking Fund' for the discharge of the railway loan. "The arrangement was beneficial to the State, both in the long and short run," adds Chandrashekhara, paying a tribute to the Dewan.

⁶ Hayavadana Rao, C., *Mysore Gazette*, Vol.II, part IV, p.2984 (Henceforth *Mysore Gaz*)

⁷ N.S.C., *Op.cit.*

Other Reforms

Abkari or Excise was another revenue source, which helped to improve the finances. The collection in the State was Rs.10.50 lakhs in 1881 and by 1894, it had increased threefold. Leakage in the collection of Excise was checked by administrative action. Earlier, the rate of the Excise had differed from place to place; a uniform rate was fixed all over, but the price of sale was not affected. A central control for manufacture and distribution was organised by closing all outlying distilleries and this made vigilance easy.

In 1892, manufacture of arrack was separated from sale by making different persons or separate agencies, to ensure that there would be regular accounts for both the processes. A capitalist firm from Madras came forward to manufacture arrack. They had better technical knowledge and resources and cost of production was low. Separate agencies were assigned for vending arrack. This led to competition among the vendors and malpractices of any vendor could now be reported to the government, thus minimising loss of revenue.

Setting up of mills at Bangalore and an increase in the labour force in KGF and coffee plantations also increased consumption of liquor and rise in excise revenue. "Increased revenue from toddy was almost wholly the result of improved management, while from arrack was due to increased management and consumption," says Shama Rao.⁸ If the Excise collection was Rs.12 lakhs in 1894, which was an increase of Rs.5.67 lakhs from 1881-82 "due to increased consumption," he points out.

In 1897, two important changes in Excise Department were introduced. The retail price of arrack was increased by Rs. One per gallon from the existing rate of Rs.5.31. This had a 'moderating' effect on consumption, it was claimed. License was issued for tapping toddy and certain groves were assigned to specific shops.

Better conservation of forests brought additional income to the State. Forests were expanded in several places and better conservation methods were employed. Forest staff was sent to Dehradun for training. An Inspector General of Forests was appointed in 1885 and the area of reserved forests increased from 643 square miles to 1704 square miles in 1894.

There was a greater demand for fuel because of railways, KGF and Bangalore Textile Mills. A careful policy was adopted to check the depletion of forests. Vigilance was increased, plantation of timber yielding trees in reserved forests and increasing plantation activity outside the forest area was also taken up. In 1893-94, sandalwood yielded 65 percent of the revenue from forests. Between 1882-94, new plantations were formed in 33 square mile area. In 1889, the Dewan had announced the forest policy by which all forest tracks were to be conserved, reproduction by artificial means aided, and agricultural classes were facilitated for grazing cattle and meeting essential requirements of manure.

⁸ Shama Rao, p.88

Irrigation

The State's financial position was improved during the long tenure of Sheshadri Iyer's Dewanship and the State's total revenue was 91.03 lakhs in 1882-83. By 1886-87, the total revenue rose to 127.5 lakhs. By the close of his administration in 1901-02, it was 189 lakhs. This was due to various steps taken by the Dewan such as expanding irrigation, encouraging industries, extending railways and securing income from the gold mines. He achieved this in the course of the rule of boy Prince Chamarajendra Wodeyar when he had a free hand, though during the Regency of the Maharani, he had to face some hurdles.

Improving irrigation was a major policy matter for the Dewan since the threat of failure of rains loomed large. "We cannot absolve ourselves from the fact that there are a large number of tanks that are in complete ruin," the Dewan told the Representative Assembly. The ryots and the government have to take steps to jointly manage such tanks. "Any reform in our tank system must start with a clear recognition of the fact that it was beyond the ability of the Government to undertake the repair and maintenance of all tanks with any ultimate benefit in revenue; nor would it be equitable to throw the burden on the ryots after the village system or what little remained of it had been disorganised; and after the ryot had been tacitly relieved of his responsibilities by imposition of special cesses for the repair of tanks," he said in his Assembly Address.

For the management of the tanks, Sheshadri Iyer made the following arrangements:

1. Tanks yielding more than Rs.500 as revenue were to be taken care of by P.W.D. There were 790 such tanks.
2. Those yielding less than Rs.500 as revenue were to be taken care of by the village itself under the responsible control of the revenue officer. In the latter case, the ryots were to be relieved of paying irrigation cess at the rate of one anna per rupee of the revenue.
3. In case the villagers did not manage the tank, the government itself was to undertake the responsibility of handing over the tanks to private persons and collect $\frac{1}{4}$ of revenue (*chautay*).⁹

These proposals were discussed in the Assembly, and it was decided that this would be attempted in seven taluks. It was decided that revenue limit of the tanks to be brought down from the existing of Rs.500 to Rs.300. A new branch in the Public Works Department was formed to take care of these (above mentioned) tanks. This branch also managed all the irrigation and restoration works, and also took care of the canals drawn from the Cauvery, Hemavathi, Kabini and the Lakshmanateertha.

The model experiment was undertaken with the work tried first in eight taluks of eight districts instead of seven. The experiment had a successful trial,

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp:118-119.

as announced by the Dewan in 1887. It was slowly extended to other taluks.¹⁰ A programme to extend well irrigation was inaugurated in 1891. Loans were advanced at a nominal rate of interest to ryots to dig irrigation wells. “In the districts of Kolar, Tumkur, Chitradurga and Bangalore, loans were taken for 917 and 550 wells, calculated to irrigate 5,225 acres,” reports Shama Rao.

Loans were also sanctioned for the repair of ‘Saguvalikattes’ or small reservoirs. The raising of bunds had been restricted in 1873 which had caused a lot of inconvenience in Chitradurga district. This restriction was later removed and it was decided to raise dams not exceeding an expenditure of Rs.20,000. Work was undertaken in Chamaraja Wodeyar channel and improvements to Chikkadevaraja Sagar both on the Cauvery; Virajanadi dam and Devaraya systems. The Jodirampur channel, Ramasamundra channel and the Rajarajeshwari channel in Hassan and Mysore districts were also improved. Assembly’s views were ascertained to obtain popular co-operation.



Chamarajendra Reservoir & Old Acquiduct, Hesaraghatta

The Marikanive Project under which the Vanivilas Sagar and Chamarajendra Reservoir at Hesaraghatta were developed to supply drinking water to Bangalore were two important works of this period. For the first time, telephones were used in the State to give instructions from Bangalore on the flow of water into the main pipeline from the reservoir.

The Marikanive Project planned to construct a dam across the Vedavati River in Chitradurga district was started in 1898 and was completed in 1907. The Dewan had to face a lot of severe criticism over starting it, though it irrigated a vast area in Chitradurga district (and at present irrigates 10,000 hectares of land). The reservoir is named after the Regent Queen as Vanivilas Sagar and raised near the Marikanive village in Hiriyur taluk with a length of 1,300 feet and an height of 162 feet from the deepest bed. The reservoir spreads over 21,460 acres. Two channels from the reservoir, one of the length of 29 miles and another of 30 miles were excavated. The lake has a holding capacity of 30,000 million cubic feet of water.¹¹ The Mavattur tank was repaired at a cost of Rs.2.81 lakhs. The Mirasabihalli tank and the Parashuramapur tank were also repaired, each costing more than Rs.2.50 lakhs.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Karnataka Gazetteer*, vol.I, 1992, p.673



Arecanut Garden

Regular scholarships were awarded every year to students joining the Madras Agriculture College so that they could return with better ideas to improve agriculture in the State. Supari and betelnut garden owners of Malnad were given special encouragement for preservation of existing gardens and planting new ones. From 1887, new gardens were to pay four annas per acre as revenue for the first 12 years, with progressive assessment for the next three years. *Soppinabetta* rights were recognised in 1891 which permitted them to pick leaves from the neighbouring government forests.

Bangalore suffered from drinking water scarcity and was provided with drinking water through taps by raising a reservoir at Hesaraghatta across the Arkavathy river. During the rule of Commissioners' regime, many experiments were made to supply water to the city but all those were not successful meeting the needs of the twin city fully. There was already a reservoir of Vijayanagara times called Shivasamudra. Bangalore city secured tap water in 1896 from Hesaraghatta (This tap water was jocularly called as 'Sheshadri Coffee' after the Dewan). A similar water supply project was implemented in Mysore city.¹²

The Agricultural Bank scheme was inaugurated in 1891. The existing Exchange Banks did not accept deposits from persons except those holding current deposits by other transactions. Deposit by others carried no interest. The new Bank was designed to help farmers and garden owners deposit money and take loans for cultivation purposes. If deposits were not forthcoming, the government volunteered to release loans at favourable rates. In case of farmers pledging their land, they were exempted from stamp and other duties. The scheme helped farmers to know about the benefit in transacting with banks and saved them from the clutches of private money lenders who charged high rates of interest.

Industries

Though Rangacharlu had stated that agriculture and industry were to be given equal importance for the growth of the State, as his tenure was short, he could not pay much attention to the growth of industry. Sheshadri Iyer in his address to the Assembly in 1890 stressed the growth of industries thus, "It is, however, to indigenous industries that we must look for the growth of capital and wealth in our midst for real progress in other directions. With the general poverty of the people on the one hand, and their growing intelligence on the other, our great want doubtless is the establishment of suitable industries on a scale calculated to afford a variety of remunerative occupations to large numbers and thus to obviate profitless competition within narrow spheres. The government therefore must encourage people with enterprise and intelligence to start industries and also support existing ones."

¹² *Karnataka Gazetteer*, Bangalore Dist., p.649.



In fact the indigenous industries had been destroyed after the Industrial Revolution in England and also by the British policy of tariffs. It was production by the masses. Domestic craftsmen, whether handloom weavers, braziers, blacksmiths etc. in India, could not compete with the machine made goods. Rubber came as an alternative to leather, crippling leather workers considerably. Machine made crockery harmed the potters and braziers. Salt production had been made the British Government's monopoly, throwing salt workers out of their jobs. Steam power had replaced human or animal power which made production cheaper and possible on a mass scale. But the efforts of Dewan Rangacharlu and Sheshadri Iyer created the necessary infrastructure for industrial growth providing roads, railways, technically trained men etc.

In 1875 Standish Lee, the Principal of School of Engineering, Bangalore, started a carpet weaving unit. In 1879, he installed a 12-horse power steam engine to weave wool. This was the first successful experiment and these products began to compete with the production in jails, being cheaper than the latter.¹³

In 1884, the Bangalore Woollen and Cotton Mills was started. Later, Lee's unit merged with it in 1886 and was known as Binny Mills. This secured government patronage by way of land, water and other facilities at a concessional rate. Its paid up capital was Rs.10 lakhs and the Government purchased shares worth Rs.15,000. The Mysore Spinning and Manufacturing Company was started in 1884 with a share capital of Rs.4.50 lakhs. The Government helped this factory which employed 630 persons in 1891. In 1901 Sirur and Company took over its management. Bangalore became a center of textile industry as a result of these new mills established in this period.

The Government Central Industrial Workshop was established in 1897 to supply equipment and plant for industries started in the State. It undertook repairs and supply spare parts for the PWD, Sanitary Department and the Electrical Department. It manufactured general engineering equipments including structural works like trusses and tanks, and also cast both ferrous and non-ferrous items, mainly for paper, sugar and oil units. This was a great boon to the small-scale industries and workshops.¹⁴

Gold Mining

The most important industry started during the period was gold mining in KGF. In 1873, a retired Irish army man Mr. M.F.Lavelle (who had served in New Zealand) applied for permission to explore 'Coal and other Minerals' in Kolar district. He got exclusive rights of mining for a period of three years and in return had to pay a royalty of 10 percent to the Government. He started operations by sinking a shaft near Oorgaom. He was unable to secure necessary capital and it was soon made known that it was not coal and other minerals but mainly gold. Lavelle transferred his rights to a military officer called Beresford

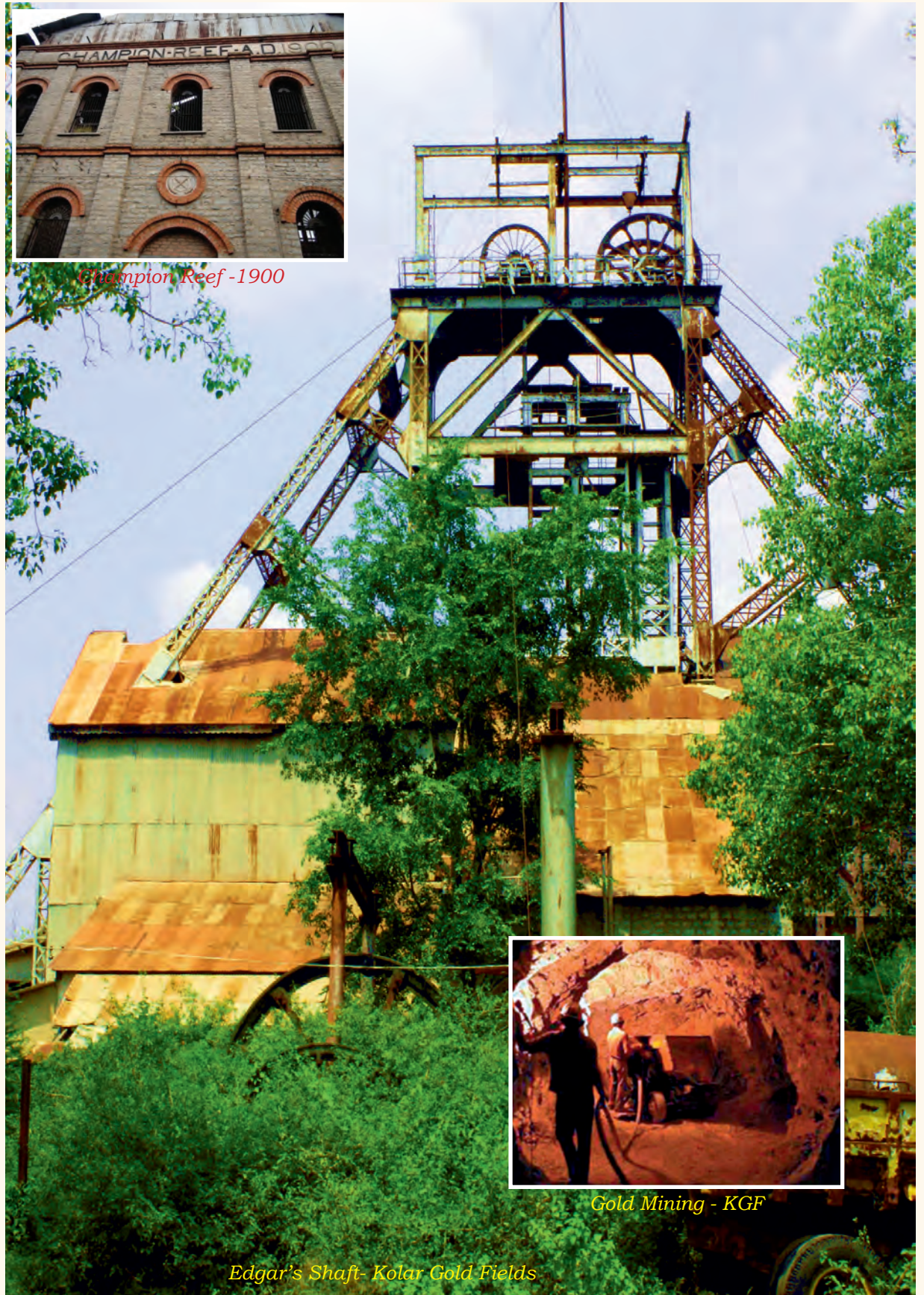
¹³ Ibid, 268-49.

