

A HISTORICAL STUDY ON VIJAYANAGARA EMPIRE

***Dr.Manjunatha Sakalesh,**

Associate Professor, Dept. of History, Sir.M.V. Govt. Arts and Commerce College, Bhadravathi.

Abstract:

This paper purpose is to study the Vijayanagara Empire. Before the early 14th-century rise of the Vijayanagara Empire, the Hindu states of the Deccan – the Yadava Empire of Devagiri, the Kakatiya dynasty of Warangal, and the Pandyan Empire of Madurai – were repeatedly raided and attacked by Muslims from the north. By 1336 the upper Deccan region (modern-day Maharashtra and Telangana) had been defeated by armies of Sultan Alauddin Khalji and Muhammad bin Tughluq of the Delhi Sultanate. Further south in the Deccan region, Hoysala commander Singeya Nayaka-III declared independence after the Muslim forces of the Delhi Sultanate defeated and captured the territories of the Yadava Empire in 1294 CE. He created the Kampili kingdom near Gulbarga and Tungabhadra River in the northeastern parts of present-day Karnataka state. The kingdom collapsed after a defeat by the armies of Delhi Sultanate and upon their defeat, the populace committed a jauhar (ritual mass suicide) in c. 1327–28. The Vijayanagara Kingdom was founded in 1336 CE as a successor to the hitherto prosperous Hindu kingdoms of the Hoysalas, the Kakatiyas, and the Yadavas with the breakaway Kampili Kingdom adding a new dimension to the resistance to the Muslim invasion of South India. In 1336, Vijayanagar kingdom was established by Harihara and Bukka, who were two brothers and served in the army of Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq. They broke away from the Delhi Sultanate and established an independent state in Karnataka and established the capital city Vijayanagar on the banks of river Tungabhadra in 1336. Harihara and Bukka were helped and inspired by contemporary scholar and a saint Vidyaranya for the establishment of their kingdom. The rise of regional kingdoms in the medieval period started as the Delhi Sultanate weakened. The last dynasties of the sultanate Sayyid and Lodi were very weak rulers who could not maintain the kingdom.

At this time, in the south of India arose the Vijayanagara Kingdom, based in the Deccan and down South of the country. By the end of the 13th century, efforts made by the southern powers to fend off Turkic Islamic invasions resulted in the rise of the empire. At its height, it pushed the sultans of the Deccan beyond the Tungabhadra-Krishna River doab region, conquered nearly all of South India's leading families, annexed modern-day Odisha (formerly known as Kalinga) from the Gajapati Kingdom, and otherwise established itself as a significant power. The empire saw the rule of four different dynasties: Sangama, Saluva, Tuluva, and Aravidu dynasties. The Sangama dynasty was Shaivite while the rest were Vaishnavites. The Vijayanagara kingdom signifies a golden period for the southern region in every aspect.

Keywords: *Vijayanagara Empire, Historical, Krishnadevaraya, Harihara, Bukka Etc.*

INTRODUCTION:

In 1336, Vijayanagar kingdom was established by Harihara and Bukka, who were two brothers and served in the army of Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq. They broke away from the Delhi Sultanate and established an independent state in Karnataka and established the capital city Vijayanagar on the banks of river Tungabhadra in 1336. Harihara and Bukka were helped and inspired by contemporary scholar and a saint Vidyanarya for the establishment of their kingdom. The rise of regional kingdoms in the medieval period started as the Delhi Sultanate weakened. The last dynasties of the sultanate Sayyid and Lodi were very weak rulers who could not maintain the kingdom. At this time, in the south of India arose the Vijayanagara Kingdom, based in the Deccan and down South of the country. By the end of the 13th century, efforts made by the southern powers to fend off Turkic Islamic invasions resulted in the rise of the empire. At its height, it pushed the sultans of the Deccan beyond the Tungabhadra-Krishna River doab region, conquered nearly all of South India's leading families, annexed modern-day Odisha (formerly known as Kalinga) from the Gajapati Kingdom, and otherwise established itself as a significant power. The empire saw the rule of four different dynasties: Sangama, Saluva, Tuluva, and Aravidu dynasties. The Sangama dynasty was Shaivite while the rest were Vaishnavites. The Vijayanagara kingdom signifies a golden period for the southern region in every aspect.

