



## Vijayanagara Kingdom 1500 - 1632 AD – A Glimpse

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### ABSTRACT :

What Sewell called the 'Forgotten Empire' once unified the larger part of South India, governing it from Vijayanagara for over 200 years. Once modern methods of research took root, the effort began to reconstruct its history. British historians saw in it a predecessor—an imperfect, but predecessor all the same. Indian historians tended to see in it good evidence of Indian capacity for military enterprise and efficient administration.

KEYWORDS:-Peruse, Kingdom , Transfer, Power , Administration

### INTRODUCTION :

The history of India, South of the Vindhyas, is affected by a new element (into the body politic of the area) in the 14th century. Having conquered the whole, of the northern India, the Sultans of Delhi turned their attention to the region south of the Vindhyas-. Initially Devgiri, Warangal, Dwarasamudra and Madura kingdoms were overrun and compelled to become the Vassal States of Delhi. In between the years 1307-1311 AD Alauddin Khilji's general Malik Kafur achieved a significant extension to the authority of Delhi. Alauddin's death in January AD 1316 did not put an end to the invasions of the Muslims into South India. The Tughluqs pursued a more aggressive policy. An expedition was sent to Warangal under the leadership of Juna Khan in AD 1321. His first attempt failed. However he was prevailed upon to make another attempt. The Kakatiya empire came to an end with the surrender of the king Prataparudra. His capital Warangal was named Sultanpur and annexed to the Tuglaq Kingdom. The rule of the Mussalmans in the south was tyrannical and oppressive. The oppressive nature of the Muslim rule is described in detail in Gangadevi's Madhura vijayam, Ibn Batutass travelogue and in the vilasa copper plate 2 Igrant of Proloya Nayaka. "Brahmins were disallowed to perform their religious rites and idols were desecrated and broken. All the agraharas which had long been in the enjoyment of the most learned, were taken." This oppressive rule of the Muslims in the former Kakatiya territories and beyond created a deep unrest and an undying hatred towards the conquerors. Soon there were revolts in various provinces of the south. The most formidable uprising was that of Kapaya Nayaka of Musnuri family in Warangal. Mohammad Bin Tuglaq was unable to crush this rebellion due to his preoccupation with other matters and Warangal was lost by the Tuglaqs. This was followed by the revolt of Harhara I of Sangama family in Kampili which eventually led to the foundation of the Vijayanagar kingdom in 1336 AD. There are various theories regarding the origin of Vijayanagar. It is commonly believed that Harihara and Bukka Raya were originally in the service of Prataparudra Deva of Warangal. After the fall of Warangal the brothers migrated to Kampili in the vicinity of Tungabhadra. When Kampili was also captured by the Muslims, these two brothers were carried off as captives to Delhi along with many other officers. At this point, contemporary Muslim accounts stress the fact that these brothers were converted to Islam. But the Hindu sources do not allude to this at all. About this time, a rebellion broke out in Anegondi. Sultan Mohammad Bin Tuglaq sent the brothers Harihara and Bukka to suppress the rebellion which they soon accomplished. As a reward for their services, Sultan appointed Harihara as the ruler of Anegondi and Bukka as the treasurer of the conquered region. Thus these two brothers were successful in gaining a foothold in South India. In Kampili, Harihara and Bukka came into contact with sage Vidyanaraya. Inspired by him, they renounced Islam. They were taken back into the Hindu fold. After this, Harihara declared his independence. On the advice of the sage Vidyanaraya, a new site was chosen for the capital of the kingdom. Subsequently the kingdom was known after the new capital Vidyanagara. Later, military victories made her known as Vijayanagara kingdom. It is widely accepted that Vijayanagar was established with a view to uphold the Hindu traditions and to act as a bulwark against the Muslim onslaughts in the South. However there are some scholars who refute the theory that the founders of Vijayanagar were inspired by religious zeal. "Like many of their predecessors in the country, the above kingdoms were only the embodiment of personal political ambition of their respective founders. The accident of the difference in religions between the Hindu chief and their overlord the Sultan of Delhi, might have incidentally helped the former in rousing sympathetic support of the indifferent people in realising their ambition. Whether the founders of Vijayanagar kingdom were inspired by religious ideology or not, it cannot be denied that the very birth of Vijayanagar was conditioned by external factors—namely the invasion of South by the Turkish Sultans of Delhi and their oppressive rule. The birth of Vijayanagar, its growth and ultimately its decline were largely decided by external factors. Almost from the time of its inception, Vijayanagar had to face the hostility of its northern neighbours. In 1347 AD, Bahmani kingdom was founded with Gulbarga as its capital, by Hasan Gangu Bahman Shah, The Bahmani rulers took over from the Sultans of the north, the role of the leaders of Islam in the Deccan and soon began to expand their dominions beyond the river Krishna, Their relations vis-a-vis Vijayanagar were marked by attack and counter attack. This fight for survival and the dynamic policy pursued by the Vijayanagar rulers soon

transformed the kingdom into a mighty empire of the South. Kings of four dynasties ruled over Vijayanagar for a long, period of three centuries and more.

