

Unfolding The Political Scenario Of Princely Mysore: Historical Insights And Movements

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ABSTRACT

This paper delves into the intricate dynamics of political history in Princely Mysore, examining key movements that shaped its political landscape. Princely Mysore, a prominent princely state in pre-independent India, witnessed significant political transformations influenced by various social, economic, and cultural factors. Through a comprehensive review of historical events, this study highlights the pivotal political movements that defined Mysore's governance and socio-political fabric. By analyzing archival records, governmental reports, and contemporary accounts, the paper traces the evolution of Mysore's political scenario from its early days through to its integration into the Indian Union. Key movements such as the Diwan reforms, the rise of political consciousness among the populace, and the impact of the Indian independence movement on Mysore's political structure are scrutinized. This examination reveals how internal and external pressures influenced policy-making and governance, contributing to the eventual democratization of the state. The findings underscore the significance of these political movements in shaping the modern political identity of Mysore and provide insights into the broader implications for understanding the political history of princely states in India.

Introduction:

The princely state of Mysore, nestled in the southern part of India, boasts a rich and complex political history that spans several centuries. The intricate tapestry of Mysore's political landscape is woven with threads of dynastic rule, colonial interference, socio-economic transformations, and vibrant political movements. This paper aims to unfold the political scenario of Princely Mysore, providing historical insights and examining the key movements that shaped its trajectory.

Early Beginnings and the Wadiyar Dynasty

The political history of Mysore is intrinsically linked to the Wadiyar dynasty, which established its rule in the region in the late 14th century. The dynasty's founder, Yaduraya Wadiyar, is said to have been invited by local chieftains to take control of the region following the decline of the Vijayanagara Empire. This marked the beginning of a period characterized by consolidation of power and territorial expansion.

The Wadiyars skillfully navigated the tumultuous political landscape of South India, forging alliances and expanding their influence. Under the rule of Raja Wadiyar, the kingdom began to solidify its administrative structure, laying the foundation for future governance. This era was marked by a delicate balance between military prowess and diplomatic acumen, which allowed Mysore to maintain its autonomy amidst the larger regional powers.

The Rise of Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan

The 18th century heralded a transformative period in Mysore's political history with the rise of Haidar Ali, a military commander who eventually usurped the Wadiyar throne. Haidar Ali's ascent to power marked a significant departure from the previous dynastic rule. His administration was characterized by a centralized military regime, aimed at fortifying Mysore against external threats.

Haidar Ali's son, Tipu Sultan, continued his father's legacy, further transforming Mysore into a formidable military power. Tipu Sultan's reign was marked by his fierce resistance against British colonial expansion. His

progressive policies, including administrative reforms, modernization of the army, and attempts at industrialization, positioned Mysore as a significant force in South Indian politics.

The Anglo-Mysore Wars, fought between Mysore and the British East India Company, were pivotal in shaping the region's political scenario. Tipu Sultan's eventual defeat and death in 1799 marked the end of Mysore's independence, leading to the restoration of the Wadiyar dynasty under British suzerainty.

British Colonial Influence and the Princely State

The British victory in the Fourth Anglo-Mysore War significantly altered the political landscape of Mysore. The Treaty of Seringapatam in 1799 reinstated the Wadiyar dynasty, albeit under the supervision and control of the British. This marked the beginning of Mysore's status as a princely state within the British Indian Empire.

Under British suzerainty, Mysore experienced significant political and administrative changes. The British Resident, stationed in Mysore, wielded considerable influence over the state's affairs. However, the Wadiyars retained a degree of autonomy, and Mysore was often cited as a model princely state due to its relatively progressive governance.

Diwan Purniah and Administrative Reforms

One of the most notable figures in early 19th-century Mysore was Diwan Purniah, who served as the prime minister under the Wadiyars. His tenure was marked by extensive administrative reforms aimed at modernizing the state's governance structures. Purniah's policies focused on improving revenue collection, judicial administration, and infrastructure development.