¹⁴ Ibid.

Jewels of Administration



Champion Reef - 1900



Gold Mining - KGF

Edgar's Shaft- Kolar Gold Fields

with the permission of the Government. He with other operators approached a London firm in 1881, M/S John Taylor and Sons. Though it took time for them to make the enterprise a profitable one, by 1885, the company had profits. In 1886, the company paid a royalty of Rs.33,368 to the State. The sum went on increasing and in 1895 the royalty paid was Rs.7.33 lakhs. In 1895 the various mines employed 400 Europeans and 11,700 Indians. Gold output was 16,325 ounces in 1886-87. But the capital for the company was raised in England and all the gold mined was to be taken to London. Hayavadana Rao points out that the value of gold extracted was worth 16,269,217 pound sterling from the beginning till 1901. The total royalty received was Rs.91 lakhs till 1901 from the 14 mines operating at that time. Hence a desolate dry area in Kolar district became a populated and thriving industrial center.¹⁵

An Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition was organised at Mysore in 1888. This displayed the achievements and experiments in the field of agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, industries, handicrafts and other aspects. This later became the mother of the Dasara Exhibition.

Power Generation

The most outstanding contribution of Dewan Sheshadri Iyer was the generation of Hydro-electric power at the Shivasamudra Falls. It was the proposal to supply power to the Gold mines at KGF, which gave it a concrete shape.

Power production could be a very solid venture, he realised, which was necessary for all-round progress. Electricity was produced by oil engines which was very costly. Mysore Palace had a dynamo installed by Dewan Rangacharlu which was operated by oil. As Sheshadri Iyer knew that it was a heavy cost to that of Hydro-electricity which was cheap. A minor effort had been made to produce hydel power at Gokak Falls in Belgaum district in 1889 to run a textile mill, but it generated only seven KW of power). Sheshadri Iyer planned something bigger. He came into contact with Edmund Charington, an Electrical Engineer who applied for Mysore Government's permission to produce power at the Shivasamudra Falls. This project had the support of Col. Henderson, the Resident at Mysore. British mercantile interests were in touch with the Resident and other Europeans over the potential of hydel power generation in Mysore.

Sheshadri Iyer wanted to make this project a State enterprise, so Charington's application was not considered. He consulted Col. Pennyquick and secured his services from Madras Government, where he was Chief Engineer, PWD to make a detailed study of the problem. He gave a report in favour of the project.

The Dewan deputed Capt. Lotbeniere, Deputy Chief Engineer of Mysore to visit Europe and America in 1895. He examined the Hydro-electric power centres in Canada and U.S.A. including the Niagara Falls. The project was

¹⁵ N.S.C. pp:94-95; *Mysore Gaz.*, p.3003.

to be located in the Shivasamudra Island and a part of the island was in Madras Presidency in Kollegal taluk.¹⁶ “But Mysore was placed in a peculiarly disadvantageous position of being a feudatory state, subject especially to the onerous conditions of the Instrument of Transfer of 1881.” However, Sheshadri Iyer, as the spokesman of the Maharaja’s Government, proved to be a consummate negotiator. “The great perseverance, patient skill and extraordinary persuasive powers he displayed in the course of negotiations won for Mysore a well deserved victory”, says N.S.Chandrashekhar.¹⁷

The Madras Government laid down many conditions and one of them was if Mysore failed to use the waters to generate power for two consecutive years, the agreement could be terminated. The Supreme Government also agreed to the project on 27th March 1900. Negotiations with John Taylor and Sons were also taken up and it was agreed to supply power to them by March 1902 for 10 years. Annual supply had to be 4000 H.P. For first five years, the rate was between 18 pound sterling to 29 pound sterling per HP, the average rate being 20.4 pound sterling. For the next five years, the rate was to be 10 pound sterling per H.P. The calculations helped to reach the conclusion that within five years, the capital invested by Mysore would be recovered, and from the sixth year, 10 percent on capital expenditure could be recovered. Madras Government had to be paid for 30 years, at the rate of Rs.Five per H.P. of half the water power to be utilised every year. But the minimum payment had to be at least Rs.2,000 per year.

General Electric Company of United States got the contract for the installation of the power plant. A Swiss Company (Eseher Wyss and Co. from Zurich) installed the hydraulic plant. The whole erection process was completed in 20 months, and maintenance of its working for one year was by the installing firm.

“There was a strong and persistent opposition to the Cauvery Power Scheme in the State,” says N.S.Chandrashekhar.¹⁸ Newspapers and public figures felt that the limited resources of the State were being wasted. “Every effort was made to prevent the scheme from being taken up,”¹⁹ he points out.

Power to KGF

When digging for the channel started in August 1900, there were several problems. Heavy rains led to flooding of the work place and work was stopped. Then cholera raged on the work place and work had to be stopped again for another one month. The work was delayed by three months as the uncharted terrain and wild jungle had to be cleared, rocks blasted. 5,000 people toiled at the site until machines arrived at the Goa Port in January 1901. After this, installation work was brisk and power was transmitted to KFG in June 1902, three months after the scheduled date. Power supply of 4.3 MW was produced

¹⁶ Shama Rao, vide pp:180-82

¹⁷ N.S.C., p.147.

¹⁸ Ibid.,

¹⁹ Ibid, p.149.

and transmitted for a distance of 147 kilometres through 78 KW transmission lines. It was the longest hot line in the world then. The total cost of the project was Rs.50 lakhs.²⁰



The Hydro-electric project was the greatest achievement of Sheshadri Iyer as Dewan. It assured the government regular annual income. It also helped Mysore to achieve all-round progress in industry, agriculture and scientific research and improve its financial position. He faced stiff opposition from all quarters and physical or natural hurdles for the scheme was also huge. "This scheme alone should entitle Seshadri Iyer claim a position among three or four makers of modern India," says C.P.Ramaswamy Iyer. He consulted industrial leaders such as Jamshedji Tata, Phirozesha Mehta, Dadabhai Naoroji and other eminent patriots who rendered moral support and encouragement to him. Many European officials and technicians stood by him. Col. Henderson and Bourdillen, Residents, supported him. Curzon, the Viceroy was also sympathetic to Mysore and visited the state in 1900. Government of India approved it perhaps because it was to support an English mining firm. Sheshadri Iyer himself was not alive to see the completion of the project as his death occurred in September 1901.²¹

The ramifications of the power production were many. Short supply of power in certain seasons due to shortage of water supply near the reservoir caused lot of inconvenience. Sir M.Visvesvaraya later took up the giant Kannambadi Reservoir work to provide water to the Shivasamudra Reservoir and for irrigation work. Power supply to Bangalore in 1905 enhanced the city's

²⁰ Shama Rao, p.182.

²¹ N.S.C., pp:150-51.

importance educationally, commercially and industrially. The Tata (Indian) Institute of Science was started here because of the availability of cheap power. “Contemplating over the benefits of power generation and struggling hard to have the project implemented is an example of the Dewan’s serious concern for the people’s welfare at a time when there was a foreign government and science had not advanced much in this land,” says D.V.Gundappa.²²

The Plague

A serious calamity of the period was the outbreak of the epidemic plague in the State, as elsewhere in India. It had serious repercussions all over the country including political agitations in Maharashtra. The likely spread of plague was anticipated in advance in 1897. The Epidemic Diseases Regulation was passed in 1897, and T. Ananda Rao was appointed as the Plague Commissioner to lead the anti-plague operations. All hospitals were equipped to treat the plague patients. Sanitation was improved in all cities and towns so that rat menace could be controlled.

There was no case of plague for almost a year but the sudden death of a person coming from Hubli in the railway quarters of Bangalore on 15th August 1898 created a panic. Some more people died in the neighbourhood of the Bangalore Goods Shed area. Soon it spread to Aralepeth, Akkipeth and other areas of the city, totally to seven divisions. Nearly 30,000 people left Bangalore by December 1898 and went to their native villages or towns and carried the disease to those places as most of them were already infected. Soon the whole State had the incidence of plague which took a toll of 2,665 deaths in Bangalore city alone and in the Bangalore district another 4,472, excluding the city. The government report states that the total deaths due to the disease was 3,393 in Bangalore, as many cases had escaped detection.

Hayavadana Rao states that 14,831 attacks were noted in the State and 12,273 deaths were reported. Mysore city had 2,667 cases of attack and 2,171 deaths. This was in the year 1898-99.²³ The epidemic continued till December, but appeared again in June 1899. The population of Bangalore was reduced by 25 percent as was the case of reduction in population in other towns of the State.

The Government appointed a Chief Plague Officer at Bangalore as it was serious in the city and had spread elsewhere from here. The city was divided into four



Ambulance used during Bangalore plague in 1898

²² D.V.G., p.40

²³ Mysore.Gaz. p.2999.

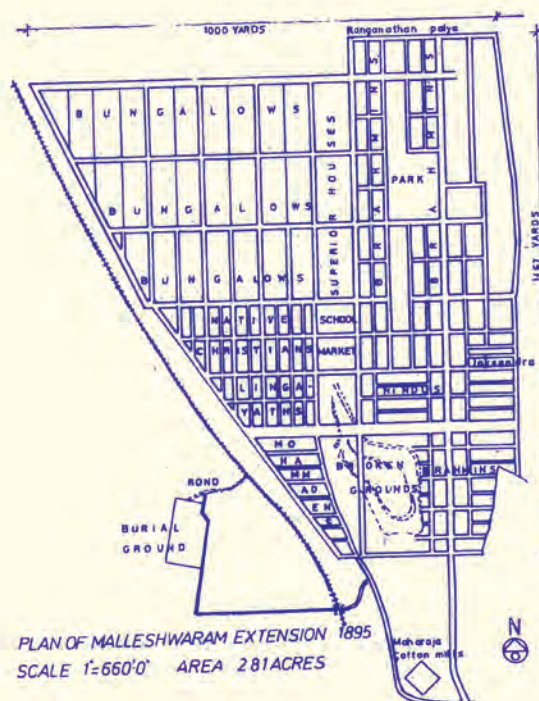
wards and two sub-wards for undertaking anti-plague operations. Prizes were awarded to killers of rodents. People in Bangalore were asked to vacate their houses and live in segregation camps outside the city. A total of 8,419 houses in the city were disinfected (All these figures do not speak of the Bangalore Cantonment area where 3,321 people had died between September and March in 1898-99, and another 348 during 1899-90). Of the houses disinfected in Bangalore, 684 were infected and the rest were all deserted. The Contagious Diseases Hospital was converted as Plague Hospital at Magadi Road in Bangalore and passengers coming to the city were checked for infection at eight outposts and infected persons were sent to the Plague Hospital. Telephone lines were laid to co-ordinate anti-Plague operations. The deceased were buried or cremated by the Government staff.

All these details regarding Bangalore give an idea of how serious the holocaust was and how the Dewan planned to counter the situation all over the state. Insanitary houses in many narrow streets including half of the old Taragupet were demolished, streets were broadened, better sanitary facilities were provided; and the drainage system was rehauled in Bangalore.

In the city of Bangalore "Trade was almost at a standstill during the plague season... the estimated loss of revenue to the Municipality alone amounted to Rs.40,000," says a report on plague. Binny and Minerva Mills were closed as were the schools.²⁴

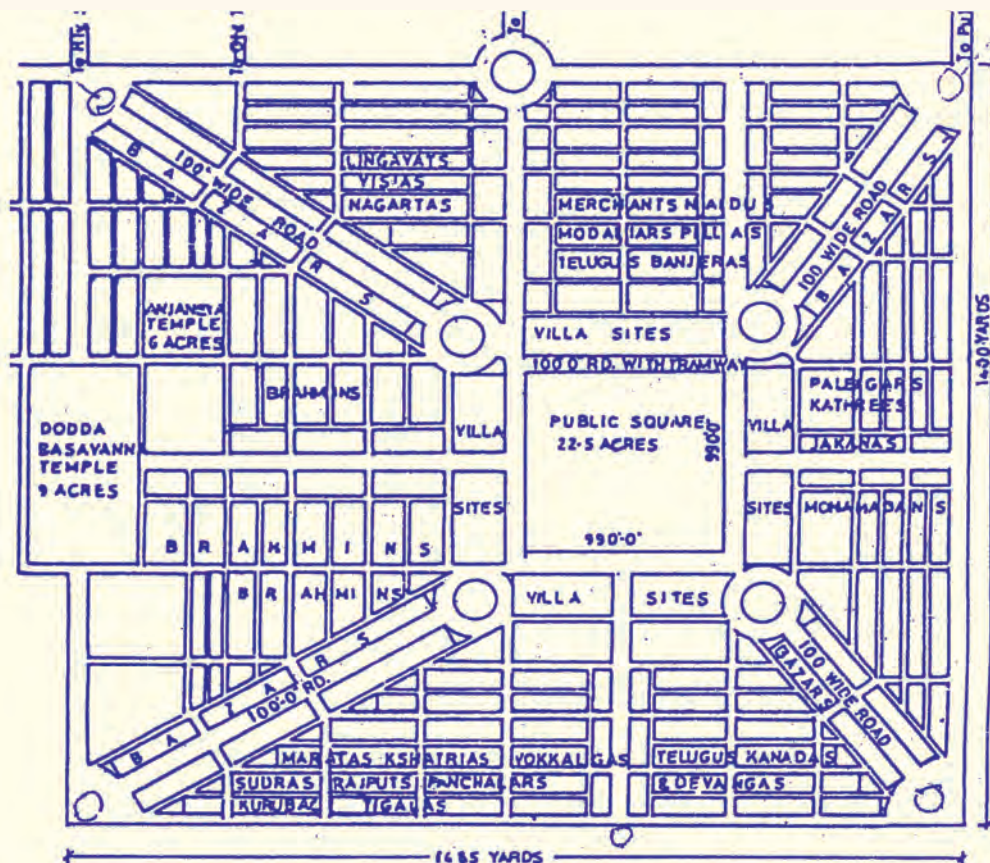
Bangalore Modernised

Plague helped the modernization of the city. Planned new extensions like Malleswaram in a 291 acre area and Basavanagudi with 440 acres were created. These places had sheltered people who had vacated their houses due to the epidemic. The poor were provided with free material such as bamboo to raise temporary shelters. Fifty telephone connections which were used to co-ordinate the anti-plague operations in the city were handed over to government offices in Bangalore, providing the city with modern means of communication for the first time. City Hospital (1898) and Hospitals in the State were better equipped



²⁴ K.G., *Bangalore Dist*, pp:89-90.

