

# Military Modernization Efforts Under Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan

**Dr. Manjunatha T**

Associate Professor of History, Govt First College, Tarikere, Chikkamagaluru District, Karnataka,  
Pin:577228

## Abstract

HyderAli(1761-1784) and Tipusultan(1784-1799) Mysorean kings of modern India waged war against British colonial power. They ruled Mysore kingdom in Karnataka from 1782 A D to 1799A.D. during his rule Agriculture, horticulture, Trade and commerce are developed on the line of modern Science and technology, His aim was to build modern kingdom as nations adopted modernisation in Europe and USA.so he gave much importance to all fields .in order to achieve these he sent many emissariesto various countries such asAfrica , Arabia ,china and Europe. During this time European imperialists particularly British gradually penetrating into India and they declared war on Mysore Kingdom Hence, Tipu sultantaken help of French for organising on the European mode.however, Tipu's army men were succeeded in invention of many new war technologies. they are racket launchers and pistols.

## Army organization

Tipu abolished all forms of physical punishment within they except treacherywhich was encountered with court martial and death. Such minor reforms were innumerable. Some of them were introduced for the first time not only on Indian sol bet also were unknown to the British army in Europe itself.The army created by Haidar and Tipu was modern not only in terms of itsorganisation and upkeep but also in terms of its munitions and arms. In the initial periodof their rule it remained a challenge to procure and produce modern arms which theBritish used which after all were the result of bourgeois manufacture and capitalist industry. However, Tipu's remarks in 1783 in The Fathul Mujahidin makes it amply clear thatechnological backwardness or inadequate supply of weapons was a concern of the pastThus by the time of Haidar's death, it may be clearly

Page 2

said, the state-run laboratories and factories had achieved and even surpassed what the industrial revolutionfetched the colonialists in the sphere of war. A look at the quality and quantities of military hardware and paraphernalia rendered Mysore India's fist of steel against Colonialisin which often bewildered the BritishOccupationists themselves; prompting reactions ranging from panic to extreme harmed,Lally writes that Tipu's inventory in 1786 showed 3,00,000 firelocks, 3.00,000 matchlocks2,00,000 swords, 22,000 pieces of cannon of different calibres, 700 elephants, 600camels and 11,000 horses<sup>1</sup>or setting fire to Towns and villages in which the enemy have magazines

Of its regular armed forces, the Government Merchant Pioneers of Anti colonialism Writing about the stores the British found in 1799 at Maddur, a minor fort, ShamaRao says: "An idea of the military stores generally contained in the forts may be obtained from what was found in this for, This fort contained 373 guns, 60 mortars and I howitzers of brass, 466 guns, 12 mortars and 7 guns unfinished of iron; in all

929 pieces of ordnance, of which 287 were mounted on the fortification, 4,24,400 rounds of shot, 5,20,000 pounds of powder 99,000 muskets, carbines etc, of which 30,000 stand French and 7,000 of the Company's arms. There were also powder magazines, 2 buildings for boring guns and muskets, 5 large arsenals and 17 other buildings filled with Swords, accoutrements, rockets and a variety of small stores." <sup>2</sup>Thus it was that Maddur also got its name, which meant gunpowder town. Further, ShamaRao gives us the following account of arms and arsenal found in Srirangapatna when it fell to the British in 1799: "Nearly 1,000 pieces of brass and iron ordnance were found in the fort and island of Srirangapatna. The number of iron shots, viz, round grape and of other descriptions amounted to more than five lakhs, besides about 12,000 shells, grenades and cases filled with grape. About 60,000 stand of small arms were found to be in an effective state. The number and quantity of other descriptions of arms, ammunition and military stores were in proportion and included between four and five thousand draught bullocks. In the stables were found only a few fine stallions and brood mares, Tippu's cavalry being in the field. A great number of the iron ordnance and nearly six all the brass pounders numbering 51 were of English manufacture and the » <sup>3</sup>other were in general cast in Tippu's own foundry.<sup>3</sup>

### **Innovation of racket launchers**

Recently Shejesawranayaka , Director, Department of Museums and heritage Government of Karnataka explored on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2018 Iron

Page 3

war rackets in Nagara fort area in shimoga district of Karnataka .According to Dr.M H Siddanagowda retired director Department of Museums and heritage Government of Karnataka, ‘ Later these racket brought to England where William Congreve developed missiles in 1805 A.D.<sup>4</sup>A body of full detects by setting fire to ammunition wagers the cavalry, not used to this kind of instrument, would be quickly thrown into disorder by it; for the rockets falling at the feet of the horses, emit a flame resembling, that of a forge furnace, which frightens them; and when they burst, they do considerable missile mischief. It is small advantage, that they describe a curved line, and may therefore be thrown by people that are covered by a line of infantry. be thrown by people that are covered by a line of infantry. Nikhilesh Guha describes the rocket in the following way: "The third infantry was made of the Juzail-burdars or rocketmen no command being complete them.

