

FISCAL REFORMS IN MYSORE AND MALABAR: A NEW EXPERIENCE UNDER HAIDER ALI AND TIPU SULTAN

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ABSTRACT

The decline of the Mughal Empire in the eighteenth century due to various factors was a significant change in the political pattern of India. One of the most spectacular development during this period was the emergence of small and large independent states throughout India. Mysore was one of such state, acquired its independence under Wodayar kings and later it reached in the hands of Haider Ali and followed by his son Tipu Sultan. As a part of reconstructing Mysorean economy; both Haider and Tipu contributed their special attention to the fiscal configuration of Mysore. Traditional coins of Mysore under Wodayar dynasty used to mint with the pictorial devices and a short inscription in Devanagari script. But Haider brought slight changes like the addition of Hijara year and Persian mint names etc. In the case of Tipu Sultan, he introduced several changes in the coinage of Mysore like Persian legends, new dating system and the name of the coin etc. As a part of their fiscal policy, they established so many minting centers in different parts of their territory which includes Gooty, Bellary, Pattan, Nagar, Malabar, and etc.

KEYWORDS: *Mughal Empire, Eighteenth Century, Change Political Pattern of India*

INTRODUCTION

The decline of the Mughal Empire was the significant event in the eighteenth century due to various reasons. It enabled the emergence of small and large independent states, most of them assumed an independent character. Under this situation, South India was governed by three major powers like the Marathas, the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Mysore. From the known history of Mysore, it was a part of the Vijayanagara Empire and it became a separate entity under the control of Wodayar kings later it reached in the domains of Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan. During the period of Haider Ali, the economic, as well as the political system of Mysore, brought into considerable changes due to his special policies and programs. These policies were considerably helped to reduce its economic backwardness up to certain level. In 1782 after the death of Haider Ali, the rule of Mysore reached in the hands of Tipu Sultan. By the second half of the eighteenth century, the Mughals have remained as a regional power in the north but their coinage was continued as the most accepted currency throughout India during this period. But in the case of Mysore, they developed their own currency system which was entirely different from the Mughal system. Traditional coins of Mysore under Wodayar dynasty was used to mint with the pictorial devices and a short inscription in Devanagari script. When Haider Ali became the ruler of Mysore, he tried to continue existing type's coin with slight changes like the addition of Hijara year and Persian mint names etc. During the reign of Tipu Sultan, Mysorean coinage brought under several changes but these were not in the lines of Mughal coinage. He developed his style of currency with many changes like Persian legends, new dating system

and the name of the coin etc. Another notable contribution of them was the establishment of many minting centers in different parts their territory to equip their coinage system which includes Gooty, Bellary, Pattan, Nagar, Malabar etc. Even they invaded Malabar as a part of their expansionist policy; it was more valued to Mysore due to its geographical peculiarities and trade experiences. This article is an attempt to analyze and identify the significant minting centers in Mysore and what changes took place in the pattern of Mysorean coins under Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan. Besides, it also examines the nature of Mysorean coins, its circulation and exchange rate with existing coins, especially in the Malabar region.

Generally, Mysore coins followed the pattern of Vijayanagara Kingdom under Wodayar kings and so they used pictorial devices. The early Wodayar rulers issued the coins with the image of Narasimha on one side and the name of the ruler in Devanagari on another side.¹ Even though Haider Ali followed the general pattern of the existing coins of Mysore, he introduced specific typological changes in the currency system and it made the coins distinctive from previous. Besides the traditional depiction of deities and other pictorial devices Haider contributed to the adoption of certain Islamic features like the introduction of Hijra date system and engraving the mint name in Persian script in his coins. *Hijra* is an Islamic calendar system which began in 622 AD with the migration of Prophet Mohammed from Mekkah to Madeena. A most astonishing feature of Haider's coins is that his name is written either in the form of the initial letter of his name, i.e. Persian letter *he* or in the form of figure 222. Here 222 are the indication of Arabic numerals is equal to the name of Haider under the Abjad system. According to the Abjad system, all Arabic letters have been assigned some numeric value and instead of writing a full word or a sentence, it is expressed as the sum of those numbers. For instance, 786 are written for *Bismillahi Rahmani Rahim* and 92 are written for the *Prophet Muhammed*. Haider adopted this system and instead of Haider, he wrote 222. The breakup of the word Haider and the corresponding numeric values are followed; he+ye+dal+re= 8+10+4+200= 222. ²

