

Delivery Note

Bavarian state library, Munich
Ludwigstr. 16
D-80539 Muenchen

Fon: ++49-89-28638-2451
Fax: ++49-89-280-9284
E-mail: doklief@bsb-muenchen.de

Delivery address

Library
Prince Leopold Institute of Tropical Medicine
Nationalestraat 155
BE-2000 Antwerpen

Data concerning order:

Order date: 2023-06-14 13:37:25
Order number: SUBITO:2023061400497 /
Customer name: Prince Leopold Institute of Tropical Medicine
User account: SLI02X00995E

Delivery date: 2023-06-14 17:17:04
Delivery priority: NORMAL
Delivery way: Email
E-mail address: docdel@itg.be

Remarks concerning delivery:

Data concerning document:

Signature: Z 2001.9 Hbzs 574-95 = Neueste Hefte
Author:
Title: The Indian economic and social history review
Year: 2020
Volume / Issue: 57/2
Pages: 199-227
Author of article: Sharmila Shrivastava
Title of article: Slopes of struggle: Coffee on Baba Budan hills
ISSN: 0019-4646
ISBN:
CODEN:

Your comment concerning the order:

40387 Werner Soors

Slopes of struggle: Coffee on Baba Budan hills

Sharmila Shrivastava

Hansraj College, University of Delhi

The history of Mysore coffee is inextricably linked to the mountainous inam lands of Baba Budan dargah situated atop eponymous hills. In the Malnad region of the Nagar Division in the seventeenth century grew probably the earliest coffee gardens of India. This paper examines the significance of the Baba Budan inam lands coffee in the development of the coffee economy of Mysore. The trajectory of coffee, a peasant and a plantation crop, was shaped by regulation and domination by the British administration and European planters and embedded resistance to this control. Native cultivators and the Baba Budan inamdars, as indigenous coffee growers, clashed with European planters over land and labour issues. Coffee was a profitable and popular cash crop, and natives dominated land and production in the colonial period. Competition, collusion and contestation laid the foundation of the two components of the coffee industry in Mysore—native and European.

Keywords: Baba Budan, coffee, inam, planters, land, resistance

Introduction

The soaring Baba Budan hills were regarded as the ‘cradle’ of coffee in the nineteenth century south India.¹ What is less known is that many seminal issues that shaped the history of Mysore coffee were first raised and resolved on the forested slopes. The hills were witness to struggles of domination and resistance which provided the template for the development of coffee cultivation in Mysore in the colonial period. Tussles over scarce land and labour resources, and a conscious creation of difference between ‘European’ and ‘native’ coffee characterised the coffee economy.

Based on primary official sources and planters’ accounts, this paper analyses the history of Baba Budan hills coffee with special reference to *inam* lands coffee. The Mysore government and the British administration questioned and redefined the scope of customary inam rights and privileges, and the extent and alienability

¹ Rice, *Mysore: A Gazetteer*, Vol. II, p. 389.

***The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 57, 2 (2020): 199–227**
SAGE Los Angeles/London/New Delhi/Singapore/Washington DC/Melbourne
DOI: 10.1177/0019464620912613

of coffee growing inam lands, which was contested by the *inamdars*. The British sought to impose their ideas of proprietary rights and transfers in land in the Malnad which threatened native notions of fluid rights.² The administration made repeated attempts to stabilise land ownership and transfers in the coffee taluks. The British had to grapple with problems of multiple sales and mortgaging of land, encroachments, excess land holding and coffee smuggling. These steps would have facilitated acquisition of land by European planters and increased revenue from coffee.

Incursion of European planters in the hills was opposed by native planters—both men and women—and the lead was taken by the *makandars* (inamdars) of the Baba Budan *dargah*.³ Long protracted disputes over lands and land sales to European planters, garden boundaries, and control over labour—which entailed complaints to officials, legal suits, forcible seizure of coffee seeds from disputed gardens, and physical and verbal violence—were viewed seriously by planters and officials. The establishment of coffee plantations by Europeans was not a smooth process in Mysore.⁴ Conversely, encounters with European traders and planters often led to limitation of the privileges and rights of the Baba Budan *dargah* and the scope of its inam lands.

Coffee is seen as an important aspect of globalisation, linking different people, countries and continents through trade, finance, consumption and technology. Coffee cultivation, consumption and diffusion have been historically associated with Muslims.⁵ The use of ‘commodity chains’ in the study of coffee in Mysore can be associated with British efforts to align existing land rights and transfers with European notions of private property rights, along with steps taken to curb the vast lands enjoyed by inamdars.

Most of the academic works on plantations in colonial India have focussed on Assam tea, not coffee. These works deal primarily with labour, with land issues being peripheral. This paper argues that European planters were given generous

² The Malnad or the Western highland of Mysore was suitable for coffee cultivation due to its elevation and fertile forest soil. Coffee required a high elevation of around 3,000 to 4,000 feet above the sea level, and was cultivated on hill slopes. *Inam* was a gift, reward or grant of land or money by government for services rendered, or for religious or charitable purposes; *Inamdar* referred to the holder of an inam. I use the term ‘native’ and ‘native planters’ throughout the paper in a non-pejorative sense.

³ The Baba Budan *dargah* inamdars were called ‘makandars’ in the British sources. In the nineteenth century, the shrine was called *dargah*, *mutt* (matt), and *makan*. Selections from the Records of the Mysore Commissioners Office, IV, *Report on the Nugur Division of Mysore*, by H. Stokes, 19 May 1838, p. 64. *Dargah* is a tomb or shrine of a Muslim saint; *mutt* or *matt* is house of a priest; *makan* means a house; *makandar* meant holder of a house; *taluk* was division of a district under the management of an *amil*.

⁴ *Report of the Royal Commission on Labour in India*, VII, p. 349. According to this report, a plantation was a ‘large enterprise in agriculture’ and a western creation that entailed ‘development of agricultural resources of tropical countries in accordance with the methods of Western industrialism’.

⁵ Clarence-Smith and Topik, eds., *Global Coffee Economy*. A commodity chain is a ‘production-consumption’ chain where production, trade and consumption are inter-related. The authors advocate the importance of small holders’ cultivation and a comparative study of different coffee producing countries and societies.

concessions and better protection, related to control over land and labour in British India compared to what was given to them in the native state of Mysore. This was not due to the presence of the government of the Maharaja of Mysore, but the strongly entrenched native cultivators who controlled around 70 per cent of coffee acreage (for details see below). Mysore was under direct British administration between October 1831 and July 1881. The interests of the native cultivators could not be ignored completely by European planters or the British administration. The administration had to balance the two aspects of Mysore coffee industry—native and European. The trajectory of Mysore coffee was thus different.

At a time when the British administration was attempting to comprehend and shape existing land rights in the coffee producing taluks of Mysore, we get a completely different picture from Assam. In colonial Assam's 'planter raj' we have allusions to untrammelled power enjoyed by the European tea planters. The 1838 wasteland rules, which were later revised, allowed European planters to acquire vast lands at low cost and favourable terms, with low revenue rates. Planters exercised tight legal control over labour under a benevolent British government, and dominated the local bodies. Amalendu Guha does not mention the difficulties faced by the administration in enforcing the wasteland rules, or the opposition of local peasants to European planters.⁶

According to Alan and Iris Macfarlane, forests in Assam had several uses and were held collectively by each village. Yet local people, who were not consulted regarding land grants to Europeans, did not protest against the loss of their lands and forests to foreigners.⁷ Rana Behal's work deals primarily with labour. The chapter on land does not refer to indigenous reactions to grants of vast wastelands (forests) to European companies and planters.⁸ We do not come across such silences in Mysore.

In Kerala region, encouragement and initiative for coffee cultivation came from British Residents and European planters. Coffee acreage was dominated by Europeans. From 1862, lands were granted in perpetuity as heritable and transferable property. Few clashes between local cultivators and European planters are mentioned by Baak. The native state of Travancore gave in to the demands of the European planters due to political and economic considerations. Baak refers to the British planters' 'raj' and 'hegemony', and complete collusion with the British

⁶ Guha, *Planter Raj to Swaraj*, pp. 1–50. Wastelands, of at least 100 acres extent, were granted to applicants on 45 years lease, and a quarter of the land had to be 'cleared' within five years or they could be resumed. The applicant had to have capital or stock of ₹3 per acre. These conditions discriminated against indigenous population. From 1854 lands (with an extent of 500 and later 200 acres) were given on 99 years lease. A fee simple sale at low rates and auctioning were introduced in 1861–62. Planters had rights over trees.

⁷ MacFarlane and Iris, *Green Gold*, pp. 126–143. Forests were designated as 'wastelands' by the British government which declared that nobody owned them.

⁸ Behal, *One Hundred Years of Servitude*, pp. 1–54. There is discussion on indigenous tea which was discovered in Assam and tribes' reluctance to share any information, the Tea Committee, the initiative taken by Europeans in the establishment of tea plantations, and the tea mania of 1860s.

Residents.⁹ This was not the case in Mysore, another native state, due to the strong presence of native cultivators.

Early References to Coffee

The variety of coffee grown in Mysore, its origins, indigenous names, and expanded commercial cultivation reflect its trans-national linkages. The coffee crop and its consumption connected Mysore, Arabia and Europe. Coffee cultivation and consumption in India was associated with the Muslim community. Legend has it that sometime in the seventeenth century, Baba Budan, a Muslim saint from Chikmagalur, smuggled seven seeds of green coffee from Mocha on his return from a pilgrimage to Mecca. He planted these near his hut on the slopes of the hills that bear his name.¹⁰ Coffee cultivation then spread from the hills to other adjacent districts of Mysore state in south India. If we believe this legend, this was one of the first successful transplantations of coffee from Arabia in any part of the world.¹¹

Edward Terry, an English traveller who visited India between 1616 and 1619, mentions that many well-heeled people in India, who were strict about their religion and did not drink wine (Muslims), drank coffee.¹² This beverage, new to the Europeans, was from the beginning popularised on the basis of its positive impact on health. Though coffee emerged as an Asian beverage, the culture of coffee drinking has long been appropriated by the western world.

The botanical name of the coffee cultivated in Mysore was *coffea arabica* and it was listed as *bundu*, *kaphi* or *kapi* in Canarese (sic) in nineteenth century official records.¹³ The word coffee is derived from Arabic *qahwah* which means wine. The

⁹ Baak, *Plantation Production and Political Power*. Under the 1862 rules lands were granted free of assessment for five years, on the condition that 1/4th of the land had to be cleared and planted in three years. In 1877, indigenous planters held 32.7 per cent of plantation acreage in Travancore state. Coffee plantations had a brief history and gave way to tea and rubber as major plantation crops after 1877–80. A large part of the work deals with the rise of the Syrian Christian planting community.

¹⁰ Stokes, *Report on Nugur*, p. 64; Mark Cubbon, Commissioner of Coorg to Cecil Beadon, Secretary, Government of India, 'A Memorandum on Cultivation of Coffee in Mysore and Coorg', 20 September 1859, Foreign Department, Political, 30 September 1859, 121–130, National Archives of India, New Delhi, p. 21. (Hereafter Comr, Sec, GoI, For. Dept., NAI); Rice, *Mysore Gazetteer*, Vol. II, pp. 374, 390; Elliot, *Experiences of a Planter*, Vol. II, p. 73.

¹¹ Ukers, *All About Coffee*, p. 1. The coffee plant was indigenous to Abyssinia, and from there it spread to Yemen. The Arabs are associated with discovering and promoting its use as a beverage. Coffee cultivation was sought to be confined to Arabia in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, by prohibiting the export of coffee beans unless they were steeped in boiling water, or parched to destroy their germination power.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 33–35. According to Terry, these people 'use a liquor more wholesome than pleasant, they call coffee; made by a black Seed boyld in water, which turns it almost into the same colour, but doth very little alter the taste of water, notwithstanding it is very good to help Digestion, to quicken the Spirits and to cleanse the Blood'.