Jewels of Administration



PLAN OF BASAVANAGUDI EXTENSION 1894, Scale 1"=660'0"
AREA 440 ACRES

and Victoria Hospital (in the new building from 1900) provided with modern medical facilities.

The loss caused by closure of trade, industry and other activities was tremendous, But the Dewan had anticipated the holocaust and paid serious attention to set things right quickly. About 800 labourers from Arcot district were encouraged to emigrate to Bangalore to open the Binny and Minerva Mills.²⁵

Plague persisted, though not on the scale of 1898-99 and sanitary facilities were improved and extended. The spraying of insecticide eliminated rodents in the long run. The Anti-Malaria Programme also eliminated rodents, though its incidence on a very small scale continued till the 1930s.

Though the old city of Bangalore was on the way to modernization with many new amenities provided, the misery caused by deaths, separation and other measures left a deep scar on the minds of the people, turning them anti-government. This was true of the other parts of the state.

"The Plague of 1898 had called for scientific diagnosis of disease and modern methods in the care and treatment of patients and Government had built up quite an enviable system of public and medical aid," says K.N.V.Sastry.

²⁵ Ibid



Victoria Hospital - Bengaluru

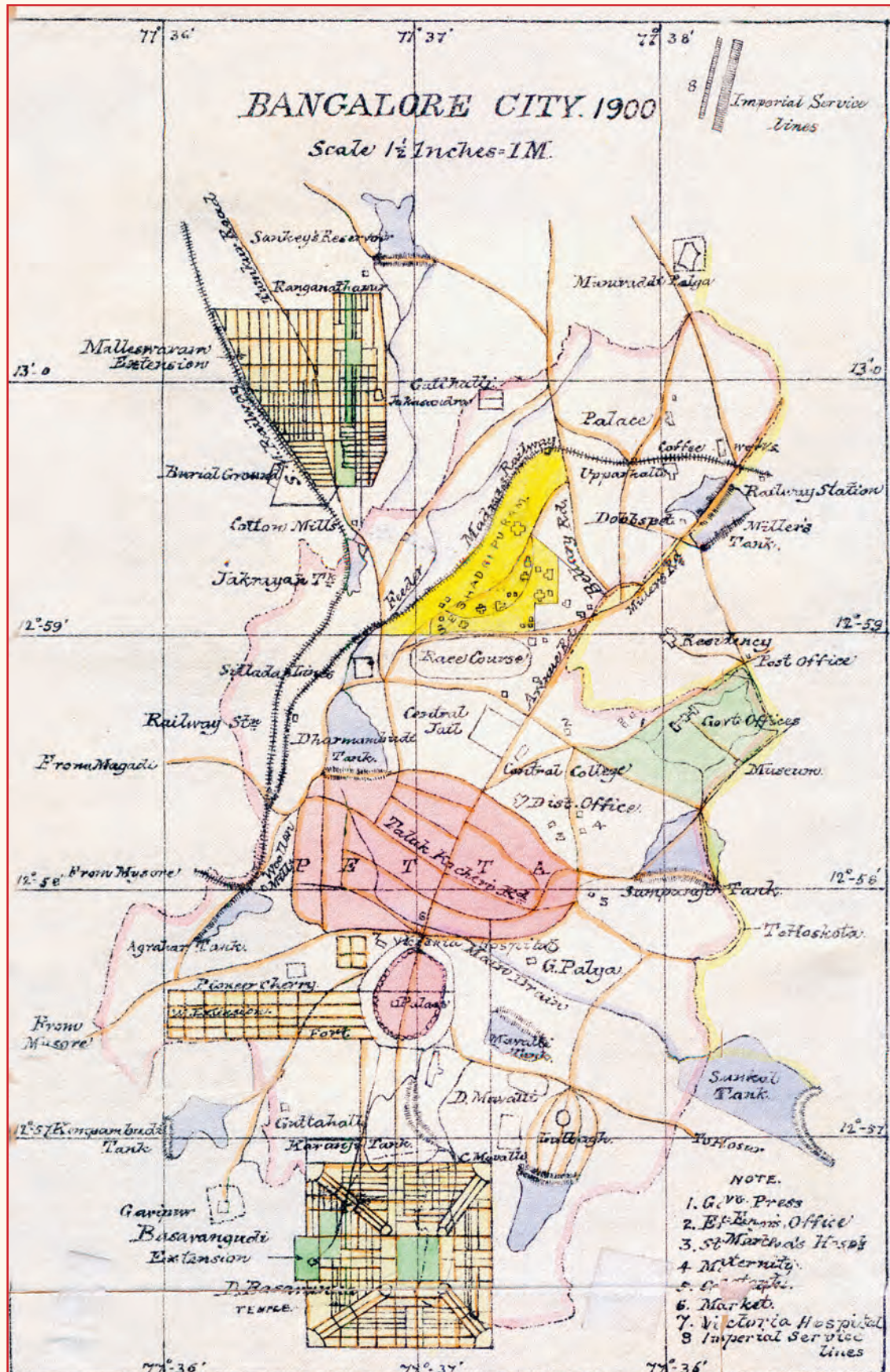


Victoria Hospital (Old Photo)

Main Street, Bangalore 1890



Jewels of Administration



Representative Assembly

The Representative Assembly had been started with great enthusiasm and its privileges being nurtured by Rangacharlu. But, Sheshadri Iyer did not pay much importance to the Assembly though he enlarged it and made its members elective. To him it was a 'necessary evil'. Election brought in many enlightened members who were aware of their rights and privileges. They turned vociferous in the long run. Sheshadri Iyer, who was a very capable administrator, was arrogant and haughty. Issues raised by members either out of ignorance or half-knowledge made the Dewan snub them, at times bordering on ridicule. D.V.Gundappa holds a similar view. More than once did he extend raw treatment to a senior social worker, public figure and journalists such as M.Venkatakrishnaiah (also known as Tataiah, later addressed as 'Grand Old Man of Mysore'). The Maharaja was too young to intervene as he was dazzled by the achievements of the Dewan.

"The continued interest the representatives evinced and the practical common sense which characterised their discussion had disproved the misgivings of the earlier period whether the establishment of an institution of the kind was not premature," says Shama Rao.²⁶ The government took steps to widen the privileges of the Local Boards with power to nominate the Assembly members, instead of their being suggested by the Deputy Commissioner. The Deputy Commissioner was authorised to select three or four leading merchants from his district to represent the interests of trade and one or two cultivating landholders, possessing influence and information. Property qualification was introduced for members and their names were published in the State Gazetteer from 1887. Regional and Community organizations were also allowed to depute representatives on the Deputy Commissioner's selection. Eight Local Boards and 93 Municipalities nominated members from among themselves. Members of the several districts used to meet together in advance in Mysore and nominate a member to speak on a particular subject chosen became the practice. This gave weight to the debates. The Dewan complimented the members for their moderation, intelligence and practical sense.

People who paid Rs.100 to 300 as land revenue or house tax of Rs.13 or more and *inam* holders with an assessment of Rs.500 (in the case of possessing land in more than one village) were made voters. Graduates also were given the right to vote. This was introduced in 1890, and the total membership rose to 351. "Let me add that it is His Highness' sincere hope that the privilege he has now been pleased to grant will be exercised to the fullest extent," the Dewan said in his address to the Assembly. In 1893, instead of the annual election, triennial election was introduced with a view to make members responsible to their voters and gain experience as members. Bjorn Hettne feels that "the urban element in Assembly had grown too strong and the constituencies were arranged to get equitable distribution of seats," while commenting on the reforms.²⁷

²⁶ Shama Rao, p.156. Vide pp:158-165 for details

²⁷ Hettne, Bjorn, *Political Economy of Indirect Rule*, 1977, p.91.



Viceroy Lansdowne

Lord Lansdowne, the Viceroy who visited Mysore in 1892 said while addressing the members, “The inquiries I have made from those who are the best judges have satisfied me that your proceedings have served a most useful purpose and have brought His Highness’ Government into touch with all classes of the community.” He further stated, “You are quite right in supposing that the remarkable experiment has a special interest in my eyes, because the Government of India is at the moment engaged in introducing considerable change in the constitution and functions of the British Indian Legislative Councils.”

The Representatives played a responsible role by asking questions on the position of the Famine Debt repayment in 1883. A request was made to conduct the proceedings in Kannada also in 1883 as the members not knowing English would be able to respond better to the proceedings. Over the Revenue Code, it could be revised only after hearing the views of the members was another request in 1884. They also demanded access to Government records for getting the required information before raising any issue in the Assembly. These are all instances quoted by Shama Rao to give an idea of the Assembly’s fruitfulness.²⁸

Struggle for Privileges

One cannot draw a rosy picture from this. A Standing Committee of the Assembly could be formed, as all issues could not be discussed during the Dasara Assembly and this could be discussed by the Committee which could meet once in a month and make recommendations for action was one proposal strongly put forth in 1888. This would help the government to elicit detailed information on any decision or legislation. The members privately selected a Standing Committee and wrote to the Dewan for its recognition and for monthly meetings. The proposal was turned down by the Dewan who opined that “in theory it was a fair proposal.” But some of the proposals might “affect Imperial policy or sanctioned principles of administration”, he feared. There were silly requests based on false prestige. In 1887, the members requested that the letter to attend the Assembly sent to them by the Amildar was ‘inconsistent with their dignity’; they eventually extracted a promise from the Dewan that the letter would be sent by the Deputy Commissioner!

A number of members of the Municipalities were government servants (though in a minority). There was a case of one such member representing Bangalore Municipality. Being a government servant, the Assembly objected to his selection pointing out that “a Government Servant could do no justice to his position as a member of the Assembly while remaining a salaried officer of the Government.” Though the Dewan did not respond immediately, orders were subsequently passed instructing not to nominate government servants

²⁸ Shama Rao, Op.cit, pp:161-62.

as members of the Assembly. This clearly shows that the members were aware of the propriety of the Assembly in their functions. The members had said that the Dewan's address did not contain the details of receipt and disbursement. Thus the supplying of budget details for the information of members was conceded.

The persistent demand for reduction of assessment on arecanut gardens resulted in the appointment of a special officer for investigation. Later in 1896, relief amounting to 22 percent was granted to the arecanut gardens of Sorab, Sagar, Nagar and Koppa taluks, equal to that which prevailed in Tirthahalli taluk.

Perusal of the proceedings of the Representative Assembly reveal how the members brought a large number of grievances to the notice of the government and got them redressed with respect to local problems in distant areas.

There was a need to simplify the cumbersome procedures to secure loans under Land Improvement Regulation and orders were passed fulfilling the request in 1890. The rule was that land grant (*Darkhasths*) and relinquishment (*Razeenamas*) applications being sent to the Amildar had to be written by the respective village Shanbog, who also had to certify it. The inconvenience of this practice was ventilated in the Assembly. The Dewan ordered to discontinue the practice and gave permission to approach the Amildar directly. In addition to this, the following measures were introduced:

- (1) Licensed guns of farmers from Malnad area being taken away by the police failing to return them during harvesting season when they need these to check depredations by wild animals.
- (2) *Kan-Khist*, a kind of duty (cess) for using certain forest products by ryots, abolished by Bowring being continued to be levied in Koppa taluk.
- (3) The anomaly of combining police, magisterial and revenue functions by a single officer.
- (4) Demanding prohibition of Slaughter of cows.
- (5) Amelioration of the conditions of Lambanies, Korachas and other wandering Tribes.
- (6) Improvement of Primary Education.
- (7) Introduction of Technical Education.
- (8) Extension of Female Education.
- (9) Encouragement to muslim youth by providing scholarship for Higher Education.
- (10) Criminal prosecution of farmers when they cut branches of trees exceeding one inch girth (for manure).
- (11) Non-availability of trees other than the 33 kinds conserved (protected) in certain regions against felling by the forest laws and thus forest use being totally blocked for farmers in such regions.

These and many other issues are listed by Shama Rao as raised in the Assembly, some of which were addressed by the government in favour of the people.²⁹

²⁹ *Ibid*, pp:164-65.

Unfriendly Dewan

However, the Dewan was not always friendly and lenient towards the Assembly. Both D.V.Gundappa and N.S.Chandrashekhara have pointed to his high-handed attitude towards the Assembly. The issue of “Standing Committee” was treated with ridicule, and D.V.Gundappa in his Kannada book “Mysurina Divanarugalu” (pp:44-45) makes fun of the Dewan over the issue of the Standing Committee, though the author had great regard for the Dewan for his unique achievements.

