
**A Study on the Martial Battle of Hyder Ali
– with reference to First-Anglo Mysore war**

SyedBarkath K A.¹

Abstract

This paper discusses the Martial Battles of Hyder Ali in the First Anglo Mysore War. Hyder Ali has been a fairly understudied figure in Indian historiography despite his towering status during the 18th century. A significant revision of this situation is needed, as it was he who raised Mysore to the status of great power during that time Hyder Ali as the prime example of the 18th century. The Objective of this study is two-fold: first, to understand the complex interface among the Mysore and Marathas, second, to know the Military Power of Hyder Ali in the First Anglo-Mysore war. Secondary data has been used for the study.

Keywords: First Anglo Mysore war, Armed Camping, Hyder Ali, Mysore and Maratha. Military Power of Hyder Ali.

Introduction

“War is the father of all things,” said the Greek philosopher Heraclitus in the 6th century BCE. This statement has withstood the test of time. Any major change in the life of human beings - be it political, social, economic or technological, often has its roots in a conflict between two or more sides. The birth, death and rebirth of countries were forged in the crucible of war. This has been true from the time of the Egyptians up to the 21st century.

The histories of the other European powers in India such as the French, the Dutch and the Portuguese have received considerably less attention except when they were the adversaries of the British. Which dealt with the rise and decline of French power in India? From the 1930s onwards, works by Indian historians in the field of military history also began to be published. Jadunath Sarkar’s works Military History of India (1935) and Famous Battles of Indian History (1938), dealt mainly with the wars of the Mughals. Later

¹.Syed Barkath K A:Research Scholar Department Of History
Manasa Gangotri, University Of Mysore, Karnataka

on, Surendra Nath Sen's Military System of the Marathas (1953) studied the Maratha army and his other work entitle Eighteen Fifty- Seven (1957) was the centenary volume of the Revolt of 1857.

After India's independence in 1947, historical study shifted to the social and economic aspects of India's past. Political and military events were mainly studied under the lens of the end of colonialism, with a great focus on the causal relationship between the events. Though there was some focus on the military technology of the Mughals and other kingdoms by historians. the study of actual military battles and tactics has received considerably less attention. The result was that the study of war for its own sake receded and was largely studied as an adjunct to a larger research project. It was only in the last decades and that military history again emerged as a major area of research in Indian historiography.

The net result of such literature has been to increase awareness of military history as well as to spur interest in military affairs in general among the general public, However, most of the historiographical works discussed above (except those of Jadunath Sarkar who relied extensively on Persian and Indian sources in addition to European ones), especially those dealing with colonial India, rely heavily on European sources and tend to neglect Indian ones with little effort at comparing and correlating the two. Also, European sources are usually given greater weight than their Indian counterparts and are often accepted at face value. It is in this context that the present study on the First Anglo-Mysore War assumes significance. The events of this war can be regarded as a microcosm of warfare in India during the 1700s.

Hyder Ali Career

Hyder Ali was born at Budikote in 1720. He started his career as a soldier, where he was a petty officer in the army and an assistant to Nizam. Through his services, he was been attracted by Nanjaraja who is the minister of the Raja of Mysore. He also received an independent command over 12 years. Based on his services the king was depended on him and was under his control.

Hyder Ali tried to seek the friendship of the British so that they could defeat Marathas. Anyhow the British had different ideas to weaken and determine their powers, which lead to the First World War 1767. Later he came to campaign against the British and proved it successfully. In return got a mutual defense treaty to be signed by them which

made the British go back has a word given to Marathas.

Hyder Ali as a tactician and strategist

The standard thought among historians and the general populace is that great commanders are „certain to fight great battles“ 699. This subscribes to Carl von Clausewitz“s theory of the „genius for war.“700 in the same way, Hyder Ali exhibits a remarkable talent as a soldier and a diplomat, which enabled him to expand his de-facto kingdom and climb into the ranks of the major powers in India at that time. But a thorough study of his tactics reveals a much more complex picture. Hyder is generally credited as the first Indian ruler to incorporate findings of the European Military Revolution into his army. However, this argument is incomplete. Hyder had no doubt been impressed by the discipline shown by French troops in the time of Dupleix, leading to the idea of enlisting them in his army. The fact that Hyder himself showed outstanding tactical leadership is often ignored by historians.

