



**Growth of Trade and Commerce of Bangalore District  
– A Historical Perspective**

**Dr. H. S. Basavegowda<sup>1</sup>**

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*Author/s*

<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor,  
Dept. of History,  
Govt. College for Women (Autonomous),  
Mandya – 571 401  
Email: drhsbasavegowda@gmail.com  
Ph: 9480377999

*Abstract*

This paper examines the growth of trade and Commerce of Bangalore region from historical approach. The princely State of Mysore due to its geographical land locked situation had to suffer drawbacks in oceanic trade. But it had a very progressive land trade contacts and flourishing inland trade. Internal Trade was remarkable and ran unaffected for centuries. The city of Bangalore had played a very important role in the inland trade and commerce. However, the entry of European Adventurers and Merchants brought about considerable changes in the nature of this trade particularly Foreign Trade. The favourable balance of Trade of the Ancient times shifted to unfavourable State of Commerce later on. It was however, a critical analysing of the Economic policies followed by Tipu sultan, while the same has been applauded by a native historians as an attempt of self-progress and indigenous development made by any ruler of India as a unique attempt.

**Key words:** Bangalore region, Trade, Commerce, Historical Perspective.



## Introduction

Karnataka had maintained rich commercial and diplomatic relations, with the Western and Eastern Worlds. It had trade relations with the Greeco-Roman World, African Continent, and Chinese World in the most ancient times. Later, it maintained commercial contacts with the Arab and Persian World. The geographical set up with the land-locked, position, the mountain barriers which separate it from the surrounding countries on three sides and the want of navigable rivers, were the circumstances unfavourable for external trade for the State of Mysore. During the time of Tipu Sultan, all imports were forbidden, with the view of stimulating home production. But, owing to the arbitrary measures adopted to bring about this result. The government itself entered the market as a wholesale dealer, led to check the natural growth of trade and to paralysed industry. .

The religious festivals, and the weekly fairs or santes, were the principal opportunities of trade in the country side. The large merchants were chiefly the residents of the towns who employed agents throughout the districts to buy the grain, in many places giving half the price in advance before the harvest was reaped. By this means a few men of large capital were able to regulate the markets. Sandal-wood, cotton, areca nut, coffee and a few other commodities were the principal articles of commerce. The best method of exhibiting the interchange of trade was to give the imports and exports for continuous number of years. The means of transport except where there were railways were on country carts and pack-bullocks or asses in wild and forest tracts.

### Inland Trade or Country Trade:

Trade was generally divided into two types. The first one was inland trade or the local trade. The second one was foreign trade or the external trade. Historian Francis Buchanan has concentrated on the details of inland trade than international trade. Here are the accounts of the inland trade of Mysore State as viewed by the foreign travellers. In larger towns of Mysore fairs or Santhes were held to which people gathered in great numbers from all the neighbouring parts. A small duty was levied on all persons frequenting the fair bearing a small proportion to the value that each brought for sale. It was not considered burdensome. The articles for sale generally were cotton cloths, blankets or kambali, articles of iron for country use, food grains and they like.

Tipu Sultan besides being the ruler of the State also acted as a merchant and trader on his own account. For this purpose he had a large quantity of goods stored at Sri Rangapattana in his Palace and those goods were often distributed among the Amildars with instructions to sell them for a profitable price, which they did by forcing them upon men who they thought were capable for purchasing them and this method caused much oppression and loss to those who were thus forced to purchase. But this seemed to be a foreign view point than that of a real view. At different and convenient places in every taluk, there were weekly markets, which



is good parts of the country were about two or three miles from each other. To those the farmers carried their produce and sold, partly to consumers by retail and partly to wholesale to traders. In the early part of the day they endeavoured to sold their goods be retails and did not deal with the traders unless they be distressed for money. It was not customary for traders to advance money on the crops. The farmers received the produce when they ripen. At all those markets business was carried on by cash sale, no barter was customary, except among a few poor people, who exchanged grain for the produce of the kitchen garden.

