



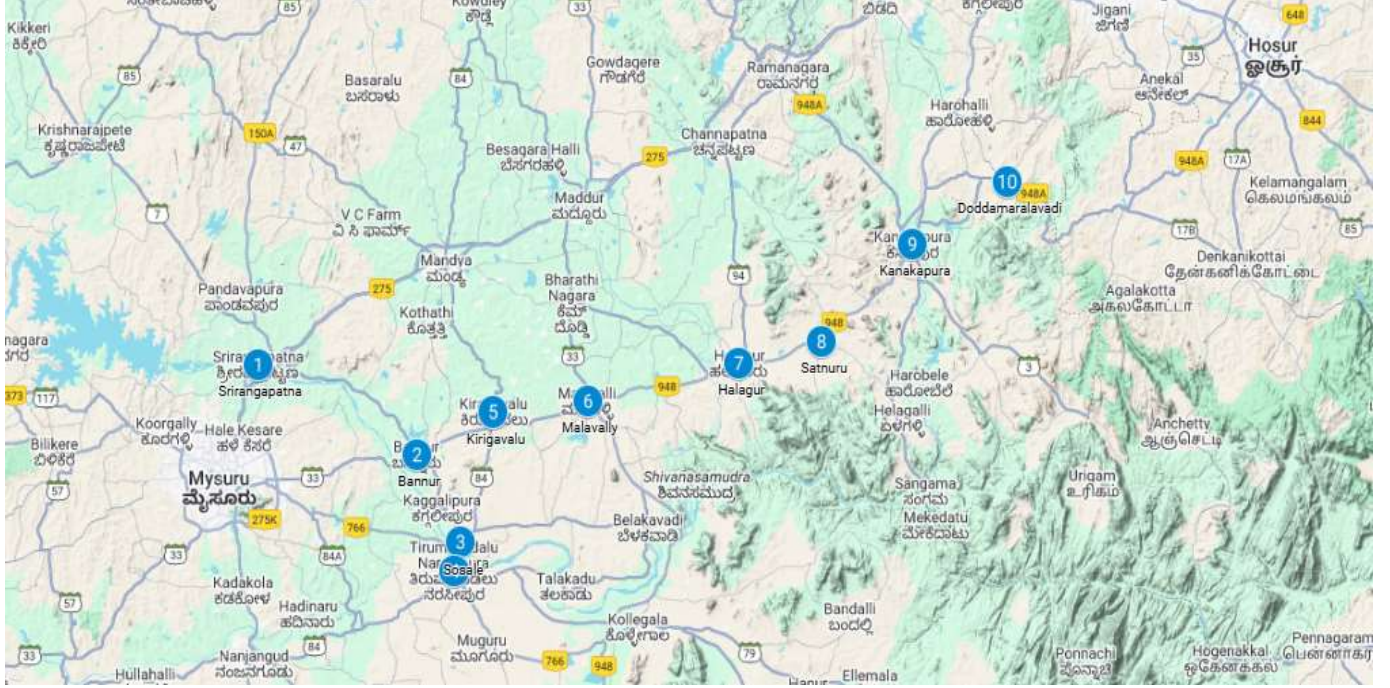
**200 YEARS LATER**  
**RETRACING FRANCIS BUCHANAN'S JOURNEY OF 1800-01**  
**THROUGH PARTS OF SOUTHERN INDIA**

**Chapter XX: Journey from Seringapatam (Srirangapatna) to Madras**  
**(Karnataka Region Only)**

**SHIVA M**  
**PROJECT FIELD RESEARCHER**

**FOUNDATION TO AID INDUSTRIAL RECOVERY (FAIR)**  
**BANGALORE, INDIA**

1.Seringapatam (Srirangapatna);2. Bannur; 3. Sosale(Sosila); 4.T Narasipura; 5..Kirigavil(Kirigavalu);  
6.Malawully (Malavalli) 7.Sathnoor (Satnuru); 8.Cancan-hully (Kanakapura);9.Malalwady (Doddamaralavadi)



On 21st March 2025, after leaving Srirangapatna, I passed through Ganjam and Karighatta, which Buchanan referred to as Karighat. The route traversed small hilly terrain, with extensive paddy fields nourished by the Kaveri River's irrigation system. Further along, I reached Arakere, which Buchanan documented as Arkaray, noting its fertile lands with abundant paddy cultivation. Even today, the edges of these fields are lined with Babul trees (*Vachellia nilotica*), just as Buchanan observed. Locals continue to use this tree's wood as a raw material for crafting agricultural implements, preserving a tradition that has lasted for centuries.