¹³ Stokes, *Report on Nugur*, p. 97; Rice, *Mysore and Coorg Gazetteer*, Vol. I, p. 74; Vol. II, p. 409; *Mysore and Coorg Directory*, Bangalore, 1883, p. 11.

early Arabs called the bean and the tree *bunn*, and the Turks *bunnu* in the fifteenth century.¹⁴ Mysore coffee was classified as *bagayet* or garden crop, and grown in *bund tota* or ‘coffee plantations’.¹⁵ The indigenous terms ‘kapi’ or ‘kaphi’ for coffee in India seems to have Kanarese origins.

According to British sources, coffee cultivation in Mysore was confined to the Baba Budan dargah gardens for a few centuries, and did not extend beyond the *inam lands* till around 1820.¹⁶ This could be the reason why coffee cultivation or trade were not noticed by Major Mark Wilks in 1799, or by Francis Buchanan who surveyed Mysore in 1800–1801.¹⁷ Buchanan went through the ‘talucs’ of ‘Lacky-hully, Copa, Westara, Chica Moguluru, Caduru, Terricaray, Bailuru, Sakra-pattana, Belluru’, and ‘Hasina’—the coffee cultivating taluks of Nagar Division in the nineteenth century.¹⁸ However, he did not state that coffee could be cultivated as a lucrative crop in these areas.

Coffee cultivation was first mentioned by Wilks in 1805, who noted that Mysore coffee was being sold in the markets of Srirangapatna.¹⁹ According to Dr Benjamin Heyne, who toured Mysore in early nineteenth century, some coffee was cultivated in Mysore and sold in the *bazaars* of Bangalore and Srirangapatna. Heyne viewed coffee as a potentially profitable crop which could be grown in Mysore.²⁰ Local coffee was thus sold and consumed in towns and military stations.

The reason for limited cultivation of coffee could be related to two factors. One was the existence of a ‘peculiar prejudice ... against coffee cultivation’ in the Nagar Division that ill luck would befall anyone who cultivated coffee, and that the cultivator would not prosper. This dissuaded the spread of coffee cultivation

¹⁴ Ukers, *All About Coffee*, pp. 8, 11; In Ethiopia, coffee is called ‘buna’ which means bean. Allen, *Devil’s Cup*, pp. 2, 10, 53.

¹⁵ Stokes, *Report on Nugur*, p. 28; Rice, *Mysore: A Gazetteer*, Vol. I, p. 103. Tota meant a garden.

¹⁶ Rice, *Mysore Gazetteer*, Vol. II, p. 374; *Imperial Gazetteer: Mysore and Coorg*, p. 225.

¹⁷ Wilks, *Report on Interior Administration*.

¹⁸ Buchanan, *Journey from Madras*, Vol. I, pp. 198–207; Vol. III, pp. 270–405, 411–416. Betel-nut plantations were found in Nagar Division. Betel nut, pepper, sandalwood, and cardamoms were major products and exported to Bangalore; Cubbon to Sec GoI, 20 September 1859, p. 24. In Nagar Division, ‘Luckwully, Wustara, Coppa and Chickmoogloor’, and in Ashtagram Division ‘Munzerabad, Bailoor’ and ‘Maharajdroog’ were the main coffee producing taluks in 1850s; In 1811, and 1822 ‘Sucroypatnam, Lakwalli, Tarikeri,’ Kadur, and Chikmagalur taluks produced coffee. JP Grant, *Superintendent Mysore Revenue Survey*, to Secretary, Dewan of Mysore, 7 April 1884, Serial 4, Land Revenue 1882, File no. 45–82, Sl. 1–57, Karnataka State Archives, Bangalore (Hereafter Dew Mys, Sl., LR, KSA); Trans. copy of letter from Sreematoo Suruadhycary Bala Rajjah Urus to Amildars, Killadars and Sayer Managars of Luckuree, Sucraypatam and Chickmoogloor Taluks in the Territory of the Palace, 6 March 1822, Land Revenue 1821–22, File no. 1 of 1821, KSA. The coffee taluks were later organised under Kadur (Nagar) and Hassan (Ashtagram) districts.

¹⁹ Coffee Cultivation in Mysore, Mysore Commissioner Office for Government of India, Agriculture 1872–73, File No. 3, Sl. 1–13, KSA.

²⁰ Selections from the Records of the Mysore Commissioners Office, II, *Statistical Fragments on Mysore*, by Dr Benjamin Heyne, pp. 31–32. Heyne was a member of the Asiatic Society of Calcutta, and a surgeon and naturalist attached to Fort St. George. Bazaar means market.

beyond Koppa, Lakvalli and Vastara taluks.²¹ A similar notion against coffee cultivation existed in Ashtagram Division.²² RH Elliot, a Scottish planter who came to Manjarabad in the 1850s, was asked by local *raiya*ts if Europeans ate coffee berries, and enquired about their use.²³ It is possible that this prejudice was spread deliberately to deter people from cultivating a profitable cash crop.

A second important factor for the growth of coffee cultivation after 1820 was the farming out of *waram* tax (half share of the coffee crop entitled to the Mysore government) collection to Parry, Dare & Company, a European agency house of Madras, by the Mysore Maharaja's government from January 1823 to December 1837. Under Parry's contract money was advanced to *raiya*ts to start or extend coffee cultivation, to pay their revenue instalments and to settle their accounts with merchants. Advances were repaid after the coffee trees came into bearing.²⁴ This encouraged expansion of coffee cultivation in Nagar and Ashtagram Divisions during the fifteen years of *ijaradari*, and the stimulus was provided by the European market.

In Coorg, coffee was 'probably' introduced by the Moplahs in the Nalkanad region, and kept a secret from local *raiya*ts for some years. According to Dr Bidie, coffee cultivation was introduced in Coorg during the time of the rajas by a 'Mahommedan faker' who had brought the seeds either from the Baba Budan land or from Mocha.²⁵ The coffee crop and produce of Mysore and Coorg can thus be said to have descended from the seven seeds planted by Baba Budan near his hut. Coffee cultivation in both the regions initially was the preserve of a few due to the profits involved.

Inam Lands Coffee and European Incursion

Baba Budan hills were considered most suitable for coffee cultivation with their high elevation, evergreen forests (*kans*), and fertile 'jungle' soil. Numerous native coffee gardens and European plantations had come up on the forested slopes in the

²¹ H. Stokes, Superintendent Nugger Division, to Offg Sec Comr Mys, 26 November 1835, Sl. 3; Supdt Ashtagram to Sec Comr Mys, 21 January 1836, Sl. 5, Land Revenue 1835–36, File no. 1 of 35, Sl. 1–26, KSA. Sources do not mention this prejudice in Ashtagram Division in the 1830s. (Hereafter Supdt, Asgm, Div); Bowring, *Memorandum on the Malnad*.

²² J. Clerk's Memo on Coffee, Supdt Asgm, 20 March 1860, For. Dept., December 1861, General A, Progs. Nos. 68/78, NAI. In 1860s, natives took up coffee cultivation with great reluctance due to a popular notion in Ashtagram that anyone who planted coffee would not survive to pick his crop and his family would be ruined.

²³ Elliot, *Experiences of a Planter*, Vol. II, p. 73; In Ashtagram Division coffee cultivation expanded from 1831, the year the British took over the administration of Mysore province. Rice, *Mysore Gazetteer*, Vol. II, p. 329. *Raiyat* means peasant.

²⁴ Coffee Cultivation in Mysore. *Ijarah*—contract or lease, generally applied to farming of revenue.

²⁵ Richter, *Gazetteer of Coorg*, p. 95; *Imperial Gazetteer*, p. 289; Elliot, *Gold, Sport, and Coffee Planting*, p. 277; Bidie, *Report on the Ravages of the Borer*, p. 5. This was obviously a mix up with the Baba Budan legend. *Fakeer*—a Muslim mendicant.

nineteenth century.²⁶ Baba Budangiri was called *Hyatki Pahd* by the Muslims with the tomb of Baba Budan on the summit. This was a shrine of ‘great sanctity’, visited by devout Muslims from all parts of India and Arabia.²⁷ The ‘Durgah of Sreegoroos Dutatray Bavabooden’, also called the Mecca of the south, was regarded as the most influential Mussalman ‘mutt’ in India in the nineteenth century.²⁸ According to hearsay, the dargah had been given inam lands by Hyder Ali, Tipu Sultan and the Maharaja of Mysore for its upkeep.²⁹

The dargah did not have any *sanad* to prove the origin of its inam lands, and possessed vast landed properties for which there was no *sarkar* document.³⁰ The British, with their emphasis on the written word, in turn, deplored ‘the indefinite character of the Inams’.³¹ All coffee cultivated on the dargah lands was claimed as being grown on inam lands by the makandars. The high hill lands could primarily grow coffee which was considered extremely important for the upkeep of the dargah. The prestige and importance of the dargah also depended on the extent of its lands, and, by 1884, it claimed 2,873 acres as its inam lands. The British administration, however, noted that the dargah had encroached upon vast lands from time to time. The claims of the Dattatreya peetha dargah were based on three *nirups* (in ‘Marattah’) in its possession—His Highness the Mysore Maharaja’s Nirup of 12 February 1829 to Lakvalli *Amildar*; His Highness the Mysore Maharaja’s Nirup of 18 August 1831 to Lakvalli *Amildar*; and the *Diwan Katcheri’s* Nirup of 1832.³²

In 1799–1800, *waram* tax was imposed on coffee lands, but Baba Budan dargah inam lands were exempted. This was because a dargah *kalandar* was credited

²⁶ Rice, *Mysore Gazetteer*, Vol. II, p. 389

²⁷ Cubbon to Sec GoI, 20 September 1859, p. 21; Rice, *Mysore Gazetteer*, Vol. II, p. 390; Stokes, *Report on Nugur*, p. 64; Memorial of Sajjade Syed Gous Shah Khadri, Khan Bahadur of Guru Dattathreya to K. Sheshadri Iyer, Dewan Mysore, 8 September 1887, Sl. 12, LR 1882. According to this petition, the hills and the shrine were known as ‘Chandradrona Parvatha’ and ‘Guru Dattathreya Peetha’ to the Hindus, and ‘Baba booden Hayathoolbahar Swamy’s Durga’ to the Muslims. Giri means hill.

²⁸ The Plaintiff’s plaint, 7 January 1850, Abstract of Special Appeal in O.S. no. 13, LR 1821–22; Rice, *Mysore Gazetteer*, Vol. II, p. 390; Playne, *Southern India*, p. 303; Petition of F. D. Meppen to Comr Cubbon, 15 December 1852, LR 1821–22.

²⁹ Bishtiah, Witness on the Defendant’s side, Abstract of Special Appeal; Examination of Ghouse Shah Kadree, 7 November 1853, LR 1821–22; Nirup of HH Krishnaraj Wadyar to Dharmaraya, *Amildar* of Lakkavalli, 2 September 1828; HH Krishnaraja Wadyar to Subbaraya, *Amildar* of Sakkarepatna, 3 September 1828, encls. in, Khadri to Dew Mys, 8 September 1887.

³⁰ Khadri to Dew Mys, 8 September 1887; Kyfet from Syed Gous Khadry before Capt. WF Stephens, Asst Comr, 12 September 1853, LR 1821–22. Sanad means grant; sarkar means government.

³¹ Grant to Sec Dew Mys, 7 April 1884.

³² Khadri to Dew Mys, 8 September 1887; Grant to Sec Dew Mys, 7 April 1884; Order, Rev Progs, No. 710–11/7, 28 April 1884, Sl. 6; Dep Comr Kadur Dist to Chf Sec Govt Mysore, 16 March 1891, No. 511, encl. 3, Dep Comr Kadur to Chief Sec Govt of Mysore, 16 March 1891, Sl. 26; J. P. Grant to Dep Comr, Kadur Dist, No. 327, 20 August 1890, Sl. 27, LR 1882; Coffee Cultivation in Mysore. Nirup—order of a superior; *amildar*—native collector in charge of a taluk; *kacheri*, cutcherry—an office, court; *Diwan*, Dewan—Minister.

with introducing the coffee plant in Mysore from Arabia.³³ This exemption provided the ground for clashes involving the dargah makandars, and the Mysore government and the British administration, including Europeans. Repeated tussles with European traders or planters generally led to curtailment of the dargah's inam rights and lands.