### **Commercial Regulations of Tipu Sultan**

- The commercial regulations of Tipu Sultan were elaborated with the view of making the sovereign the chief merchant ion his domain; with this object in view, the trade activity of the people were regulated in all directions.
- First, all commercial inter course with Europeans was viewed with great suspicion and both imports and exports were prohibited because they would afford means to his enemies of getting secret information.
- Exports were prohibited as they resulted in a rise of local prices and imports were forbidden because they impoverished the people.
- A board of nine commissioners of Trade was set up with seventeen foreign and thirty home factories of minute instructions were issued regulating exports and imports.
- Special monopolies were created for trade in tobacco, sandalwood, pepper etc., and a law was passed making banking the monopoly of government.
- Though special measures were adopted during this region to loser trade, yet as they all tended to pass the control over trade into the hands of Tipu and transfer to him all profits, commercial enterprise suffered seriously.

### **Trade and Commerce regulations with special reference to Bangalore region**

Tipu made Bangalore a popular trading centre as it was a regional capital and during judicious government of that Prince, became a place of importance

- Tipu brought its misfortunes by prohibiting the trade with the dominions of Arcot and Hyderabad, because he vested the powers governing both regions. He then sent large quantities of goods, which he forced the merchants to purchase at high price. There were regular trade between Bangalore and Mangalore.
- From Bangalore were sent cotton cloths both white and coloured in return for raw silk and silk cloths from Mangalore.
- The Trade to Calicut consisted of coloured cotton cloths and the imports were all kinds of foreign goods brought in by sea.
- The trade with the country of Nizam was ceded, while with the Marathas South of the river Krishna was carried on chiefly by the merchants of Bellary, Adoni, Dharwar, Hubli, Naragund and Navalguda.
- The agents of merchants trading in those and other places resided at Bangalore, received goods from their principals and sold them to the merchants there.



- The chief imports from the territories of the Nizam and the Marathas were cotton-wool with some coarse cotton clothes, muslins, dotras or cotton cloth with silk borders, blankets worth two to three pagodas each, wheat, red dyes.
- The returns from Bangalore were chiefly made in money, but some coloured cotton and silk cloths were also sent.
- Gossai merchants from Poona brought shalws, saffron and most from Kashmir and Persian Pearls from Surat and returns were made in money and in the manner of pearls.
- From Hyderabad the places around, Pathan (Paitan) and Gujarathi merchants brought red cotton cloth flowered with gold and silver, turbans and fine manufactured cotton and the returns were in money and pearls.
- The trade between the dominions of the Nawab of Arcot and Bangalore was carried on at Wallajapet chiefly by the merchants of Bangalore who maintained agents there for the purpose.
- The imports were salt, sulphur, tin, lead, zinc, copper, European steel, paints and glue, nutmegs, cloves, camphor, raw silk, Burhampur silk cloths, English woollen cloth, goni cloth, English and Indian paper, English hardware, glassware, Bengal sugar, dates and almond.
- The returns from Bangalore were chiefly betel-nut, sandalwood, black pepper, cardamoms, shikkakai and tamarind. Considerable trade was carried on with lacs in the Western parts of Mysore, the chief exports being betel-nut, black pepper, sandalwood and cardamoms and the imports were grain, tobacco, tamarind, blankets, muslins, turbans, coloured cotton staff and silks.
- Goods of all kinds were transported on the backs of animals including Buffaloes and Asses. No direct trade was carried on between Bangalore and the company's Jahagir but some Gujarathi merchants were making the necessary arrangements for opening a trade directly with Madras.
- Tanjore merchants brought hidden pearls and took away money. The merchants of the Baramahal and Salem districts, annexed by lord corn wall is to the company's dominions, sent cotton cloths and took back the same articles were also carried to Wallajpet.
- Agents from Krishnagiri and Vanambadi constantly resided there and merchants occasionally came from Salem and Dharampuri. No merchants any agents at those places and occasionally sent goods either.

### **The internal trade routes**

In the dominions of the Raja of Mysore considerable date was carried on with several places in the Nagara district namely Bidanur, Bogunji, Sringeri, Koppa, Kalasa, Kigganimara, Mundaykara and Mathuru.

- From those places were imported great quantities of betel-nut, black pepper, sandalwood and cardamoms, partly by the merchants of Bangalore and partly by those of the Nagara district.
- The returns from thence were grain, tobacco, tamarinds, blankets, muslins, turbans, coloured cotton stuffs and silk which were the chief manufacturer of this place and the paper of the lower carnic. Both partial preferred selling their goods by wholesale and laying in their returning investment by the same means but they were seldom able to do and were more commonly reduced to the necessity of leaving part of their goods in the hands of an



agent and of purchasing their new investments at the different weekly markets in the country.