Review of Related Literatures

1. The record of Mysore over Haider Ali and tipu sultan by Joseph Michaud, 1801, Translated by Raman Menon on the order of the Raja of Panagal in 1924. It tried to track the histy of Mysore during the reigns of the previously mentioned kings. I with a quick survey of the history of Mysore and the Mughal Empire before the 18th century but quickly enters into the reign of Hyder Ali in the second chapter. Giving a conquestsars, the book commences the rise of Tipu Sultan in the Second Anglo-Mysore War in 1782 after the death of Hyder Ali and deals chiefly with the association between the British and Mysore.
2. Compatibility in the year 1761 to 1772 of Peshwa, Madhu Rao, by John Briggs, published in the Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, Volume 2, No. 1, 1829, pp. 109-165. The letters begin shortly after the rise of Madhav Rao in 1761 after the death of his father Balaji Baji Rao and continue till shortly before his death in 1772. It also contains details of the secret understandings between the Marathas and other rulers such as the Nizam of Hyderabad and Mysore and lists the terms of the treaties which were negotiated especially with Hyder Ali after the regular invasions of Mysore.
3. A Crowd of agreement, appointments Relating to India and the Neighbouring Countries, compiled by C.U. Aitchison, Vol. V, 1864. It begins with the record of an agreement between the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Madras government

against the French in 1759 (during the Tanyard Carnatic War) and ends with a treaty between the British government and Coorg in 1834. The terms and conditions of the treaties signed with the kingdom of Mysore from the peace treaty at Madras in 1769 to the treaty with the restored Wodeyar dynasty in 1799 are given.

4. Records of the Indian Navy (1613-1863), Vol. I, by Charles Rathbone Low, 1877
This is a work in two volumes and covers the seafaring activities of the British from the establishment of their factories on the coast of India in the early 1600s up to the reorganization of the Royal Indian Navy in 1863. The author provides summary descriptions of the naval battles as well as the trading missions undertaken first by the East India Company marine and later the British Navy in the Indian Ocean. As the title suggests, the work mainly concerns the operation of the British fleets, especially against the French fleets during the Carnatic wars.
5. In 1640-1800 Old Madras, Traced from East India Company's Records preserved at Fort St. George and The India Office, and from Other Sources, by Henry Davidson Love, Volume II, 1913. The second volume deals with the Carnatic Wars as well as the First Anglo-Mysore War. Regarding the latter conflict, the volume contains descriptions of the raid on Madras by Tipu in 1767 as well as the final siege of Madras by Hyder Ali in 1769. Also, there are descriptions of the defenses and other building works which were in progress at the time as well as those undertaken due to the demand of war.
6. Hyder Ali's Fleet, by Surendra Nath Sen, published in Studies in Indian History, 1930 this research paper concerns Hyder Ali's attempts to establish a navy. The author has done a deep study of Portuguese records at Goa and has compared them to studies by British historians. He traces the desire of Hyder Ali to establish a fleet contact with the outside world after his capture of Mangalore in 1763. The author goes on to how Hyder's initial attempt proved to be futile because he appointed an Englishman to command his fleet who deserted with the ships to Bombay during the First Anglo-Mysore War.
7. Selections from the Peshwa Daftar: The Karnataka Expeditions of Madhavrao I (1761- 1772), ed. by G.S. Sardesai, 1934. This volume is one in a series of compilations of the official records from the Peshwa Daftar by Govind S. Sardesai and is a valuable resource for the day-to-day affairs of the Maratha government of

the Peshwa. It also details the Maratha expeditions to the Deccan, particularly the wars between Hyder and Peshwa Madhava Rao and is a very useful primary source for examining the daily events that occurred during the campaign and as such can be corroborated with other works.

8. *The New Cambridge History India: Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire* by C.A. Bayly, 1990. This is a study by C.A. It covers the first century of British expansion in India starting in the 1750s up to the Sikh wars of the 1840s. It studies the condition of the Indian states in the eighteenth century and also describes the corresponding strengths of the establishments and their methods of waging war.
9. *Societies and Military Power: India and its Armies* by Stephen Peter Rosen, 1996. The author draws a comparison between the societies of India and Europe in the past as well as the present concerning their ability to produce professional standing armies. It has been identified that the main reason for British success in India was not only the technological superiority but also the fact that due to social divisions the Indian armies were not capable of being disciplined and coordinated while the British army was well-trained and could adapt to the situation.