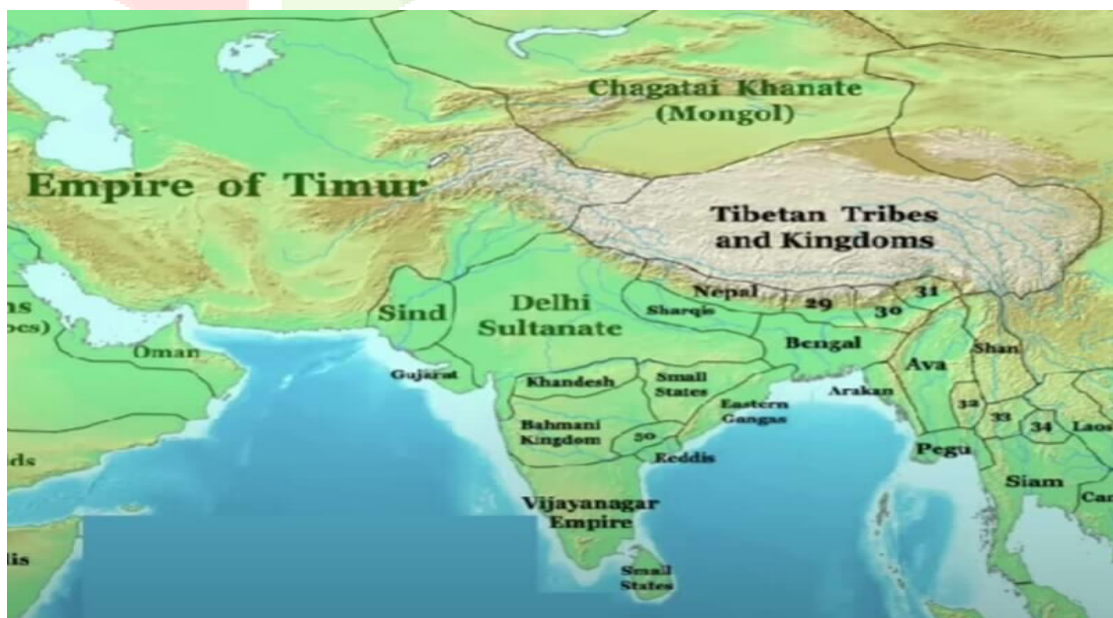
OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

This paper aim is to study the Vijayanagara Empire.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

This paper is purely based on secondary sources of data such as websites, journals, articles, books and other sources.

VIJAYANAGARA EMPIRE:





1. Sangama dynasty (1336-1485)

Harihara 1 ruled from 1336 to 1356, and gained control over most of the area south of the Tungabhadra River and earned the title of “master of the eastern and western seas” (Purvapaschima Samudradhishavara). After his death, his brother Bukka Raya I took over in 1356 and ruled till 1377. In 1367, Bukka I launched an assault on the Mudkal fortress. In revenge, the Bahmani sultan crossed the Tungabhadra and marched into Vijayanagar, defeated the king, and forced him to retreat to the jungle. A long war ensued and the Bahmani sultan had the upper hand because of the use of artillery. Finally, a treaty shared the disputed Tungabhadra doab between the kingdoms. The kingdom was expanded to the eastern coast under Harihara II (1377 to 1404). He conquered territories from: Reddis in upper Krishna Godavari delta, Warangal rulers in the lower Krishna-Godavari delta, Ganga rulers of Orissa, Contested Bahmani Sultans, Captured Goa and Belgaum from the Bahmanis, Sent an expedition to northern Sri Lanka. Their expansion eastwards stopped because the Warangal ruler had seized Golconda and Kaulas from the Bahmani sultanate and signed a treaty. Treaty between Warangal and Bahmanis forged an alliance that lasted for over 50 years. This alliance stopped Vijayanagar from taking over the Tungabhadra doab.