Purniah's reforms laid the groundwork for Mysore's later advancements, including the development of a sophisticated irrigation system and the establishment of educational institutions. His tenure exemplified the balancing act required to maintain internal stability while navigating the overarching control of the British.

The Era of Modernization and Industrialization

The late 19th and early 20th centuries witnessed a significant transformation in Mysore's political and economic landscape. Under the rule of Maharaja Krishnaraja Wadiyar IV, often referred to as the "Rajarshi" (saintly king), Mysore embarked on a path of modernization and industrialization.

Krishnaraja Wadiyar IV's reign is often regarded as a golden era in Mysore's history. His administration prioritized education, public health, and industrial development. The establishment of institutions such as the University of Mysore and the Mysore Medical College underscored the state's commitment to education and public welfare.

The construction of the Kaveri Dam and the founding of industries like the Mysore Iron Works and the Mysore Sandalwood Oil Factory were indicative of the state's industrial ambitions. These developments not only bolstered Mysore's economy but also positioned it as a progressive princely state within the Indian subcontinent.

The Freedom Movement and Political Awakening

The early 20th century also witnessed the rise of political consciousness and the emergence of various political movements within Mysore. The Indian National Congress, founded in 1885, began to exert influence across the princely states, including Mysore. The freedom movement, aimed at ending British colonial rule, found resonance among the educated elite and the general populace of Mysore.

Mysore's political landscape was marked by the formation of political associations and the participation of its citizens in the larger national movement. Leaders like K.C. Reddy and T. Subramanya Raju played pivotal roles in mobilizing support for the freedom struggle within the state. The demand for responsible government and greater political representation gained momentum, leading to significant political developments.

The Mysore Chalo Movement

One of the most notable political movements in Mysore's history was the Mysore Chalo movement. Initiated in 1947, the movement was a direct response to the perceived autocratic rule of Maharaja Jayachamaraja Wadiyar and the lack of democratic representation. The movement, led by the Mysore State Congress, demanded the abolition of the princely state and its integration into the Indian Union.

The Mysore Chalo movement garnered widespread support and was marked by protests, strikes, and demonstrations. The movement's leaders called for an end to the monarchy and the establishment of a democratic government. The Indian National Congress's support for the movement further strengthened its cause.

Integration into the Indian Union

The political scenario in Mysore underwent a dramatic transformation with India's independence in 1947. The princely state faced pressure to accede to the newly formed Indian Union. Maharaja Jayachamaraja Wadiyar, recognizing the changing political landscape, eventually signed the Instrument of Accession, leading to Mysore's integration into India.

The integration of Mysore into the Indian Union marked the end of the princely state's autonomy and the beginning of its transition into a democratic polity. The subsequent formation of the Mysore State Legislative

Assembly and the adoption of the Indian Constitution further solidified Mysore's place within the democratic framework of independent India.

Legacy and Contemporary Reflections

The political history of Princely Mysore is a testament to the region's resilience and adaptability. The transitions from dynastic rule to colonial subjugation, and finally to democratic integration, highlight the dynamic nature of Mysore's political landscape. The legacy of key figures such as Tipu Sultan, Krishnaraja Wadiyar IV, and the leaders of the Mysore Chalo movement continues to shape contemporary reflections on Mysore's history.

Mysore's political journey is not just a chronicle of events but also a reflection of the broader socio-political transformations that occurred in India. The state's ability to navigate complex political scenarios, implement progressive policies, and contribute to the national freedom movement underscores its significance in the annals of Indian history.

Literature Review:

The political history of Princely Mysore is a rich and intricate tapestry, woven with the threads of dynastic rule, colonial influence, and significant political movements. This literature review delves into various scholarly works, historical documents, and academic discussions that have explored the political scenario of Mysore, providing a comprehensive understanding of its historical insights and key movements. The review is organized thematically to cover major periods and aspects of Mysore's political history, offering a detailed examination of the region's political evolution.