Statement of the Problem

The First Anglo-Mysore War of 1767-1769 is a landmark event in the history of the subcontinent in general and peninsular India in particular. It marked the beginning of more than thirty years (30) of warfare between the kingdom of Mysore and the expanding East India Company. While the other powers such as Marathas and Nizam of Hyderabad played a secondary role. The outcome of the war was momentous as it resulted in a decisive victory for Hyder Ali. As a result, the historiography of the Anglo-Mysore Wars has remained one dimensional, but Hyder Ali's victories are downplayed. The present research study aims to rectify the above sources to provide a more balanced objective on account of the First Anglo-Mysore War. The dispute continued with varying fortunes for the individual powers over the next two years. The study shows that Hyder Ali was a master tactician who insensitively made use of any opportunities that came in his way but failed to gauge the strategic situation from a long-term point of view. Although his son Tipu Sultan is widely studied in Indian historiography, Hyder Ali himself remains a relatively obscure figure. Therefore, the present research aims to rectify this by examining the background and the rise of the Mysore ruler, by studying one of his most important

military campaigns in great detail.

Objectives of the Study

- To study the complex relationship between the Mysore and the Marathas. Along with the analysis of their significance to the events, who gained ultimately.
- To use of Indian and foreign sources, both primary and secondary, to reconstruct the events through their comparison and correlation and thereby locate the Military Power of Hyder Ali in the First Anglo-Mysore War.

Limitations of the Study

There are certain limitations associated with the present study of the First Anglo- Mysore War. Many of these writings have been translated by British scholars whom they suspect. Secondly, due to constraints of a financial nature and other resources, the research scholar was unable to access many original British records which are kept in the Oriental and Great care was taken in the compilation and correlation of sources to draw up plausible hypotheses. Thirdly, as the present research work is a study of the military tactics of Hyder Ali, it seeks to particularly focus on that aspect rather than others

Research Methodology

The present study has conducted an exhaustive use of the secondary sources for the reign of Hyder Ali with particular reference to the First Anglo-Mysore War and conducted to analyze and reconstruct the events of the war from all points of view.

An Analysis of the Conduct of the War of 1767-1769

The Council appointed the Field Deputies - who set impractical goals for the army commanders. Present historians such as Sinha and Sheikh Ali maintain a slightly different view. Instead of putting the burden on the Madras government, they concur with the contemporary battle reports that the lack of cavalry was a major factor in weakening the British army's ability to force a decisive victory on Hyder, thus allowing him to get away to fight another day. Thus, the organizational flaws of the Madras Army were more to blame for the defeat rather than the faulty government policies.

However, this gives only one side of the story. The fact that Hyder himself showed outstanding planned leadership is often ignored by historians. He had incorporated infantry and artillery elements that had been trained under European commanders, and though they had been found wanting in several encounters. Though much is made of his repeated repulses at the hands of Smith, it cannot be doubted that the latter was also a very able commander who was able to match Hyder; and that is why mutual respect developed

between them. The fact remains, however, that Smith was never able to defeat Hyder completely. After each reverse - such as that at Changama, Thiruvannamalai or Mulbagal, Hyder was able to retreat in an orderly manner, thus being able to save as much of his army as possible, which suggests great organisational ability.

Conclusion

The War of 1767-1769 remains the least studied of all the four Anglo-Mysore Wars. Although, there have been many case studies of the Second, Third and Fourth Anglo-Mysore Wars, but there has been no similar study on the First Anglo-Mysore War. Apart from the primary records by contemporaries, like Maistre De la Tour and Mark Wilks. The fallout is that objectivity suffers, as there are no similar studies of the tactics and victories of Hyder Ali during the same conflict. Hyder Ali certainly can be called one of the outstanding cavalry commanders of the 18th century. He expanded Mysore – developing one of the most powerful states in India at that time, based on sheer personal ability. Most of his conquests took place with him at the helm. Nevertheless, his policies and actions set in motion a process that would not enhance the longevity of his dynasty unless improved upon. He left a vast but loosely organized kingdom for his successor Tippu, whose inability to deal with the problems that arose led to the British domination of Mysore and with it the whole of peninsular India.

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Books

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