In 1894-95, certain areas in Tumkur district were suffering from severe drought and the Standing Committee made a representation for tax relief on their behalf. But the Dewan refused to accept the representation. The government was capable of obtaining information on its own was his reply. Local papers wrote against this attitude. *The Hindu*, also wrote a scathing editorial on the episode. But the Dewan was adamant.³⁰

Once Venkatakrishniah asked the Dewan in the Assembly: “What about the Committee?” Sheshadri Iyer’s reply was “That Committee is burnt.” Venkatakrishniah’s rejoinder was, “Many members do not burn their bodies.” The Dewan’s reply was “Then it is buried.” N.S.Chandrashekhara reporting this incident also says that Sheshadri Iyer’s attitude towards the Assembly hardened with the passage of time.³¹ D.V.Gundappa also quotes this incident.

³² The proceedings of the Assembly amply illustrate this.

Once a member was snubbed by the Dewan and the member kept quiet after that. Lee Warner, the Resident who at times used to attend the meeting, later (after the meeting) wrote a letter to the Dewan over the incident complimenting the Dewan for this ‘bold’ action.

Latter Chintsal Rao (often referred to as Chinchal Rao), a member of the Council and a close friend of the Dewan told him that “he should feel ashamed for this letter an incident on which the Dewan was gloating over, Chintsal Rao said. He did not wish to continue as a colleague of the Dewan,” he added. The Resident’s wish was that the people here should not be assertive and the British Empire must continue permanently. Under those circumstances, Chintsal Rao offered to resign. These words made the Dewan realise that his action was inappropriate. Chintsal Rao asked him to apologize for his behaviour. “The Dewan had a large heart. Next day at the beginning of the meeting he followed the instructions of Chintsal Rao”, says D.V.Gundappa.³³

In 1885, the Dewan in his address to the Assembly said, “At the outset the institution was regarded by some as premature, but the continued interest you evince in public affairs, and the practical common sense which characterises your discussion have served to refute the assumption so often made that the institution is in advance of times. The success achieved in the past is an encouragement for further endeavours to secure these annual meetings

³⁰ NSC, pp:172-73.

³¹ *Ibid*

³² D.V.G., *Mysurina Divanarugalu* (Kan) 1971, pp:44-45.

³³ *Ibid*, pp:46-47.

or fuller representation of the wants and wishes of the people. In view of attaining this end, His Highness has been pleased to direct that the various Local Boards, now about to be constituted shall be empowered to select their representatives for this Assembly, thereby investing it with authority and weight which belonged to a body formally deputed for the representation of the people". How the representation was increased and the total number of members came to 251 is already noted. Some newspapers were highly critical of the proceedings of the Representative Assembly. *Vrittanta Chintamani* (16th October 1888) opined that the Representative Assembly "is more a farce" and suggested that in order, it might be a really useful institution and it should consist of men of light and learning".³⁴

The same paper wrote again (4th July 1889) using the same words, "The Representative Assembly is another farce. This is supposed to be the Imperial Parliament with the difference that the members of the Mysore Parliament are wanting in education and independence. As thus constituted, they had no voice in administration of the State. A better state of things might be expected when the Representative Assembly was capable of exercising some sort of check over the doings of the Dewan."³⁵

Vrittanta Chintamani (28th June 1893) with the headline 'On New Rules for Election of Representative Assembly' reported, "These new rules they say, confine to ryots and merchants among whom there are few educated men and cannot therefore discuss intelligently the questions coming before them."³⁶

Vrittanta Chintamani (22nd May 1901) writing under the headline "Hollowness of Some of the Institutions in Mysore" writes, "Though Mysore is regarded as a model native State on account the two institutions, i.e., the Representative Assembly and the Competitive Examination for the Civil Service, yet looked at closely both these institutions do not serve the purpose for which they were originally intended. The Representative Assembly has been nothing more than a petitioning body as Lord Harris called it, since the death of the late Maharaja. Even the privilege of petitioning, it is not allowed to exercise, for if the members petition in a body, they are told to approach individually, and when they send up individual petitions, their petitions are rejected, on the ground that as individuals, they have no right to petition on matters concerning the whole province."³⁷ There were other newspapers too who at times used foul language out of indignation over the Dewan's attitude towards the Assembly.

"According to a booklet about the Representative Assembly, the sessions in 1898, 1900 and 1902 were suspended due to the Plague and the attendance during the sessions of 1899, 1901 and 1903 was 'extremely thin'" says Bjorn Hettne. According to the booklet, the Assembly was "opposed to his autocratic nature" (his referring to the Dewan).³⁸

34 Halappa, G.S., *The History of Freedom in Karnataka*, Volume II, 1964, p.735.

35 *Ibid*, pp:736-37.

36 *Ibid*, p.739.

37 *Ibid*, p.740.

38 Hettne, *Op.cit*; p.92.

Rangacharlu's Dream Shattered

N.S.Chandrashekhar says that Rangacharlu, even when he was in his deathbed, pleaded with the future Dewan, Sheshadri Iyer (the latter's name was recommended by the former for the Dewan's post) "to take care of the Assembly and foster it," when Sheshadri Iyer waited upon him. "Sheshadri Iyer had broken faith with his master and turned hostile to the Assembly, and instead of helping its growth, did everything to hamper it, that during the latter part of his administration the Assembly was tolerated, but not allowed to play an effective role and that once the beneficent presence of the Maharaja, the royal founder of the Assembly had been removed by death, Seshadri Iyer was increasingly autocratic and treated the Assembly with contempt are the charges levelled against him."³⁹ Chintsal Rao, a colleague with a balanced mind, had also retired in 1888.

When the British Government wanted to take over the *anche* or State Postal Department, the Assembly passed an unanimous resolution to retain the old system. The Dewan did not intervene in the matter. The Dewan's reply to the proposal in 1890 to have a non-official member elected by the Assembly to be inducted in the Maharaja's Council for representation of public interest was that it was not expedient to have a member who was not a responsible servant of the government. The demand by a European planter member to have a Legislative Council for the State was responded to as 'ostentatious'.

In 1891, a proposal came from the Assembly to appoint an Honourary Secretary to the Assembly to represent the views of the Assembly between the interim period of two annual sessions. Nothing came finally from the proposal. N.S.Chandrashekhar who has listed these and many other incidents of the Dewan's attitude vis-à-vis the Assembly says that, "The session of the Assembly held in 1893 was notable" because of several suggestions made for constitutional change, the "vehemence" with which they were urged. M.Venkakrishniah a senior member proposed the election of as many members to the Maharaja's Council as the present existing official members in the Maharaja's Council and the Maharaja himself should preside over the Council meetings. These additional members to the Council must be given legislative work was another suggestion. But there was no response from Dewan to these proposals and there was no unanimity among the members on many issues. Bjorn Hettne points out that the European members (planters) wanted constitutional reforms. Once a demand for the Legislative Council came from a planter, the Dewan rejected it and a native member supported the Dewan. The interesting picture that emerges from this discussion is the European members were keen on constitutional reforms, but the natives wanted status quo.⁴⁰

Some members of the Assembly were highly critical of the Dewan. The 'Mysore for Mysoreans' controversy also raged. So were issues of the Marikanive Project and the Shivasamudra Hydro-electric project. The Dewan's temperament could not help him withstand the adverse criticisms which were as severe an attack

³⁹ NSC, *Op.cit*, p.154.

⁴⁰ Hettne, *Op.cit*, p.91.

by a barbed weapon. "There can be no denying the fact that Seshadri Iyer's relationship with the Representative Assembly was neither smooth nor cordial, except in the first few years of his Dewanship," says N.S.Chandrashekhar.⁴¹

Another member made a representation that all important issues discussed in the Assembly must be put to vote which was rejected by the Dewan. Chintsal Rao told the Dewan: "Sheshadri, you have missed the opportunity of becoming known as the greatest statesman in India."

"The peculiar circumstances of the time and in particular hostile forces with which he had to contend during the period of Regency made him less tolerant of the Assembly than would have been the case if the circumstances had been more propitious," says Chandrashekhar.

Help to Agriculturists

The State collected its revenue by depending on executive orders and circulars, since there was no Revenue Code. A Bill based on the Bombay Revenue Code was prepared and placed before the Representative Assembly in 1883. There was lot of discussion between the Resident James Lyall and the later Resident Dennis Fitzpatrick over the Bill. It was sent for the approval of the Supreme Government after discussion over it in the Representative Assembly.

"Some of the chief subjects codified are the relationship of the landlord and tenant, the rights of Government lands, and their mining rights which of late have required a certain amount of value, and forest rights of the Government and occupants, upon which point you will agree with me, there is at present neither a definite regulation nor a uniform practice. Nor is the Government satisfied with the present rule for the recovery of its revenue," the Dewan told the Assembly in 1883. The rules on the subject were simplified. Adequate provision was made for the collection of public revenue and also to protect the private right of property. The rights and obligations of the *Inamdars* and tenants were defined. Occupancy rights of tenants who had occupied government lands and had paid assessed revenue were recognised. Tenants were protected from arbitrary increase in rent. Copies of written leases granted by the *Inamdar* and their registers were deposited in the Deputy Commissioner's office. After discussion with the two successive Residents, the Bill was sent to the Supreme Government and it became a law in 1889 as the Mysore Revenue Code. This minimised uncertainties over revenue administration due to varying executive actions based on the temperament of officials or the *Inamdars*. Instead of the civil courts dealing with revenue appeals, the revision cases were to be heard by two Council Members of the State.⁴²

The Survey and Settlement abolished the levy of *mirasi* (customary payment of grains as remuneration) by Shanbhogs and Patels from the ryots and the remuneration to be paid to them was through grant of service *Inam* lands.

⁴¹ NSC, *Op.cit.*, p.174.

⁴² *Ibid.*

Money payment had reduced them to the status of government servants of the lowest rank. The new decision would help them to retain their traditional influence as heads of villages, whereas service *Inams* would make them look like holders of a position and status in the eyes of the village community, was the Dewan's earnest wish. But it was not implemented, though he expressed his view in Dasara speech in 1883. They received *potgi* (remuneration) from the government. This system continued till 1908.

Collection of revenue increased and by the time Sheshadri Iyer retired, it reached Rs.180 lakhs. Viceroy Lord Hardinge, while paying tribute to him in 1913 said, "The revenue of the country, which stood at Rs. 100 lakhs when he took charge, had reached the high figure of Rs.180 lakhs when he laid down office," quotes Hayavadana Rao.⁴³

N.S.Chandrashekhar describes three measures of Sheshadri Iyer as 'far-sighted', namely, the founding of the Agricultural Bank, Life Insurance for the employees and the Mysore Civil Service Examination. The Agricultural Banks were to be associations of landholders, organised on co-operative principles. The Bank was to accept deposit and procure loans and was managed by elected men from among its members. Loans were to be released for approved purposes only. The Dewan promised to help the Bank with Government deposits.

"The co-operative spirit to which the association owed its existence must emanate from the agriculturists themselves.... Small beginnings and early struggles are the necessary conditions of a vigorous life," said the Dewan as he expressed his idea of the Bank. These Banks were organised on the model of those existing in Germany and France, according to the Dewan. They were expected to free the farmer from private usurious moneylenders. "This was an enlightened measure," says N.S.Chandrashekhar.⁴⁴

"The scheme of Agricultural Banks did not prove as great a success as was expected when they were started," says C.Hayavadna Rao.⁴⁵ The number of Banks rose to 61 in June 1901. A special officer was appointed in December 1896 to enquire into the working of the Bank and also explain to the people the principles on which they were founded and worked. But failure of rains, using loans for family functions like marriages and festivals etc. resulted in irregular repayment of loans. The Banks could not make much headway and progress.

The second was the Insurance Scheme introduced for government employees. It not only helped them to save a part of their earnings but also covered the risk that the family had to face in case of his sudden death. "The measure is calculated to benefit the public servants materially, and at the same time, to improve their general tone and promote independence and purity of character," the Dewan said in support of the scheme. It was proposed to begin with a minimum of Rs.20 or 10 and maximum of Rs.500. The premium was 10 percent of the salary and a bonus was allowed for increased premium.

⁴³ *Mysore Gaz*, p.3009.

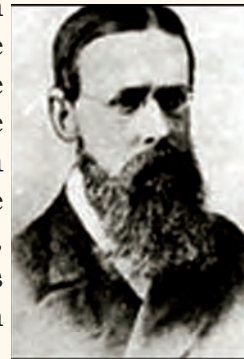
⁴⁴ N.S.C., p.112.

⁴⁵ *Mysore Gaz*, p.3002.

The scheme was introduced in 1891 with a maximum payable amount of Rs.50. The scheme was managed by a committee with the Controller as the Secretary. Later Dewan M.Visvesvaraya provided for the participation of the public (non-officials) also in the scheme in 1916. (A separate Public Branch Insurance was also opened). The government made no profit from the scheme, but aimed at giving security to the officials and induced the habit of thrift and savings.

The third was the starting of the Civil Service Examination for recruitment of civil servants in the State, which was held for the first time on the 4th July 1892. This arrangement was open for candidates from all over the country which led to various complex developments in the State politics.

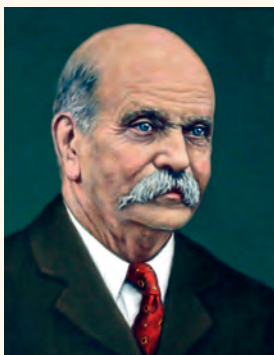
The creation of the Geology Department. in 1894 was another notable step with Robert Bruce Foote, retired Superintendent of the Geological Survey of India in charge. A geological survey was undertaken in the State. The presence of iron ore on a huge scale in the Western Ghats, especially in the Bababudan ranges came to light. It was this natural storage which later created the founding of Bhadravati Iron Works by Sir M.Visvesvaraya In 1897-99, a Mining Regulation was passed and rules were framed “more or less similar to those in force in England, New South Wales, the Transval and other countries,” says Shama Rao.⁴⁶ An Agricultural Chemist was appointed in 1898-99 for soil testing with responsibility for the whole State. This was followed by the Agricultural Department.



Robert Bruce Foote

Advancement of Education

Education made substantial progress under Sheshadri Iyer's Dewanship. The number of schools, which was 866 in 1881 (at the time of the Rendition) rose to 2231 in 1902. The number boys in 1881 was 39,413 and girls around 3,000; in 1902, the total enrolment rose to 1,11,624. About 23 percent boys of the school-going age and about Four percent girls attended schools in 1901, as per the census report. The Director of Public Instruction had to be changed as Education Secretary to the Dewan in 1883 due to financial constraints. In 1890, education was made a separate department under Dr.H.B.Bhabha. Archaeology was made a separate Department in 1890 with a view to protect ancient monuments and antiquities with renowned scholar Louis Rice in charge.



