CHAPTER-VII

ECLIPSE OF THE NAWAB’S RULE

The Mughals, while ruling a great part of India, created the Nawabship of Carnatic in 1698 in South India, with its capital at Arcot.\(^1\) Arcot was ruled by two lines of rulers, the Nevayets and the Wallajahs. The regions from river Gondegama on the north, the Western Ghats on the west, the sea on the east and the Cape Comorin on the south, formed the Carnatic. The erstwhile Carnatic comprised of the Districts of Ongole, Nellore, Chittoor, South Arcot, North Arcot, Chengleput, Madras, Tiruchirappalli, Madurai, Dindigul, Tanjore, Tirunelveli, Ramnad, Sivagangai and Pudukkottai. The Marathas of Tanjore, the Maravas of Ramnad and Sivagangai, the Tondaimans of Pudukkottai and the auxiliary powers called the Poligars paid tribute to the Nawab of the Carnatic.\(^2\) The Rulers of this region were called the ‘Carnatic Nawabs’. The independent kingdoms of Madurai, Tanjore and Gingee were within the Carnatic Region.

To subdue the Rulers of Madurai, Tanjore, Gingee, Ramnad and other Poligars, Aurangazeb, the Mughal Emperor, sent his Commander, Zulfikar


Khan, to the South in 1698. Zulfikar Khan defeated the Nayaks of Madurai and the Marathas of Tanjore and became the Governor of the newly conquered regions. He was authorised to collect taxes from the rulers. He was succeeded by Daud Khan. After Daud Khan, Sadat-ullah-Khan became the Nawab of the Carnatic. Sadat-ullah-Khan was succeeded by Dost Ali Khan.³

Dost Ali Khan had several daughters, and his third daughter was married to a close relative, Chanda Sahib, who was also known as Hussain Dost Khan. In 1732, Dost Ali Khan sent his forces under the command of his son, Safdar Ali Khan, and his son-in-law, Chanda Sahib, to collect tributes from the tributary dependencies.⁴ In the course of the journey, the army spent a few days in Madras and Pondicherry. At Pondicherry, Chanda Sahib came into contact with the French. The army of Chanda Sahib was attacked by the forces of Tanjore. Chanda Sahib defeated the King of Tanjore and collected tribute and appointed his brother Budda Sahib as the Governor of Tanjore.⁵ Afterwards the forces entered the Madurai Kingdom for collecting tribute. After the death of Vijaya Ranga Chokkanatha, the Nayak of Madurai, his wife, Meenakshi, became the ruler.⁶ As she had no issue, she adopted Vijaya

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⁴Letter from Fr. Joseph Vieyra from Calpalaya Madura Mission, Annual letter, 1 August 1733.
Kurnara Nayak and crowned him as the King of the Madurai Kingdom and she acted as his Regent. This was opposed by Bangaru Thirumalai, father of Vijaya Kumara Nayak. Bangaru Thirumalai contacted Safdar Ali Khan and paid rupees thirty lakhs to dethrone Meenakshi. Safdar Ali Khan entrusted Chanda Sahib with this assignment. Perumal Nayak and Venkat Nayak, the brothers of the Queen, approached Chanda Sahib and promised to give Rupees one crore to establish her on the throne of Madurai without being questioned by any rival. Chanda Sahib accepted the agreement and took an oath upon the Koran, at Delawai Mantapam, near Tiruchirappalli. Chanda Sahib then entered the Fort at Tiruchirappalli. Contrary to his promise, he arrested the Queen Meenakshi and became the King of the Madurai Kingdom. This was viewed with concern by the Hindu Powers of the Carnatic. They formed a Confederation of Hindu Kings to fight against Chanda Sahib. The Hindu Kingdoms in the Carnatic invited Marathas of Satara. Further, the King of Mysore offered financial assistance to the Hindu Powers of Tamil Country. Safdar Ali Khan also joined hands with the Hindus to do away with Chanda Sahib. It was only poetic justice that Safdar Ali Khan deceived Chanda Sahib who had earlier deceived Meenakshi of Madurai. Without getting any help from outside, Chanda Sahib could not resist the attack and hence he

8. Letter from Father Gaston Coeurdoux, written from Pondicherry, 6 January, 1739.
surrendered to the Marathas on March 13, 1741. The Marathas arrested Chanda Sahib and sent him as prisoner to Satara with an escort of 30,000 horses.