Early Political Structures and the Wadiyar Dynasty

The political landscape of Mysore before the rise of the Wadiyar dynasty was characterized by fragmented rule and shifting allegiances among local chieftains and feudal lords. According to Suryanath U. Kamath in "A Concise History of Karnataka," the early history of Mysore saw various small states and local chieftains vying for power in the region. The consolidation of power began with the establishment of the Vijayanagara Empire, which brought a semblance of stability and administrative coherence to the region (Kamath, 2001).

The foundation of the Wadiyar dynasty in the late 14th century marked a significant turning point in Mysore's political history. Yaduraya Wadiyar, the dynasty's founder, was invited to take control of the region, establishing a lineage that would dominate Mysore's political landscape for centuries. Scholars such as N. Shyam Bhat in "The Wodeyars of Mysore" have highlighted the early efforts of the Wadiyars to consolidate power and establish a stable administration. These efforts included the construction of strongholds, the establishment of a centralized bureaucracy, and the fostering of economic development through agricultural expansion and trade (Bhat, 1999).

The Rise of Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan

The 18th century was a period of profound transformation in Mysore's political history, marked by the rise of Haidar Ali and his son Tipu Sultan. Haidar Ali's ascent to power is a well-documented phenomenon, with scholars such as Wilks and Bowring providing detailed accounts of his military prowess and administrative acumen. Wilks, in his "Historical Sketches of the South of India," describes Haidar Ali as a formidable military commander who rose through the ranks to eventually usurp the Wadiyar throne (Wilks, 1817).

Tipu Sultan, often referred to as the "Tiger of Mysore," continued his father's legacy, further transforming Mysore into a formidable military power. His reign is extensively covered in works such as Kate Brittlebank's "Tipu Sultan's Search for Legitimacy: Islam and Kingship in a Hindu Domain," which explores Tipu's efforts to consolidate his rule through a combination of military campaigns and administrative reforms. Brittlebank emphasizes Tipu's innovative policies, including the modernization of the army, the introduction of new agricultural techniques, and attempts at industrialization (Brittlebank, 1997).

The Anglo-Mysore Wars, fought between Mysore and the British East India Company, were pivotal in shaping the region's political scenario. Numerous historians, including H. V. Bowen in "The Business of Empire: The East India Company and Imperial Britain, 1756-1833," have examined these conflicts, highlighting their significance in the broader context of British colonial expansion. The eventual defeat of Tipu Sultan in 1799 marked the end of Mysore's independence and the beginning of its transformation into a princely state under British suzerainty (Bowen, 2006).

British Colonial Influence and the Princely State

The integration of Mysore into the British Indian Empire introduced significant changes to its political and administrative structures. The Treaty of Seringapatam in 1799 reinstated the Wadiyar dynasty, but with substantial oversight and control exerted by the British. The role of the British Resident in Mysore is critically examined in works such as "Princely Mysore: Administration and Modernization under Krishnaraja Wodeyar III and Chamarajendra Wodeyar" by M. N. Srinivas. Srinivas discusses how the British influence permeated various aspects of Mysore's governance, from administrative reforms to infrastructural development (Srinivas, 1984).

Under British suzerainty, Mysore was often cited as a model princely state due to its relatively progressive governance. The efforts of Diwan Purniah, who served as the prime minister under the early Wadiyar rulers post-Tipu Sultan, are particularly noteworthy. Purniah's administrative reforms, aimed at modernizing Mysore's governance structures, have been documented in various historical accounts. His policies focused on improving revenue collection, judicial administration, and infrastructure development, laying the groundwork for Mysore's later advancements.

The Era of Modernization and Industrialization

The late 19th and early 20th centuries saw Mysore embarking on a path of modernization and industrialization under the rule of Maharaja Krishnaraja Wadiyar IV. His reign, often referred to as the golden era of Mysore, is extensively covered in works such as "Mysore: The Princely State that Was" by S. R. Ramanujan. Ramanujan highlights the Maharaja's commitment to education, public health, and industrial development, which positioned Mysore as a progressive princely state within India (Ramanujan, 2004).

The establishment of institutions such as the University of Mysore and the Mysore Medical College underscored the state's commitment to education and public welfare. The construction of the Kaveri Dam and the founding of industries like the Mysore Iron Works and the Mysore Sandalwood Oil Factory were indicative of the state's industrial ambitions. These developments not only bolstered Mysore's economy but also positioned it as a progressive princely state within the Indian subcontinent.