Benjamin Louis Rice

“No nation could thrive without a highly educated class at its head, and the system of Government school would never be complete without Colleges,” said Rangacharlu in 1882 at a function of the Maharaja's College. “There was a need to stimulate a desire for

⁴⁶ Shama Rao, p.175.

education among agricultural classes,” he ardently stated. They did not permit education to be left to the chances of individual philanthropy, but felt that the government must undertake maintenance of public schools and colleges.

In 1886, Sheshadri Iyer announced in the Representative Assembly that the education policy of the government would maintain the elementary and secondary education and bring this within the reach of all the classes. Promoting study of local vernacular and ancient classical languages was also the objective of the government together with the promotion of education of girls. Training young men in medicine and engineering was also aimed at. In Mysore, Maharani's School for girls was started (1881) which later became Maharani's College in 1901.

To encourage higher caste women to attend school, teachers from respectable families were appointed in Mysore. M.Venkatakrishniah enrolled his wife to this school as a student to set an example to others. Generally grown up girls from orthodox families were not sent out of the house, and did not attend to school due to caste prejudices. It was even rumoured that in earlier days only children of prostitutes attended them, and it was partially true as observed by Europeans. Fighting against such hurdles was a difficult task. Sheshadri Iyer was influenced by Theosophical Society and stood strongly in favour of female education.

Private institutions such as Maharani's High School of Mysore, Arya Balika Pathashala of Bangalore and the Empress Girls High School of Tumkur were converted into government schools. Ambil Narasimha Iyengar (Palace Bakshi) took a lot of interest in girl's education and started the Maharani's School in Mysore in 1881. The Maharani supported his efforts. Soon 59 girls above the age of 12 attended Maharani's School and non-Brahmin girls had to agitate to get entry into this school at a later date.

“All round progress in the field of education was made during the period 1890-95,” says N.S.Chandrashekhar. The Maharaja's College in Mysore was converted into a first Grade College. A chemical laboratory was started in Bangalore Central College. Qualified teachers were appointed in both the colleges. Thus collegiate education was put on sound footing. Students' homes were opened at Mysore, Chitradurga and Kolar. The Normal School at Mysore, which had been closed during the famine (1877) was reopened. Schools were also started at Shimoga and Kolar to train teachers. A number of government scholarships were introduced to study engineering, medicine, veterinary science and forestry in institutions in British India. In 1888, special scholarships were instituted.

A special tribunal was appointed 1896 to settle the claims of Damodar Brijol Das which amounted to Rs.5.67 Lakh as debt which Krishnaraja Wodeyar III had borrowed. The tribunal found that none of the claimants was a legal heir of the deceased creditor. The Maharani Regent decided to use the whole amount for charities under the name 'Damodar Das Charities'. The whole amount was invested in Government of India at 3 ½ percent securities. It was decided that



Maharaja's College - Mysore

80 percent of the income from this was to be used for awarding scholarships to bright students of post-graduate studies and research in India and foreign countries on scientific and technical studies; the remaining 20 percent was set aside for awarding scholarships to the Gujarati community students to which Damodar Das belonged. Noted Archaeologist M.H.Krishna, leader of co-operative movement K.H.Ramiah and noted industrial manager S.G.Sastry were among many eminent beneficiaries of this scheme.

In memory of the Diamond Jubilee of the reign of Empress Victoria in 1887, the Oriental Manuscripts Library was opened in Mysore in 1891. It contained 1653 classical printed works and 1358 manuscripts in Kannada and Sanskrit. The library became world famous because one of its Director at a later date, Shama Sastry published Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, which was till then not found in printed form or in a complete manuscript form.



Oriental Research Institute(1891) - Mysore

An Industrial School was opened at Mysore in 1892 where training was imparted in carpentry, blacksmithy, masonry, pottery, rattan work and freehand drawing. As Muslims did not volunteer for higher education, scholarships were instituted for them and fees payable by the Muslims boy were reduced.

Aid was extended to a large number of private schools and schools imparting Sanskrit education. Mysore Local Examination for vernacular candidates and middle school pupils was started in 1886 with view to maintaining a uniform minimum standard. Candidates successful in the local examination were later considered for low grade posts of the government. The Sanskrit College in Mysore was improved and more branches of learning were opened. Students from all parts of India were attracted by the offer of scholarships.

The number of aided and Government schools which were 866 in 1881 rose to 1,767 and the number of pupils from which 39,413 in 1881 rose to 91,112 in 1901. The number of pupils 1,11,020 in 1895 declined to this lower figure, chiefly because of plague (1898-99). The fees at the college level was low and students from the border areas of Madras Presidency came to Mysore State to study at Bangalore.

Lord Dufferin, the Viceroy who visited Mysore in 1886 after seeing the students that had lined up and greeted him remarked, "When I passed during what I imagine a quarter of a mile of street, lined on either side were

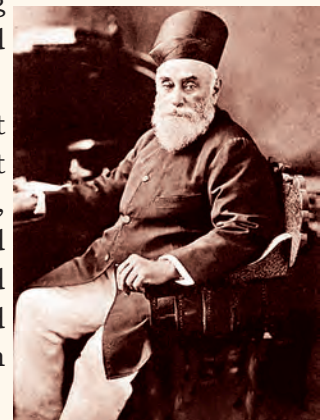


Viceroy Lord Dufferin

rows and rows, eight or ten deep, of the youth of the country, congregated under respective teachers, I felt you were laying, broad and deep for all time to come, the foundation of a prosperous future. But great has been my satisfaction at all these proofs of the progress made in the matter of general education. I was still more pleased by a sight, which, I imagine, is not to be seen in any part of India and that is the appearance of rows and rows of young ladies belonging to high caste families assembled together under the same admirable system and enjoying as far as I can understand, as extensive opportunities of acquiring knowledge and of enlarging their experience and of strengthening their understanding as could be found in any of the most advanced cities in Europe." This was the richly deserved tribute to the educational policy of the Government.⁴⁷

To encourage scholarship in Kannada and Sanskrit, the 'Karnataka Bhashojjivini Sabha' was founded at Mysore in 1886 with a Kannada College attached to it. Together with opening an Engineering School at Mysore, Industrial Schools were also started at district headquarters.

Facilities were provided for the 'Soil to Silk' project of J.N.Tata by granting them 13 acres of land at concessional rate in Bangalore for mulberry cultivation, silk worm rearing and reeling. One of the persons trained here, Appa Dorai Mudaliar was subsequently appointed Sericulture Inspector in the State. Young men interested in pursuing sericulture were also trained at this farm on deputation by the Government.



J.N. Tata

⁴⁷ Ibid, pp:142-43.

Swami Vivekananda visited Mysore in 1892 and influenced the thinking of the Dewan and the members of the royal family, including the Maharaja and the Maharani. For his visit to America, the Maharaja helped Vivekananda financially and the Dewan also encouraged the idea. Swamiji wanted an institution to teach and undertake research in modern science in India, and suggested this to the Maharaja and the Dewan. He shared the necessity of founding such an institution in India in the mind of J.N.Tata when they travelled together in a steamer across the Pacific on the Swamiji's journey to Chicago, U.S.A. Swamiji suggested that Mysore state could be a venue to start such an institution. "Sheshadri Iyer was responsible for the location of the Indian Institute of Science at Bangalore. His close association with the members of the Tata family helped the establishment of this institute in Bangalore," says S.N.Chandrashekhar.⁴⁸ The founding of Tata Silk Farm had brought the Dewan in close contact with the Tatas. The Council Members and the next Dewan, P.N.Krishnamurthy were also aware of the Tata's Science Institute project, though it materialised after the death of Sheshadri Iyer. Power supply to Bangalore from 1905 also helped the selection of Bangalore as the venue.



Swami Vivekananda

Social Changes

Sheshadri Iyer was deeply influenced by the Theosophical Society. When Col. Olcott visited Bangalore in 1896 and addressed a public meeting at the Central College, the Dewan presided over it and was highly influenced by his talk. He encouraged the Society's activities in the State.⁴⁹ Later when Annie Besant visited Bangalore in 1896, he attended her lectures and he presided over one of her lectures in December of the same year. "She has pointed out to us the eternal path which alone leads to salvation and bliss," he spoke as President and added, "On this occasion I offer her on behalf of all present here and on behalf of my countrymen in general the tribute of our deep reverential gratitude to her for her mission, of love to this country and for the noble offer to awaken us once again to the high spiritual life of our ancient philosophy." When the Supreme Government wrote to him to keep an eye on the seditious activities of the Arya Samaj in the State,



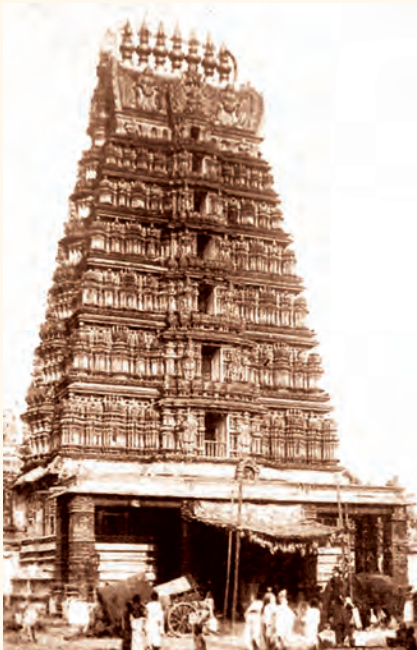
*H. S. Olcott,
Annie Besant and C. W. Leadbeater*

⁴⁸ N.S.C. p.152.

⁴⁹ K.G., Bangalore District Gazetteer. P.89.

he replied that the Samaj was only engaged in social reform activities and not indulging in political activities. Sheshadri Iyer was influenced by the neo-modern socio-religious movements.

In fact, the Dewan was against the *devadasi* system which prevailed in the



Srikantheshwara Temple - Nanjangud

temples. As an experiment in 1892, he banned the system of *tafe* or professional dancing girls offering service at the Nandi temple in Kolar district. They were permitted to enjoy the land granted to them for their services hereditarily. Similar orders were issued regarding the famous Nanjangud Srikantheshwara temple in 1899. Performance of *gejje puje*, a ceremony to initiate a girl to the life of a *devadasi* in temples was also banned in 1900. During the beginning of the next century, this degenerated practice (started in the name of *angabhoga* in temples) was completely banned in the State. The liberal and bold decision of Sheshadri Iyer gave a fillip to such a law.

He also passed Infant Marriage Regulation in 1894 by which no girl below eight was to be married. Similarly men above 50 were not to marry girls below 16 and three persons were convicted in 1895 under the proceedings of the Govt. of Mysore, 1895 (Judiciary). In the passage of the regulation on age of marriage, the Dewan had also consulted the *Mathadipatis* and religious leaders.

“Sheshadri Iyer’s views on a women’s place in Society were progressive and far advanced of his times compared to those of his great predecessors,” says N.S.Chandrasekhar.⁵⁰ (p.103) “I attach great importance to getting amongst our leading families, a number of young ladies with a high English education who would feel for the advancement of their sex and take up the same position in regard to them, as occupied by educated men in relation to ignorant brethren,” said the Dewan in the Maharani’s School in 1882. He believed that such leading families would be examples to others.

Ambil Narasimha Iyengar and M.Venkatakrishnia were in the forefront in this movement for social reforms. The former was instrumental in starting the Maharani’s School and a home for destitute women in Mysore. Even widows were persuaded to join the Maharani’s School.

Local self-government continued to receive support. From 83 municipalities when he took over, the number rose 124 in 1901. A new sanitary Board was established in KGF. Health services were also expanded and modern hospitals were opened and Local Boards were given the maintenance. The building of Victoria Hospital in Bangalore was opened in 1901.

50 N.S.C. p.103

Road mileage, which was 3930 miles when the Dewan took over, increased to 5300 miles in 1901. In January 1897, the PWD was divided into two circles and one Superintending Engineer was put in charge of each circle. This division was undertaken not only to strengthen the efficiency of the department but also to have better control over expenditure with more effective inspection of work in progress and more scrutiny of preparation,” says Hayavadana Rao.⁵¹



Old Mysore Palace (1890 Photo)

The Department also took up the reconstruction of the Ambavilas Palace which was damaged in a fire in 1897. Its rebuilding cost was estimated to be Rs.25 lakhs by Irvin, its architect. Among the notable huge bridges built during the period were the Cauvery Bridge at Yedatore (now Krishanrajanagar) and across the Hemavati at Holenarasipur, and across the Bhadra river at Tadasa. Special attention was paid to the bridges in Malnad as the roads and bridges were damaged due to heavy rainfall. The local funds were entrusted with construction of new roads and its maintenance. This decentralization was of great help.

The Dewan's wish to improve municipal administration resulted in increase in their number and also their acquiring better financial status. Their annual income rose to Rs. Eight lakhs from Rs.2.76 lakhs at the beginning of Dewan's administration. They took care of schools, hospitals and roads. There was now more public involvement in administration.

Despite all-round progress in all fields of development by handling huge development projects like the railway, Vanivilas Sagar and hydro-electric

⁵¹ Mysore Gazetteer, p.3005.

project with great tact and ingenuity, the Dewan had to face very adverse weather. A peculiar development – rather a ‘movement’ called ‘Mysore for Mysoreans’ was seen during this period. The Dewan was arrogant by nature and could not handle the situation in a smooth way.

Mysorean Vs. Madrasi Movement

In fact Mysore was backward educationally in comparison to Madras Presidency where a University had been founded in 1857 and there were scores of high schools by the closing decades of the 19th century. Mysore State had hardly a dozen high schools and those that existed were in the Cantonment area, where Kannada was not given importance. During the rule of the Commissioners, government servants were mostly recruited from Madras Presidency and the tradition also continued after the Rendition. Many people already working in Madras Presidency as officers were directly deputed to several posts in Mysore and this included the Dewan also.