In the early nineteenth century, certain Hindu mutts and the dargah grew coffee on their inam lands in Nagar Division. These religious establishments enter the sources with their resistance to local official attempts to impose waram on the coffee produce of their inam lands. In most of the cases, the inams and immunity from taxation were restored by the Maharaja of Mysore and the Diwan for the Baba Budan dargah in 1821–22.³⁴ However, in 1822–23, the Mysore government levied waram on the coffee cultivated in the Baba Budan hills. This step coincided with the commencement of Parry's coffee contract. Initially, the makandars sold their entire produce to Parry's native agent Aroonagiri Naik. In 1826, Naik claimed waram from the dargah. He made partial payment for the produce received for the years 1825–26 and 1826–27.

This conflict led to further definition of the scope of the coffee growing inam lands enjoyed by the dargah. According to the orders of the Mysore Maharaja in 1828–29 no waram could be levied on coffee grown in the *makan* (dargah) lands, if the concession had been granted since 1799–1800. Waram was to be imposed on all coffee grown outside the *makan* lands on sarkar lands by the makandars. The outstanding waram sum of 38 pagodas and $\frac{1}{4}$ fanam (due to the government since 1822–23) was remitted. Parry's agent could not detain the coffee produce of the inam lands, and had to pay for the coffee taken from the makandars.³⁵ The inam was thus restored, but also circumscribed within the *makan* enclosure.

The makandars also encroached upon jungle lands, planted them with coffee, and claimed exemption from waram on the produce. In 1831, the makandar was detained for a month for usurping extensive jungle lands and planting them with coffee in Attingundy village of Jagur *magani*. The usurped lands were taken over by the amildar, a government agent was appointed to manage them, and waram

³³ Trans. Order from HH the Maharaja of Mysore to Ramiah, Amildar of Sakkarpatta, Magha month, year Sarvadhari, [January–February 1828–29], encl. in Grant to Sec Dew Mys, 7 April 1884; Stokes, *Report on Nagur*, p. 64. Kalandar means a Muslim mystic.

³⁴ Free Trans. copy of Nirup issued by Krishnaraj Wader, Maharaja of Mysore to the Amildars, Killadars and Sayer Manigars of the Taluks of Tarrikeri, Lakwalli, Danavasa, and Kadur, Bangalore, 17 October 1811, encl. in, Grant to Sec Dew Mys, 7 April 1884. This happened to the mutts of Chelgur in Tarrikeri taluk, Hirekan in Lakvalli taluk, and Hogrikan in Kadur taluk belonging to 'Bisgni Iya' whose privileges were restored in 1811; Bala Rajiah Urus to Amildars, Killadars and Sayer Manigars, 6 March 1822.

³⁵ Order from Maharaja Mysore to Amildar Sakkarpatta, Magha, Sarvadhari, encl. in Grant to Sec Dew Mys, 7 April 1884; Order from the Hoozur Magha month, year Sarvadhari; Krishnaraja Wadayar to Amildar of Sakkarepatna, 3 September 1828; Nirup from HH Krishnaraj Wadyar to Dharma Rao, Amildar of Lakkavalli, 12 February 1829; Nirup from Krishnaraja Wadayar to Amildar of Lakvalli, 2 September 1828, encls. in Khadri to Dew Mys, 8 September 1887.

share of 368.5 maunds (on gross produce of 737 maunds) was imposed. However, on the makandar's appeal, the inam was continued by the Commissioner's orders in November 1832 and the waram share was returned.³⁶ The administration tended to restore and accommodate the special status of the dargah and inamdars despite the lack of sanads to prove their claims in early nineteenth century.³⁷

The British followed the policy of encouraging coffee cultivation, and maximising revenue from it with low taxation and free trade which was introduced with the termination of Parry's Contract in December 1837.³⁸ Waram was substituted with a new *halat* (excise tax) of Re. 1 per maund (of 28 lbs) of the coffee produce exported out of the coffee taluks. *Halat* and *sayar* (duty in transit) were also imposed on the coffee produce of the inam lands to deter evasion of tax, as any produce could be passed off as inam lands coffee.³⁹ This was the first successful step to impose tax on inam produce. *Halat* rates were lowered to 8 annas per maund of the coffee exported in 1843, and to 4 annas in 1849.⁴⁰

The Baba Budan dargah inamdars, however, claimed exemption from both the imposts, and had to submit documents to prove their claims.⁴¹ It was difficult to ascertain the precise extent of coffee producing lands, average annual produce, or revenue demand of the dargah lands as coffee was grown in jungles, and not entered in the official accounts of cultivated lands.⁴² According to the British administration, documents held by the makandar to substantiate inam rights did not specify the extent of land given as inam, but just a general freedom

³⁶ Document dated 6 November 1832, LR 1821–22; Trans. of Nirup of HH Maharajah of Mysore to Narsiah, Amildar of Lukavully, 18 August 1831; Trans. Nirup No. 5, Commissioner's Dewan Cutcherry, 13 November 1832, encls. in Grant to Sec Dew Mys, 7 April 1884. These unauthorized lands required 50–60 coolies for cultivation, and gave an annual produce of around 1000 maunds. Similar charges of encroachment were made against the Bisagni mutt. Magani was a sub-division of taluk and corresponds to Hobli.

³⁷ Khadri to Dew Mys, 8 September 1887.

³⁸ H. Stokes to Offg Sec Comr Mys, 26 November 1835; Stokes to Offg Sec Comr Mys, 16 March 1837, No. 120, Nagar Papers 1837, KSA. (Hereafter NP); Coffee Cultivation in Mysore.

³⁹ Mark Cubbon to Supdt Nuggur, 1 March 1839, Sl. 15, Agriculture 1838–39, File no. 1 of 38, Sl. no. 1–82, KSA; Coffee Cultivation in Mysore. *Halat* was a low tax compared to a heavy waram of half the crop. *Halat*—export duty levied on coffee, excise duty; *sayar*—transit duty. Transit duty on coffee was abolished in 1843.

⁴⁰ The Baba Budan dargah had paid *halat* since 1842. Grant to Sec Dew Mys, 7 April 1884; Cubbon to Sec GoI, 20 September 1859, pp. 23–24; Coffee Cultivation in Mysore. *Halat* was lowered due to fall in coffee prices and to encourage coffee cultivation and tax compliance. One rupee consisted of 16 annas.

⁴¹ Stokes to Offg Sec Comr Mys, 29 November 1837; Trans. copy of urzee of Ameenooddeen, Amildar of Luckvully to Mr. Stokes, Supdt Nuggur, 17 February 1838, LR 1821–22. The inamdars' claim to exemption was based on the fact that they had never paid waram on their coffee lands. *Sayar* would have been paid by traders.

⁴² Mys Comr Office to Actg Supdt Asgm Div, 18 October 1838, Sl. 6, Agri 1838–39; A Macleod, Supdt, Trans. Yadasht from Nuggur Div Supdt Cutcherry, 17 March 1838, LR 1821–22; Ameenooddeen to Stokes, 17 February 1838.

from payment of duty on coffee grown on the Baba Budan Hills.⁴³ This was reiterated by the Survey Superintendent in 1884. Such official steps to curb the privileges of the dargah would not have gone down well with the inamdars.

Coffee was an export-oriented commodity. In 1821–22, merchants from Bombay and north India bought coffee from Nagar Division, mainly for consumption in India.⁴⁴ The ijaradari of Parry catered to the European market, and in the 1830s the dargah sold its coffee to the East India Company and ‘other traders’.⁴⁵ In early nineteenth century ‘Mysore coffee found a ready sale’, and was sent from Mangalore to Arabia, and then exported as ‘the genuine Mocha berry’. Later it was sent from Mangalore to Europe, ‘packed in Mocha bags’.⁴⁶ During the course of the century, native coffee from Mysore (and Coorg) was shipped to Arabia and continued to be sold in England and Europe as Arabian or ‘Mocha’ coffee.⁴⁷ The coffee which had descended from the seven seeds which came from Mocha was subsequently sold as ‘Mocha’ coffee—the first global geographical coffee brand. The first and ‘long established brand’ of Mysore coffee—‘Cannon’s Mysore’ came from the southern slopes of Baba Budan hills.⁴⁸

In Mysore, native coffee was grown under the shade of trees, as opposed to open planting followed by the Europeans which proved to be ‘fatal’ with the borer attacks on coffee trees in 1866–67.⁴⁹ Coffee was grown in the open in Arabia and initially the same method was employed in the Baba Budan region, but the trees did not thrive well. The method of planting under the shade of forest trees was then adopted, and the shift came with experience. Shade planting was the older system in Mysore, and was the ‘almost universal system followed on native property’.⁵⁰ After the borer depredations, European planters shifted to shade or partial shade planting.

Mysore coffee enjoyed a high reputation due to its good quality since 1830s. This in turn was attributed to the soil and slow ripening of coffee berries under shade—a technique first used by native cultivators.⁵¹ We get to know that ‘the reputation of the [Mysore] coffee is not exceeded by any coffee in the world’, and it fetched very high prices in the London market. Mysore coffee was known as

⁴³ Acting Supdt Asgm to Sec Comr Mys, 13 September 1838, Sl. 2, Agri 1838–39. The Makandar held two *takeeds* from Diwan Poorneah, and one *nirup* from the Rajah.

⁴⁴ Stokes to Offg Sec Comr Mys, 31 May 1837, No. 234, NP 1837.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*; Stokes to Offg Sec Comr Mys, 29 November 1837; Ameenooddeen to Stokes, 17 February 1838; Nirup Mysore Maharaja to Narsiah 18 August 1831.

⁴⁶ Cubbon to Sec GoI, 20 September 1859, p. 22.

⁴⁷ Digby T. Brett, President, North Mysore Planters Association, to Mysore Resident, 30 September 1889, Sl. 1, Mysore Residency 1889, File no. 481, Sl. 1–8, NAI; *Report on Administration of Coorg, 1869–70*, p. 183.

⁴⁸ Elliot, *Gold, Sport and Coffee Planting*, p. 313; Rice, *Mysore Gazetteer*, Vol. I, p. 167.

⁴⁹ The borer depredations did not lead to much loss of native shade grown coffee trees in Nagar Division.

⁵⁰ Bidie, *Report on the Ravages of the Borer*, p. 30.

⁵¹ Stokes to Offg Sec Comr Mys, 26 November 1835; Stokes, *Report on Nugur*, pp. 32, 96–97. Coffee trees were also found growing in the wild in jungles.

‘Chick’ variety, and the name was most probably derived from Chikmagalur—the main town at the foot of the Baba Budan hills.⁵²

Lands for Coffee: Competition, Scarcity, and Clashes

Coffee gardens were known by their individual names in Mysore. One of the earliest coffee *pattas* available was for ‘Yemma Khanay’ garden, which was originally a jungle. The patta was granted for coffee cultivation to the makandar of the Baba Budan Hills, Mahdeen Shah Kadry in March 1840 by the amildar of Sakrepatna.⁵³ The patta provides information on the process of grant of jungle lands for coffee cultivation and the conditions on which these grants were made. It also gives an insight into the ecological aspects of coffee cultivation in forested regions.

From the patta we get to know that coffee was a jungle crop, its cultivation involved cutting of forest trees, and that the title deed had provisions for protection of water courses in the jungles. Coffee grants were made on application to local officers, and the applicant could select the lands, often with the help of local *patels*. Yemma Khanay was a large garden and was not measured, and its patta specified boundaries on the east, west, north, and south, which was customary in Mysore. When the patta was granted, local raiyats had apparently laid claim to the forest land as their *hak* and protested its grant for coffee cultivation—a recurring theme of coffee history in Mysore and Coorg.⁵⁴

Lands for coffee cultivation were initially granted free to the applicants, and were liable for resumption in case of non-plantation within the stipulated time, which varied from one patta to another, according to the condition and extent of the lands granted.⁵⁵ A public notification was issued regarding the land. If no claimant

⁵² Rice, *Mysore Gazetteer*, Vol. I, pp. 166–167; Elliot, *Gold, Sport and Coffee Planting*, p. 306.

