



DECLINE OF VIJAYANAGARA EMPIRE- A STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The Vijayanagar Empire's capital was Hampi, which is now in Karnataka. It is physically close to the Deccan Plateau in South India. **Harihara and Bukka** founded the Vijayanagar Empire, one of the most notable empires of Deccan India, on the banks of the **Tungabhadra River** in what is now Karnataka. The **Sangama Dynasty** brothers Bukka and Harihara built the Vijayanagar Empire. A pastoralist cowherd community with Kuruba origin claimed that Harihara and Bukka were members. Vira Ballala III, the Hoysala King, had previously employed both Harihara and Bukka. At its height, the Vijayanagar Empire held sway over nearly all of South India's ruling families. The Deccan Sultans were expelled by the Vijayanagar Empire's rulers beyond the Tungabhadra-Krishna River Doab region as well. The Gajapati Kingdom of Kalinga was likewise subjugated by the Vijayanagar Empire, which also absorbed modern-day Odisha (formerly Kalinga).

Keyword:- HAKKA, BUKKA, HARIHARA, KRISHNADEVARAYA, SANGAMA, DEHALI SULTANATE, SANGAMA DYNASTY, BAHAMANI KINGDOM.

INTRODUCTION

Harihara and Bukka founded the Vijayanagar Empire, one of the most notable empires of Deccan India, on the banks of the **Tungabhadra River** in what is now Karnataka. The Vijayanagar state was established in 1336 by brothers Harihara and Bukka, who had both fought for Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq. They formally separated themselves from the **Delhi Sultanate in 1336**. **Vidyaranya**, a modern scholar and saint, helped Harihara and Bukka in the establishment of their empire and served as an inspiration to them. The Vijayanagar Empire will be covered in this article, which will be useful for UPSC exam preparation.

Vijayanagara Empire Origin

On the southern banks of the Tungabhadra River, in what is now the Indian state of Karnataka, the Vijayanagar Empire, also known as the Karnata Kingdom, was established in 1336 CE. The Vijayanagar Empire's capital was Hampi, which is now in Karnataka. It is physically close to the Deccan Plateau in South India.

The **Sangama Dynasty** brothers Bukka and Harihara built the Vijayanagar Empire. A pastoralist cowherd community with Kuruba origin claimed that Harihara and Bukka were members. Vira Ballala III, the Hoysala King, had previously employed both Harihara and Bukka.

Vijayanagara Empire Dynasties

Four important dynasties dominated the Vijayanagara Empire. They included the Sangama, Saluva, Tuluva, and Aravidu dynasties.

Sangama Dynasty

It was the first dynasty of the Vijayanagara Empire, and its first king was Harihara Raya I (1336–1356 AD). Some of the dynasty's kings included Bukka Raya, Virupaksha Raya, Deva Raya, Ramachandra Raya, Mallikarjuna Raya, and Praudha Raya.

Saluva Dynasty

With Narasimhadeva Raya as its first king (1485–1491), it was the second dynasty of the Vijayanagara Empire. His son Thimma Bhupala took over as successor. As the final head of the Saluva Dynasty, Narasimha Raya II succeeded his father Thimma Bhupala.

Tuluva Dynasty

The Vijayanagara Empire's third dynasty was the Tuluva Dynasty. Narasa Nayaka, Viranarasimha Raya, Krishnadeva Raya, Achyutadeva Raya, and Sadasiva Raya were among the Tuluva Dynasty's kings. The Vijayanagar Empire's most powerful emperor was Krishnadeva Raya. He was in charge of the empire from 1509 to 1529. During his rule, the empire is thought to have reached its peak.

Aravidu Dynasty

The Vijayanagara Empire's fourth and last dynasty was the Aravidu Dynasty. Muslim republics like Bijapur gained importance after the Battle of Talikota when the empire started to crumble.

