

# Tigers Religious Policy

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**Abstract:** Religious Policy a representation of a ruler that signifies a particular characteristic. Tipu Sultan, though virtual ruler of Mysore, recognised the nominal sovereignty of the Hindu Maharaja in whose service he had risen to such great power. He gave more importance for the non Muslim Religions. He gave gifts to many temples.

**Keywords:** Muzarai System, portfolio, Religious tolerance, Fundamental Tenet, Jagadhguru, Badshah.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Temples in South Indian policy were active centres of religious and social life in their respective areas, and rulers used with one another in making gifts and creating endowments for the proper functioning of the temples in their dominions... in the Mysore state kingdom we can see the religious policy of during Tipu Sultan which is very famous. Tipu is very famous for his administration and he has assumed the title as “Tiger of Mysore”.

Tipu Sultan, described by Historians was an enlightened ruler who believed that, god is not confined to any religion and that all religions therefore, deserve equal respect. He was opposed to colonialism and was a firm believer in rights of man. He welcomed the American Declaration of Independence and applauded the spirit of the French Revolution. He was the first among the Modern India Nationalist. Who knew also that India was weakened not by outside powers but by sickness, decadence and disunity within?

K.N.V. Shastri of Bangalore has added to our knowledge many revealing facts about Tipu Sultan in his article: The *Muzarai* System under Mysore *Maharajas* read by him at the 38<sup>th</sup> Session of the Indian Historical Records Commission at Jadavpur in 1967. A.D. Tipu sultan appointed Hindus to posts of highest ranks in his states. Thus one Sharma Iyenger was the minister of Posts and Police, Krishna Rao was his Chief Treasures, Purnaiya held the most important portfolio of Mir Asaf on the diplomatic missions. He sent Appaji Ram and Srinivasa Rao to Peshwa at Poona. Sujan rai and Mulchand were his Mukhtars. (Tipu`s Declaration – 1787).

“Religious tolerance is the fundamental Tenet of the Holy *Quran*”.

The *Quran* calls upon you not revile the idols of another religion for it says. Revile not those unto whom they prey beside *Allah*. They wrongfully revile *Allah* through ignorance..... the *Quran* expects you to vie with each other in good works and says for each we have appointed a divine law and a traced out way. Had *Allah* willed he could have made you one community..... So vie one with another in good works. ( Ali 1993:20).

Sheikh Ali has mentioned the above declaration in his writings.

## 2. IMPORTANCE TO OTHER RELIGIONS

In the Historical accounts of Western authors like Mark Wilks and James Mill, the Military chroniclers like Alexander Beatsons, Wood and some Indian Historians, there are vivid descriptions of the ‘Destruction of temples and confiscation of temple lands’ in the areas that Tipu held.

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Tipu respected not only temples, but also Hindu seats of learning. The archives of the Sringeri monastery has many letters written by Tipu Sultan to his holiness Sri Sacchidananda Bharti, the 30<sup>th</sup> Pontiff of the Sringeri Mutt. The contents of the letters bear testimony to the great veneration and reverence in which Tipu held the pontiff.

In 1791A.D., Maratha Horsemen under the command of General Parashuram Bhave plundered the Sringeri monastery of all its valuables, looted the temples, killed and wounded *Devi*. ( Karnataka Gazetteer1981:624).

Several letters in kannada addressed to the *Jagadguru* of Sringeri Mutt on behalf of Tipu Sultan have been found in which Tipu is referred to as '*Badshah*' (king / Emperor). The letters reflect Tipu's high regard for the *Mutt* while seeking the blessings of the *Jagadguru* for Tipu's welfare and success of his Military campaigns. In a letter sent around a 1798-99, Tipu recalled that as a result of *Havana* performed at Sringeri, the enemy was suppressed, requested that *Havana*, *Japa*, be performed again for the destruction of his enemy and the victory of his Government. He ordered the *Asaf* of *Nagar* to arrange for the material required for the purpose.

Though Tipu was a Muslim he was following *Japa* and *Havana* for the victory of his government.

Tipu Sultan granted lands for the maintenance of about 100 temples in his kingdom. He also gave 12 elephants to the Yoganarasimha temples, Melukote, to carry the deity during the annual *utsavam* (festival) in this temple. Even today Tipu is remembered during the daily *Poojas* as a gesture of gratitude with the words. "*Tipu Sultan ka –salam*" at the time of the Third Mysore War Tipu visited Kanchipuram (Canjeevaram) and made a grant of 10,000 *huns* for the construction of a temple. During his stay at Kanchipuram, he also participated in the Chariot festival, and bore the cost of the fireworks on the occasion. (Hasan 1971: 362).

In the Sri Ranganatha temple, Rangapura, A fresco depicting Tipu Sultan fighting a tiger and riding a horse are shown on the pillar and beam of the portico.

These Historical and archaeological facts reveal that far from being a religious bigot and fanatic, Tipu Sultan respected all faiths by extending financial assistance, gifts and full freedom of worship to his subjects.