Deva Raya I (1406-1422):

He was defeated by Bahmani Sultan Firuz Shah, in the fight over Tungabhadra doab. He had to pay 10 lakh huns, pearls, and elephants as indemnity. Gave his daughter in marriage to the Sultan (ceded Bankapur in the Tungabhadra doab, as dowry). Deva Raya entered into an alliance with Warangal to partition the Reddi kingdom between them, hence Warangal switched their alliance to Vijayanagara. This helped Deva Raya defeat Sultan Firuz Shan Bahmani and annexed the entire Reddi kingdom up to the mouth of the Krishna River. Deva Raya also constructed a dam on Tungabhadra and irrigated cities and villages with canals from this dam. He also built a dam on the river Haridra. He also built the Mallikarjuna Temple in Mallapangudi. In 1420, Italian traveler Nicolo Conti visited Vijayanagara and describes a magnificent capital city. There is a Kannada inscription of Deva Raya I at the Hazara Rama temple in modern-day Hampi.

Deva Raya II (1425-1446):

He is considered the greatest ruler of the Sangam dynasty. He strengthened his army in a clever way by recruiting Muslims in the army and giving them jagirs. He then made all Hindu soldiers and officers learn mounted archery from them. In 1443, he crossed the Tungabhadra in order to recover regions south of the Krishna (Mudkal, Bankapura). But after three hard battles, both sides agreed to maintain existing frontiers. Portuguese traveler Nuniz visited during this time and wrote that Quilon, Sri Lanka, Pulicat, Pegu, and Tenasserim (Burma and Malaya) paid tribute to Deva Raya II. Persian traveler Abdur Razzaq elaborated about the army troops of Deva Raya II as well. After the reign of Deva Raya II, an internal struggle for the throne ensued weakening the kingdom for some time. From 1450, Orissa's Gajapati rulers made raids into south India up to Madurai which weakened the Vijayanagara and shrunk the authority of Rayas to Karnataka. At this time, the minister Saluva usurped the throne and the Saluva dynasty was founded.

2. SALUVA DYNASTY (1485-1505)

The dynasty had only three rulers:

- Saluva Narasimha Deva Raya (1485–1491 CE)
- Thimma Bhupala (1491 CE)
- Narasimha Raya II (1491–1505 CE)

The majority of Saluva Narasimha Deva Raya's reign was devoted to moderately successful campaigns to subdue his vassals around the realm and fruitless attempts to halt the Suryavamsa monarch of Orissa's expansion. In order to restart the horse trade, which had been taken over by Bahman, Narasimha also established additional ports on the west coast. Narasimha's youngest son, Narasimha Raya II, succeeded his brother as king after Narasimha's eldest son, Thimma Bhupa, was assassinated in 1492 by an army general and a member of Narasa's enemies. He assumed the title of Immadi Narasimha. Despite being given the title, Vira

Narasimha, the eldest son and heir apparent of Narasa, exercised real power. In 1505, he gave the order to kill Immadi Narasimha. He then assumed the throne, establishing the Tuluva dynasty, the third Vijayanagar dynasty, and ruled from 1503 to 1509.