### Bannur (Banuru)



*A paddy field near Bannur, bordered by areca nut plantations and coconut trees along the hedges.*

Following the course of the Kaveri River, I reached Bannur, a municipal town under T. Narasipura Taluk, located about 25 kilometers from Mysore. Nearby stands the renowned Somanathapura temple, an exquisite Hoysala-period monument known for its intricate carvings. Bannur is also historically significant as the birthplace of Vyasatirtha, a prominent Hindu philosopher of the Madhwacharya Dvaita order. The landscape here is largely flat, with vast stretches of lush green paddy fields sustained by the irrigation waters of the Kaveri, much like how Buchanan described it in his accounts.





*A shepherd with his flock of sheep, Bannur.*

Along with agriculture, Bannur is renowned for its indigenous sheep breed, known as "Bannur Kuri." This breed is highly prized for its excellent quality of meat and wool. Local farmers have selectively bred these sheep over generations to suit the environmental conditions of the region. Bannur sheep are valued for their adaptability, resistance to diseases, and low maintenance requirements, making them an essential part of the region's livestock economy.

Many agricultural lands in Bannur are irrigated by canals sourced from the Ramaswami Anecut, a masonry dam built across the Kaveri River, ensuring a steady supply of water for paddy cultivation and other crops.

### Sosale(Sosila)



*Confluence of River Kaveri (Cauvery) and Kabini at Thirumakudalu near Sosale—Kaveri on the left and Kabini on the right.*

On the same day, I visited **Sosale**, a small village near T. Narasipura, surrounded by vast stretches of paddy fields. Situated on the left bank of the Kaveri River, the village is known for its **Sosale Vyasaraja Mutt**, **Veerabhadra Temple**, and other historical sites. Nearby, in T. Narasipura, lies the **confluence (Sangam) of the Kaveri and Kabini rivers**, a place of cultural and spiritual significance.



*Clockwise from Top Left: 1. River Kaveri; 2. Kabini River; 3. The confluence of both rivers; 4. Gunja Lakshmi Narasimha Temple on the bank of the Kaveri River.*

### **Kirugavalu (Kirigavil)**

**Kirugavalu** is a small village in **Malavalli Taluk**, located about 15 kilometers from Mandya district headquarters. The region is known for its high-quality **Casuarina (Sara)** and **Eucalyptus poles**, which are widely used for timber and construction. During my visit, I observed several trucks being loaded with these poles, likely purchased from local yards and nearby villages.

Buchanan documented that a **Muslim community associated with Tipu Sultan's administration** resided here, continuing their presence even during his visit. Their historical connection to Tipu's government adds to the village's rich past.





*A bullock cart, similar to the one documented earlier—everything remains the same except for the wheels, which now have rubber tires instead of the traditional wooden wheels bound with an iron ring.*



*A mango grove in Kirugavalu is linked to the historical lineage of Syed Ghani Khan. His family continues to reside here, cultivating vast lands with diverse crops. The village is renowned for its 250-year-old mango orchards, along with various fruit trees*



*"The greater part of its inhabitant are Mussulmans;for during the former government of the Mysore Rajas,it was given in Jaghire to a Mohomedan family in their service.The heir of this family now lives at the place,and has considerable pension from the company,for which he appears to be grateful"*



*A glimpse of mangoes from the historic orchards of Kirugavalu.*

Even today, a few families from this historical lineage continue to reside in Kirugavalu, owning vast lands and cultivating a variety of crops. The village is particularly known for its mango orchards, some of which trace their origins back 250 years, alongside diverse fruit orchards and multiple paddy varieties.

During my visit, I met Mr. Syed Ghani Khan, a passionate young farmer dedicated to preserving rare and organically grown mango varieties. He shared the fascinating history of his family's agricultural heritage:

*"This land was gifted to my ancestor by Tipu Sultan. Over two centuries ago, during his struggle against the British, the Sultan established 'Kiru Kaavalu' in Kannada, meaning a vigilant watch system—this eventually gave the town its name. Loyal soldiers were granted land to cultivate mangoes, with the finest fruits reserved for the palace. Among them, my family received 20 acres, nurturing a thriving orchard. Now, four generations later, I continue this legacy, preserving both history and our love for mangoes."*

### **Malavalli (Malawully)**

On the same day, I reached Malavalli, a town and taluk in the Mandya district. The town was bustling with agricultural activity, with numerous agro-chemical shops actively catering to farmers. To the north of the town, I noticed a large tank (reservoir), a significant water source for the region.