During the reign of Tipu Sultan, he developed his own style of coins that was entirely distinct from the local pattern with Hindu deities or in the name of Mughal emperor. The most distinct feature of Tipu's coin is that none of them record his name, though often find his father's initial *he*. The presence of mint name is a common feature on the coins of Tipu Sultan. Another notable aspect of Tipu's coins is that he used to depict both Hijri and Mouludi era. Hijra was the year relating to the migration of Mohammed as we early discussed but the latter was a calendar system introduced by Tipu Sultan. During the Mughal period, Emperor Akbar introduced a new calendar system called *Ilahi* calendar and he used to depict the date of Ilahi in his coins after discarding the traditional Hijri date. Like Akbar Tipu also followed his new Mouludi dating systems in his coins from 1786 onwards. Till the 5th regnal year of Tipu, he followed the Hijri system and in the same year he discarded the Hijri calendar and adopted Mouludi calendar.³ The Mouludi calendar based on lunisolar year of twelve lunar months with an interrelated or *adhika* month added at certain intervals. The calendar begins with the birth of Prophet Mohammed in 570 or 571CE. Besides, the date of Hijri and Mouludi he always used to carry the name of the cyclic year in his gold and silver coins. Coins with Hijri dates have the cyclic years such as Zaki, Azl, Julu and Dalu based on abjad system.⁴

During the reign of Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan, the coins were used to mint with the metals of gold, silver, and copper. The coins are categorized in different names under the metals were used and the figures depicted on coins. The weight standards, value, and circulation of coins were varying from metal to metal. As Comparing to the Haider's reign Tipu started a number of mints throughout his territory including the places in the present states of Karnataka,

Andra Pradesh, Tamilnadu, and Kerala. Most of Tipu's mints were used to issue copper coins but at that same time, some mints produced coins in all the three metals. The list of major minting centers, their present locations, coins issued and epithets of mints as follows:-

Table 1: Major Mints under Mysore

Sl. No	Mint Name	Present Location	Metals used	Epithet	Date
1	Pattan	Seringapattanam	Gold, Silver, Copper	Darul Sultanate	Both Hijri and Mouludi
2	Nagar	Shimoga - Karnataka	Gold, Silver, Copper	.....	.....
3	Faiz Hizar	Anantapur - A P	Copper	Fort of Bounty	Mouludi
4	Banglur	Capital of Karnataka	copper	.....	Mouludi, 1215-19
5	Farrukyab Hizar	Chitradurg - Karnataka	Gold, Silver and Copper	Thefort felicitously acquired	Mouludi 1215-19
6	Kalicut	Kerala	Gold, silver and copper	Cock fort	.....
7	Faruqui	Feroque near Calicut	Gold and Copper	Prosperity	1216- 18
8	Salamabad	Coimbatore - TN	Copper	City of peace	Between 1216-18
9	Khaliqabad	Cadapah - Karnataka	Gold and Copper	City of victory	Between 1215-18
10	Zafarabad	Cadapah - Karnataka	Copper	City of victory	Between 1215-18
11	Dharwar	Nera - Karnataka	Gold Silverand Copper	The sun blackened place	Between 1216-18
12	Nazarbar	Place east of Mysore	Copper	Scattering favour	Between 1216
13	Sakkarkot	Kadur- Chikamanglore - Karnataka	Copper	.....	Between 1216-18
14	Abargarh	Chitradurda - Karnataka	Copper	.....	Between 1216-18
15	Ganjikot	Rayalseema in A P	Copper	.....	1198

Major Minting Centers in Malabar

The Mysorean invasion under Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan during the second half of the eighteenth century caused to far-reaching consequence in the history of Malabar. The political anarchy and the colonial expansion in North Kerala attracted them to Kerala. Even though they attacked Kerala as a part of their expansionist policy they had clear objectives behind their invasion. The waves of their fiscal reforms in Mysore also created some movements in the prevailing coinage system of Malabar. The prime step of such movements was the establishment of several minting centers and circulated their coins in different parts of Malabar. Mysorean coins that circulated in Malabar were very easy to identify with its minting names. Calicut and Faroque were the leading centers of Mysorean minting process in Malabar and the Bakel fort considered to be a minting spot from its evidence.

