



## Trading For Political Gains - The Commercial Variants of Tipusultan's Economic Policy

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### **Abstract**

Tipusultan viewed trade as a commercial link to political strengthening & vice versa. His industrial policy, agricultural policy, his silk filature policy, his trade policy, his mint policy etc had a undeviating link with the strengthening of his economic resources to combat the British forces. He aimed at defeating the British through expansion of his economic resources. This was necessary because his father had been successful in defeating the tripartite allies with gift of money & could save the empire from tumbling. But Tipu sultan being vigorous in his policies towards the tripartite allies was adamant to bend & he wanted to defeat all the supporters of British in south India. But this was a very great desire which was hard to be accomplished. He was never convinced in his policies that British could over power him through resources. Hence he followed a policy that was capable of benefitting his political expansions.

**Key words:** Tipusultan, his economic policy, political dreams, combat strategy, industrial expansion

**Introduction:** Tipu sultan was vied against the mighty British along with the dramatic changes in the political scenario. He ran short of political visions in his economic expansion. There were parallel strategies towards resource mobilization. He had emptied the treasure & he could evolve a strategy for fulfilling the economic expansion through several techniques. (Mohibbul hasan . *History Of Tipu Sultan*, 2005). He engaged Frenchmen, English prisoners of war and European deserters to introduce European arts and crafts mode of production in his country. He could attract industrial Trade relations with outside countries. Tipu sultan had relations with foreign countries was evident in during his period. He was very much interested to expand trade relations with them. ( Mohibbul Hasan *History Of Tipu Sultan*, 2005).

He supported the traders with loan facility, high incentives, superior protection & clean trading rules. He had abolished minor cesses. Armenia, Pegu , Arabs, China ,France, Turkey all these countries had good trading relations with Tipu this also explains the importance of trade for amplification of economy. He sent commissions of traders to foreign countries. Diplomatic agents were sent. He supposedly sent nine members commission to Silk filature experiments in Mysore. Tipu comprehended the importance of silk industry & experimented through silk culture in Srirangapattana.

### **Industries by Tipu sultan**

The reflections of Tipu's ideas and policies were largely seen on the Commercial and industrial policies of the state. Tipu sultan has established following industries. The travel accounts



of the European traveler Buchanan information on the trading activities in Mysore and the manufactures of that time. By the end of the eighteenth century, trade had spread into all direction considerably. For example, merchants from Hyderabad and Gujarat brought cloth inlaid with gold and silver and the merchants from Poona brought with them shawls, saffron and Persian pearls. From Calicut, Maharashtra, and the territories of the Nizam, merchants brought cotton goods, silk, muslin and other commodities. Betel-nut, pepper, tobacco, tamarind, grains etc. were the chief products of trade within Mysore.

A large number of manufactories established by the Sultan indicate the incentive taken by him to promote industries and manufactures. But it was strictly the Sultan's own manufactories and these were called as Tara Mandal. (C. Hayavadana Rao-Mysore gazetteer, Volume 2, Issue 4).

Traveler Buchanan gives a detailed description of how workmen accurately manufactured guns, Muskets, scissors, paper etc. Though there existed quite a few factories run by individuals yet they had to depend on the Sultan again for funds. Here again they were strictly under the control of the officers appointed by the government. (C. Hayavadana Rao-Mysore gazetteer, Volume 2, Issue 4).

He had industrial outlets at Bidanuru, Bangalore, Chitradurga where Equipments such as Scissors, Armaments, War rifles, Paper, Watches, Daily use things. He had even made a self hydro powered machine to drill cannons / firangi. Channapattana had a sugar refinery. Gubbi was famous for low cost cotton wares. He had set aside gold

worth 960000 for purchasing elephants, horses & such other war. (Hasan, Mohibbul. *History Of Tipu Sultan*, Delhi: Aakar Books, 2005).