⁵³ Memorandum of case, A. Ramaswamy, 3 November 1852; From the Revenue Cutcherry of the Suckkray Patnam Taluk, 21 March 1840, LR 1821–22; AC Hay, Asst Supdt Nuggur, to Major JT Porter, Supdt Nuggur Div., 26 October 1855, encl. in Nuggur Supdt to Sec Comr Mys, 3 November 1855, No. 284, Nagar Papers 1855, KSA. The term khanay or khan could be derived from either jungle (kan) or valley. Patta—title deed.

⁵⁴ From Revenue Cutcherry, 21 March 1840; Meppen to Cubbon, 15 December 1852; Meppen before Capt. Harvey, 10 August 1853, LR 1821–22; AC Hay to JT Porter, 31 October 1855, encl. in Nuggur Supdt to Sec Comr Mys, 3 November 1855; F. D. Meppen to Off Dep Comr, Kadur Dist, 13 March 1875, No. 2, For. Dept. Jan 1879, Revenue-A, Nos. 1–3, NAI; RH Elliot faced similar native opposition in Manjarabad. Elliot, *Experiences of a Planter*, Vol. I, pp. 6–8. Note: Coffee lands were not measured before the survey; In colonial India, surrounding villages and agriculturalists claimed the right to use forests for various purposes. Gadgil and Guha, *Use and Abuse of Nature*, pp. 158–159. Patel—headman of a village, head of village police, at times with rent free lands; Hak—right.

⁵⁵ In 1846, W. Elliot got a patta for 15 years in Tarikere taluk of Nagar Division. W. Elliot, Santewerry, to Capt. Clerk, Asst Supdt Nuggur, 7 September 1847, Sl. 65, Agri 1838–39; R. H. Elliot of Manjarabad got a coffee patta for three years in 1855 (or 1856) in Ashtagram Division. Elliot, *Gold, Sport, and Coffee Planting*, pp. 313–314; W. C. Onslow, Supdt Nuggur, to Sec Comr Mys, 4 May 1850, No. 69, Nagar Papers 1850, KSA.

came forward for the land within a month, it was put in the applicant's possession.⁵⁶ Clauses for planting and resumption were incorporated to deter speculation in land and also because coffee lands were not taxed. At times plantations were started on verbal permission, without an official patta—which often led to dissensions and counter-claims between competing parties.⁵⁷ Yemma Khanay was apparently granted for one year, and the makandar was allowed to 'enjoy' the produce of the land. The patta did not mention that the land was given on *kandayam*, or *halat* payment, and was presumed to have been given as inam.⁵⁸

A portion of Yemmay Khanay was cultivated by the Kadrys. The rest was sublet at produce rent of 1/4th and 1/8th maund per maund produced annually to men who were 'friendly' with, or served at the dargah. This was often done without any signed documents. The dargah held two pattas for coffee cultivation, though the makandar cultivated around 12 coffee gardens. The Kadrys claimed that the dargah did not pay any *sthul bhurty* or *halat* for its coffee produce. These were paid by the merchants who bought dargah coffee—as was the case with other native growers.⁵⁹

Natives had fluid notions of property rights in land, with which they were secure. They did not care to have written land deeds (pattas) for their coffee gardens and lands, and sub-let gardens without any written agreements.⁶⁰ As long as the patta remained in the name of the original owner and the division of produce was mutually acceptable to all parties involved, native notions of rights over land were not threatened. Tenants 'sold' the gardens they cultivated to others due to 'troubles' and the makandars did not interfere as long as they got their share from the new tenants.⁶¹ Thus, what was being sold was not land itself but the right to cultivate the garden with coffee, and remit the share of the dargah to the rightful claimant.

However, this situation of mutual acceptance changed when the tenants sold their portions to European planters who in turn got separate pattas for the same from the sarkar, and often did not give the customary portion of the produce to the

⁵⁶ Cubbon to Sec GoI, 20 September 1859, p. 25. Notifications were issued in Kannada and English in the Mysore Gazette from the 1860s.

⁵⁷ From Revenue Cutcherry, 21 March 1840; Hay to Porter, 26 October 1855; Abstract on Coffee Cultivation, No. 2, For. Dept. Jan 1879.

⁵⁸ Meppen before Harvey, 10 August 1853; Memorandum, Ramaswamy, 3rd November 1852; Memorandum, 26 November 1853; Kifeyet of Ghous Sheeya Kadree, by Capt. Harvey, Asst Comr, 11 August 1853, LR 1821–22. *Kandayam*—money rent.

⁵⁹ Kifeyet of Kadree 11 August 1853; Trans. Arzee of Ram Rau, Mamaladar of Chickmoogloor Taluk, to Hoozoor, 24 November 1853, LR 1821–22; Examination of Ghous Shah Kadree, 7 November 1853. The Kadrys also cultivated coffee gardens in the inam lands of the Herican mutt in Mensun Goondy; Bishtiah, Abstract of Special Appeal; Khadri to Dew Mys, 8 September 1887. *Stihul bhurty*—duty on goods produced, to be paid before being exported from the place of production. In this case, this fact was used by Kadry to reinforce the claim that Yemma Khanay was granted as inam and was dargah property.

⁶⁰ Supdt Coorg to Sec Comr Coorg, 31 December 1866, No. 26, For. Dept. May 1867, Revenue A, Progs. No. 26–28, NAI. Even in Coorg, as late as 1860s, natives could be persuaded with great difficulty to come and take their pattas.

⁶¹ Kifeyet of Kadree, 11 August 1853; Examination of Kadree, 7 November 1853.

dargah. Europeans wanted secure proprietary rights and title deeds for the lands they acquired in Mysore. It is possible that the makandars also apprehended greater support to their European tenants from the new British administration. The backdrop to clashes between European and native planters was provided by important developments associated with coffee cultivation.

In 1840, free trade in coffee, low halat, and an assured export market led to a rise in coffee prices and encouraged rapid extension of cultivation.⁶² Halat was paid by the merchant on the quantity of produce. Sources suggest that coffee was a popular and profitable crop, and raiyats were very eager to cultivate it. Almost every man, 'high and low' in Nagar and Coorg, grew coffee in his lands. A large part of coffee lands consisted of *hittalu* or backyard coffee averaging around one acre in extent.⁶³ These factors along with lands being granted free initially, no tax on coffee lands, cheap labour and a favourable British administration induced establishment of European plantations in Nagar and Ashtagram divisions and Coorg.⁶⁴

Coffee cultivation freed raiyats from revenue *kists* and enabled them to pay tax on other crops. Coffee cultivation was considered 'easy', and had benefited a large number of raiyats and patels by the middle of the century.⁶⁵ Coffee was grown as part of mixed cultivation by the raiyats and was not a monoculture crop.⁶⁶ The coffee taluks of Vastara, Chikmagalur and Lakvalli were reportedly

⁶² Supdt Nugur to Sec Comr Mys, 7 September 1854, No. 221, Nagar Papers 1854, KSA; Order No. 1111-R. 5, 5 May 1876, No. 2, For. Dept. January 1879. With the sale price of ₹4 per maund of coffee in 1838, halat imposition of ₹1 per maund of coffee produced and exported was 25 per cent of the produce instead of 50 per cent under waram; Comr Coorg to Sec GoI, 23 August 1862, No. 42, For. Dept. 1862, September Progs., Revenue 35–43, NAI, p. 54; Montgomery, Actg Supdt Asgm to Sec Comr Mys, 22 April 1840, No. 182, Ashtagram Papers 1840, File no. 482, KSA. The sale price of coffee increased to ₹4¾ from ₹3 per maund in 1838; Cubbon to Sec GoI, 20 September 1859, p. 23; Rice, *Mysore Gazetteer*, Vol. I, p. 705; Porter, Supdt Nuggur to Sec Comr Mys, 31 August 1855, No. 221, NP 1855, KSA.

⁶³ Supdt Nugur to Sec Comr Mys, 7 September 1854; Porter to Sec Comr Mys, 31 August 1855; Cubbon to Sec GoI, 20 September 1859, pp. 30–31; *Report on Administration of Mysore, 1863–64*, p. 72. (Hereafter, RAM); Comr Coorg to Sec GoI, 23 Aug 1862; Minute by Chief Commissioner, JD Gordon, 9 October 1878, Progs of Chief Comr Mys, Revenue, Agriculture & Commerce, 23 October 1878, Sl. 1, Agriculture 1876–77, File no. 5, Sl. 1–3, KSA.

⁶⁴ Elliot, *Experiences of a Planter*, Vol. I, pp. 5–6; Elliot, *Gold, Sport, and Coffee Planting*, pp. 313–314.

⁶⁵ Porter to Sec Comr Mys, 31 August 1855; Cubbon to Sec GoI, 20 September 1859, pp. 30–31; Hay to Porter, 26 October 1855; RAM, 1863–64, p. 72; AC Hay, Supdt Nagar Div., to Sec to Chief Comr, 22 April 1869, No. 333, *Memorandum on Mahnad*. Kist—instalment.

⁶⁶ Elliot, *Experiences of a Planter*, Vol. I, p. 46; Rice, *Mysore Gazetteer*, Vol. II, p. 329; Petition of Sringeri Ramanna and other Native Coffee Planters, 16 June 1879, Petition no. 786, Sl. 1, Land Revenue 1878–79, File no. 26, Sl. 1–8, KSA. Most of the raiyats cultivated rice, and garden crops which included coffee, plantains, pepper, coconut and fruits. The same was applicable to Coorg. Other cash crops like sugarcane were also not cultivated as monoculture. Amin, *Sugarcane and Sugar in Gorakhpur*, p. 42; Mixed cropping was preferred by raiyats to spread their risks. Kumar, *Colonialism, Property and the State*, pp. 111–12.

Table 1 Collections from Coffee

Years	Ashtagram ₹As. P.	Nagar ₹As. P.	Total ₹As. P.
1831–32	N.A.	4270 –0 –0	4270 –0 –0
1832–33	N.A.	7472 –0 –0	7472 –0 –0
1833–34	N.A.	7472 –0 –0	7472 –0 –0
1834–35	N.A.	7476 –0 –0	7476 –0 –0
1835–36	N.A.	7476 –0 –0	7476 –0 –0
1836–37	N.A.	7476 –0 –0	7476 –0 –0
1837–38	618 –10 –1	5643 –9 –4	6262 –3 –5
1838–39	1740 –14 –0	19270 –10 –9	21011 –9 –3
1839–40	1417 –4 –7	13394 –9 –3	14811 –13 –10
1840–41	1457 –0 –2	20486 –13 –2	21943 –13 –4
1841–42	1239 –9 –6	13965 –12 –4	15205 –5 –10
1842–43	1756 –3 –2	19964 –11 –9	21720 –14 –11
1843–44	1285 –6 –6	18494 –9 –2	19779 –15 –8
1844–45	2052 –7 –0	21203 –11 –11	23256 –2 –11
1845–46	1887 –7 –10	21119 –2 –1	23006 –9 –11
1846–47	3065 –15 –2	24254 –2 –8	27320 –1 –10
1847–48	4372 –14 –7	25686 –13 –7	30054 –12 –2
1848–49	4982 –10 –5	28366 –6 –8	33349 –1 –1
1849–50	1839 –5 –8	25670 –7 –4	27509 –13 –0
1850–51	2586 –6 –11	29713 –12 –0	32300 –2 –11
1851–52	3793 –7 –11	22159 –7 –7	25952 –15 –11
1852–53	3390 –6 –3	27937 –8 –4	31327 –14 –7
1853–54	6717 –2 –0	43487 –8 –2	50204 –10 –2
1854–55	N.A.	N.A.	32,229
1855–56	N.A.	N.A.	42,711
1856–57	N.A.	N.A.	34,065
1857–58	N.A.	N.A.	43,234
1858–59	N.A.	N.A.	44,456
1859–60	N.A.	N.A.	76,469
1860–61	N.A.	N.A.	79,091
1861–62	N.A.	N.A.	68,113

Source: 'Collections from Coffee in Mysore', No. 119 A, Fort William, 22 February 1856, Foreign Department 1856, Political Proceedings, 15–22 February, NAI, p. 561; *Mysore Gazetteer*, Vol. I, 1897, p. 705.