Kalikut (Cock-fort):- When Haider invaded Malabar Calicut was under the domains of Zamorin and it acted as the capital of Malabar district. Even Haider was able to capture Calicut in 1766 from Zamorin, it was taken by a British army under Major Abington in 1782, but it was restored by Tipu Sultan and remained under his control up to 1792. As mentioned above Tipu used to assigned epithets to his minting centers according to the significance of the places, under this consideration Kalikut was labeled as cock-fort. No doubt, Tipu used to mint so many coins from the mint at Kalikut which includes gold, silver and copper coins. Kalikut is known to have issued coins in gold (fanam), silver (double rupee) and copper (paisa, quarter paisa).⁵ Most of the Mysorean coins discovered from Malabar entitled with the mint name of Kalikut. The period of these coins was referred with his early regnal years of two to five. But in the case of quarter paisa from Kalikut was updated. The coins discovered from this region with the mint name kalikut are enough to prove the existence of such mint.

Farrukhi (Prosperity):- It is situated on the south bank of river Beypore about seven to eight miles to the south of Calicut. Tipu Sultan played a major role in the development of this place because he had a clear intention in his mind about that particular place. Geographical peculiarities and its strategic importance were one of the special features of this place. Due to this specialty, Tipu used to observe changing his capital from Calicut to here. Tipu himself visited Malabar early in 1788 and made a stay of several months, during which arrangements were made for transferring the seat of government from Calicut to Feroke.⁶ Besides, he intended to erect a fort at Feroke and later he started the construction of the fort, but the political problems and the climatic conditions were unfavorable to complete the work of that particular fort. The fort was still unfinished on 10th December 1790, when it was taken by Colonel Hartley; after the defeat of Tipu's army under Husain Ali.⁷ From the above observation, we have to conclude that the role of Feroke was inevitable in the history of Tipu. Different types of evidence that deciphered from the fort were the clear indication of major minting center. The fort was surrounded by big ditches in its four sides, inside the fort a gunpowder factory, a big hall and cavern can sit with two hundred men and a mint was started its decaying.⁸ Major coins produced from this mint were gold and copper. The mint was considered to active from 1216 to 1218 (maybe hijra year).

Bekel Fort:- Bekel fort is Kerala's biggest surviving fort presently situated in the Hosdurg taluk of Kasargod district. According to South Canara Manual and other literary works relating to the Keladi Nayaks of Karnataka, Sivappa Nayaka of Bednore popularly known as Ikkeri Nayak considered being the builder of this fort. According to Kannada literary sources, the fort was originally constructed by Kolathiri Rajas and after the decline of Kolathiri Rajas, this area came under the Ikkeri Nayakas and probably they renovated it. But in 1763, when Haider invaded Canara the fort fell into the hands of Haider Ali. The evidence from the fort probably housed the Huzur (Treasury) of Canara during Tipu Sultan's period. After the overthrow of Tipu Sultan in 1799 AD, the Bekal fort was incorporated into the domains of the English East India Company.⁹

The above doubt clarified with an archaeological excavation conducted by the Archaeological Survey of India, under Thrissur Circle inside the Bekel fort in between 1998-1999. As a result of the excavation they unearthed so many numismatic evidence, later these coins were identified by the archaeologist. They argued that the coins are resembled Tipu's Coins minted and discovered from Calicut and Ferooq. This includes copper coins like Paisa, Half Paisa, Quarter Paisa, and Eight Paisa.¹⁰ Around 75 copper coins discovered from Bekel fort, twenty-five among them are similar to the Paisa of Tipu Sultan and thirty are half paisa and twenty were quarter paisa.¹¹ The obverse of all these coins shows an elephant in different postures like lifted trunk tail followed in the Mysorean coins. Among the sixteen mints established by Tipu Sultan in different parts of his territory, some of them are inside of acquired forts. Establishing mints in the acquired fort is not uncommon during his reign as evidenced in the mint at Chitradurg known as *Faruka- Yab- Hisar*, meaning felicitously acquired fort.¹² This fort was identified in Chitradurg district of Karnataka, it came under the control of Mysore during the time of Haider Ali, but the name was given by Tipu Sultan. This was one of the active copper mints of Tipu, issuing coins of almost all denominations from 1215-1219 Mouludi years.