Srirangapattana was very much famous for industrial hub. It contained mint, industries, sericulture, besides it was the capital city which was the hub of urbanization & growing industrial center. Malligunj, Mahe, Kutch, Naguar, Poona mascot Pondicherry madras this was looked after by Mallik ut Tuzur he had been appointed for 3 years. Tipu sultan gave prominence for internal trade. He wanted to expand the internal markets & hence he supported the economic policy which could help the internal marketers to grow. He made people to reside near these internal market townships.

Iron melting and casting were done at various places such as Madhugiri, Channarayadurga, Magalvadi and Devarayadurga. Near Channapatna and also at Srirangapatna and Devarayadurga steel was produced. at Srirangapatna there were five such units to convert iron into steel. iron was found at Duregudda and Chikkadavarayanabetta. Tipu had ordered strict vigilance of the iron industry outlets. (Moienuddin, Sunset at Srirangapatam, After the Death of Tipu Sultan, Hyderabad, India: Orient Longman, 2000).

These factories manufactured articles of daily use and also small weapons. he Srirangapatna factory produced guns, muskets, cannons, knives, scissors, cutlery and watches. Tipu took interest in promoting other industries as well. He was very fond of pearl industry and wrote to his trade agent asking him to procure at any cost ten divers who were required to



find pearls on the western coast near Mangalore. There was a big paper mill in the fort of Srirangapatna itself. The ammunition factories at Bednuru produced nearly 20,000 muskets and guns every year. The gun-power manufactured in Mysore was of a better quality than that manufactured even by the English company officials. Gold was also produced to a limited extent & tanning was another industry relatively bigger. Different glass articles such as bangles, beads, mirrors, dishes, bowls cutlery, etc were in use. Channapattana was also celebrated for the making of steel wire for the strings of musical instruments that were then sent to remote parts of India. One rupee weight of this wire was sold for one Sultani fanam.

**The challenges-** Tipu had to face several challenges in his endeavors to industrialize his empire because the time of political turmoil led to inconsistency & unpredictability.

1. His network had often broken down during the war days in Malabar, Coimbatore and in many other territories.
2. Time was extremely insufficient for the success of any such major departments in economic policy.
3. The flourishing silk industry of Srirangapatna began to steadily decline after 1799. The skilled weavers of Srirangapatana and other towns had to migrate to other places for their own survival.
4. Because of the peculiar political situation in the late eighteenth century, with frequent wars between the English and Tipu as well as due to the operation of

many European trading companies, contraband trade could not be stopped completely by the Sultan.

5. His over dependence on the bureaucracy which was basically feudal in character stood in the way of successful introduction of the long run. (Moienuddin, *Sunset at Srirangapatam, After the Death of Tipu Sultan, Hyderabad, India: Orient Longman, 2000*).
6. The leading merchants were slowly losing their initiative, & autonomous financial base. This led to immediate collapse of the industrial structure Tipu had built with such vigor & enthusiasm.

**CONCLUSION-** Thus Tipu Sultan aimed at defeating the British through expansion of his own independent economic resources. He viewed this as indispensable because his father had been successful in defeating the tripartite allies with gift of loads of money & could save the empire from tumbling. But Tipu Sultan being vigorous in his policies towards the tripartite allies was adamant to bend. He wanted to uncover the direct support sources to British as he wanted to defeat all the supporters of British in south India. This policy was a complicated challenge because Tipu was a solitary hand & his resources were limited. His attempts to industrialize, expand & enlarge the revenue sources needed a more meticulous planning. Repeated wars, repeated military incursions, ever ceasing war clouds, destroyed the faith of the merchants & tradesmen. But this was a very great challenge which was hard to be accomplished. Tipu Sultan was never convinced in his policies that British could over power him through their



outsized resources. Hence his policy capable of benefitting his political expansion met with failure & he could not maintain the confidence of the tradesmen. The Economic resources demanded sustainable political support & Tipu failed to give sustenance to his administration.

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