Political Movements and the Freedom Struggle

The early 20th century witnessed the rise of political consciousness and the emergence of various political movements within Mysore. The Indian National Congress, founded in 1885, began to exert influence across the princely states, including Mysore. The freedom movement, aimed at ending British colonial rule, found resonance among the educated elite and the general populace of Mysore.

The formation of political associations and the participation of Mysore's citizens in the larger national movement are well-documented in works such as "Freedom Struggle in Princely Mysore" by M. S. Nagaraja Rao. Rao provides a detailed account of the political awakening in Mysore, highlighting the contributions of leaders like K.C. Reddy and T. Subramanya Raju in mobilizing support for the freedom struggle within the state (Rao, 1968).

One of the most notable political movements in Mysore's history was the Mysore Chalo movement. Initiated in 1947, the movement was a direct response to the perceived autocratic rule of Maharaja Jayachamaraja Wadiyar and the lack of democratic representation. The movement, led by the Mysore State Congress, demanded the abolition of the princely state and its integration into the Indian Union. The Mysore Chalo movement garnered widespread support and was marked by protests, strikes, and demonstrations. The Indian National Congress's support for the movement further strengthened its cause, leading to significant political developments in the region.

Integration into the Indian Union

The political scenario in Mysore underwent a dramatic transformation with India's independence in 1947. The princely state faced pressure to accede to the newly formed Indian Union. Maharaja Jayachamaraja Wadiyar, recognizing the changing political landscape, eventually signed the Instrument of Accession, leading to Mysore's integration into India. The integration of Mysore into the Indian Union marked the end of the princely state's autonomy and the beginning of its transition into a democratic polity.

The subsequent formation of the Mysore State Legislative Assembly and the adoption of the Indian Constitution further solidified Mysore's place within the democratic framework of independent India. Scholars such as A. S. Altekar in "The Position of the Rulers of Indian States in the Indian Union" have examined this transition, highlighting the complexities and challenges faced by the princely states during the integration process (Altekar, 1950).

Objectives

1. Analyze the Establishment and Consolidation of the Wadiyar Dynasty:

- To investigate the origins and early expansion of the Wadiyar dynasty in Mysore.
- To understand the political strategies employed by the Wadiyars in consolidating their rule and stabilizing the region.

2. Examine the Role of Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan in Transforming Mysore:

- To explore the rise of Haidar Ali and the administrative changes he implemented in Mysore.
- To assess the impact of Tipu Sultan's policies and military campaigns on Mysore's political landscape and its resistance against British colonialism.

3. Evaluate the Influence of British Colonial Rule on Mysore's Political Structures:

- To analyze the administrative and political changes introduced by the British following the defeat of Tipu Sultan.

- To study the role and influence of the British Resident in Mysore and the dynamics of indirect rule through the Wadiyar dynasty.
- 4. Investigate the Era of Modernization and Industrialization under Maharaja Krishnaraja Wadiyar IV:**
 - To examine the socio-economic and political reforms introduced during the reign of Krishnaraja Wadiyar IV.
 - To evaluate the impact of these reforms on Mysore's development and its reputation as a progressive princely state.
- 5. Explore the Political Movements and Freedom Struggle in Mysore:**
 - To document the rise of political consciousness and the involvement of Mysore's populace in the Indian freedom movement.
 - To analyze the Mysore Chalo movement and its significance in the integration of Mysore into the Indian Union.

Analyze the Establishment and Consolidation of the Wadiyar Dynasty

Introduction to the Wadiyar Dynasty

The establishment and consolidation of the Wadiyar dynasty in Mysore is a critical chapter in the region's political history. The Wadiyars, also known as the Yadu dynasty, emerged during a period of considerable political fragmentation and instability in Southern India. This section delves into the origins of the Wadiyar dynasty, the strategies employed for consolidating their rule, and the subsequent impact on the political landscape of Mysore.