The racket was a massive weapon, having a stalk of thick bamboo, eight to without them. The rocket was a massive weapon, having ten feet long, with an iron tube weighing between six to twelve pounds, containing fuse and the powder h fixed to its end. In wet weather or on marshy grounds, however, they pointed horizontally and were bound in a very uncertain direction, often creating great damage particularly among the cavalry and ammunition tumbrils of the enemy<sup>5</sup>These rockets proved extremely versatile, capable of halting and troubling the advance of any large body of enemy troops. They also played a vital part in the War against the British colonialists, what with the Mysore army having a contingent of 5,000 rocket men, contributing in a major way towards effortless victories in a few important battles.

11 Nov 2018 • 👤



[vijaykarnataka.indiatimes.com](http://vijaykarnataka.indiatimes.com)

**Figure 1 Iron rackets of Tipu sultan ,found at Nagara in shimoga district.**

The armament factories of Haidar and Tipu produced, in addition to these weapons. pistols of single and double barrels, a product of such fine quality which France was yet to produce at that time. However, an outstanding contribution made by Haidar and Tipu was the invention and manufacture of the first missiles in the history of the world. Kenneth Macksey in his book, *The Guinness History of Land Warfare* writes: "The first practical rocket missiles were used by Hyder Ali of Mysore against the British in 1780. As a result of this Englishman, William Congreve, produced rockets in 1805 which were used in the naval bombardment of Boulogne in 1806. "These missiles travelled up to 1.4 kms. The British had no knowledge of the technology involved in its production for 37 years since it took to the field against Mysore. It was only after the fall of Srirangapatna in 1799 that this technology and the principles involved in it were copied by William Congreve who in producing it made no innovation but only replicated what was stolen from the forges, foundries and factories of Mysore. Kenneth Macksey is inaccurate in dating the Mysore missiles. MMDLT records that it was already in use by 1767. He gives us a graphic description of these rockets which were mounted on camel back and were also operated by ground troops: There were likewise

Page 5

some troops, around with arms unknown at present in Europe. The same number of men [3,000] carried rockets of iron, in the form of fuses, and attached to direction rods: they are of various sizes, some containing more than one pound of powder or consumption, and fly to the distance of 1,000 Pageyards. Many of these rockets are charged to burst; others are sharpened at the end'

**Navy organisation :** in addition to building up an army as part of its regular armed forces, the government of Hyder and Tipu made three serious attempts to equip Mysore with a Navy although the state was possessed with an assortment of naval vessels, ever since their occupation of the Karnataka

coast, each major effort at trying to build up a formidable navy was repeatedly frustrated. The attempt by these rulers to arm themselves with a navy stemmed from their sea-borne mercantile aspirations. Linked with their taking of the konkan of the seaboard so that they could aspire for maritime sub Continental and overseas trade the need to defend the sea-borne merchandise of the Kingdom. The rise of seafaring Europe and particularly England, demonstrated the importance of sea-borne seas trade backed by the armadas which cleared the seas of enemies and seized entire colonies. The Mysore navy was an attempt to challenge British power in the Arabian Sea and to drawn or drive away the vessels of colonial loot. this projection of state power to the seas marked out Mysore as a pioneer in India. although the rise of Mysore's maritime state power, did not immediately pose a challenge as its well develop army did to the British colonialists; nevertheless, it caused consternation among the British colonial bourgeoisie, since it potentially pitted the state of a rising nation against what had been the bedrock and trump card of British colonial legacy. Thus, the British took special care to use very occasion they got in their wars with Mysore to destroy its fledgling naval fleet.<sup>7</sup>

#### Foot notes

1. MMLDT :HyderAli and Revolution in India, pp 47-48
2. M Shamarao : Modern Mysore vol 1(1936) pp242.
3. bid :Vol 2 pp 889-900.
4. Vijaya Karnataka, daily newspaper,11.09.2018.
5. NMLDT: HyderAli and Revolution in India, pp 47-48
6. Kenneth Macksay : The Guinness history of land warfare .pp109
7. NikhileshGuha : Pre British state system in South India ,Mysore 1761-1799 pp67

#### Reference Books

1. Macksay,Kenneth: **The Guinness history of Land warfare** ,Guinness superlative Ltd, London 1973  
Page 6
2. MMLDT: **HyderAli and Revolution in India** :Daya publishing house,1968,
3. Shamarao B :**Modern Mysore volume 1& 2**,Bangalore 1936
4. AKI: **Making History part 1**,VimukthiprakashanaShimoga1998.
5. Guha,Nikhilesh: **Pre British state system in South India ,Mysore 1761-1799** .  
RathnaPrakashan,Calcutta 1985