3. TULUVA DYNASTY (1491-1570)

Krishna Deva Raya (1509-1529):

He was the greatest ruler of the Vijayanagara empire and brought about the greatest kingdom of south india in the medieval period. He had to contend against the successor states which rose after the breakdown of the Bahamani sultanate, like the Bijapur sultanate. He defeated Bijapur in 1520. He fought against the continuous incursions by the Gajapati rulers of Odisha. In the west, he conquered Belgaum and Gulbarga. He did not pay much attention to developing the navy which proved bad as the Portuguese beat them in maritime trade. When the Timurid monarch Babur invaded northern India, he recognized Rana Sanga, the king of Chittor, and Krishnadevaraya as the two greatest Hindu kings of India. During his rule, the Portuguese explorers Domingo Paes and Duarte Barbosa traveled to the Vijayanagara Empire, and their travel diaries reveal that the monarch was both a skilled administrator and a superb general, leading from the front in combat and even ministering to the injured. He was very keen on developing the art, culture, and architecture of the kingdom. He was also known as Andhra Bhoja. He himself wrote a book on the polity. Patronized 8 eminent scholars known as Astadiggaja, one of whom was the famous Tenali Raman. Peddannah or Andhra Kavita Pitamah was another great scholar among them. His reign is known as the golden age for Telugu literature: Pedanna wrote Manucharitam and Harikatha saram, Krishnadevaraya himself wrote Amuktamalyada and Jambavti kalyanam (Sanskrit), Nandi Thimmana wrote Parijathapaharanam, Madayyagari Mallana wrote Rajasekhara Charitramu, Dhurjati wrote Kalahasti Mahatyamu, Ayyalaraju Ramabhadrudu wrote Sakalakatha Sangraha and Ramaabhyudayamu, Pingali Surana wrote Raghava Pandaviyamu, Kalapurnodayam and Prabhavate Pradyamana.

Administration:

- Provinces were called mandalams headed by mandaleshwara/nayaks. Empire was divided into mandalams, nadas, sthalas, gramas Land tax or sist was $1/6^{\text{th}}$ of the produce. Gold coin was called varaha/pagoda; silver coin was called tara; smaller units were jital , duggani. Top officers of the army were called Nayaks or poligars and were given land for their service, called amaram. (The Nayaks took control of Madurai, Tanjore, etc in the 17th -18th centuries when the kingdom became weak) All Hindu sects were respected by Krishna Deva Raya. It is well known that he supported and fostered many cults as well as their places of worship. He rebuilt Shiva sanctuaries such as the Virupaksha Temple. The temples of Tirumala, Srisailam, Amaravati, Chidambaram, Ahobilam, and Tiruvannamalai received land grants from him. He lavishly bestowed various expensive items on the Tirumala Venkateswara Temple. Many foreign travelers visited the kingdom and wrote praises of the city and administration- Ibn batuta, Nicolo

de Conti, Abdul Razzak, Barossa, Domingos Paes, and Nuniz. Krishnadeva Raya died in 1529 due to illness and was succeeded by his brother Achyuta Deva Raya (1529-1543). Sadahshiva Raya (1543-1565) was the last Tuluva ruler of the Vijayanagara kingdom. His administration was controlled by a triumvirate led by Rama Raja. Rama Raja entered into a commercial treaty with the Portuguese and stopped the supply of horses to Bijapur. This move weakened the sultanates-Bijapur, Golconda and Ahmadnagar were defeated. In 1565, the three kingdoms united and attacked Vijayanagara which became to known as the Battle of Talikota or Rakhsha-Tangadi. Rama Raja was executed and the city of Vijayanagara was looted and destroyed. The glorious city was abandoned after the destruction of the battle. The Vijayanagara empire was more or less destroyed after the Battle of Talikota but the kingdom remained till the 1640s.