Mohammed Ali, popularly known as Wallajah I came to power in Carnatic Subha in 1752. His territory was a vast and fertile region. A low land, it had its sea ports in Madras, Cuddalore, Nagore, Nagapattinam, Kayalpattinam and Tuticorin. He was able to collect the rent and revenue of the Carnatic to the extent of 36,000 pagodas. Yet the Nawab did not practice rigid economy or enforce strict check on spending, and had no idea of budget. His amuldars and other revenue officials who collected the taxes met the items of expenditure on the spot and sent to the Nawab if at all any balance remained. This naturally left place for corruption and bankruptcy. The revenue of the Circar territory was low due to the bad management of Nawab’s Officials and Renters. The military expenditure and the ravages of the war increased the Nawab’s Debts. The Nawab also led a life of pomp and pleasure. He raised loans from the British for his personal expenses. In 1754, he received 2,50,000 Rupees. His debts to the Company increased to the extent of 25,25,375 pagodas in

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10. Letter from James Hubbard, Fort St David to Fort St George, 27, March 1740, Vol. 26, 1740, pp.56-57.
13. Persian Records Bundle 0, No.95.
1761. The Madras Government at last pressed the Nawab for an unconditional assignment of all the Provinces of the Carnatic to the British. The British imposed provisions through the Carnatic Treaties of 1787 and 1792 for the gradual liquidation of the Nawab’s Debt.

**Dualism**

The most important hurdle to the healthy administration of the Carnatic Subha was ‘Dualism’. It was established by the Carnatic Treaty of 1792. The Nawab’s inefficient financial management ruined the economy of the Carnatic. It reduced the Tamil Country to virtual poverty. His huge debts led to the land assignment to the British which gave an opportunity to the British to learn the administration of the Nawab. The Madras Government experienced the contradictions of the Treaty of 1792. Rectifying the anomaly only, the British realized that they could establish their rule in the Carnatic. Lord Hobart wanted to modify it after the death Mohammed Ali. Leaving behind a legacy of burdens and hurdles to his son Umdut-ul-Umara, Nawab Mohammed Ali died on October 13, 1795. He received a lot of complaints from the Poligars. Hence he proposed a modification and demanded the

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Nawab to hand over the assigned territory to the British and to accept the British supremacy in Southern Poligar Region.\footnote{Lord Hobart, 20 October 1795, letter to Umdat-ul-Umara, M.C.C., Vol.45, 1795, pp.130-131.}

Umdat-ul-Umara submitted Hobart’s proposal of modification to his durbar. His advisers in the durbar summarily rejected it. The Nawab also recalled his father’s advice and obeyed his durbar’s instructions.\footnote{Umdat-ul-Umara, n.d., 1795, letter to Lord Hobart to M.C.C., Vol.46, No.98, 1795, pp.137-140 and Umdat-ul-Umara, 24 November 1795, letter to Lord Hobart, M.C.C., Vol.46,1795, pp.193-196.} He rejected the Governor’s proposal to modify the Treaty of 1792.\footnote{Umdat-ul-Umara, n.d., 1795, letter to Lord Hobart M.C.C., Vol.46, No.98, 1795, pp.137-140.} But Hobart was obstinate in his demand that the Nawab must relinquish the Tirunelveli Region. The Nawab complained about Hobart, the Governor, to Sir John Shore, the Governor General of Bengal.\footnote{Lord Hobart in Council, 18 December 1795, letter, M.C., Vol.201,1795, p.4779.} It created bitterness between the Nawab and Lord Hobart and the latter began to create problems for the former.\footnote{Umdat-ul-Umara, n.d., March 1796, letter to Lord Hobart, M.C.C., Vol:47-A, 1796, pp.89-91.} Sir John Shore assured the Nawab that he
would restrain the Governor and that assurance gave relief to the Nawab temporarily.  

Hobart, the Governor, constantly insisted that the Nawab must provide favour to the British in the Southern Poligar Region. Sir John Shore also reiterated Hobart’s proposal for acceptance by the Nawab. In the meantime, Hobart was recalled and in his place, Lt. Gen Harris (February 21, 1798 – August 20, 1798) became the Governor of Madras. After his short span of rule, Edward Clive replaced him as the Governor of Madras. He assumed charge on August 21, 1798. Lord Wellesley was then the Governor-General of Bengal.