D.V.Gundappa further says that Sheshadri Iyer in his initial days did not know much of Mysore. In those days Mysore did not have capable men in good numbers. English education was initiated in Madras. Therefore, English education was widely prevalent in Madras, Kumbhakonam etc. As a result, Sheshadri Iyer invited some teachers from Madras to Mysore. But with each one of them came with a trailer of their dependents - cook, servant, driver and even petty clerks, who were all Tamilians. The Mysoreans felt that their ‘house’ was being occupied by others. Thus the dispute ‘Mysorean versus Madrasi’ had its genesis. For some years, the rivalry looked aggressive. But in course of time, these emigrants settled down in Mysore and became akin to Mysoreans. The controversy ended after a decade, by the time of Dewan Visvesvaraya.⁵²

The introduction of the civil service examination in 1892 triggered the rivalry. The first examination was held in July 1892 and the second in 1894. A question was raised in the Regency Council (the new name of the Dewan’s Council in 1894 after the demise of the Maharaja, his Queen was the Regent). Should the examination be open to candidates from all over India or confined to only those qualified young men from Mysore?⁵³

The Council was presided over by Sheshadri Iyer and P.N.Krishna Murthy was the second member. “The minutes submitted by the Dewan and the members of the Council formulated the case on the one hand for continuing to keep open the examination to candidates from all over the country and on the other to restrict it to candidates from Mysore,” says N.S.Chandrashekar.⁵⁴

For three years from 1892, the members of the Representative Assembly had opposed the idea of keeping it open to the whole of India. “But the opinion was urged with great vehemence that the examination should be confined to Mysore and Mysoreans and at least knowledge of Kannada was to be insisted

⁵² D.V.G., p.51-52.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ N.S.C., p.51-52.

upon in the candidates. The second alternative was suggested as it was deemed sufficient to secure the nomination greatly to the subjects of the Mysore State as Kanarese was the ruling language of Mysore,” writes P.N.Krishna Murthy. The spirited and enthusiastic discussion had to be ordered to be closed by the presiding Dewan by stating that the late Maharaja’s decision over that matter could not be altered.

Krishna Murthy had in his mind the existence of at least 250 graduates from Mysore State in the Faculty of Arts alone. “It seems very hard that our students and educated young men should go begging from province to province in quest of employment and that an enlightened government working for the good of its subjects should practically keep the door open to admit outsiders on various pretexts of talent and intelligence and in infusing new blood. Such a measure appears to me to involve a serious injustice to the subjects of the State and I think it is high time to turn attention to our own men and limit our field to them alone, at all events for the present.... The competitive examination and scheme applied there too have not produced very innocent results and I can cite instances of the near relations of one another obtaining a footing in different branches of the service even by present mode of selection,” wrote Krishna Murthy. “Such untoward results require to be checked,” he pleaded.

Bjorn Hettne points out that the members of the Assembly were impatient to bring a certain enlargement of their influence on political affairs in spite of their respectful address to the Maharaja. A demand was for example, put forward that they should be continued “representatives until a new Assembly was elected. Otherwise, they cease to have a status as soon as the Assembly, after its meetings at Mysore.” The triennial elections were introduced with this idea.⁵⁵

Krishna Murthy also quotes Thumboo Chetty stating in 1892 that the untried youth should not be admitted to competitive examinations. Krishna Murthy concludes by saying “We have had two examinations open to all India and let us see what the result will be if two more are confined to Mysore.”

The Dewan in his reply sent to the Queen Regent argued that, “It will be great mistake to restrict our entry to local men as cliques of relations and partisans thereby come into existence. We already experience great difficulty whenever we have to transfer officers from one taluk or district to another. The Mysore Civil Scheme allows that picked young men being brought in trained from both outside and from within the State..... Those that will always be required to qualify themselves in Kanarese and pass an examination before they are confirmed and promoted.”

The Dewan further adds, “To go and change this system now, in deference to a clamour of a few agitators in the Representative Assembly and for that matter in small local prints which pass for newspapers, will amount to needless

⁵⁵ For details over the discussion etc. vide Hettne, *Op.cit.*, p.91.

confession of error and a weakness for which there is not the remotest justification in sober fact or sound reason. I had hoped we had lived down all such so-called unpopularity (!) but Mr. Krishna Murthy's testimony is to the contrary. Our duty should be to do what is right, if that brings popularity we shall be glad of it; if it brings unpopularity, we should not feel sorry for it; posterity will do us justice, for posterity alone can calmly judge without the perturbation which unfortunately so often warp the judgement of the present generation."

Actually there was not much substance in the controversy, except a personality clash. That local people must be given preference when they are really qualified is a natural instinct. Such a policy was followed by Rangacharlu not only vis-à-vis Europeans, but with regard to training local persons at a time when local educated persons were available in plenty. Sheshadri Iyer's assertive nature was responsible for much fuss, because nobody could have objected if highly qualified outsiders were appointed in the absence of similarly qualified local men. His level of assertiveness provoked local leaders and journalists to oppose him vociferously. In fact, in popular parlance it is said that many of the persons 'imported' from Madras had a 'secret attachment to Madras' and in Mysore's various disputes with the neighbouring state like water sharing etc. which secretly helped the cause of Madras.

Bjorn Hettne looks at the problem thus: "The 'Madrasis' were well-educated experienced Brahmins from Madras Presidency who were brought to the Mysore administration as a means to check the ambition of indigenous Brahmins. Soon the Madrasis got a stronghold in Mysore and recruitment from Madras for obvious reasons continued." He further says as per the wishes of the colonial power, the Madrasis in Mysore grew as a 'collaborative elite' to Madras. "This weakness of the 'collaborative mechanism' made the Madrasis to be viewed as aliens in Mysore. They were held responsible for the extreme state of economic dependence, which had been a widely recognised fact by 1910".⁵⁶

This created almost a decade long mud-slinging campaign in Mysore, both in the Assembly and in newspapers. Local Brahmins, especially Hebbar Iyengars, were in the forefront of the 'anti-Madras' campaign. In fact the appointment of Rangacharlu as Dewan had caused lot of heartburn among them, as against the apparent candidature of B. Krishna Iyengar. The selection of Sheshadri Iyer added fat to fire. "The Iyengars were supported by many Europeans as the former had worked as assistants and colleagues of the Commissioners, especially Cubbon," says Hettne.⁵⁷ The 'purge' of European's top echelon by Rangacharlu also caused heartburn among them.

Newspapers in the Fray

Among the newspapers, *Bangalore Spectator* supported the Government and *Bangalore Examiner* and *Karnataka Prakashika* were opposed to it. So did M. Venkatakrishiah and *Vrittanta Chitnamani*. There were other papers too.

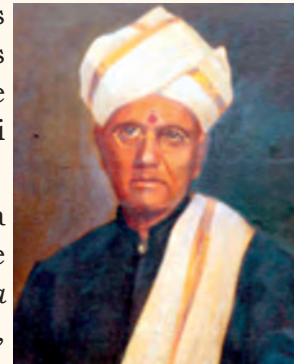
The anti-Madrasi movement did not remain only an Iyengar affair as their leader Krishna Iyengar died and it became an all-Brahmin affair, supporting P.N. Krishna

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p.72.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p.73.

Murthy to be Sheshadri Iyer's successor. The latter was descendant of Purnaiah, a Madhwa Brahmin and was holding high offices in the government. He later became the second member of the Council under Sheshadri Iyer.

Deshabhimani was started in 1892 and was a supporter of Hebbar Iyengars, and later the Mysore Party. B.C.Srinivas Iyengar was its editor. *Karnataka Prakashika*, supporting the cause of the Mysore party, had been subjected to a libel suit filed by Sheshadri Iyer in 1875 itself and had paid compensation to him of Rs.1000. (K.P. dated 8.9.1879). "But *Karnataka Prakashika* had been always critical of the Dewan, though on expansion of the voting rights and increasing the membership of the Assembly, it praised the Dewan in 1894," says N.S.Chandrashekhar. The Dewan had realised that the Assembly ought to be a representative in reality and introduced the elective system to some extent, the paper said (24 February 1894).



M. Venkatakrishnaiah

On the death of Rangacharlu, *Karnataka Prakashika* cautioned that the mistake of 1881 should not be repeated by appointing a Madrasi as the Dewan (dated 5 February 1883). But when Sheshadri Iyer's appointment was announced, there had been no public rejoicing over the matter (dated 19 February 1883).⁵⁸

"It is a well-known fact that within the past six months, half-a-dozen Madrasis who have no smallest claim have been appointed to the subordinate post in the State services...."it wrote. (30 August 1886). "Of course it was but fair that the Government of her Majesty should restore the province of Mysore to its rightful ruler. But at the same time, we are bound to confess that the Rendition has not proved an unmixed blessing, simply because the native administration, especially under the present Dewanate has shown itself to be defective in so many ways, almost, indeed a failure," (9 August 1886), was a dart against the Dewan by *Karnataka Prakashika*.

But the opposition to the Dewan had its peculiar angles. D.V.Gundappa



D.V. Gundappa

points out that when Chamarajendra Wodeyar passed away (1894) in Kolkata of diphtheria, there was senseless talk in the streets that the Dewan was responsible for his death! Some even argued, as the Prince Krishnaraja Wodeyar was underaged, that a Regent should be appointed. That Sheshadri Iyer wanted to be the Regent, was another small talk. The Maharani must be Regent was another argument. All these things were publicly discussed. M.Venkatakrishnaiah supported the Maharani's case. A public figure, Ambale Annayya Pandit, who was a relative of the Dewan put forth a case of the Dewan for the Regency.

58 N.S.C., p.158.

All these were rumours. “Finally when the Supreme Government decided in favour of the Maharani, Sheshadri Iyer accepted the decision heartily and worked with all obedience and loyalty to the Maharani and worked as Dewan for another six years is the real truth,” says D.V.Gundappa.⁵⁹

An incident depicting the anti-liberal outlook of Sheshadri Iyer was illustrated with his action against the *Deshabhimani* newspaper.

The *Deshabimani* had always been very critical of Sheshadri Iyer. There were other papers also that were critical of him. He was very distressed by such criticism, though many feel that he was too arrogant to take care of such attacks. In fact in a letter he wrote to the Maharaja on 27 September 1888, “Referring to the Press, it is not a little surprising that the highest ones in India should speak well of me judging me by my own acts while the low vulgar prints should abuse me upon lies concocted, for the purpose. My rule has been not to write to newspapers or allow my friends write in defence of me.... Even school boys are contaminated by the writings of the Mysore Vernacular paper and this state of things is, I am sure a source of great weakness of your highness’s administration – both now and in future...”⁶⁰ Here ‘great source of weakness’ is with reference to the Dewan and not the Maharaja.

No doubt Sheshadri Iyer was too much hurt by the adverse criticism, but he claimed to be a liberal and had scope to prosecute the wrong or unjust publication. He had already done it once. *Deshabhimani* published some news (article) on Sheshadri Iyer’s administration and also on the private matters of the Maharaja between 5 and 10 February 1894. He published a conversation in which the Maharaja was called ‘Chamappa’ and was made fun of. The Dewan’s office had asked Srinivasa Iyengar by its letter dated 14 March to meet the Dewan in his office on the 15th over the issue. Srinivas Iyengar expressed his inconvenience to meet the Dewan. A second letter on 15th March came from the Dewan’s office saying the editor could meet the Dewan on the 16th either at the Dewan’s office or residence (specifying the timing) and in case he satisfied the Dewan with his explanations, there are chances of the Dewan considering the offence as insignificant. If the editor failed to respond, the Government undoubtedly would take action.

In reply, Srinivasa Iyengar wrote on the 15th that though he had been given an appointment at Six P.M., and the letter reached him at 7.00 pm. He also said that in the ‘conversation’ he had published, there were no derogatory words. The Government was under the impression that the editor had committed a crime (mistake) and the government wanted to lighten the seriousness of the mistake by seeking an explanation. The editor did not wish to stand in front of the Dewan and render oral explanations. He also said that he could be prosecuted in the court of a judge. The editor also said what he was doing was fulfilling his duty to the Maharaja and the State. There was no need for him to be afraid of anybody.

⁵⁹ D.V.G., pp:50-51.

⁶⁰ N.S.G, pp:64-65.

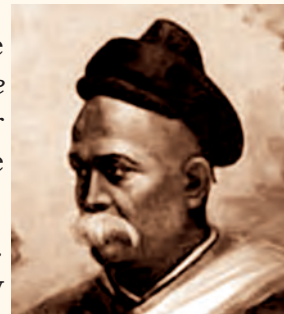
The Government ordered the suspension of the publication of the papers for 12 months on 15th March and ordered the Mysore Deputy Commissioner to take necessary action. The Deputy Commissioner visited the press the next day, seized all materials, sealed them and locked the premises. He wrote to the editor on 19th March to come to his office on 20th March when in the presence of the Assistant Commissioner, the seals would be opened and inventory of materials seized would be prepared. If the editor failed to be present, the Assistant Commissioner himself would break the seal in the presence of Panchayats and prepare the inventory.

The whole drama of the government letter to the editor and the Deputy Commissioner's 'action' had taken place between 14th March and 16th March 1894 in rapid succession and indecent haste. There had been exchange of five paper communications, and the letter written by the editor was at 9.00 pm on 15th and the government order issued on the same night, and seizure of press on the very next day, 16th March, all in quick succession. It smacked of vindictiveness and personal vendetta.

There was wide protest over on the governments' action and by almost all newspapers. D.V.Gundappa and many journalists, including from outside the State protested over the matter and condemned the action. The government did not prosecute the editor as suggested by him in his letter dated 16th March. *The Hindu* wrote an editorial on 24th March terming the Governments action "Objectionable and they have made a martyr of ordinary men, given to spread immoral and seditious literature. We have no sympathy with *Deshabhimani*. But we cannot say that it is the best thing for the Government to punish an order of the Executive Government," quoted by R.Ramakrishnan.⁶¹

Instead of prosecuting the editor, closing the newspaper was a high-handed act of the Dewan. It was a case of personal grudge being settled by an illegal course, as against the talk of the Dewan's liberal policies or an attempt to please the Maharaja out of the way as he was unhappy with the write up, making reference to him.

But the event's shadow eclipsed the personality of the Dewan. N.S.Chandrashekhara points out (based on *The Revived Memories* of K.Subba Rao) that a private letter was sent to Justice Ranade, the great liberal and the Dewan's friend.