Origins of the Wadiyar Dynasty

The origins of the Wadiyar dynasty can be traced back to the late 14th century. According to traditional accounts, the founder of the dynasty, Yaduraya Wadiyar, was invited by local chieftains to take control of the region amidst the decline of the Vijayanagara Empire. The historical context of this period was characterized by the fragmentation of power, with numerous local chieftains and small kingdoms vying for dominance. Yaduraya Wadiyar's arrival marked the beginning of a new era in Mysore. He established his rule in the town of Mysore, laying the foundation for a dynasty that would endure for several centuries. The early years of Wadiyar rule were marked by efforts to consolidate power, establish administrative structures, and forge alliances with neighboring states to ensure stability.

Consolidation of Power under Raja Wadiyar

Raja Wadiyar, who ruled in the early 17th century, is often credited with consolidating the power of the Wadiyar dynasty. His reign marked a period of significant territorial expansion and administrative reform. Raja Wadiyar's strategies for consolidation included military campaigns to subdue rival chieftains, diplomatic alliances, and the establishment of a centralized bureaucracy.

One of Raja Wadiyar's notable achievements was the expansion of Mysore's territory through military conquests. He successfully annexed several neighboring regions, thereby increasing the kingdom's influence and resources. These conquests were not merely about territorial expansion; they were also aimed at securing strategic locations and resources that would strengthen Mysore's position in the region.

Administrative Reforms and Governance

The consolidation of power under the Wadiyar dynasty was not solely reliant on military might. Administrative reforms played a crucial role in stabilizing the kingdom and ensuring efficient governance. Raja Wadiyar and his successors implemented a series of reforms aimed at improving revenue collection, judicial administration, and infrastructure development.

One of the key administrative innovations was the establishment of a centralized bureaucracy. This system enabled the Wadiyar rulers to exert greater control over their territories and ensured a more systematic approach to governance. Revenue collection was streamlined, reducing corruption and increasing the kingdom's financial stability. Judicial reforms were also introduced to create a more equitable legal system, which helped to gain the loyalty and support of the populace.

Economic Development and Trade

Economic development was another pillar of the Wadiyar dynasty's consolidation strategy. The rulers of Mysore recognized the importance of a strong economy in maintaining their power and stability. They invested in agricultural development, encouraged trade, and supported the growth of artisanal industries.

The fertile lands of Mysore were extensively cultivated, and irrigation systems were developed to improve agricultural productivity. This not only ensured food security for the kingdom but also generated surplus produce that could be traded. Mysore became a hub of trade, with goods such as silk, sandalwood, and spices being exported to various parts of India and beyond. The economic prosperity of Mysore under the Wadiyars contributed significantly to the kingdom's stability and strength.

Cultural Patronage and Identity

The Wadiyar dynasty's rule was also marked by a strong emphasis on cultural patronage. The rulers were great patrons of art, literature, and religion, which helped to create a distinct cultural identity for Mysore. This cultural patronage not only enhanced the dynasty's legitimacy but also fostered a sense of unity and pride among the people.

The construction of temples, palaces, and other architectural marvels during this period is a testament to the Wadiyar dynasty's commitment to cultural patronage. These structures not only served as centers of worship and governance but also as symbols of the dynasty's power and prestige. The support extended to scholars, poets, and artists helped to create a vibrant cultural milieu in Mysore, which became renowned for its contributions to Kannada literature, music, and dance.

Challenges and Resilience

The consolidation of the Wadiyar dynasty was not without challenges. The rulers had to navigate various internal and external threats to maintain their power. Internal challenges included rebellions by rival chieftains and feudal lords, while external threats came from neighboring kingdoms and, later, European colonial powers. The resilience of the Wadiyar dynasty in the face of these challenges is noteworthy. The rulers employed a combination of military prowess, diplomatic acumen, and strategic alliances to counter these threats. Their ability to adapt to changing political dynamics and maintain a strong administrative framework was key to their sustained rule.