As mentioned above sixteen mints of Tipu Sultan located in his territory Bekel Fort located in an important in South Canara linking Malabar and Karnataka should have a mint or storing place of the coins or ingots for supply to other coins. Under this context, we cannot reject the possibility of Bekel fort acted as a minting center of Mysorean rulers in Malabar.

When Haider entered into Malabar, there were three types of currency system which existed, which includes the currency of Europeans, Muslim traders, and the native people. The Muslims mainly transacted in the rupee of gold and silver, which was stamped with letters on both sides and was in circulation in all coastal trading centers of the subcontinent. The Hindu merchants struck the pagodas which got the name because it bears the image of an idol (Pagoda meant an idol temple) on one side. When Haider established his government in Malabar, he tried to introduce some changes in the existing coinage system. Firstly, he ordered to stamp the Persian letter (H) should be on one side of the panams, in allusion to his own name, and the currency was termed as Hyderee Panams. Two important coins struck by Haider in Malabar were Hyderee Panam and Hyderee Hoons. Another high-value currency also struck in this period by Haider called Hyderee Hoons.¹³ Even it had adequate circulation in Malabar, Tipu Sultan ordered to discontinue the currencies of Hyderee Panams and Hyderee Hoons, and instead of that he introduced the Sulthany Panams and the Sulthany Hoons in the year 1786-87. Even the coins of Tipu circulated in a large volume in the initial years of his rule; the value of these currencies was deteriorated in the following years. In the initial year, the sulthany panams were $16\frac{3}{4}$ percentage of higher in value to verary or hyderee panams.¹⁴ It was mainly due to the availability of European currency and the native coins in the Malabar. The local chieftains also had their own coins in Malabar region and the value of local panams varied from area to area and metal to metal. There was also silver panams. Kannur Panams and the Verary Panams and Kochi Panams were also in circulation. The metal content in the Kochi Panams was at the ratio of 1: 4.5: 4.5, gold, silver and copper respectively. ¹⁵

Exchange Rate in 1774-86.¹⁶

Table 2

Currency	Accepted by Merchants	Accepted by Government
Kannur Panams	4	$3\frac{7}{8}$
Verary Panams or Hyderee Panams	$3\frac{6}{8}$	$3\frac{5}{8}$
Hyderee Hoons or Pagodas	$\frac{1}{4}$	$\frac{1}{4}$

Exchange Rates of Tipu's Currency. ¹⁷

Table 3

Year	Panams equal to 1Rupee 1 Sulthany Hoon	% of Higher Value Compared Verary Panams
1786-87	$3\frac{1}{8}$	$12\frac{1}{2}$
1787-88	$3\frac{2}{8}$	13
1788-89	$3\frac{3}{8}$	$13\frac{1}{2}$
1789-91	$3\frac{3}{8}$	$13\frac{1}{2}$
1791-92	$3\frac{1}{5}$	10

But the situations were completely changed in Malabar when it handed over to the British after Sreerangapattanam treaty in 1792. All coins, which includes native, Muslim, Hindu and Mysorean began to deteriorate its value and completely banned by the British in the subsequent years. The Samoothiri's currency faced devaluation of $\frac{3}{8}$ percent per rupee, in the subsequent year and 1793-94 ten and a half new verary could only be exchanged to ten Sulthany Panams.¹⁷ The value of sulthany hoon also decreased in 1792, as one hyderee panams could only be exchanged against $31\frac{1}{8}$ rupees.¹⁸

CONCLUSIONS

The death of Aurangzeb in 1707 created a great void in the history of India and it followed by a number of political chaos. The emergence of Mysore was in this situation and it became prominent under Haider Ali Tipu Sultan. Due to their foresight, they tried to enhance the prevailing economy of Mysore. As a part of that, they introduced some fiscal policy in Mysore and it was able to bring a new face into their coinage. Introduction of Hijra, usage of the abjad system and mouludi calendar system are some examples. When they reached in Malabar, they also followed same experiments; it created some positive movements in the economic situation of Malabar. There was no doubt, Mysorean reforms in their fiscal policy was a new experience and definitely, it helped to reconstruct their economy as well polity up to certain level. Even the remains of their contributions are existing today in the case of roads, forts, and technology, most of the scholars are not ready to accept the facts. No doubt, Such persons are the mere followers of the colonial historiography.

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