Vijayanagara Empire Geographical Spread

At its height, the Vijayanagar Empire held sway over nearly all of South India's ruling families. The Deccan Sultans were expelled by the Vijayanagar Empire's rulers beyond the Tungabhadra-Krishna River Doab region as well. The Gajapati Kingdom of Kalinga was likewise subjugated by the Vijayanagar Empire, which also absorbed modern-day Odisha (formerly Kalinga).

Vijayanagara Empire Administration

A structured governmental framework existed in Vijayanagar. A central administration and a provincial government each controlled a portion of the Vijayanagar empire. The King was the most influential person in the state and had last say in all matters. There was also a Council of Ministers in place to help the King with his administrative duties.

The Vijayanagar Empire was made up of six provinces. A governor known as a "Naik" was in charge of running each province. Districts were also created inside the provinces. The communities that were created from these districts' subsequent subdivisions were smaller ones. Lawbreakers were duly penalised and fines were assessed against them.

The empire collapsed as a result of the regional rulers' excessive power. The organisation of the army was ineffective and rife with serious problems. These settlements were governed by a number of hereditary officers, including officers in charge of the department of forced labour as well as accountants, watchmen, and weights men. Another official known as a "Mahanayakacharya" acted as a conduit between the villages and the administration and the government.

Vijayanagara Empire Economy

The economy of the empire was mainly reliant on agriculture. Favourable agricultural policies had been enacted by all of the monarchs in different regions of Vijayanagar. The majority of the rural area was farmed due to the fertile terrain. A number of enterprises augmented the agricultural wealth. The most prevalent sectors supported by the monarchs' government are metallurgy, mining, textile, and fragrance.

The main driver of overall prosperity was the robust inland, coastal, and international trade. Doth, spices, rice, iron, saltpetre, sugar, and other goods were the principal exports.

The most significant imports included velvets, China silks, horses, elephants, pearls, copper, coral, mercury, and pearl jewellery. Coins from the Vijayanagar Empire were minted in gold, copper, and silver. They wore symbols of many deities and animals.

The King ordered that the coin's emblem be modified. Due to this, Krishna Dev Raya put Venkatesh and Balakrishna figures on the currency, while Harihara and Bukka I engraved a picture of Hanuman (a Hindu God) on it.

Vijayanagara Empire Cultural and Social Life

With community representatives for each caste, starting from the lowest to the highest, the Vijayanagar Empire upheld a stringent caste system or cultural hierarchy. Muslims were given the chance to speak as well. The highest caste in India was the Brahmin, who was frequently authors and instructors of religion. They were also employed as judges.

The four castes are Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, and Sudras. The family god of the predominantly Saiva monarchs of Sangama, Virupaksha, was. However, there were Vaishnavite dynasties as well. There were, in fact, writers of low caste who created works of popular literature. People from lower castes had a chance to become famous in the empire's service because the caste structure did allow for military promotion.

Both wealthy men and wealthy women wore anklets, necklaces, bracelets, and earrings. They also perfumed themselves with musk and rosewater. Men wore silk turbans, which occasionally had gold decorations. Nobles were pampered by the large staff, lived in luxury, and wore costly clothing.

Men and women both played sports at this time, and the culture put a high value on physical fitness. Gyms were built expressly for the troops to stay in shape, and guys and females would wrestle with one another. A well-liked type of entertainment was cockfighting. During this time, Indian women were given some freedom and had the opportunity to engage in government administration as well as other industries like trading. Additionally, women might express themselves through writing and art.

Vijayanagara Empire Contribution to Architecture and Literature

During this time, the Hazara Ramasami and Vittalaswamy temples were constructed. The bronze image of Krishnadeva Raya is a masterpiece. Literature has been created in Kannada, Tamil, Telugu, and Sanskrit. Sayana wrote Vedic commentary.

Amuktamalyada was written by Krishnadevaraya in Telugu, as well as Usha Parinayam and Jambavathi Kalyanam in Sanskrit.