4. ARAVIDU DYNASTY (1542-1646):

Aliya Rama Raja belonged to the dynasty and his brother Tirumala Deva Raya took over the throne after the former's death in battle. All the rulers of the dynasty kept trying to restore the city of Vijayanagara but were marred by constant attacks from the Muslim neighbors. This kept on weakening the kingdom. Venkatapati Deva Raya's (1586-1614), reign saw a gain of strength as he successfully dealt with the Deccan sultans and restored much of the kingdom as well. Around 1592 Venkatapati shifted his capital from Penukonda to Chandragiri, which was further south near the Tirupathi hills. After 1604, he shifted the capital from Chandragiri to Vellore Fort, which was used as a major base. The Dutch in 1608 sought permission to set up a factory in Pulicat during his rule. He died in 1614 and his nephew Sriranga II took over the rule. But he and his family were murdered by rival factions as a struggle for the throne ensued. His son Rama deva Raya (1617-1632), who was smuggled out by a faithful commander during murders, took over the rule after the long-drawn battle. His rule was marred by constant battles with the rival factions. The last ruler of the dynasty and Vijayanagara empire was Sriranga III (1642-1652). He kept losing territories to the Nayaks and Deccan sultans and by the time of his death was a king without a kingdom. Thus ended three centuries of Vijayanagara rule in South India. The Vijayanagara empire had a significant impact on the culture, language, architecture, and literature of the time. Numerous languages like Sanskrit, Telugu, Kannada, and Tamil literature flourished. The temple architecture with tall gopurams and Kalyana mandapams was prominent (Vithala, Virupaksha temple, Hampi; Varadharaja, Ekamparantha temples, Kanchipuram).

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS:

The Vijayanagar Empire was one of the richest state then known to the world. The chief gold coin was the varaha or pagoda. Varahas because the most common symbol was Varaha-the Boar incarnation of Vishnu The Perta was half a Varaha. Fanam was one tenth a pertha. Tar was a silver coin, Jittal was a copper coin, Harihara I and Bukka I used the Hanuman symbol in their coins, Krishna Deva Raya's coins had the figures of Venkatesh and Balkrishna. Achyuta Raya used Garuda while Tirumala maintained the original Varaha. The chief items of export were cotton, silk, spices, rice, saltpeter and sugar. The imports consisted of horses, pearls,

copper, coral etc. The art of shipbuilding (300 sea ports) had developed in this period which helped in flourishing trade. Ships were used for coastal and overseas trade. The most important commercial area on the West coast was Malabar, with its important port of Cannanore. It had commercial relations with the islands of the Indian Ocean, Burma, the Malay Archipelago and China in the East, and Arabia, Persia, South Africa, Abyssinia and Portugal on the West. Chess was a game promoted by the state and players were rewarded.

Agriculture & Industries Under Vijayanagara Empire:

Agriculture was in a flourishing condition. Rulers encouraged agriculture in the different parts of the empire and to increase agricultural production by a wise irrigation policy. The construction of a dam and excavation of canals were also there. Numerous industries were present during this time :-> textiles, mining and metallurgy & perfumery. Industries and crafts were regulated by guilds.

Cultural Conditions of Vijayanagara Empire:

The chief characteristics of the Vijayanagara architecture were the construction of tall Raya Gopurams or gateways and the Kalyanamandapam with carved pillars in the temple premises. Different languages such as Sanskrit, Telugu, Kannada and Tamil flourished in the regions. The sculptures on the pillars were carved with distinctive features. The horse was the most common animal found in these pillars. The most important temples made under Vijayanagara Empire :->

- Vittalaswamy temples at Hampi
- Hazara Ramaswamy temples at Hampi
- Stone chariot at Hampi.
- The Varadharaja at Kanchipuram
- Ekamparanatha temples at Kanchipuram.
- Religions Followed by Vijayanagara Empire :->

Early Vijayanagar rulers were followers of Saivism. Virupaksha was their family God. Later, came under the influence of Vaishnavism. However, Siva continued to be worshipped. Vaishnavism was professed in various forms. Example :-> Srivaishnavism of Ramanuja was highly popular. The Dvaita system of Madhava was also practiced. Epics and Puranas were popular among the masses, especially since they served as a means of education among women.

