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## A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF NAGARA REBELLION

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**ABSTRACT:** The Nagara revolt was the first peasant revolt against colonial rule. In the Mysore region this peasant struggle was very strong, sharp and broad. This provided an opportunity for direct conflict with colonial and local monarchies. It also led to the decline of provincial state power. In this one can perceive the elements of anti-Brahmin struggle. Brahmins achieved political dominance by being appointed in large numbers to Faujdar and other posts in the administration of the Mysore state. Nagara rebellion started due to problems related to forced revenue collection and lease system. Later the revolt spread to Mysore, Bangalore and Dakshina Kannada. The Mysore army had completely failed to quell the Nagara rebellion and sought the help of the British. Finally the British army succeeded in quelling the Nagara rebellion. After this we do not find peasant struggles in Mysore state for a century. But the peasant sensibility is visible in the land ownership consciousness, political framework and organizational form. This led to the economic growth of Mysore state.

**KEY WORDS:** Sharatti system, Colonial, Imperial, Monarchy, Patel, Faujdar, Nagara.

### INTRODUCTION

Nagara or Bidanuru or Hider Nagara in Shimoga district was a province belonging to the Mysore kingdom. Bidanur was once the capital of Keladi Nayaks. Here in 1831, the largest peasant revolt took place. The Nagara revolt was the epitome of organized peasantry in the Mysore state as a result of thirty years of indirect rule by the British. A major peasant revolt occurred in pre-independence or 19<sup>th</sup> century South India. So Catholina Ligo, who classified the peasant revolts as happened during the colonial period, mentioned about the Nagara revolt. He called the Nagara revolt one of the seven largest peasant revolts in colonial India.

After the fall of Tipu, the Mysore principality was divided into six Provinces. Nagara or Bidanuru is one of them. It was historically a region ruled by Ikkeri Nayakas. The people here expressed their emotional justification by questioning the legitimacy of the Mysore king through rebellion. There was a rule that 24 lakhs of rupees should be given as tribute in cash to the British from this part. This amount was 57% of the

estimated revenue of the state under the subsidiary alliance Treaty of 1799. Due to such a rule, there was a wide opportunity to exploit the revenue officers, traders, moneylenders and farmers. The collection of additional revenue from farmers and the land tenure system had a serious impact on the agricultural activity of the Nagara division of Mysore State.

## CAUSES OF NAGARA REVOLT

There were no particularly uniform rules regarding land revenue settlement in the Nagara division. A look at the history of revenue records here shows that the revenue collection rates are increasing day by day. During the time of Dewan Purnaiah the revenue was within the maximum limit. All these were the result of the dues and donation systems implemented by him.

In 1806, Purnaiah introduced a new system of land measurement. After this, the rates of revenue payment did not decrease. These measures reduced the number of cultivators who were largely revenue-burdened. Later the situation worsened and most of the land ownership was in the possession of rich land owners. The land was given to the cultivators who agreed to pay the same revenue as in Shivappa nayaka's time by entering into an agreement with the Patels and Amuldar who had earlier concessions. This was known as sharatti system.

As the Patels got ownership of the land, they forced the farmers to cultivate as metis. According to this, the farmer had to give half of his crop to Patel. Paying the revenue was Patel's responsibility. This made the Patels even richer. But the peasants became tenants in their own land. There was no communication between the government and the farmers. A British officer who investigated the riots in the Nagara division pointed out how powerful a Patel was in the area. Patel was in complete control of the business process. He used to buy crops from farmers. Also Patel was a moneylender of that part. While buying the produce of the farmers, the Patels and the traders used to fix the price they came up with. Due to poverty and money motive farmers had to sell the produce at a fixed price. Thus farmers were caught in the vicious circle of land revenue and price fixing by traders and moneylenders.

When Mummadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar came to power, the supply of products in the market increased and the price of products decreased. Due to this, the amount of revenue submitted to the government also decreased. A new land revenue policy was implemented to address this issue. Accordingly each Amuldar was required to collect a fixed amount of revenue every year. He was fully responsible for that. Hence the Amuldar followed an extreme course of revenue collection and collection. This arrangement favoured some influential people in the ruling class. He came forward to become the Amuldar of the land revenue system over a competitive bidding process.