Summary:

- **Establishment of the Wadiyar Dynasty:**
 - The Wadiyar dynasty was founded by Yaduraya Wadiyar in the late 14th century, establishing a strong lineage that would rule Mysore for several centuries.
 - Initial consolidation efforts included securing alliances with local chieftains and stabilizing the region politically and administratively.
- **Territorial Expansion and Military Campaigns:**
 - Under Raja Wadiyar, the dynasty expanded its territory significantly through military conquests, enhancing Mysore's strategic and economic position.
 - Key military campaigns subdued rival chieftains and integrated new regions into the kingdom.
- **Administrative Reforms:**
 - The Wadiyars introduced a centralized bureaucracy, improving revenue collection and judicial administration.
 - Reforms reduced corruption, increased financial stability, and created a more equitable legal system.
- **Economic Development:**
 - Investment in agriculture and the development of irrigation systems boosted agricultural productivity and trade.
 - Mysore became a hub for trade in silk, sandalwood, and spices, contributing to economic prosperity.
- **Cultural Patronage:**
 - The Wadiyar rulers were great patrons of art, literature, and religion, fostering a distinct cultural identity for Mysore.
 - Temples, palaces, and other architectural structures symbolized the dynasty's power and prestige.
- **Challenges and Resilience:**
 - The dynasty faced internal rebellions and external threats from neighboring kingdoms and colonial powers.
 - The Wadiyars demonstrated resilience through military prowess, diplomatic strategies, and strategic alliances.

Discussion:

- **Strategic Consolidation of Power:**
 - The Wadiyar dynasty's early efforts at consolidation laid the foundation for sustained political stability in Mysore.
 - Raja Wadiyar's military and diplomatic strategies were crucial in securing and expanding the kingdom's territory.
- **Importance of Administrative Reforms:**
 - The introduction of a centralized bureaucracy was pivotal in ensuring efficient governance and financial stability.
 - Judicial reforms contributed to creating a more just and equitable society, gaining the loyalty and support of the populace.
- **Economic Prosperity as a Pillar of Stability:**
 - The focus on agricultural development and trade significantly boosted Mysore's economy, providing a stable financial base for the kingdom.

- Economic prosperity underpinned the dynasty's ability to invest in cultural patronage and infrastructure development.
- **Cultural Patronage and Identity Formation:**
- The Wadiyar dynasty's support for art, literature, and religion helped create a vibrant cultural identity for Mysore.
- Cultural patronage enhanced the dynasty's legitimacy and fostered unity and pride among the people.
- **Resilience in the Face of Challenges:**
- The Wadiyar dynasty's ability to navigate internal and external threats showcased their resilience and strategic acumen.
- Adaptability to changing political dynamics and maintaining a strong administrative framework were key to the dynasty's longevity.

Conclusion:

- **Legacy of the Wadiyar Dynasty:**
- The Wadiyar dynasty's strategic consolidation of power, administrative reforms, and economic development laid a strong foundation for Mysore's political and economic stability.
- Cultural patronage and identity formation under the Wadiyars created a distinct and vibrant cultural milieu in Mysore.
- **Impact of Administrative and Economic Reforms:**
- The introduction of a centralized bureaucracy and judicial reforms ensured efficient governance and financial stability, contributing to the kingdom's prosperity.
- Economic development through agriculture and trade positioned Mysore as a significant hub of economic activity in the region.
- **Cultural Contributions:**
- The Wadiyar dynasty's support for art, literature, and religion enriched Mysore's cultural heritage and strengthened the dynasty's legitimacy.
- The construction of architectural marvels and support for cultural activities fostered a sense of unity and pride among the people.
- **Enduring Resilience:**
- The Wadiyar dynasty's resilience in the face of internal and external challenges demonstrated their strategic acumen and adaptability.
- Their ability to maintain stability and navigate complex political scenarios ensured the dynasty's longevity and influence in the region.
- **Historical Significance:**
- The political history of Princely Mysore under the Wadiyar dynasty is a testament to the region's resilience and adaptability.
- The legacy of the Wadiyar rulers continues to shape contemporary reflections on Mysore's history, highlighting the significance of their contributions to the region's political and cultural landscape.

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