Lord Wellesley, the Governor-General, realized the chaotic situation in the Carnatic and pressurised the Nawab to accept the modified Treaty of 1792. The Governor General referred to Tipu Sultan’s possible intervention, the Nawab’s amuldar’s plunder, increase of military charges

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etc. as justification for a modified treaty. He also reassured the Nawab by citing favourable features of the new proposal, viz., no future treaty, permanent peace to both realms and good revenue to the Nawab.25

**Fall of Seringapatnam**

After the fall of Seringapatnam on May 4, 1799, the secret correspondence between the Nawab and Tipu Sultan was discovered.26 Between these rulers, Ghulam Ali Khan and Ali Raza Khan acted as messengers.27 N.B. Edmonstone was entrusted with the translation of the persian letters into English. He established that the Nawab had secret understanding with Tipu Sultan.28 It provided an opportunity to Wellesley to impose terms on the Nawab. He directed Edward Clive to conduct an enquiry and gather oral testimony of the important persons involved in the conspiracy before executing the British Design.29 The Madras Government


appointed Josiah Webbe and Lt. Col. Close for the enquiry. 30 The Commissioners enquired all persons separately. 31 Edward Clive, the Madras Governor, was ordered to send the results in a special vessel. Meanwhile, Lord Wellesley authorized Edward Clive to assume civil and military administration 32 of the Carnatic because the Nawab violated the third article of the Treaty of 1792. 33 Edward Clive came forward to assume the Nawab’s Government and blamed the Nawab for his treason, betrayal of alliance, violation of trust and negligence of inhabitants. 34

The Nawab produced certain facts for supporting his cause. Firstly, he entered into correspondence with Tipu Sultan because of the request by Lord Cornwallis to cultivate friendship and peace in Southern Region. 35 Secondly, he had only the ceremonial connections with Tipu Sultan. Both Tipu Sultan and the Nawab were Muslims and considered themselves as brothers of the same faith. 36 Thirdly, the British failed to prove the Nawab’s participation in the Fourth Mysore War in favour of Tipu. In

30 Ibid.
32 Ibid.
33 Ibid.
fact, the Nawab in that war supported the British by giving 16,000 pagodas and large number of elephants and horses.\textsuperscript{37}

**End of the Nawab’s Rule**

Edward Clive decided to negotiate with Umdat-ul-Umara, the Nawab, for a new settlement. But the Nawab passed away on July 15, 1801 and frustrated Edward Clive’s intention. He deputed Josiah Webbe and Lt. Col. Close for a meeting with the important officers of the Nawab regarding the succession.\textsuperscript{38} Umdat-ul-Umara had nominated his son, Ali Hussain, eighteen years old, as his successor and Mohammed Najib Khan Salar Jung and Tuckia Ali Khan as deputies to Ali Hussain.

Edward Clive held two personal interviews with Ali Hussain. Ali Hussain rejected the British demands.\textsuperscript{39} Then Edward Clive negotiated with Azim-ud-Daula, the son of Amil-ul-Umara, the second son of


Mohammed Ali.\textsuperscript{40} Azim-ud-Daula accepted the new political settlement in return for his ascendancy as the Nawab of Carnatic. On July 31, 1801, he ascended the throne by entering into a new Carnatic Treaty with the British. Ali Hussain died within a few days.\textsuperscript{41} The modified Carnatic Treaty of 1801, with the explanatory articles, was exchanged with the Nawab Azim-ud-Daula on September 16, 1801.\textsuperscript{42} It put an end to the dual rule in Southern Poligar Region.\textsuperscript{43}

**British Responsibility**

The Treaty of Carnatic, signed on July 31, 1801, marked the period of transformation in the Carnatic Region. It widened the responsibility of the British Administrators. The Collector of Southern Poligar Region became the representative of the British over Ramnad and Tirunelveli Regions. The interference of the Nawab of Carnatic in Tamil Country was completely terminated.\textsuperscript{44} The British became the sole Authority in Ramnad after the

\textsuperscript{40}Ibid., pp.97-98.


\textsuperscript{43} Revathy, G., *History of Tamil Nadu: The Palayams*, New Delhi, 2005, p.65

deposition of its Poligar, Muthu Ramalinga Tevar.\textsuperscript{45} The British brought Ramnad under proper administration\textsuperscript{46} and they decided to rearrange the extensive region of Tirunelveli and its dependent Pollams.\textsuperscript{47} It necessitated the appointment of a separate new Collector.


\textsuperscript{46} \textit{Fifth Report of East India Company Affairs, op.cit.}, pp.147-148

\textsuperscript{47} \textit{Ibid.}. 