Note: Due to lack of data on acreage, halat collections reflect increase in coffee acreage and production.

very 'prosperous', and Chikmagalur town was an important coffee emporium.⁶⁷ According to sources, coffee had benefited Mysore (and Coorg), and increased the general welfare and material prosperity of the people.⁶⁸ On the other hand, coffee

⁶⁷ Porter to Sec Comr Mys, 31 August 1855. The town had seen rapid increase in size and prosperity.

⁶⁸ Elliot, *Gold, Sport, and Coffee Planting*, p. 276. RAM, 1863–64, p. 69; Elliot, *Experiences of a Planter*, Vol. I, pp. 54, 78–79. Coffee had generated extra income and additional employment.

cultivation was associated with the 'evils' of multiple sale and mortgage of lands and coffee produce which led to disputes and litigations in courts.⁶⁹ These tendencies proved very vexatious to European traders and planters.

Important changes were made in the process of grant of jungles for coffee cultivation between 1840 and 1846—which coincided with the coming of the European planters, and upset the existing power relations in the Malnad. Amildars were disallowed from granting jungles (to curb corruption), and the authority was given to a British officer of Superintendent rank. In addition, the tendency of the patels and *gowdas* to claim, grant and sublet unoccupied jungle lands (as coffee cultivation became attractive) was stopped.⁷⁰

Increasing demand and competition for jungle lands by both natives and European planters led to scarcity of suitable lands for coffee cultivation in Lakvalli and Vastara taluks by 1846. This paved the way for auctioning of land to the highest bidder.⁷¹ Land scarcity would have heightened conflicts over land between natives and Europeans. Coffee gardens situated in jungles did not have individual boundary marks and were not measured. As a consequence, boundary disputes and complaints of encroachments were frequent. This often led to forcible seizure of coffee seeds from the disputed garden by one party, native or European.⁷²

The British administration attempted to regulate coffee cultivation in the Malnad region. Most of the coffee plantations were held without official pattas by the natives. Vast tracts of these remained uncultivated since coffee lands were tax free. Few trees were planted to justify occupation, despite the resumption clause, to keep others out. It was difficult for the administration to control the inaccessible forested tracts effectively, and coffee smuggling was rampant under the halat system. In addition, local raiyats were generally hostile to newcomers, and opposed grants to outsiders. This deterred applicants and delayed transfer of lands. The 8 June 1852 *Ishtihar* of Superintendent Onslow of Nagar Division directed all the coffee growers to get pattas from the government for their plantations, on pain of resumption.⁷³ The *ishtihar* sought to stabilise native land

⁶⁹ H. Devereux, Supdt Nuggur Div to Offg Sec Comr Mys, 14 July 1841, Sl. 48, Agri 1838–39.

⁷⁰ Hay to Porter, 26 October 1855; Macleod, Supdt Nuggur Div. to Sec Comr Mys, 20 April 1846, Sl. 60, Agri 1838–39; Revenue Cutcherry Suckkray Patnam, 21 March 1840; Supdt Nagar to Sec Chief Comr Mys, 26 June 1869, Sl. 15, Land Revenue 1868–69, File No. 5, Sl. 1–25, KSA. Gowda—headman of a village, head of village police.

⁷¹ Macleod to Sec Comr Mys, 20 April 1846. It was suggested that if no bidders came forward the land could be given free to the original applicant.

⁷² Supdt Nuggur to Sec Comr Mys, 4 August 1853, No. 142, Nagar Papers 1853, KSA. For example, in Lakvalli a large jungle had around fifty coffee gardens; Supdt Nuggur to Sec Comr Mys, 7 July 1855, No. 174, NP 1855; Hay to Porter, 26 October 1855; Plaintiff's plaint, 7 January 1850; H Devereux to Offg Sec Comr Mys, 5 June 1841, Sl. 45, Agri 1838–39.

⁷³ Comr Coorg to Sec GoI, 23 Aug, 1862, p. 49; *Coffee Cultivation in Mysore*; Order No. 1111-R. 5, 5 May 1876; A 43 Memorandum, 8 March 1860, Nagar Papers 1860, KSA; Montgomery to Sec Comr Mys, 22 April 1840. *Ishtihar*—a notification or proclamation.

ownership, and check excessive land holding, multiple sales and disputes with Europeans.

Access to labour provided another area of conflict between the local planters and Europeans. Coffee plantations came up in remote areas and required a large number of labourers. The Nagar Malnad with its small population faced labour scarcity and difficulties in procuring labour.⁷⁴ Most of the labour force was provided by agrestic 'slaves'.⁷⁵ Slavery was abolished in the British Empire in 1833, and the British government passed an Act against slavery in India in 1843—almost simultaneously with the establishment of the first European plantations.⁷⁶ This enfranchisement along with the pull factor of higher wages and greater freedom offered by the European planters upset the dominant position of the native landholders. Labour desertions heightened labour scarcity with resultant loss of local cultivations especially of areca nut in Mysore.⁷⁷ This in turn reinforced local opposition to acquisition of jungle lands by Europeans for coffee plantations.

European Plantations and Native Responses: Appropriation of Land and Labour

The initial European interest in coffee was confined to trade, by both the agency houses and private merchants.⁷⁸ In 1840, Thomas Cannon established a plantation to the south of Baba Budangiri.⁷⁹ By 1847, Cannon had been followed by W. Elliot, F. D. Meppen and Van Ingen in Nagar Division.⁸⁰ The Malnad weather was cold and feverish, with heavy rains and recurring malaria which deterred immigration. On the other hand, huge blocks of forested lands given to European planters required adequate labour supply for clearing the jungle and

⁷⁴ Rice, *Mysore Gazetteer*, Vol. I, p. 735. Population was sparse especially in west and south Mysore; Cubbon to Sec Comr, 20 September 1859, p. 28; *RAM*, 1863–64, p. 99.

⁷⁵ Jr Asst. Nuggur Div. to Offg Sec Mys Comr, 8 October 1841, No. 236, Nagar Papers 1841, KSA; *Report of The South of India Planters' Enquiry Committee*, 1896, For. Dept. June 1898, Internal B Progs., Nos. 294–303, NAI, p. 18. (Hereafter RSIPEC); Rice, *Mysore Gazetteer*, Vol. I, pp. 648, 254. They could be bought and sold along with their master's estate to which they were attached in the earlier days; These were debt 'slaves' and could be sold in Nuggur in 1841–42. Supdt Nuggur to Off Sec Comr Mys, 2 December 1842, No. 227, Nagar Papers 1842, KSA.

⁷⁶ Sec Comr Mys to Supdt Nuggur, 7 July 1843, No. 91, Nagar Papers 1843, KSA; Kumar, ed., *The Cambridge Economic History of India, Vol. II, 1757–1970*, p. 216. (Hereafter CEHI). According to the Act, there could be no further sales of slaves for arrears of revenue and the courts could not enforce rights associated with possession of slaves.

⁷⁷ *RAM*, 1862–63, p. 32; *RAM*, 1863–64, p. 72. Money wages had risen from ₹3 and 3.5 to ₹4 and 5 per month by early 1860s; Rice, *Mysore Gazetteer*, Vol. I, 254; Census of India, 1891, Vol. XXV, Mysore, Vol. I, p. 252; RSIPEC, p. 18; Micklejohn, Dep Comr Kadur to Sec Dew Mys, 27 October 1882, Sl.3, Land Revenue 1881–82, File no. 16, Sl. 1-6, KSA. In Coorg, rice cultivation was impacted.

⁷⁸ However, these entities also established plantations in Nagar and Ashtagram.

⁷⁹ Rice, *Mysore Gazetteer*, Vol. II, p. 389.

⁸⁰ *RAM*, 1872–73, p. 114.

planting coffee. At times, Europeans established villages near their plantations to attract and settle labour, and had to give up portions of jungles which could not be planted, due to lack of labour, within the stipulated period mentioned in their pattas.⁸¹ Neither did the British administration concede to all the demands of the European planters.⁸²

Establishment of European plantations in the Baba Budan hills region led to deliberate attempts by Europeans to create a perceived difference between European and native planting techniques and production. European systematic planting methods were contrasted with haphazard native ones—a claim dismissed by official enquiries.⁸³ In 1847, F. D. Meppen lamented the decline in the value of Indian coffee in the English market, as the natives were not concerned about the quality of their coffee. Native planters gathered green coffee to harvest the crop early and the processing of the green beans before they were husked ‘completely destroys the flavour and colour of the coffee’.⁸⁴ Native coffee cultivation was characterised as ‘slovenly’—a charge that was repeated throughout the nineteenth century by European planters and officials.⁸⁵

This narrative created the basis for the two coffees of Mysore—native and European. By 1860–61 there was a great influx of European planters due to a ‘perfect mania for [coffee] planting’ with exaggerated notions of profits, ranging from 50–60 per cent.⁸⁶ Coffee acreage expanded with increasing native and European demand. However, natives dominated in number, acreage and production of coffee and could not be subsumed by the European plantations. In the 1860s, native planters held ¾ of the coffee lands, and produced three-fourths of the entire coffee in Mysore.⁸⁷

⁸¹ W. C. Onslow, Supdt Nuggur, to Sec Comr Mys., 24 September 1847, Sl. 64, Agri 1838–39; Elliot to Clerk, 7 September 1847; R. Porter, Santewerry, to Sec Dew Mys, 12 May 1884, Sl. 1, Land Revenue 1883–84, File no. 56–83, Sl. 1–13, KSA; Supdt Nuggur to Sec Comr Mys, 19 June 1858, No. 108, Nagar Papers 1858, KSA. In July 1846, Mr. W Elliot got a patta for an ‘extensive jungle’ (five in total) in the Kulladgherry hill for planting coffee in the Baba Budan hills region in Santeveri, in the Tarikere taluk in Nagar Division. Under the patta 1,132,800 coffee trees had to be planted in the next 15 years, that is, between 1847 and 1861. In 1850, Elliot and his partners gave up two jungles, and, in 1858, two of the three jungles still remained unplanted due to inadequate labour supply.

⁸² Onslow to Sec Comr Mys, 4 May 1850; Sec Comr Mys to Supdt Nuggur, 20 June 1850, No. 74, NP 1850; Memorandum no. 48, M Cubbon, 1 April 1858, NP 1858. Attempts to convert Elliot’s coffee patta to a simple one without any restrictions, and the village lands into a permanent grant were rejected by the British administration in 1850 and 1858.

⁸³ Van Ingen claimed that he had planted coffee trees ‘in straight line, at regular intervals’. Hay to Porter, 26 October 1855; Hay to Porter, 31 October 1855.

⁸⁴ F. D. Meppen to Capt WC Onslow, Supdt of Nuggur, 6 February 1847, Sl. 62, Agri 1838–39.

⁸⁵ Comr Coorg to Sec GoI, 23 Aug 1862, p. 49.

⁸⁶ Bidie, *Report on the Ravages of the Borer*, pp. 1–3. Land was acquired individually, or by joint stock companies and partnerships which purchased ready-made estates.

⁸⁷ Rice, *Mysore Gazetteer*, Vol. I, p. 704; ‘Extract Annual Report Administration of Mysore, 1863–64’ in D. P. Mackenzie to Supdt Nuggur Div, 29 July 1862, No. 31, For. Dept. May 1865, Revenue A, No. 30–32, NAI; Coffee Cultivation in Mysore.

Table 2 Coffee Acreage under European and Native Gardens

Years	No.	Acres	No.	Acres
	European		Native	
1862–63	153	25,244	12,285	38,479
1863–64	179	26,010	12,915	40,534
1864–65	170	29,117	16,770	54,968
1865–66	184	29,930	16,607	60,826
1866–67	196	31,310	18,191	64,151
1867–68	216	31,468	19,622	67,758
1868–69	263	32,042	21,275	75,929
1869–70	282	32,533	21,563	78,460
1870–71	290	34,232	22,191	78,446
1871–72	302	34,267	22,330	78,593
1872–73	305	34,310	22,759	76,690
1873–74	310	33,175	23,409	78,423
1874–75	307	32,631	23,564	78,499
1875–76	301	32,638	23,942	80,487

Source: Mysore Gazetteer, Vol. I, 1897, p. 705.