- Three quarters of the returns from Bangalore to Nagara were made in cash. From Srirangapatna, the imports to Bangalore were black pepper, sandalwood and cardamoms.
- The returns were made in every kind of cloth manufactured there with all the kinds of goods brought from the lower Carnatic to a far greater value than that of the goods imported from Srirangapatna.
- From Gubbi and its neighbourhood in the centre of the Raja's dominions, were imported pepper, betel-nut and coconuts.
- The merchants of Bangalore made their purchases at the weekly markets and carried with them chiefly money but also turmeric, the producer of this place and oxen from Hosakote and Kolar.
- To Chatrakal (Chitradurga) the merchants of Bangalore sent the manufactures of the place and it return received country blankets.
- The dealers carried their own goods from one place to the other place and generally returned with the produce in cash. From Doddaballapura occasional traders brought fine cotton cloth manufactured there and took back the produce in money.
- From Namgondlu beyond Nandidurga were brought jaggery, raw sugar and sugar candy which were also sold for cash. The places east of Bangalore such as Kolar and Narasapura sent money and procured betel-nut and black pepper. Betel-nut was the principal article of trade at Bangalore and was of two kinds, the best was called Deshvara, came from the Nagara district.
- The inferior quality was called Wallagram, which came from Gubbi and all the places of South of Sira and North of Madhura. This least quality was chiefly reserved the country-side use, while the Deshvara was dispersed through the country to the eastward as far as Madras. It was called boiled nut.

The trade of the country had not started as the inhabitants had deserted the place. No proper estimate was formed of the quantity of exports and imports but it was on the increase every month and was then about one fourth of the quantity that was exported and imported in the most flourishing time of Hyder's government. Tipu, later took charge of the custom-house. During whose period the condition of the trade was much improved. In one year there were imports of 1500 bullock loads of cotton wool, 50 bullock loads of cotton thread, 230 bullock loads of raw silk, 7000 bullock loads of salt, 300 bullock loads of foreign goods from Madras. At the same time was exported betel-nut of 400 bullock loads and of pepper 400 bullock loads.

### **Carriage of Goods**

Goods of all kinds were transported by cattle in bullock loads. The best cattle were used in the cotton trade and belong to Panchama Banajigaru, natives of the country when the cotton grows.

- The bullocks employed in this trade were very fine animals and each brings from 12 to 15 maunds of cotton.



- They travel daily at rate of 3 computed KOS ( twelve British miles) and in the three how's they perform this journey. Besides straw, then were fed on oil-cakes and seed and leaves of the cotton plant. They cost from 15 to 25 pagados.
- In the same manner were fed the oxen which were employed in transporting betel-nut, pepper and most other kinds of goods but these cost only 4 or 5 pagodas.
- The rate of hire was always fixed on the average load of eight maunds.
- The carriage of the bullock load of pepper, betel-nut or other articles that show well and may be equally divided costs 15 Fanams from Bangalore to Wallajapet distance about 145 British miles.
- The carries were not answerable for any accident that may happen to the goods.
- The merchant therefore must send with them some trusty person, who was generally a younger branch of the family.
- The bullock employed in carriage was always shall with slight iron shoes. Buffaloes of the northern breed were sometimes employed especially by cloth merchants, their common load was 15maunds. The people who transport salt and grain generally used asses or a very poor kind of bullock. The ass carries from 40 to 50 seers measure. They could travel about six miles a day and were all males purchased from the washer men who breed them. Two men took charge of twelve loaded asses. Their cost was from 1 ½ to 2 Pagodos.

## Conclusion

Mysore State, which was the heart of Deccan South did play a very prominent role in the overseas and inland trade of India. But the princely State of Mysore due to its geographical situation had to suffer a bit as far as the oceanic trade was concerned. Francis Buchanan, has however, some interesting points to make regularly this trade and commerce. Internal Trade was fabulous and it went on unaffected over with the change of government or change of Administrators. The city of Bangalore had played a very important role in the inland trade and commerce.

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