Francis Buchanan documented that Hyder Ali Khan had granted Malavalli as a Jaghir (gift) to his son Tipu Sultan. Tipu established a fruit orchard near the town, sustained by a fine reservoir that provided a constant water supply. According to Buchanan, this orchard was well-maintained under the supervision of a Daroga (Superintendent or Chief Officer), a writer, and ten laborers. The orchard once boasted 2,400 trees, with half being mango trees and the rest including orange trees.

Unfortunately, by the time Buchanan visited, the orchard had deteriorated, and the land had been converted into paddy fields. Today, there are no traces of the once-grand orchard that Tipu Sultan had cultivated for personal use.

However, during my visit to Kirugavalu, I encountered Syed Ghani Khan, a farmer whose family land was once gifted by Tipu Sultan. His ancestral orchard, which has been preserved for over 250 years, possibly carries a historical connection to the lost Malavalli orchard, continuing the legacy of Mango cultivation in the region.



*Marehalli Kere (Lake) near Malavalli.*



*“About two miles south-west from Malavalli is a large reservoir, near which sultan made a trial of his army with that of General Harris. After having by this found that his troops were totally inadequate to face the English, he shut himself up in the Seringapatam”*

*-Francis Buchanan, Chapter XX*





*A glimpse of Marehalli Kere, near which the British forces attacked Tipu Sultan's army.*

Buchanan referred to the large reservoir, now called Marehalli Kere (Latitude: 12.357494, Longitude: 77.052031), located approximately 3.7 to 4 km southwest of Malavalli town.

This vast reservoir, covering around 600 acres, plays a crucial role in irrigating the nearby paddy fields through its well-planned reservoir channels.

Interestingly, this very location was the site of the Battle of Malavalli, which took place on 27th March 1799 during the Fourth Anglo-Mysore War. The battle was fought between the East India Company and the Mysore Kingdom, led by Tipu Sultan. The British forces, commanded by General George Harris and Colonel Arthur Wellesley, launched an attack on Tipu Sultan's army, which had taken a defensive position near this reservoir to slow the British advance toward Srirangapatna. The battle ultimately led to the Siege of Srirangapatna, marking a significant turning point in the war.

## Halagur(Huluguru)



*Shimsha Water Basin, is one of the tributaries to the River Cauvery.*



*A glimpse of the Shimsha River.*

Further, I traveled to Halagur, passing through Banasamudra, which Buchanan also referred to by the same name. I crossed the Shimsha River, which Buchanan mentioned as the "Madura River." This river flows through Maddur and is one of the important tributaries of the Cauvery (Kaveri) River. It originates from the Devarayana Durga Hills, flowing through Mandya and Ramanagara districts before joining the Cauvery River.

A dam has been constructed across the Shimsha River at Markonahalli in Kunigal Taluk, Tumkur District. Buchanan also mentioned a large reservoir near its source, referring to "Cadaba Amanikere" near Gubbi, which might have been considered one of its sources, though the river primarily originates from Devarayana Durga Hills.





*Left to Right: 1. Basavanabetta, south of Halagur, once abundant with sandalwood trees as described by Buchanan, is now primarily covered with bamboo forests. 2. Blacksmiths of Halagur.*

Near Halagur, Buchanan noted the presence of iron boiler manufacturing units used in sugar production. He also observed that the region had a significant population of the Vishwakarma community, who were engaged in metalwork. Today, many of them have transitioned into goldsmithing and jewelry craftsmanship, continuing their skilled tradition.

In the Halagur region, I came across many shrines dedicated to Siddappaji, a revered folk deity. I heard numerous stories about the miracles attributed to Siddappaji, deeply rooted in local traditions. The Panchalas (Vishwakarma) have a significant connection to this deity, but devotion to Siddappaji extends beyond caste boundaries, with people from various communities worshipping him. Folklore songs dedicated to Siddappaji are commonly sung, often alongside those of Manteswamy, another prominent folk deity. These oral traditions continue to play a vital role in preserving the region's cultural and spiritual heritage.

South of **Halagur** lies **Basavanabetta**, which Buchanan described as **two hills abundant with sandalwood trees**. However, in the present day, the region is primarily covered with **bamboo forests**, with little to no trace of the once-thriving **sandalwood groves**.

## Sathanur (Satnur)

While passing through **Halaguru**, I observed a **major drinking water pipeline** originating from **Thorekadanahalli (TK Halli)** on the banks of the **Shimsha River**. This prestigious **BWSSB water treatment plant** processes **775 MLD (Million Litres per Day)**, supplying **drinking water to the urban regions of Bangalore**, and playing a crucial role in meeting the city's water demands.