Justice M.G. Ranade

The Dewan had addressed Ranade as 'My dear friend'. But Ranade in his reply had addressed the Dewan as 'My dear Sir'. On Ranade's failure to reciprocate in his address as 'friend' he explained to Subba Rao, "Have you forgotten the '*Deshabhimani*' incident? How can I use the term friend? Our spheres of work are different and our views on public matters also differ a great deal. I must stand at some distance." N.S.Chandrashekhara says, "Such an eminent public figure like Justice Ranade, known for his sober and dispassionate outlook, should

61 *QJMS*, Vol.74, No.4, pp.360-61.

react so sharply gives the measure of indignation aroused in the country by the *Deshabhimani* incident.”⁶²

Posing oneself as a democrat and liberal and acting high-handedly without caring for criticism, fair or unfair was a weakness of Sheshadri Iyer. His attitude towards the Representative Assembly also did not present a bright picture of his commitment to liberalism.

D.V.Gundappa describes that the “Dewan’s facial expression and style of talking in the Assembly was always one of “*thenkaara*”, (‘expressive of arrogance of power’ in Kannada).⁶³ His attitude towards the Press became the policy of his successors and tarnished the fair name of Mysore, till the emergence of Sir M.Visvesvaraya.

In fact, he did not summon the Representative Assembly under the pretext of plague in 1898, 1899 and 1900. It met only in 1901. Chintsal Rao resigned his membership of the Dewan’s Council in 1895. He told his friend, K.Subba Rao, who was a journalist and had later joined Mysore Service, “He (the Dewan) would carry out his schemes against all oppositions, and if necessary would at times even throw sand in the eyes of opponents.”⁶⁴

Subba Rao says that he himself had devoted much time in finding out the primary key to unravel the secret of Sheshadri Iyer’s life, which cannot be overlooked. In one word, he was ‘great’ in many respects.⁶⁵

“Great he was in his mathematical and engineering calculations, which enabled him to draw estimates of public works, costing lakhs and crores of rupees; great he was in deciding upon and starting original works such as the electrical installation at Sivasamudram and the Marikanave dam; great he was in checking the estimates of Royal Engineers of British Indian fame and in exacting work from them; equally great he was in framing stately despatches on important subjects; great he was in marshalling facts and figures to win his case in any controversy with the allied British Provincial Governments like Madras or even in turning the tables against successive British Residents; great he was in the art of controlling men and measures; above all great was his achievement in some of the most intelligent mass of humanity for an unduly long period. Therefore, I came to the conclusion that this versatile genius of renowned State-craft had the grandeur of greatness in him. But I would be committing almost an unpardonable violation of the well-established canons of historical accuracy, if I omit to mention my humble conviction that he was equally great in his autocracy, in his despotic methods and the manner in which he put down his political opponents.”⁶⁶

Sheshadri Iyer was conferred the CSI by the British Government and also KCSI in 1893. The Maharaja conferred in the same year, the title ‘*Rajya Dhurandhara*’ on him. He was liberal in religious matters, was influenced by the

⁶² SNC, pp.182-83.

⁶³ D.V.G., p.63.

⁶⁴ RM, p.372

⁶⁵ *Ibid*; p.341.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, pp.349-50.

Theosophical Society and was sympathetic to the Arya Samaj too. When the Supreme Government urged him to keep an eye on the political activities of Arya Samaj, he said that the Samaj was engaged in only social reforms in the State. He was sympathetic to the Indian National Congress and urged the Maharaja to donate money to the Congress. He was closely attached to the Sringeri *matha* and had close contacts with Sri Sacchidananda Shivabhinava Narasimha Bharathi Swamy. He built a new house Kumarabhavan at the Kumarakripa Extension in Bangalore where religious discourses were a regular feature, especially by Pandit Virupaksha Shastri. There used to be daily religious functions under the aegis of his wife Dharmasamvardhini who was a deeply religious lady.



Kumarakripa - Bengaluru

Like Rangacharlu, he too did not respect the Europeans' sense of superiority. Once at Courtallam, a famous health resort, when some arrogant Europeans took unnecessary offence to some servants of the Dewan and got them sentenced to imprisonment by a European magistrate, Sheshadri Iyer took the matter to Madras High Court and had them released.

Once a European head of a department, had undertaken to complete a certain work of great importance within a definite period. However the progress was slow and the time for completion was near at hand. Sheshadri was inspecting the progress of the work almost everyday and on a certain date, he called the officer and warned him that it would cost him dear if he did not carry out his promise. The officer said that he was doing all that in his power, that he could not work against time and that both skilled and unskilled labour on a large scale had to be utilised and controlled and that in spite of his best efforts if the work could not be completed in time it was not his fault: and if the Dewan was pleased he would revert to his original British Indian service. Sheshadri was in no mood to put up with such a reply and said, "Please take note of it, your job will be gone once and forever. I shall take good care to see that the British Government do not excuse your faults here. You may retire home but never expect service in any part of India, British or Indian". Sheshadri did not stop there a minute longer, got into his carriage and drove back to his house. His admonition had the desired effect. The officer worked day and night, finished the work in time, was profusely thanked and suitably rewarded by the Dewan, and the Dewan and he were lifelong friends. Do you think that any other Dewan would have risen to the same level?"⁶⁷

More than once he had offered to resign when the Maharaja opposed some of his steps. He had the courage of his conviction when he differed from the ruler in regard to policy matters. He also maintained very cordial relations with the Regent Maharani. Though there are indications of his differences with her due to the words of her retinue, he never allowed them to come in the open.

⁶⁷ Subba Rao, K. *Revised Memoirs* Madras, 1933, p.372.

“It must, however, be recognised that Sheshadri had a generous heart. While stories of highhandedness towards his opponents are not altogether non-existent, yet I know personally that some of the fierce agitators against him were often rewarded with promotion in the State service, and he was prominently wise in not ignoring the justice of the claims of those who criticised him. He had also a strong reserve temper which clothed him as it were with a dignified endurance of all opposition, simply with a smile or a nod of his head.”⁶⁸

He opened schools, including residential schools for the Panchamas and also night schools for the labourers. This shows his concern for the neglected sections of the Society. Separate schools for the Panchamas were opened as they were afraid of attending other public schools where caste Hindus harassed them. Their getting educated was more important to the Dewan.

But his contribution to the development of the State by helping agriculture, expanding irrigation, increasing the railway mileage, helping to start gold mining, generating electric power, expanding education and bringing steady income to the State from other than usual channels like mines and railway are his unique contributions. The first 20 years of the two Dewans (1881-1901) gave Mysore a firm footing as a state financially sound and towards the march on the road of prosperity. The foundation of liberal spirit laid by Rangacharlu could not be shaken by Sheshadri Iyer, though he was not as liberal as the former.

Sheshadri Iyer never practised nepotism and was not corrupt. People and Government servants were afraid of him for his watchful eyes regarding their irregular dealings and lethargy. He set an example to others by his upright methods of functioning. His long period of 18 years Dewanship is a landmark in modern Mysore's history. Willam Hunter, compiler of Gazetteer of India described Sheshadri Iyer as “a statesman who had given his head to Herbert Spencer and his heart to Para Brahma.”

Sheshadri Memorial Hall was built in Cubbon Park in Bangalore and his statue was unveiled in front of it and the Hall houses the State Central Library. An extension in Bangalore and a road are named after him - Sheshadripuram and Sheshadri Road. But an observation by an European officer is worth noting here: “A succession of strong and able Dewans had gradually gathered an undue share of authority into their own hands. Lord Curzon was anxious that the state of things should cease and that the Maharaja should be the actual ruler of his people and master of his own house,” writes E. Machonochic, who was later appointed the British Private Secretary of Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV. The Dewan had become an inheritor of an ‘autocratic tradition’. This is mainly with reference to Sheshadri Iyer. That is how he could overlook the decision of the Council.



Sir W.W. Hunter

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 349-350

During the period of sickness of Dewan Sheshadri Iyer, the First Member of the Dewan's Council, T R A Thamboo Chetty officiated as the Dewan. Though Sheshadri Iyer resigned as Dewan on 18th March 1902, Thamboo Chetty had been officiating as Dewan from 11th August 1901 during the leave period of Sheshadri Iyer. Prior to this too, in 1897 and again in 1900, Thamboo Chetty was the in-charge Dewan for a short period, but he retired in 1901.



Thamboo Chetty

Born in 1849, Thamboo Chetty completed his B A and secured a law degree from the Madras University in 1870 before he reached the position of Chief Judge of Mysore High Court and was appointed as Member of the Dewan's Council under Dewan Rangacharlu. He started his service in Madras as a clerk in the military establishment. When noted scholar John Maine was working as Legislative Secretary in Madras, Thamboo Chetty worked as his Personal Assistant, and later worked as the District Muniiff in Bellary District. He joined Mysore Service as Head *Sheristedar*.

In 1881, Thamboo Chetty was selected as the First Councillor in Dewan Rangacharlu's Council and continued in the post under Dewan Sheshadri Iyer for over a period of 20 years. Though he was devoted Christian, "He combined Hindu and Christian traditions in his life," says D.V.Gundappa.¹ He was well known for his balanced views and did not take any extreme stand. He took an active interest in public bodies like the Arcot Narayaswamy Mudaliar Charities and Devraj Bahadur Fund and was honoured with the title 'Rajadharm Pravina' by the Mysore Durbar.



Palace Offices, Mysore

¹ Gundappa, D.V., Mysurina Diwangalu, p.63.

Appendix I *On Deshabhimani*

The Kanarese newspaper known as the '*Deshabhimani*', which was being printed and published in the Mysore City, published a series of articles in the year 1894, which were considered highly objectionable on account of their obscenity and disloyalty to His Highness the late Maharaja. Four such articles which came prominently to the notice of Government have been translated into English and a printed copy of the translation is attached hereto.

2. On a perusal of these articles, B.C.Srinivas Iyengar, Editor and managing proprietor of the paper, was called upon to appear on 15th March 1894 before the Dewan and to submit any explanation that he might have for the publication of the objectionable article which appeared in the shape of a dialogue between the Editor and a gentleman in the issue of the 24th February 1894. Srinivas Iyengar sought to know definitely in writing the nature of the explanation required and added that it would be more satisfactory if he were allowed to submit a written explanation in which he was informed that the Government did not wish to carry on correspondence with him regarding the objectionable feature of the dialogue under reference; that the object of the Government in summoning him to attend personally was to afford him an opportunity of showing any extenuating circumstances which might have existed and could be regarded as a mitigation of the offence, and that if such a explanation were not forthcoming by 6 pm. that day (15th March 1894), Government would proceed to deal with the matter finally.

3. Srinivas Iyengar having declined to appear personally, Government passed the following order No.23, dated. Mysore, the 15 March 1894

"The Kanarese newspaper published in the City of Mysore under the name of "*Deshabhimani*" having, in its issue of the 24th February 1894, published an article in the shape of a dialogue between the Editor and a gentleman containing matter which is disrespectful to the Sovereign, seditious and otherwise objectionable, and the said newspaper having on this and other occasions shown itself to be a source of bad education to the people, His Highness the Maharaja has been pleased to direct that the above mentioned newspaper be punished by suspension of its publication for a period of one year from this date.

"The Deputy Commissioner of Mysore is directed to carryout the above punishment in due course."

4. On the same date (15th March 1894) a letter was written to the Deputy Commissioner requesting him to execute the order of Government by attaching and taking possession of the *Deshabhimani* Press and by issuing notice of the above order of suspension to every proprietor, Printer, Editor or other person connected with the said press and newspaper and to every subscriber to the latter.

5. The press and its materials were in the first instance left in Srinivas Iyengar's house duly packed and sealed under the guard of two police constables. As it was however found that the place was full of rats and white ants, Government, on the application of the Deputy commissioner, directed the return of the press and plant to the Editor, if he gave sufficient security for abiding by the order of Government prohibiting the publication of the newspaper. The Editor however refused to give security and stated that Government had acted illegally in attaching the press and that they were bound to return the same with Rs.500 damages for their illegal act. Upon a further representation that the building was very leaky, that the materials were spoiled by rain, and the owner would not repair the roof, the Deputy Commissioner was directed to secure the attached property in a safe and suitable place in the same manner as other. The press and its materials were removed to the Central Police Station at Mysore. At present, however, the heavy parts of the press are kept in the compound of the buildings. On 19th April 1894, Srinivas Iyengar issued a notice to the Deputy Commissioner threatening that he would file a suit against him if the plant and materials of the press were not released from attachment and handed over to him together with the sum of Rs.500 being damages sustained by him. This was recorded by Government with the intimation to the Deputy Commissioner that no action was called for till a suit was actually filed.

6. On the 12th October 1894, Srinivasa Iyengar addressed a long representation and circulated the same among the members of the Dasara Representative Assembly condemning the administration of the then Dewan as well as that of His Highness the late Maharaja stating that His Highness was altogether dependent on his subordinate: that the Dewan taking advantage of this had brought His Highness round to confide in him implicitly and to place in his hands the entire administration of the State keeping himself aloof. A similar representation was submitted by him to His Highness the late Maharaja also.

7. After the expiry of one year from date of suspension, the Deputy Commissioner informed the Editor that the attached property of the Press now deposited in the Police Office would be returned to him if he applied for the same. But Srinivas Iyengar desired that they might be delivered to him at the place from which they were removed: that the Palace Electric Engine Supervisor Paparam be deputed to set the press in working order and that the manager of the Government Branch Press be also directed to spare a few compositors to get the types sorted. The Deputy Commissioner intimated to him that it was not possible to do so, that the removal of the material was necessitated by his own refusal to give security and that he should therefore make his own arrangement for taking delivery of the Press and materials from the Police Office. The Deputy Commissioner reported the above to Government who ordered the reference to be filed.

8. Subsequently, in 1899 and 1900, Srinivas Iyengar addressed three letters to the late Dewan (Sir Sheshadri Iyer) couched in disrespectful and

objectionable language. These letters were placed before the Council by the officiating Dewan (Mr.Thumboo Chettiar), and it was decided that no orders were called for and the papers were, on 1st September 1900, ordered to be filed.