Position Of Women Under Vijayanagara Empire:

Women occupied a high position in Vijayanagara Empire; Women also took an active part in the political, social and literary life of the empire. It was the only empire in Medieval India which employed women in state services. The practice of dancing girls attached to temples was also in vogue. Devadasis held a highly respectable position in society, and were given land grants, maidservants, etc. The plight of widow was pitiable, but they could remarry and it was encouraged by states by not levying any tax on it. The prevalence of Sati or Sahagamana is present in the Vijayanagar Empire

Foreign Visitors of Vijayanagara Kingdom:

- **Ibn Bututa** (1333-1347 A.D.) — Moroccan traveller, who visited India during the reign of Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq. And came to Vijayanagar during the reign of Harihar I.
- **Nicolo Conti** (1420-1421 A.D.) — Venetian traveller, who gave a comprehensive account of the Hindu kingdom of Vijayanagar.
- **Abdur Razzaq** (1443-1444 A. D.) — Persian traveller, who stayed at the court of the Zamorin at Calicut. He has given a vivid account of the Vijayanagar city, while describing the wealth and luxurious life of the king and the nobles.
- **Duarte Barbosa** (1500-1516 A.D.) — Portuguese traveller, who has given a valuable narrative of the government and the people of the Vijayanagar empire.
- **Domingos Paes** (1520-1522 A.D) — Portuguese traveller, who visited the court of Krishnadeva Raya.
- **Fernao Nuniz** (1534-1537 A.D) — Portuguese merchant, who wrote the history of the empire from its earliest days to the closing years of Acchyutdeva Raya's reign.

CONCLUSION:

Before the early 14th-century rise of the Vijayanagara Empire, the Hindu states of the Deccan – the Yadava Empire of Devagiri, the Kakatiya dynasty of Warangal, and the Pandyan Empire of Madurai – were repeatedly raided and attacked by Muslims from the north. By 1336 the upper Deccan region (modern-day Maharashtra and Telangana) had been defeated by armies of Sultan Alauddin Khalji and Muhammad bin Tughluq of the Delhi Sultanate. Further south in the Deccan region, Hoysala commander Singeya Nayaka-III declared independence after the Muslim forces of the Delhi Sultanate defeated and captured the territories of the Yadava Empire in 1294 CE. He created the Kampili kingdom near Gulbarga and Tungabhadra River in the northeastern parts of present-day Karnataka state. The kingdom collapsed after a defeat by the armies of Delhi Sultanate and upon their defeat, the populace committed a jauhar (ritual mass suicide) in c. 1327–28. The Vijayanagara Kingdom was founded in 1336 CE as a successor to the hitherto prosperous Hindu kingdoms of the Hoysalas, the Kakatiyas, and the Yadavas with the breakaway Kampili Kingdom adding a new dimension to the resistance to the Muslim invasion of South India.

The empire reached its peak during the rule of Krishna Deva Raya when Vijayanagara armies were consistently victorious. The empire gained territory formerly under the Sultanates in the northern Deccan, such as Raichur and Gulbarga from the Bahamani Sultanate, territories in the eastern Deccan from wars with Sultan Quli Qutb Shahi of Golkonda, and Kalinga region from the Gajapatis of Odisha. This was in addition to the already established presence in the southern Deccan. Many important monuments were either completed or commissioned during the time of King Krishnadevaraya. Krishna Deva Raya was succeeded by his younger

half-brother Achyuta Deva Raya in 1529. When Achyuta Deva Raya died in 1542, Sadashiva Raya, the teenage nephew of Achyuta Raya, was appointed king, and Aliya Rama Raya, Krishna Deva Raya's son-in-law, becoming the caretaker. When Sadashiva Raya was old enough to assert his independent claim over the throne, Aliya Rama Raya made him a virtual prisoner and became the de facto ruler. He hired Muslim generals in his army from his previous diplomatic connections with the Sultanates and called himself "Sultan of the World". He was keen interfering in the internal affairs of the various Sultanates and on playing off the Muslim powers against one another, while making himself the ruler of the most powerful and influential regional power. This worked for a while but eventually made him very unpopular among his people and the Muslim rulers. He made a commercial treaty with the Portuguese to stop the supply of horses to Bijapur, then defeated the Bijapur ruler and inflicted humiliating defeats on Golconda and Ahmednagar

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