### 3. CONTRIBUTIONS OF TIPU SULTAN

- 1) Tipu addressed Sringeri Swamiji as *Jagadguru*.
- 2) Gave gifts to numerous temples such as –
  - a) Lakshmikanth temple in Kalale in Nanjanagudu.
  - b) Narayan Swamy temple at Melukote.
  - c) Srikanteshwara temple at Nanjanagudu.
  - d) Ranganatha swamy temple at Srirangapatna.
  - e) Nanjundeshwara temple at Nanjanagudu.
  - f) Narasimha temple at Srirangapatna.
  - g) Gangadhreshwara temple at Srirangapatna.
  - h) Fixed allowance to Royakottai temple in Tamil Nadu.
  - i) Gave 10,000 Huns to complete at Canjeevaram in Tamil Nadu.
  - j) Participated in the celebration of its chariot festival, when the temple construction was finished.
  - k) Settled the dispute between two seats of Melokote temple in respect of some religious observances, and both parties accepted his decision.
  - l) He received the *prasada* and the shawl from the *Swamiji*.

#### 4. TIPU'S GIFTS TO HINDU TEMPLES

Tipu's gifts to the Hindu temples are explained here. Those are –

##### 1) Lakshmi Kanta Temple:

Kalale in Nanjanagudu has a silver cup donated by Tipu Sultan. A short kannada inscription, which is engraved on the silver cup read: 'Tipu Sultan *Padashah*'s gift a weight grams 84'. (Institute Of Kannada Studies 1977: 411).

ನೃಪತುಂಗನು ಒಡಿಸಿದ ಸಿಂಹದ ಕಿರೀಟದ ಮೇಲೆ  
 ಇಟ್ಟಿರುವ 84 ಗ್ರಾಂ ತೂಕದ ಕಿರೀಟ

This Silver inscription tells us that it was presented by Tipu Sultan *Padsha* to the above temple.

##### 2) Sri Sharada Devi Temple - Sringeri, Chikmagalore District.

Tipu Sultan presented the *acharya* with a number of gifts during the period 1792 – 1798. The *Swamiji* was very much pleased with Tipu sultan's munificence and expressed his pleasure by blessing Tipu. In return Tipu gave many gifts to Sri Sharada Devi Temple.

##### 3) Nanjundeshwara Or Srikanteshwara Temple.

*Linga* was gifted to Nanjundeshwara temple by Tipu.

The Kannada inscription on the marble tablet above the door of the sanctorum reads-

ನೃಪತುಂಗನು ಒಡಿಸಿದ ಸಿಂಹದ ಕಿರೀಟದ ಮೇಲೆ  
 ಇಟ್ಟಿರುವ 84 ಗ್ರಾಂ ತೂಕದ ಕಿರೀಟ  
 ಇಟ್ಟಿರುವ 84 ಗ್ರಾಂ ತೂಕದ ಕಿರೀಟ

(Mysore Archaeological Department 1940: 26).

4) Sri Siddalingeshwara Temple - Nanjanagudu, Mysore. Tipu Sultan gifted two huge bronze bells to the temple. And he had good relations with them.

##### 5) Chelva Narayan Swamy Temple – Melukote

Tipu Sultan gifted two Silver Cups to this temple. ( Institute Of Kannada Studies 1977: 261).

##### 6) Yoga Narasimha Swamy Temple, Melukote.

Two Kettle drums in 1781.A.D., were presented by Tipu Sultan to the Melukote temple.

##### 7) Sri Ranganatha Swami Temple, Fort, Srirangapatna.

A big Silver Bowl, three Silver Cups, a Silver *Pancharati* and a Silver kettle. ( Institute Of Kannada Studies).

##### 8) Sri Bhu Narayan Devararay Temple, Hagribomanahalli, Bellary District.

In 1786. A.D. Tipu Sultan presented one large and two small gold crowns inlaid with uncut rubies, and a necklace of gold beads and a pendant to the deities of the temple, Rama, Lakshmana Devaru.

Important Hindu Officers Under Tipu were –

- 1) Purnaiya – Minister of Revenue
- 2) Krishna Rao – Minister for Finance (Treasury)
- 3) Shama Rao – Minister Of Post and Police

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- 4) Ranga Iyengar – High position at Srirangapatna
  - 5) Srinivasa Rao – Ambassador at Madrass
  - 6) Appaji Ram - Ambassador at Pune
  - 7) Moolchand - Ambassador at Delhi
  - 8) Subha Rao – copies of 30 letters of Confidents of Tipu
  - 9) Nayaka Sanngana - Confidents of Tipu
  - 10) Narasaiya – Chief *Munshi*
  - 11) Nagapaiya – ( *A Brahmin* ) – *Faujidar* of Coorg
  - 12) Hari Singh – Commander of a Division in the army
  - 13) Sripat Rao – High position in the army
  - 14) Shivaji – Cavalry Commander of 3000 horse
  - 15) Rama Rao – Commander of Cavalry
- ❖ Gandhi had called Tipu “Embodiment of Hindu Muslim Unity”.
  - ❖ Srikantaiah – Editor of Mysore Gazetteer – furnished Dr. B.N. Pande, the renowned Historian, a list of 156 temples to which Tipu paid annual grants. He sent photo copies of 30 letters of Tipu written to Shankaracharya of Sringeri.

**5. CONCLUSION**

Tipu had developed a great liking and admiration for the Indian Culture and ways of life. During the course of time Tipu Sultan contributed immensely to the Hindu Temples. And he gave many gifts to the various temples for example Melukote temple, Sharada Devi Temple, Sringeri, Ranganatha Swamy temple..... etc.

Like this Tipu gifted numerous gifts to the other religion and personally he had participated.

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