The king's advisers, many of his relatives were added to the court staff. Prominent among them was Rama Rao, who was a relative of Purnaiah. In 1799, Purnaiah, with the influence of his authority, appointed Rama Rao as Faujdar of the Nagara division. Through his influence, Rama Rao had inducted Annigeri and Hanagal family members and his relatives to all the Faujudari posts in the city. He built a powerful group in the Nagara province. Venkata Subbaiah, Pondaiah, Balakrishna Rao, Krishna Rao, Baburao etc. were

prominent among them. He used to collect high revenue from farmers. All these factors led to the Nagara revolt.

## **BEGINNING OF NAGARA REBELLION**

Military Officers Morrison, Michael Yard and Cuban, who interrogated the Nagara Rebellion, Revealed that Purushottama Rao and Krishna Rao had hired goons to loot the Nagara Province. Also the man who robbed the peasants was the one who instigated the rebellion. Engaging in nepotism, Krishna Rao's tyranny became excessive and he was removed from power, replaced by Veer raja urs. He discovered the corruption of the earlier Faujudars. Frightened by this, the deposed Faujudar and his companions waited for a suitable opportunity. In this case, the peasants were organizing a revolt locally against the excessive revenue. Krishna Rao used this opportunity to incite the peasants not to cultivate, not to collect revenue and to revolt. Around this time, Budi Basappa, claiming to be the heir of the Keladi royal family, rebelled on behalf of the peasants. Krishna Rao encouraged people to join his party. Its purpose was to trouble the new forager Veer raja urs. A group of self-interested people joined forces and lured the angry peasants to their side by deception and raised rebellion in different parts.

## **SADARAMALLA**

Budi basappa's real name is Sadaramalla. He was the son of a common farmer of Kungsi village. Budi Basappa from his childhood had a tendency not to lead a subservient life. Budi Basappa left home at a young age. He participated in many robberies till his twenties. He served two years in prison for this crime. Then he joined the service of Raja guru Jangama Vasantaiah of Keladi. At the time of Vasantaiah's death he stole the royal seals of the Keladi family. Convicted of robbery in 1812, he claimed to be the son of the Dodda Basappa, the adopted son of the late queen of the Nagara. He also obtained a title deed to Budi Basappa and Budi Basappa Nagara khavinda from the Canara court. People believed the false letter issued under this title. At Basappa's wedding in 1830, Anavatti Amuldar called Budi Basappa the king of the Nagara. When Budi Basappa ascended the throne, he promised farmers through a private circular. He said that he will cancel the revenue and reduce the revenue rate. In the meantime Krishna Rao, the deposed Faujudar, joined Budi basappa's Group.

Farmers under the leadership of Budi Basappa organized the rebellion from the Honnali centre. Rangappa Nayaka, a Palegara of the Tarikere clan, also rebelled with Budi Basappa. So all of them requested the people to show sympathy to the farmers and remove the yoke of slavery of Mysore government. Kaldurga and Kamanadurga area fell to the rebels. Later the Nagara rebellion spread to places like Kadur, Chikkamagaluru etc. The peasants, who were drowning in poverty, participated in the Nagara revolt. Mummadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar rushed to Chennarayapatna and tried to take measures to solve the farmers' problems. But this work failed and murder and extortion increased in Bidanur area.

## SUPPRESSION OF NAGARA REBELLION AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

Farmers intensified their protest in Chennagiri, Shimoga, Holehonnur, Tarikere and Anavatti areas. Enlightened by this, Mummadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar removed Veeraja urs from power and in November 1930, re-appointed Krishna Rao as Faujdar of the Nagara division. Yet the Nagara rebellion continued. In February 1831, the Mysore army also failed to suppress the Nagara revolt. Then the kings of Mysore turned to the British for help. Accordingly, the British army under the leadership of Colonel Briggs and Rach Port also rushed to Shimoga. This army launched an invasion along the Harihara route and captured Kamanadurga, Chandragutti and Nagar Province. Budi Basappa, Rangappa, Hanumappa etc. were arrested and hanged. William Bentinck, citing administrative failure, wrested power from Mummadi Krishnaraja and imposed Commissioner's rule in the Mysore state. Mummadi Krishnaraja was given a sabbatical of one lakh rupees annually by the British Government. After this event Mysore State came under colonial rule but some modern elements can be identified at that time.

## CONCLUSION

Without effective leadership overall, there were no competent, effective self-interested leaders who could harness the overwhelming discontent to bring about tangible change. So a revolt against the monarchy could not be effectively organized. As a result the urban revolt ended in failure. Nagara rebellion was directly against the Mysore monarchy and indirectly against the British. It is a good idea that many peasant elements are expressed in this.

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