Table 3 Coffee Acreage and Halat Payments

Years	No. of Estates	Acres	European	Native	Total
			Halat in ₹		
1862–63	12,438	63,723	N.A.	N.A.	93,373
1863–64	13,094	66,544	N.A.	N.A.	109,463
1864–65	16,940	84,085	N.A.	N.A.	92,791
1865–66	16,791	90,756	N.A.	N.A.	102,781
1866–67	18,387	95,461	N.A.	N.A.	43,199
1867–68	19,838	99,226	N.A.	N.A.	106,357
1868–69	21,538	107,971	15,118	89,289	104,407
1869–70	21,845	110,993	11,802	55,176	66,978
1870–71	22,481	112,678	12,581	57,194	69,775
1871–72	22,632	112,860	10,162	64,786	74,948
1872–73	23,064	111,000	16,607	62,554	79,161
1873–74	23,719	111,598	10,415	44,563	54,978
1874–75	23,871	111,130	14,611	51,724	66,335
1875–76	24,243	113,125	16,529	58,044	74,573
1876–77	N.A.	115,314	N.A.	N.A.	52,816
1877–78	N.A.	128,438	N.A.	N.A.	38,108
1878–79	N.A.	127,693	N.A.	N.A.	33,453
1879–80	N.A.	126,731	N.A.	N.A.	36,712
1880–81	N.A.	159,165	N.A.	N.A.	33,611

Source: Mysore Gazetteer, Vol. I, 1897, p. 705.

In 1865–66, native planters paid around 86 per cent, and Europeans around 14 per cent of halat at ₹88,470 and ₹14,311 respectively out of a total of ₹ 102,781.⁸⁸ In 1878, Europeans held over 32,000 acres with 300 estates, and natives held around 80,000 acres with nearly 24,000 estates.⁸⁹

Native opposition to European acquisition of land and labour resources had wide ramifications for the Europeans. There were numerous cases of dispute and litigations in the 1850s, and we cannot under-emphasise the choice and significance of the words used in official records for such tussles. Between 1850 and 1855, Van Ingen, a European planter, tangled with a native planter Pootappah over a coffee garden near Gonikal village in Sakrepatna taluk. Ingen claimed variously that he had acquired the garden from certain gowdas and patels of Gonikal in 1847, and planted coffee.

In 1850, Ingen was fined ₹15 (which was later remitted) for assaulting Pootappah's caretaker, and was accused of carrying away the produce of the garden in dispute. The situation was so grave that Superintendent Onslow declared that the real intention of the planter's native neighbours was 'to drive him out of the country', and emphasised 'the necessity of protecting him from oppression'. Ingen could not prove his case, and Pootappah was given a new patta for the garden in 1855.⁹⁰

In 1851, Veerummah Hegurtee claimed a coffee garden, in Gonacul village in Chikmagalur taluk of Nagar Division, which had been mortgaged to Van Ingen by two men in 1850. She complained to the amildar and sent an *arzi* to the Commissioner against the purchase and issue of a patta to Ingen without proper enquiry.⁹¹ During the two years of investigation, Veerummah refused to appear in person. She could not provide any documentary evidence to back her claim and referred to the Baba Budan makandars, who in turn could not prove anything. This led Onslow to conclude that 'There is reason to believe that she has been instigated to make the complaint she has by the Mukkandars of the Baba booden Hills'. This was seen as a move to deprive a European planter of a legally acquired property. The case was decided in Ingen's favour to ensure security of property rights in Nagar.⁹²

⁸⁸ RAM, 1865–66, p. 8. From the data on halat payments (4 annas per maund = ₹1 per cwt.), we can deduce exports and production.

⁸⁹ Minute by J. D. Gordon, 9 October 1878. The average size of a European plantation was 100 acres and of a native holding around 3.5 acres. Total area under coffee in Nagar and Ashtagram Divisions was 112,000 acres.

⁹⁰ W. C. Onslow, Supdt Nuggur to Sec Comr Mys, 11 July 1850, No. 110, NP 1850. [emphasis added]; Hay to Porter, 26 October 1855. The garden had been granted to Pootappah in 1839 on verbal permission without any patta. Both Pootappah and Van Ingen had applied for pattas in 1852.

⁹¹ Supdt Nuggur to Sec Comr Mys, 25 June 1851, No. 89; Sec Comr Mys to Supdt Nuggur, 29 October 1851, No. 130, Nagar Papers 1851, KSA. Heggade—headman of a village, or village police, at times with rent free lands; *arzi*—a petition.

⁹² Supdt Nuggur to Sec Comr Mys, 3 November 1851, No. 188, *Ibid.* Her brother denied that she owned the garden in dispute; Onslow, Supdt Nuggur to Sec Comr Mys, 3 May 1853, No. 84, NP 1853.

In 1847, Van Ingen purchased a part of the Yemma Khanay garden, which belonged to the Baba Budan makandars, from one of the tenants, Rachappa Chetty for ₹150. The sale deed and the patta issued to Ingen by the makandars in 1849 mentioned the number of trees but not the extent or boundaries of the garden. In order to strengthen his proprietary rights, Ingen applied for and obtained a government patta in May 1851. This patta mentioned the garden's boundary marks, extent (66,330 square yards) and the number of trees (23,150) planted.

The issue of a separate patta to a European planter by the British administration for a portion of the dargah's garden, for which the makandar had the original patta, was unprecedented and resented by the dargah 'Mussalmans'. It altered the existing notions of fluid rights in land and power relations in the coffee taluks. The dargah was entitled to 1/8th of the produce from the portion, but Ghouse Shah Kadry had not received anything until 1853, as both Rachappa Chetty and Ingen were very 'inimical' to him. Kadry alluded to collusion in the sales of gardens to European planters due to 'great friendship' between the amildar, Ingen and Chetty, and 'enmity' which existed between him (Kadry) and Chetty, Ingen, and Meppen.⁹³

Ghouse Shah Kadry was clearly conscious of collusion between the British administration, European planters, and some local officials and growers. However, this collusion was layered, complex, and fluid—the British administration did not always side with the European planters; and native officers, planters and traders at times opposed and at times colluded with the Europeans according to convenience depending on individual cases.

Van Ingen soon had multiple boundary and land disputes with his neighbours—the makandars and their other tenants. Ingen comes across as an aggressive planter who was accused of trespass, forcible weeding, carrying away the coffee produce of gardens belonging to the Kadrys, and of forcible possession of another tenant's garden. Ingen claimed that these gardens formed part of the one he had bought in 1847, and that he had planted them with coffee. The official enquiry, however, dismissed Ingen's claims on the basis of the boundaries defined in the 1851 patta.

In the cases of gardens in dispute (including the one with Pootappah), Van Ingen differentiated his systematic and methodical European coffee planting from that of the natives as being 'planted at regular distances and in straight rows'. However, the trees were not planted in a 'regular system' and were not different from those planted by native growers in the neighbourhood.⁹⁴

An enquiry proved that the two men had held the said garden for considerable time before they had sold it to Van Ingen.

⁹³ Kifeyet of Kadree, 11 August 1853. This sale and transfer was done without the prior knowledge of the makandars; F. D. Meppen, Planter in Nugger Div, to Lt. Genl. M Cubbon, Comr Mys, Petition, 15 November 1853, LR 1821–22; Hay to Porter, 31 October 1855. Mussalman—Muslim.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*; Supdt Nugger to Sec Comr Mys, 7 July 1855. In 1855, Ingen was ordered to not interfere in other gardens, pay for the coffee he had taken, and restore a garden he had grabbed from one of the tenants. Ingen was awarded 74,905 square yards of coffee land.

Van Ingen complained that he was ‘annoyed, insulted and abused’ by the native planters and constantly faced ‘great inconvenience and annoyance’ from the local authorities, who wanted to check his pattas repeatedly and examine his coffee gardens. The local amildar was accused of treating him with disrespect, and siding with Veerummah Hegerty and Kadry. Ingen claimed he was harassed over the ‘frivolous complaints of the Mussalman of the Bababoodan Hills’ who used ‘most disrespectful language’. Another Mussalman—Saphy, who had charged Ingen of stealing coffee from his garden, had used ‘very insulting language’ against the planter during an enquiry held by the amildar. No action was taken against this verbal inversion.⁹⁵ As mentioned above, establishment of European plantations was not a smooth process in the hills. James D. Moore, Jr, in his unpublished thesis underplays the significance of the clashes between European planters and indigenous growers, and the crucial role of inamdars and inam lands coffee in the history of Mysore.⁹⁶

Onslow took serious note of the complaints in 1853 and opined that ‘there is a conspiracy to deprive Mr. Van Ingen of his property and to drive him out of the country’. Onslow recommended that it was imperative ‘to repress ... the overbearing and mischievous influence of the Mussulmans of the Bababooden mutt’ and protect a young planter. Another planter, Meppen, had to deal with ‘similar molestation’, and ‘the Mussulmans have declared their intention of driving out of the country all people of this class who attempt to acquire land in it’.⁹⁷ These were alarming situations for the British administration and European planters as the colonial settlers needed official protection from the natives. The resistance of the dargah makandars was defining the territoriality of coffee cultivation in the Baba Budan hills by driving out the outsiders.⁹⁸

In June 1849 Moortaja Kadry, the young *mokhtesar* of the dargah sold Yemma Khanay coffee garden to Fred Meppen, a European planter, for ₹1000. The transaction was facilitated by Racahappa Chetty and Chengulroy Naik—who had been native agents of Parry and European merchants. The sale led to protests by Moortaja’s relatives, especially his uncle Ghouse Shah Kadry who claimed that as the *mokhtesar* he managed the dargah affairs and controlled the garden.

Ghouse Shah Kadry and other relatives contended that Yemma Khanay was part of the inam lands of the dargah and thus inalienable, even though the patta had been issued in the name of Mahdeen Shah Kadry. Accordingly, Moortaja did not have the right to sell it without the consent of the other *hakdars* of the undivided joint family. Moortaja denied the sale and receipt of money and demanded the

⁹⁵ A. Van Ingen, Mootinpoor, to Maj. W. C. Onslow, Supdt Nuggur, 16 February 1853; Van Ingen to Supdt Nuggur, 8 March 1853, encls. in Onslow to Sec Comr Mys., 3 May 1853.

⁹⁶ Moore, ‘Plantation Development and Labor Response’.

⁹⁷ Onslow to Sec Comr Mys, 3 May 1853.

⁹⁸ Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency*, pp. 278–332.

restoration of the garden, and Meppen was stopped from taking the produce of the garden by Ghouse Shah Kadry. In January 1850, Meppen sued the Kadrys in the Nagar Sadar Munsif Court for the possession of the garden valued at ₹1,000, and ₹300—the value of 200 maunds of coffee taken forcibly from him.⁹⁹

Meppen clung tenaciously to his claim over the coffee garden, while the Kadrys did not want to part with it, or return the sale money.¹⁰⁰ Meppen accused Ghouse Shah Kadry of ‘opposition and arrogance’, and ‘of molesting, annoying and injuring’ him due to the case. Meppen further claimed that Kadry, ‘has been heard today he will not stop until he has got every European at Chickamoogloor out of the country’, and that his ‘only object is to annoy and distress Planters settling in the country’.¹⁰¹ This opinion was endorsed by Onslow, as noted above. Such statements point to the strong and bitter opposition to European planters in the Baba Budan hills region. This habitual, regular and conscious resistance was neither an open insurgency nor a silent day-to-day resistance to colonial incursion, but something between the two poles.¹⁰²

The case went on for three and a half years and was initially adjudged by the panchayat, munsif’s court and Superintendent Onslow.¹⁰³ In his first order of November 1852 Commissioner Mark Cubbon decided to protect the sanctity of dargah property. The sale of the garden was cancelled as ‘irregular and illegal’, and Moortaja was ordered to pay back ₹1000 to Meppen along with interest.¹⁰⁴ Meppen, however, petitioned the Commissioner again and attempted to prove that Yemma Khanay was part of the alienable property of the dargah.