*Left to Right: 1. The terrain from Sathanur to Kanakapura with dry, poor soil and hilly landscapes (captured in summer). 2. The hilly terrain on the backdrop from Kabbaladurga hill with green shrub forests (captured in winter).*

The **strata from Sathanur to Kanakapura** consists of **poor and slightly dry soil**. On the **left side**, the **Kabbaladurga hills** are visible, adding to the rugged terrain of the region.

## Kanakapura (Canicarna-hully)

On the same day, I visited Kanakapura, which Buchanan documented as 'Canicarna Hully.' Interestingly, some elderly locals I met still refer to it as 'Kankanahalli.' I passed through this town by crossing a narrow valley.

Kanakapura, located in Ramanagara district, sits on the banks of the Arkavathi River and is India's largest producer of cocoon silk. As I traveled through nearby villages, I saw numerous mango plantations and many agrarian families rearing silkworms, with cocoon trays placed in front of their houses.





I met a farmer engaged in silkworm rearing, carefully placing cocoons in rearing trays made of bamboo, as seen in the picture.







*Clockwise from Top Left: 1 & 2. Silkworm rearing with cocoons carefully placed in bamboo rearing trays. 3. A farmer placing cocoons on the tray feed with mulberry leaves. 4. Silkworms spin their cocoons over 3 to 8 days, forming a single continuous strand of silk.*

Silkworms are usually fed with mulberry leaves. Though Tipu Sultan initially attempted sericulture on a trial basis, it did not succeed. However, the industry was later systematically introduced and flourished under British administrators, particularly during the reigns of Mysore Maharajas Krishnaraja Wadiyar III and IV, who actively promoted silk production.



*Left to Right: 1. A traditional Mysore house with a clay tile roof, a front porch with wooden pillars, and a man engaged in silk cocoon rearing. 2. A goat near the house*

Francis Buchanan's records on Bangalore Pete's commerce highlight that in the 1800s, silk was a significant import from China, indicating its importance in trade even during that period.



## Doddamaralavadi (Malalwady)



. The Arkavathi River originates in the Nandi Hills of Chikkaballapura district (left refers to Arkavathi). The Suvarnamukhi stream (referred to as Swarnarekha by Buchanan) flows through the Bannerghatta forest region (right refers to Suvarnamukhi).







*Clockwise from Top Left: 1. A mound constructed across the River Arkavathi. 2. Domestic waste disposed into the stream. 3. The Suvarnamukhi River dried up in summer. 4. Another glimpse of the confluence of both river streams.*

*“By the way I crossed three times the channel of a small river name Swarna-reka. It comes from Anicul, joins the Arkawati a little above Kanyakarna hully.”*

*-Francis Buchanan, Chapter XX*

Further, I traveled northeast to Doddamaralavadi, which Buchanan referred to as Malawady. It is a small village in Kanakapura Taluk, Ramanagara district.



*Left to Right: 1. Mulberry cultivation, with leaves used for feeding silkworms—silk rearing is extensive in this region. 2. Mulberry plants along with coconut and fruit groves on the banks of the Arkavathi River stream.*

Along the way, I observed several areca nut plantations, mango orchards, and extensive mulberry cultivation, which is prominent in this region.

I inquired with the locals about reaching the confluence of the Swarnarekha River and the Arkavathi River, located south of the village near the Basavanna Temple.



Buchanan referred to Swarnarekha, which corresponds to the Suvarnamukhi stream that flows through the Bannerghatta forest region. The Arkavathi River, on the other hand, originates in the Nandi Hills of Chikkaballapura district.

Further, Buchanan proceeded towards Tully, which is now Thalli, a town in Tamil Nadu. It is situated near the Karnataka border, adjacent to Anekal and Kanakapura regions. Presently, Thalli falls under Denkanikottai Taluk of Krishnagiri District.

With this, I conclude my retracing of Francis Buchanan's journey through Karnataka, marking the end of an enriching expedition filled with historical insights and personal discoveries. Through this journey, I encountered diverse landscapes, met people who still hold fragments of the past, and witnessed both the enduring and transformed elements of the regions Buchanan once described.

From the iron smelting sites to agricultural lands, ancient trade centers, and forgotten reservoirs, much of what Buchanan recorded still resonates, while modernization has reshaped many places beyond recognition. His meticulous documentation has proven invaluable in understanding Karnataka's historical, cultural, and geographical evolution.

Though my journey stops here at the Karnataka-Tamil Nadu border, the echoes of Buchanan's observations continue to provide a bridge between the past and present, offering a deeper appreciation of this ever-changing yet historically rich land.

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