- 1 Sangama Dynasty 1336 - 1485 AD
2. Saluva Dynasty 1485 - 1505 AD
3. Tuluva Dynasty 1505 - 1570 AD
4. Aravidu Dynasty 1570 - 1672 AD

### ***Sangama Dynasty***

The kings of this dynasty played a major role in the expansion of Vijayanagar kingdom. Harihara I, Rukka I/ Harihara II, Deva Raya I and Deva Raya II — all played a big role in the expansion of the kingdom. Harihara II became the monarch of whole of South India and snatched the important fort of Pangal from the Bahmanis. Deva Raya I had to face repeated invasions from the Bahmani side and they were successfully thwarted by him. Deva Raya II annexed the fort of Kondavidu pushing his north eastern frontiers beyond the river Krishna. After his death, the fortunes of the Sangama dynasty began to decline. But the kingdom was held in tact by the able minister Saluva Narasimha who ultimately became the emperor of Vijayanagar in August 1485 AD.

### ***Saluva Dynasty***

The rulers of this dynasty ruled for over two decades. But during this short period, Saluva Narasimha 6 played a stellar role in checking the Mohamrnan expansion into South and in securing the northern frontiers against their onslaught, Saluva Narasimha was assisted in this noble task by his illustrious generals Isvara Nayaka, his son Narasa Nayaka and Araviti Bukka. X'c was only because of the efforts of Saluva Narasimha that "instead of breaking up under the weight of heavy blows delivered by the- Gajapat.is and Asvapatis, Vijayanagar Survived for another century to achieve glory and splendour that had 3 never been surpassed by any other Hindu state," From his death bed, in 1491 AD Saluva Narasimha appointed hi-s general Narasa Nayaka, as the regent of the empire., Narasa Nayaka installed Immadi Narasimha as the throne of Vi jayanagara, But the power of administration rested solely with Narasa Nayaka - Narasa Nayaka died in 1503 and his son Vira Narasimha became the pradhani and senadhipati of the empire. It was he who hatched a plot to get Immadi Narasimha killed and ascended the imperial throne. This incident took place in 1505 AD, Thus Vira Narasimha established the rule of Tuluva dynasty

### ***Tuluva Dynasty***

Under the kings of this dynasty, the glory of Vijayanagar ..reached its high water mark. There were four rulers of Tuluva dynasty

- 1 Vira Narasimha
2. Krishna Deva Raya
- 3 Achyuta Deya Raya
4. Sadasiva Raya

### ***Aravidu Dynasty s***

Tirumala Raya# the brother of Rama Raya crowned himself as the king of Vijayanagar in 1570 AD. There were seven rulers of Aravidu dynasty

- 1 Tirumala Raya
- 2 Sri Ranga I
3. Venkata II
4. Sri Ranga II
5. Rama Deva Raya j Venkata III
6. Sri Ranga III

Tirumala Raya was successful in holding the fabric of empire together though he lost Adoni to the Adilshahis.

## **CONCLUSION :**

The relations of Vijayanagar with all her neighbors - the Bahmani kingdom and her legal successors Bijapur, Ahmednagar, Golconda, Bidar and Berar kingdoms# Kalinga or Orissa kingdom and the Portuguese in Goa have been described in detail# in an effort to find out the motives behind the activities of Vijayanagar rulers in their wars or peaceful contacts with their neighbors. Apart from the motives of the Vijayanagara sovereigns# an interesting subject of study is the machinery they employed in the execution of their policy. If such a machinery existed, did it correspond to modern systems atleast in its rudimentary form? It is to throw light on the evidence we have with regard to these matters that the study is undertaken. Vijayanagara's relations with Kondavidu# Rajahmundry and Kundukuru were of great importance# but these fall outside the time limits we have set for the study. In any study of the relations of men or society with regard to their neighbors the primary interest of the subject would be to preserve oneself. The instinctive activity for one's perpetuation is bound to result in violence. Violent activity on a large scale is what is called war. Wars in plenty had to be waged more in defense of their state than to aggrandize over others by the rulers of Vijayanagar The only exception to this statement was the activity of Ramaraya but even he wished the welfare of all though he wanted exclusive credit for achieving it. So the first principle of life i.e., urge for survival forms the basic principle of foreign policy i\* of any state. Consequently a large part of this study on external relations of Vijayanagara has become a study of the wars fought by Vijayanagar either; in defence of herself or to gain mastery of others. King;- Vijayanagar empire was a vast and "well knit empire comprising all India South of river Krishna in its heyday of glory. It had monarchical form of Government which implies that the king was the