Meppen informed Cubbon that all ‘mutts’ possessed two kinds of property—‘inalienable and alienable’. Yemma Khanay was neither *jagir*, nor inam land, but government land which was granted to Mahdeen Shah Kadry for planting coffee, on his *darkhast* to the local administration. Portions of the garden had been sold earlier to another European planter (Van Ingen) without the consent of the Kadrys,

⁹⁹ Plaintiff’s plaint, 7 January 1850; Memorandum, Ramaswamy, 3 November 1852; Examination of Kadree, 7 November 1853; Kifeyet of Kadree, 11 August 1853; M Cubbon, in appeal before Comr, 5th November 1852, LR 1821–22. Mahdeen Shah Kadry was Moortaja’s father and Ghouse Shah Kadry’s brother. The Kadrys protested against the sale of joint property over which they had rights of pre-emption. Meppen had employed servants and invested ₹78 in the garden. Mokhtesar—head of a department; munsif—subordinate civil judge.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ Petition of F. D. Meppen, 10 August 1853, LR 1821–22; Petition of Meppen to Cubbon, 15 December 1852; Meppen to Cubbon, 15 November 1853.

¹⁰² Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency*; Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*.

¹⁰³ Panchayatdars, Abstract of Special Appeal; Cubbon, 5th November 1852; W. C. Onslow, 7 October 1851.

¹⁰⁴ Cubbon, 5th November 1852. Yemma Khanay was regarded as inam land as its patta did not mention any kandayam or halat demand. According to Cubbon, Moortaja had no power to alienate any portion of dargah land by sale or mortgage, though he was the *mukhtiar*. If the sale was allowed dargah properties could soon become ‘extinguished’. It was decreed that the sale money had been paid.

and the ‘mutt’ had the right to take 1/8th of the produce as rent from the garden, as it did from Ingen.¹⁰⁵

On the basis of these arguments, and Ghouse Kadry’s acknowledgement that dargah lands had been sold earlier, Yemma Khanay was restored to Meppen along with the value of the coffee produce in December 1853. The sale was declared a ‘bona fide transaction’, and a patta for the garden had to be issued to Meppen by the Superintendent of Nagar Division.¹⁰⁶ This tussle ended with the retreat of dargah’s claims over its ‘inam’ lands.

It is significant that at a time when Mysore was under direct British administration, appropriation of land and labour resources by European planters was challenged by women coffee growers. In 1852, one Mootyalumma of Chikmagalur complained that her labourer ‘slaves’ had been forcibly taken away by Cannon’s servants, with the help of ‘sirkar servants’. Both the amildar and Cannon denied any collusion. Mootyalumma could not be traced to identify the peons who had taken the labourers (she had given advances to) to prove her complaint before the amildar. According to Onslow, the real reason behind the complaint was the ‘great struggle ... for labourers’ in the coffee districts and ‘spite’ for the European planters.¹⁰⁷ This struggle over labour became intense as the century progressed.

In another case Chennamah, a Brahmin widow, in her arzi to Onslow claimed a coffee garden sold to Cannon by her brothers in law. It was noted that both the complainants were women and could not be traced to prove their charges. The intention of the arzis was apparently to malign Cannon, a planter of good reputation.¹⁰⁸ Tussles between native and European planters characterised the development of the coffee industry in Mysore (and Coorg) in the colonial period.

Increasing demand and rapid extension of coffee acreage led to rise in value and scarcity of suitable lands by 1863.¹⁰⁹ Around the same time there were official

¹⁰⁵ Meppen to Cubbon, 15 December 1852. According to Meppen, the inalienable lands of the mutts consisted of ‘Enams, Jagheers’ and ‘Maniums’ which were ‘granted by native Government for the support of the Mutt’ for which they held duly registered documents in the records of the country. The ‘alienable property’ consisted of lands ‘acquired privately from time to time by the mutt’; Ghouse Shah Kadry also acknowledged that he and other dargah people had sold and transferred gardens on their own, without the consent of other family members, if the transaction was profitable. Examination of Kadree, 7 November 1853; Meppen to Cubbon, 15 November 1853; Meppen before Harvey, 10 August 1853. According to Meppen, the fact that Yemma Khanay was granted for one year proved that the garden was not inam land. Jagir—rent free lands granted for services rendered to government; maniums—exempt from taxes or imposts; darkhast—application, petition.

¹⁰⁶ M. Cubbon, In Appeal before the Comr, 10 December 1853, LR 1821–22; Examination of Kadree, 7 November 1853.

¹⁰⁷ W. C. Onslow, Supdt Nuggur to Sec Comr Mys, 25 January 1853, No. 16, NP 1853. Cannon in turn stated that he would have compensated her. Cannon, settled in the area since 1841, claimed that he had a good reputation amongst his native neighbours, and no complaint had ever been made against him.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ *RAM, 1863–64*, p. 70.

concerns regarding the ecological impact of European open planting techniques, introduced in Ashtagram and Coorg especially, to give high profits. Evidence of 'total annihilation' and 'utter destruction of some magnificent tracts of Forest lands' led to curbs on granting forest lands for coffee.¹¹⁰ This further exacerbated scarce land resources for the Europeans. Opening of coffee plantations on the hill slopes entailed felling of forest trees. It diminished precipitation and the downstream supply of springs to the raiyats' areca nut, rice fields and wastelands. This caused conflicts between coffee and other crops as well as between European planters and local raiyats.

Acreage and Diminution of Inam Lands and Inamdars

In 1860, the British administration introduced a new coffee patta with strict stipulations for planting 500 trees per acre on lands granted for coffee cultivation within five years, or the lands could be resumed. Lands were granted specifically for planting coffee on halat payment of 4 annas per maund of coffee produced or exported, which was subject to revision.¹¹¹ This was done to curb excessive land holding without proper cultivation—by both natives and Europeans. The patta also attempted to control rampant coffee smuggling with halat evasion in the absence of survey of land under coffee cultivation and definite record of quantity of produce.¹¹² Despite repeated warnings, many native growers had not registered their lands or applied for pattas. It was recognised officially that the people had 'wilfully disregarded the *circular* orders'.¹¹³ Coffee smuggling, the wilful disregard of government orders, and opposition to European planters at the ground level can be seen as conscious native resistance to control from above.

The 1860 patta was opposed by the Baba Budan hills inamdars as the new stipulations curbed their special status. They asserted their right to grow any crop on their lands and use the timber on them. They also claimed that the halat they paid was a 'mere excise', and not in lieu of waram.¹¹⁴ In 1854, Makandar Ghose Shah Kadry complained against the levy of seigniorage on the timber cut in his inam 'holdings'. This was exempted in 1860 by Superintendent Porter's orders, as no waram had been paid on the lands.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁰ *Supdt Asgm to Sec Comr Mys*, 2 October 1863, Sl. 73, Agri, 1838–39. Open planting was also related to increased drying of seasons and resultant borer deprecations of 1866–67 especially on European plantations.

¹¹¹ *Puttah for Coffee Lands; Off Sec Comr Mys to Supdt Asgm*, 20 February 1860 Sl. 2, General Miscellaneous 1837–38, File no. 3, Sl. 1–28, KSA. Valuable trees on granted lands belonged to the sirkar, not planters. Planters were asked to return their old pattas to Superintendents and apply for new ones.

¹¹² *Ibid.*; *Comr Coorg to Sec GoI*, 23 August 1862, p. 50; Order No. 1111-R. 5, 5 May 1876.

¹¹³ A 43 Memorandum, 8 March 1860.

¹¹⁴ *Off Sec Comr Mys to Supdt Asgm*, 20 February 1860; The Notification of October 1857 had circumscribed the rights of the planters over the timber standing on their plantations. 'Notification', JT Porter, *Supdt Nuggur to Sec Comr Mys*, 31 October 1857, No. 214, Nagar Papers 1859, KSA.

¹¹⁵ *Khadri to Dew Mys*, 8 September 1887.

The existence of coffee growing inam lands had important bearing on taxation of coffee. After the new patta of 1860, European planters made repeated complaints against the heavy, fluctuating halat and the stricter resumption clause for non-cultivation. They demanded a 'light' acreage assessment on coffee lands which would give them secure proprietary rights.¹¹⁶ However, the extensive rent free jagir lands which grew large quantities of coffee on the Baba Budan hills, and could not be taxed easily, deterred introduction of acreage assessment in Mysore.¹¹⁷ Commissioner Bowring did not advocate arbitrary prohibition of coffee cultivation on inam lands.¹¹⁸ Demand for acreage assessment was not made by the native majority who preferred halat over a fixed land tax. Yet, acreage assessment on coffee lands was introduced in Coorg in 1864 and in Mysore in August 1881.¹¹⁹

The move to clip the vast lands held by inamdars was a pan India phenomenon in the nineteenth century. In Mysore, it got intermeshed with coffee.¹²⁰ Huge tracts in the Baba Budan range were claimed as rent free inam lands by the makandars of the Baba Budan dargah, and the Bisagni mutt. There was no sanad or record of the first origins of the inams. The lands had never been measured, the *jari* accounts did not mention them and there was no record of their *bijwari* assessment. The claims of the Dattatreya peetha dargah were based on three nirups in its possession.¹²¹

The British administration started the survey in Mysore in 1863, and constituted the Inam Commission in 1866.¹²² The two institutions worked in tandem to curb the excessive lands held by inamdars. In 1867, the Baba Budan dargah inam lands were characterised as 'grants or endowments towards the support of religious or charitable institutions'. The Inam Commission recognised that inams as a rule held excess lands. If inams did not exist before 1831, they were liable to be resumed.

¹¹⁶ Coffee Cultivation in Mysore. The European planters' contention was that, with an average production of 25 maunds of coffee per acre, under halat they paid ₹6 per acre as tax as opposed to ₹1 per acre as land tax in the Madras Presidency. Mysore planters wanted parity with European planters of British India.

¹¹⁷ 'Extract Annual Report Administration of Mysore, 1863–64', in D. P. Mackenzie to Supdt Nuggur Div, 29 July 1862.

¹¹⁸ Comr Coorg to Sec GoI, 23 August 1862, p. 56; L. Bowring, Comr Mys to W Muir, Sec GoI, 4 July 1865, No. 4, For. Dept. Aug 1865, Revenue A, Progs. 4–6, NAI; *Coffee Cultivation in Mysore*. On the other hand, if halat was retained just for inam lands, a lot of coffee from other lands could be passed off as inam produce and escape taxation.

¹¹⁹ This early acceptance of demand was due to greater coffee acreage under European planters compared to native cultivators, and the fact that Coorg was a part of British India.

¹²⁰ Kumar, *CEHI*, Vol. II, p. 227. According to Kumar, in South India the Inam Commission was set up in 1858 to validate inams which had been in lawful possession since the last fifty years, and resume and commute others.

¹²¹ Supdt Mys Rev Sur to Sec Dew Mys, 7 April 1884; Order, Revenue Progs, No. 710–11/7, 28 April 1884, Sl. 6, LR 1882. *Jari*—continued or current; *bijwari*—area of land calculated according to the quantity of seed required for sowing it.

¹²² *Imperial Gazetteer*, p. 82. The survey was completed in 1901.

In 'doubtful cases', and where the inam was probably enjoyed for full 50 years, a quit rent of 1/4th of the assessment was to be imposed.¹²³ The Baba Budan dargah inam lands were put in this category.