9. Srinivas Iyengar, submitted a memorial in October 1992, to His Highness the Maharaja, complaining that the Deputy Commissioner of Mysore Mr. A Rangaswami Iyengar was beyond the terms of the Government order and unauthorisedly attached and took possession of the press and material, causing hereby much loss to him. He prayed that his press might be returned to him in good working order or if this could not be done, that a sum of Rs.5,000 might be paid instead with a further sum of Rs. 4,800 as compensation for the loss he had sustained. He further prayed that if none of the foregoing requests could be complied with, a suitable appointment might be conferred upon him or his family furnished with some means of supporting themselves.

10. The matter then went up before His Highness, who was pleased to pass the following order:-

The Petitioner seems to me to have got nothing more than his deserts. His claim for compensation is preposterous. Any deterioration that may have taken place in his printing plant is due not to the action of Government. He can have his plant back, but I am not sure that he should not be required as before to give security that the paper shall not be revived, will the Dewan favour me with his opinion on this point?

The Dewan was of the opinion that the plant might be returned without requiring any security, and this opinion was accepted by His Highness.

The following order was accordingly issued by Government in November 1903:-

“Government is unable to consider the question of the Memorialists claim for compensation, as they are of opinion that any loss he may have sustained or any deterioration that may have taken place in his printing plant is due not to the action of Government, but to his own contumacy.

“The memorialist can have his plant back from the Deputy Commissioner of Mysore who will hand them over to him obtaining a receipt from him therefore”.

11. Srinivas Iyengar did not take delivery of his plant and machinery but requested again that the machinery might be put in order by Government agency and delivered to him in good order. He was informed that it was already decided that he had no claim for compensation of any sort whatever.

12. Subsequently, he requested that some lands might be granted free of price under the old Mirle Nala (canal) in the Nanjangud Taluk. Government, in consideration of the hard circumstances into which he had fallen after the requisition of the Press, ordered that an extent of 15 acres might be given to him the said locality. But he has not taken possession of the lands set apart for his, although he was asked to do so more than once

Appendix II**Sheshadri Iyer's Letter to Maharaja**

May it please your highness I have had it in my mind for some time back to represent to your highness the special difficulties under which I labour in the due and satisfactory discharge of my official work as your highness's Dewan, and as the representation would be somewhat long and in some respects personal, I beg your highness will permit me to write this letter for your highness's consideration, reserving discussion of details to a special personal interview.

Your highness well remembers the special difficulties under which I began my Dewanship, and how hard I had to work almost single handed to bring every department to the prosperous condition in which it is at present. I have always been content that my acts and the results of my policy would speak for me and I have therefore maintained a stern silence though assailed by false, slanderous and defamatory criticism from a low vulgar and interested clique and its parasites. I have notwithstanding put my whole heart into my work, and my sole aim has been to serve your highness and to make your rule a complete success, and I expect to leave to my heirs nothing but a fair reputation as a statesman and an unsullied name as a gentleman. I have reason to believe that if the present state of things goes on much further I stand in some danger of forfeiting the good opinion of my master and of my friends and well wishers and I accordingly appeal to your highness for protection.

My usefulness as your highness's Dewan and my power to do good in your highness's name are entirely dependent upon not only the support-but upon even the appearance to support-which your highness accords me. But agencies are apparently at work busily circulating false rumours of disagreement between the Maharaja and his Dewan. Falsehoods such as The Evening Mail and The Mysore Vernacular paper constantly vend must in course of time demoralise the people and weaken your highness's authority. I accordingly entreat your highness most earnestly to express an indignant and emphatic disapproval of the game that is going on.

I am sure that the Government today is fifty times weaker than it was five years ago, and I can honestly say that this result is due to no weakness or idleness on my part.

No one can be more anxious than I am that my sovereign should be the ruler both de facto and de jure, and I lose no opportunity to ensure this end. Interested persons may represent that when "Government of Mysore" or "Government of His Highness" is mentioned, the reference is to myself individually. I honestly believe that of all Dewans in India, I am the least anxious to assert or publish my individuality.

Every sovereign has two distinctive functions-legislative and executive. Legislative Acts are issued in your highness's name and Executive Acts are



by way of distinction issued in the name of the “Government of Mysore” or “the Government of H.H. the Maharaja”. This definition appeared to commend itself to so great a lawyer as Mr. Fitz Patrick. In the Draft Revenue Code the “Dewan” is nowhere even mentioned, for on principle I object to any Dewan acting otherwise than under the authority and in the name of his sovereign. I hope your highness will be able to admit that I have never once violated this principle, and this being so, your highness cannot but regard those that say and write the contrary otherwise than a pack of liars whose whole object is to profit by the scramble for power which is sure to ensue if only they succeed in weakening my authority.

As my detractors are so busy your highness will pardon me if I attempt in a mild way to justify myself to my sovereign by submitting for your highness’s kind perusal the accompanying statement marked B, and refer briefly to some of the more important facts that have made the financial administration of the past five years the complete success that it has been.

1. Shortly before I became Dewan the treasury was so empty that the first instalment of the subsidy could not be paid punctually. I set about to place the finances on a firm basis, and wrote the printed memorandum which under your Highness’s orders was submitted to Lord Ripon at Madras, which compelled the Government of India to admit that they made a mistake in their calculations of the resources of Mysore, and which finally led to a postponement of the enhanced subsidy.

2. The prosperity of every item of revenue has not been attained without the most anxious attention on my part. To give only a small instance, by an arrangement with the Madras Bank I am earning for the state more than my salary, and such an arrangement had never been thought of even during the 50 years of British administration in Mysore. The sustained attention I have been giving to the improvement of our irrigation works, apart from the large revenue from land it is already bringing, ensures such local prosperity, that posterity alone will be able to gauge it at its real value to your highness’s country.

3. By hard fighting and at the risk of being regarded as quarrelsome by the British Government, I have to some extent contributed to a satisfactory settlement of the railway question, for the railway being only hypothecated I hope to arrange for its final redemption by the State by establishing a sinking fund.

4. By personal attention I have brought your highness’s excise revenue to its present highly prosperous condition, and I may claim the whole of the credit for this and I may be pardoned if I state that with any relaxation of my personal attention this important (item) of revenue is likely soon to deteriorate.

5. On expenditure side every department of State has been so thoroughly improved within the past five years and in point of efficiency your highness’s judicial, police, educational, medical and other departments will bear favourable comparison with the most advanced provinces of British India.

6. During all your highness's tours I have toiled to bring credit to your highness in everyway and that I have succeeded on these and other similar great occasions such as the Viceroy's visit and thereby earned your highness's good opinion which has been to me a source of great pride. While on this subject I may remind your highness of what I wrote on the receipt of the insignia of the CSI I then said that I welcomed it as a mark of your highness's approval and expressed a desire to receive it from no hands other than those of my sovereign. I knew from Mr. Lyall that I owed it to your highness's desire that I should be so honoured and I have been labouring to receive still greater honours at your highness's instance.

7. In conclusion I have in some degree contributed to the credit which has been heaped on your highness's rule from the Viceroy down to the poorest peasant, and by the public press in every part of India.

8. Referring to the Press, it is not a little surprising that the highest ones in India should speak well of me judging me by my acts while the low vulgar local prints should abuse me and base in every case their abuse upon lies concocted for the purpose. My rule has been not to write to newspapers or allow my friends to write in defence to me. I have since I became Dewan never once violated this rule, though it is generally known perhaps that I could write for newspapers something that would command some degree of public attention. Before the rendition when your highness's best interests were at stake from a grasping clique of officials and weak European officers, I confess I sometimes wrote to newspapers and produced some good results. But since your highness selected me for the Dewanship I never once so much as inspired a single sentiment for any newspapers and even when personally attacked I appealed to your Highness as I did not wish to violate this rule I had set unto myself. Apart from the falsehoods which so facelessly emanate from the vile local prints, the public press of India has the highest respect for your highness's rule.

Indeed, life and property are more safe now and the people less preyed upon by minor officials than at any previous period in the history of Mysore, though it is not surprising that some mend do not know when they are best off, and grumbling and dissatisfaction are common failings among place hunters and their protégées.

9. I have received frequent marks of your highness's appreciation of my work and confidence in me, such for instance as your highness's recommendation of me for CSI and more recently for some promotion and it is my earnest hope that I shall never give occasion to forfeit in any degree however small that confidence and appreciation-and my apprehension that I might fail to be as successful in future as in the past is my only excuse for inflicting this long appeal on your highness.

10. There is one other personal matter on which I ask your highness's permission to say a few words-the sum total of my offending in the eyes of some local man is that I am filling the province with my relatives and Madrasis.

There can be no greater falsehood than this. Of all your highness's officers I am the one that has invariably resisted the temptation of employing my relatives—not only after I became Dewan but ever since I came into the province 20 years ago, I always refused to bring a relative into the service. This cannot I am sure be said of any other of your highness's officers Mysorean or non-Mysorean. The sober fact is that I have only two relatives in Mysore Service—one Vydhyanatha Iyer till lately my private secretary and the other my son Doreswamy whom your highness was good enough, a couple of months ago, to allow me to appoint as my private secretary. Such being the case why in the name of conscience should I show any favour to any one in the service? Why should I advance a Madrasi in preference to a Mysorean? The distinction between a Madrasi and Mysorean however plausible to a European unacquainted with the country is most fallacious to every one acquainted with our social manners and customs. Indeed, the complaint directed as it is, against the Madrasi Brahmin is most unmeaning, as the Brahmins are a cosmopolitan race ethnologically, religiously and socially. The so-called Mysorean on whose behalf the unmeaning cry is raised is a very small and insignificant section of your highness's subjects. It is a class consisting of a few families that was guilty of the grossest oppression during the British administration, that was then and now most disloyal to your highness, that systematically and in secret and by anonymous petitions do not scruple to slander your highness. It has no higher aim of life than self-aggrandisement, and its present low condition is no doubt due to an act of God intended for your highness's well being. It sometimes happen that some so-called Madrasis already in the service are better than these professed Mysoreans, and if to advance the former is a sin of favouritism, it is I humbly submit one which leans to virtue's side and of which no administrator who has the welfare of the country at heart need be ashamed. My detractors do not of course mention the indifferent Madrasis (but only the able ones) for the former are not accounted my favourites, nor are some of the European Officers for whom I have the greatest respect included in this category—the reason is obvious. They do not expect to profit in any way by throwing bad language on the Europeans, who as a rule would resent such language with a horsewhip. So your highness's Dewan to be treated with less consideration or to be distracted from the high duties of his office by a cry which has no foundation in truth, and which proceeds merely from those who wish to have a scramble for power, patronage etc.

11. I beg to conclude this part of my representation with an earnest appeal to your highness for protection from false and slanderous criticism. I am sure that some expression of your highness's indignation is sufficient to crush it completely, for the instruments employed by the slanderers are labouring under very false notions and it only requires the slightest breath from your highness to reclaim them to the path of truth. Even school boys are contaminated by the writings of the Mysore Vernacular paper, and this state of things is I am sure is a source of great weakness to your highness's administration—both now and in the future. Already the service is filled to an embarrassing extent with

large circles of relatives and the gradual widening of these circles which is already in progress inspite of my watchfulness cannot enhance the prosperity of your highness's subjects.

12. There is also a question which relates to the distribution of the work of the administration, which appears to me to stand in need of some revision and I accordingly beg to be permitted to place before your highness this important subject. The constitution of your highness's council has been admitted to be an anomaly on all hands. It is no disparagement to the elderly officers put upon the council to say that in their age of life they are not found able to bear any portion of the burden of the State. I have never been anxious to bear on my own shoulders the whole of this burden. Your highness may remember that a couple of years ago I placed before your highness for discussion with your highness's principal officers (native and European), a plan for giving the state an Executive Council. After consideration this plan was considered to be inapplicable to a small State like Mysore, when larger provinces are administered efficiently by a Lt. Governor or Chief Commissioner. It was not I, but others, who thought that a separate revenue commissionership would be inapplicable to a native State, but it must be said against such an appointment that it would not prevent the large number of appeals that now come to me and which, involving as they do, an examination of voluminous vernacular records take too much of my time which properly should be devoted to an elaboration of large questions of State. When the idea of a separate revenue commissionership was abandoned I obtained your highness's permission to depute two members of the council to hear and decide all appeals to the Government, but owing to the present constitution of the council I had to overlook the work of these two members, and even the small help I used when poor Mr. Krishna Rao died. Next came the proposal to appoint Col. Grant to the council, and to employ him on deputation on special revenue work. I submit copy of the letter which under your highness's orders I submitted to the Resident on this subject. As I reported to your highness the Resident informed me sometime back verbally that a telegram had been received from the Government of India that they did not like the appointment of a European officer to your highness's council. This is how the case now stands. If I had a quarter of the official help which the late chief court had I would not have so persistently pressed for a reconstitution of the council, but every officer seems to think that he is doing a great favour to the state by drawing a liberal salary and sitting quiet and occasionally by way of change vinding a little scandal and idle gossip. I assure your highness that I am not at all overdrawing the picture. It is only too evident such a feeling exists and it is greatly due to the general demoralisation, which results from what is stated in the first part of this letter.

13. With a council constituted as the present and with my subordinate ministerial officers in this frame of mind, it is not surprising that my attention is required to every detail of the administration. For I am most anxious nothing should go wrong so long as I am your highness's Dewan, and at whatever

personal sacrifice I shall continue to carry on the work of the administration to the best of my power and ability.

14. Indeed, I have been most willing, even anxious, to get the secretariat to do as much as possible, but unfortunately what little they do has often to be corrected by me and has when they escape my notice led to civil suits which the Government is in the undignified necessity of compromising out of court!

15. I have never once complained before. But age and ill-health are fast telling upon me. I feel now 20 years older than when 5 ½ years ago your highness appointed me as your Dewan. Constant anxiety and worry and annoyance, and discouragement on every side are undermining my health and insomnia is fast becoming a chronic disease with me. With a little more peace of mind I may expect to last a few years longer than under present circumstances and hence this appeal to your highness for help and encouragement.

I beg your highness will excuse the somewhat disjointed character of this letter. I have had to write each portion on a different day as may be seen from the date at the top and being by temperament reserved and reticent on personal matters, I have not before opened my mind to your highness in the perfectly candid way I now do by means of this letter.

Your highness knows me too well to make it necessary for me to add that my whole life has been dedicated for the service of your highness and your highness's country, and the only aim of my life is to merit my sovereign's approbation and the country's gratitude, and always to be your highness's most loyal humble servant.



Old Mysore - 1895