head of the administration and occupied a supreme position. In Amuktamalyada it is said that king was the most important of the seven members of the body politic. But this did not mean that he was an autocrat. In Amuktamalyada, Krishnadeva Raya reveals the paternal conception of the duties of the king and his government towards the people., Vijayanagar like the 'other monarchical kingdoms had to face the problem of usurpation and dynastic change more than once. But it goes to the credit of the rulers of Vijayanagar that all of them had the interest of the empire close to their heart and tried to enhance the power and prestige of the empire. "A patriotic programme and not selfish greed was the motive behind usurpation."

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### Council:

Though the king was supreme he had many checks on his authority and one of them was the Imperial Council much akin to the Mantri Parishad of Kautilya. It was a permanent body which influenced the policy of the king. According to Achyutarayabhynayam the council met in a hall which was called 3 Venkata Vilasa Mantapa It is perhaps the same building which pass describes "Thence he (the king) goes to a building made in the shape of a porch without walls which has many pillars hung with cloth to the top and with -the walls handsomely painted.... In such a building, he despatches his work with -chose men who bear office in his kingdom and govern his 4 cities and his favourites talk with them.' The meetings of the council were confidential and all the matters pertaining to the state - internal as well as external - were discussed frankly. There were two categories of members in the council (a) the Prime Minister, Ministers Deputy Ministers and Heads of the Departments and (b) a few blood relations of the king. Usually the council was dominated by one strong minister, the pradhani. According to Krishnarayavijayarim, Krishnadeva Raya consulted Saluva Timrma affectionately called Appaji, after defeating the Muslims on the advisability of proceeding further into the. Muslim territories and when the Minister advised him not to undertake such a rash task, the king accepted the -advice. But not on all occasions, the monarchs took the advice of the council - If Nuniz is to be believed, Krishnadeva Raya ignored the councils advice regarding the campaign he led into the territory of Ydalcao. When "the lords of his council" told the king "that the reason for which he invaded the Bijapur territory was rather petty and that "he should think of what would be said and talked throughout the world" he did not listen to their advice., Hence the councilors seeing him 'unmoved from his determination to make war' let him have his way and contented them selves .with making a few suggestions about the route he was to take for the campaign

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### Envoys:

Apart from the Sthanapathis or ambassadors, diplomatic agents were sent to foreign courts whenever necessary. Their object was either to make acquaintance with them or to renew and strengthen old friendships. In 1511 Krishnadeva Raya sent his ambassador to the Portuguese court "in order to establish a perpetual friendship with the king of Portugal". This was answered by a counter embassy from the king of Portugal who was anxious to secure the friendship of. Vijayanagar. In 1601 Venkata II sent his ambassadors to the court of Ayres De Saladana the new Portuguese viceroy. These diplomatic agents were different from the permanent ambassadors in the sense that these agents had only a temporary work delegated to them. Sometimes even before the envoy returned to the capital another envoy was sent in order expedite the matter or to get specific assurance of help. These diplomatic agents took handsome gifts to the kings they visited as a token of friendship. Krishnadeva Raya also received envoys from the other States with specific purpose of 'securing his 40 J. friendship. Mention can be made in this instance of the embassy of Friar Luis in 1510 a-D. From his embassy we come to know that an envoy could get more than one audience with the king.. But after this, he could not leave the kingdom only with the permission of the host king- Since this was not granted to Friar Luis he had to stay in the capital from January to November 1510 AD. Besides political missions, Vijayanagar Kings also received religious groups, travellers and traders Mention can be made of the Jesuit missionaries who frequented the court of Venkata II and explained the basic tenets of Christianity to the emperor. They were received cordially and Venkata II had excellent rapport with them Right from its inception in 1336 AD Vijayanagar had belligerent neighbours to contend with- From that time onwards till the final eclipse of the empire in 1672 AD. Vijayanagar had to wage wars - sometimes for glory and territorial acquisition and sometimes for survival with its neighbours.

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