In 1883, the Dattatreya peetha Baba Budan dargah claimed 2,873 acres which contrasted completely 'with the original permission to cultivate [coffee], free of tax, within the enclosure of the Makkan, mentioned in the Nirup' of 1828–29. According to the order of 28 April 1884, large parts of the lands claimed by the makandar as inam had been encroached upon in the last fifty years. The Mysore government decided not to resume the inams despite their weak claims, and to treat the dargah generously due to its 'importance and antiquity'. The coffee growing inam lands of the dargah and the Bisagni mutt were confirmed on 'equitable quit rent' of 1/4th of the assessment rate (of ₹1–8–0 per acre). A permanent settlement was imposed upon the tenants or the inferior holders of the two 'institutions', to give them security of tenure.¹²⁴

During the survey, the boundaries of the Dattatreya peetha dargah were sought to be settled and fixed. The coffee growing inam lands of the dargah were divided into two parts—Dattatreya peetha I and Dattatreya peetha II, and their maps were prepared. The inam lands of the Bisagni mutt were limited to the Kolgave village. The inam lands of the dargah were to be confirmed as 'whole inam villages' along with arable or non-arable waste to create convenient and compact blocks. The dargah claimed Dattatreya peetha I and II as its own.¹²⁵

In 1887, the Diwan of Mysore dismissed the petition of Ghouse Shah Kadry, the manager of the dargah, to confirm the inams without the 1/4th quit rent, and

¹²³ RAM, 1867–68, pp. 98–99; In 1872–73, the Inam Commissioner's duties were transferred to the Survey and Settlement Commissioner. Rice, *Mysore Gazetteer*, Vol. I, pp. 698–699.

¹²⁴ Supdt Mys Rev Sur to Sec Dew Mys, 7 April 1884. The inams were confirmed by the government to maintain the prestige of the two institutions and to provide sufficient funds for the discharge of their religious and charitable duties. The Deputy Commissioner of Kadur was authorized to manage the inam lands for 2–3 years to ensure the settlement of lands and deal with petty land disputes. Most of the coffee lands under the inamdars were occupied by inferior holders or tenants. Almost all the coffee gardens were either heavily mortgaged or sold to 'others' who paid 3 seers per maund (7.5 per cent) of the coffee produced, as levied by the institutions; Order, Revenue Progs., No. 710–11/7, 28 April 1884, Sl. 6; The Deputy Commissioner of Kadur was authorized to fix assessment varying from ₹1 to ₹1.5 per acre on a permanent basis with the tenants. Progs of Dewan of Mysore Maharaja, Camp No. 785, 11 July 1885, Sl. 10, LR 1882.

¹²⁵ Supdt Mys Rev Sur to Sec Dew Mys, 7 April 1884. The two institutions were spread over three villages. In 1883, the new Dattatripit village had 2,873 acres—17 guntas, which were claimed as inam lands by the dargah. Kolagavi village had 940 acres—30 guntas, and Hogrehalli had 344 acres—9 guntas which were claimed by the Bisagni mutt as inam lands; Petition of Syed Gow Sha Kadri Khan Bahadur of Dattatriyapitha Darga, No. 1059, date of Arzi 4.8.90, Sl. 21; Order no. 717–18/PF 27–93, 5 October 1901, Sl. 55; Letter from Supdt of Rev Survey, 15 July 1890, No. 225, encl. in, Progs. of Mys Govt to Supdt Rev Survey, 12 August 1890, Genl. No. 5167–8/74, Sl. 27, LR 1882. Wastelands were to be made part of the inam villages according to the topographical features and reasonable requirements of the inamdars and cultivators.

to cancel the inam lands of the Bisagni mutt in Kolgave village.¹²⁶ The Mysore government continued the British policy of limiting the inam lands of the dargah. In the Dattareya peetha II village the dargah got involved in land disputes with the Bisagni mutt over Mahal lands. Ghouse Kadry also claimed that some lands of Mr Brito's Mensungundi estate were former inam lands.

However, on the basis of documentary proof and witnesses, the Deputy Commissioner of Kadur ruled in favour of the Bisagni mutt and Brito. The survey maps were not regarded as a final settlement of disputes between the parties, and the dargah's claims over Dattareya peetha II on the basis of sanads of Tipu Sultan were declared to be 'worthless' by the Mysore government.¹²⁷ We thus see continued circumscription of the Baba Budan dargah lands vis-a-vis the European planters.

The Mysore government recognised that the inamdars did not have legal rights over 'extensive lands' which included 'almost the whole of the upper inner slopes and crests of the Bababudan hills on their eastern and southern aspects'. These 'wild and unproductive lands' were held nominally without much benefit, merely to add importance and dignity to the institutions.¹²⁸ The official view was that resumption of the vast arable and non-arable waste and grazing lands would still leave extensive lands for the dargah.¹²⁹ For the administration, the proof of validity of inam lands was based on possession of sanads, and for the makandars on non-payment of waram on the said lands.

The 1901 orders directed that 881 acres – 31 *guntas* of land under actual occupation, and 2,349 acres – 32 *guntas* of culturable and unculturable land be formed into a village called 'Dattatripit' and given to the Baba Budan dargah in Kadur district. 1,836 acres – 34 *guntas* of land were confirmed to the Bisagni mutt and called 'Mahal'. 2,700 acres – 4 *guntas* of waste were removed from the old maps of 'Dattatripit' Parts I and II and reserved to the government.¹³⁰ In 1902, the Mysore government dismissed the appeal on behalf of late Ghouse Shah Kadry over the claim of survey numbers 292 to 295 of the Mensungundi estate as part of the inam lands of the Dattareya peetha dargah.¹³¹

¹²⁶ Khadri to Dew Mys, 8 September 1887. The Bisagni mutt lands were claimed by the dargah; Mys Dew Office to Dep Comr Kadur, 13 December 1887, Sl. 14, *Ibid*.

¹²⁷ Dep Comr Kadur Dist to Chf Sec Mys Govt, 16 March 1891; Memo, J H Campbell, Dep Comr Kadur, 31 December 1888, Sl. 18, *Ibid*.

¹²⁸ Order no. 717–18/PF 27–93, 5 October 1901.

¹²⁹ J. P. Grant, Sur Supdt Mys to Dep Comr Kadur Dist, 20 August 1890, Sl. 23, LR 1882. A very large area of ain-kharab lands and unoccupied assessed lands were mapped into Dattatripit I (4,805 acres) and Dattatripit II (929 acres). According to the Survey Superintendent, mapping of such vast lands in the villages gave no rights to the dargah over them as inam lands. The dargah could not produce any evidence to stake its claims over the 'unculturable lands' but the fact that there was no opposing interest to limit them.

¹³⁰ Order no. 717–18/PF 27–93, 5 October 1901.

¹³¹ Mysore Dewan's Office, Petition Dept., No. 1059, 22 Aug 1902, Sl. 57, LR 1882. The government did not want to deviate from the findings of the Deputy Commissioner in December 1888.

Conclusion

Coffee came into prominence in 1799 with British ascendancy over Mysore state after the death and defeat of Tipu Sultan. Coffee cultivation was limited to Baba Budan dargah lands in the early nineteenth century, and regarded as the preserve of the inamdars. European incursion in the form of agency houses, traders and planters, and an expanding export market led to increase in prices and induced expansion of cultivation. Coffee was a popular and profitable crop for both natives and Europeans.

Native cultivators dominated coffee acreage and production. The coffee industry consisted of two components—native and European—which were not mutually exclusive. The British administration facilitated the establishment of European plantations, but did not concede to all the demands of the planters, or completely disregard native rights. Attempts to dominate, control, and regulate the coffee industry by the British administration and the European planters were repeatedly contested by the natives, with varying success.

The Baba Budan dargah inamdars tangled with the administration over the validity, scope and definition of their inams, and payment of tax. European notions of proprietary rights in land and emphasis on the written word came into conflict with fluid and oral notions of rights and agreements held by the natives. Encounters with Europeans generally led to limitation of inam rights and lands. Appropriation of land and labour by Europeans was challenged and resisted by native coffee cultivators and the dargah inamdars—and provides new insights into the history of resistance in colonial India.

References

- Allen, S. L. *The Devil's Cup: A History of the World According to Coffee*, New York, 1999.
- Amin, S. *Sugarcane and Sugar in Gorakhpur: An Inquiry into Peasant Production for Capitalist Enterprise in Colonial India*, Delhi, 1984.
- Annual Report on the Administration of Coorg for the year 1869–70.*
- Baak, P. E. *Plantation Production and Political Power: Plantation Development in South-west India in a Long-Term Historical Perspective, 1743–1963*, Delhi, 1997.
- Behal, R. P. *One Hundred Years of Servitude: Political Economy of Tea Plantations in Colonial Assam*, New Delhi, 2014.
- Bidie, G. *Report on the Ravages of the Borer in Coffee Estates*, Madras, 1869.
- Bowring, L. *Memorandum on the Malnad of the Nagar Division with the View of Showing the Existing Communications and the Measures Required for Further Opening up the Country*, Bangalore, 1869.
- Buchanan, F. *A Journey from Madras through the Countries of Mysore, Canara, and Malabar, Vols. I–III, 1807*, (Reprint), New Delhi, 1999.
- Census of India 1891, Vol. XXV, Mysore, Part I, Report with Appendices*, Bangalore, 1893.
- Clarence-Smith, W.G., and S. Topik, eds., *The Global Coffee Economy in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, 1500–1989*, Cambridge, 2003.
- Elliot, R. H. *The Experiences of a Planter in the Jungles of Mysore, Vols. I & II*, London, 1871.
- . *Gold, Sport, and Coffee Planting in Mysore*, Westminster, 1894.

- Gadgil, M., and R. Guha. *The Use and Abuse of Nature Incorporating This Fissured Land: An Ecological History of India and Ecology and Equity*, New Delhi, 2000.
- Guha, A. *Planter Raj to Swaraj: Freedom Struggle and Electoral Politics in Assam 1826–1947*, (Revised edition), New Delhi, 2006.
- Guha, R. *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*, (Reprint), Delhi, 1986.
- Imperial Gazetteer of India: Mysore and Coorg*, Calcutta, 1908.
- Karnataka State Archives (KSA), Agriculture 1838–39, 1872–73, 1876–77, Bangalore.
- KSA, Ashtagram Papers, 1840.
- KSA, General Miscellaneous, 1837–38.
- KSA, Land Revenue 1821–22, 1835–36, 1868–69, 1878–79, 1881–82, 1882, 1883–84.
- KSA, Nagar Papers 1837–1860.
- Kumar, D. *Colonialism, Property and the State*, Delhi, 1998.
- . ed., *The Cambridge Economic History of India, Volume II: 1757–1970*, (Reprint), Hyderabad, 1984.
- MacFarlane, A. and Iris. *Green Gold: The Empire of Tea*, London, 2004.
- Moore, J. D., Jr. 'Plantation Development and Labor Response in Nineteenth Century Mysore', PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1983.
- Mysore and Coorg Directory*, Bangalore, 1883.
- National Archives of India (NAI), Foreign Department: General A, Internal B, Political, Revenue, Revenue A, 1856–1898, New Delhi.
- NAI, Mysore Residency, 1889.
- Playne, S. *Southern India: its History, People, Commerce and Industrial Resources*, London, 1914.
- Report on the Administration of Mysore for the year 1862–63, 1863–64, 1865–66, 1867–68, 1872–73*.
- Rice, B. L. *Mysore and Coorg: A Gazetteer compiled for the Government of India, Vol. I, Mysore*, Bangalore, 1876.
- . *Mysore and Coorg: A Gazetteer compiled for the Government of India, Vol. II*, Bangalore, 1876.
- . *Mysore: A Gazetteer compiled for Government, Vol. I, Mysore in General*, (Revised edition), Westminster, 1897.
- . *Mysore: A Gazetteer compiled for Government, Vol. II, Mysore, by Districts*, (Revised edition), Westminster, 1897.
- Richter, G. *Gazetteer of Coorg: Natural Features of the Country and the Social and Political Condition of its Inhabitants*, 1870, (Reprint), Delhi, 2008.
- Royal Commission on Labour in India: *Report of the Royal Commission on Labour in India, VII*, Calcutta, 1931.
- Scott, J. C. *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, Delhi, 1990.
- Selections from the Records of the Mysore Commissioners Office, Bangalore, 1864.
- Ukers, W. H. *All About Coffee*, (2nd ed.), New York, 1935.
- Wilks, M. *Report on the Interior Administration, Resources and Expenditure of the Government of Mysore, Under the System Prescribed by the Orders of the Governor General in Council*, 4 Sept. 1799, Bangalore, 1861.