Vijayanagara Empire Conflict with Bahmani Kingdom

Conflict between the Bahmani and Vijayanagar kingdoms was heavily influenced by who controlled Raichur doab (the region between the rivers Krishna and Tungabhadra). The Vijayanagar Empire's northern and the Bahmani Kingdom's southern boundaries were both touched by the lush Raichur Doab region. Natural resources are abundant and fertile in this area.

Both kingdoms fought for possession of the renowned Golconda diamond mines, which were located in the eastern part of the doab region. Other considerations include the terrain of both kingdoms and the restricted capacity of the Deccan's Tungabhadra region for expansion. The other conflict hotspots were the Marathwada area and the Krishna-Godavari delta.

Both areas had sizable ports that controlled trade with neighbouring countries and productive land. One important area for trade, for instance, was the Konkan belt, which contained the port of Goa. A fertile area in the Marathwada region, this port was used for export and import, particularly the import of horses from Iran and Iraq. It is also possible to attribute the battle between the Bahmani and Vijayanagar states to Hindu-Muslim tensions. Despite the fact that the conflict's primary justifications were territorial and commercial.

Vijayanagara Empire Decline

The Aravidu dynasty's leaders lacked strength and ability. Governors of many provinces became independent. Some portions of Vijayanagar were conquered by the kings of Bijapur and Golconda. "The Vijayanagara empire served a high historical purpose by acting as a champion of Hindu religion and culture against the aggressions of the Muslims in Southern India."

Apart from above, on account of its efficient administration, prosperous economy, diplomatic polity, liberal religious policy, the Vijayanagara empire occupied a remarkable and glorious place in Indian history for more than two hundred years from 1336 A.D. to 1565 A.D.

Rise and fall of the dynasty:

From 1565 onwards, the empire just remained in existence only and without any worthwhile achievement till 1614. Its defeat at the hands of the erstwhile Bahmani rulers in 1565 gave it a crushing blow. The 16 rulers of the empire were from 4 dynasties; the Sangma Dynasty (1336 to 1486), the Saluva Dynasty (1486 to 1509), the Taluva Dynasty (1510 to 1570) and the Arvinda Dynasty.

The Kingdom of Vijayanagara came into being as a result of the confusion that prevailed at the time of Muhammad Tughlaq. According to Dr. V.S. Smith, "There is however no doubt that the new power was the outcome of the efforts made by two brothers, sons of Sangama to stay the tide of Muslim invasion and preserve the Hindu Dharma in the peninsula".

Likewise Dr. Ishwari Prasad says, "The most probable account is that which ascribes the origin of the Kingdom to the two brothers, Hari Hara and Bukka who were employed in the treasury of Pratap Rudra Deva, Kakatya of Warrangal and who fled the country when it was overrun by the Muslims in 1303."

The Kingdom comprised a substantial part of peninsular India south of the Krishna river up to Rameshwaram, including the Tamil region and that of the Cheras (Kerala). To the north was the powerful Bahamni Kingdom with whom it had constant conflicts and which ultimately led to its downfall.

Krishnadeva Raya (1509-29):

Krishnadeva has been described by all the travellers who visited his empire as "an emperor of much justice." Domingos, a Portuguese traveller described Krishnadeva in these words, "He is the most feared and perfect king that could possibly be." The Mughal emperor Babur described in his 'Baburnama', Krishnadeva "as the most powerful ruler of India."

The Vijayanagara empire reached to its zenith in peace, order, power, prosperity and learning during his reign.

Krishnadeva as a military commander:

He was a brave general and bold warrior. He invaded Mysore and annexed it. He recaptured the Doab lying between the rivers Krishna and Tungbhadra from the Bahamni Sultans. The military exploits of Krishnadeva have been described in the following words, "He is one of the most distinguished and powerful kings of Vijayanagara who fought with the Muslims of the Deccan on equal terms and avenged the wrongs that had been done to his predecessors."

Religious toleration:

Though his personal leanings were in favour of Vaishnavism yet he respected all the sects.

Patron of literature:

Literature made a tremendous progress during his reign. He himself was a gifted scholar of Telugu and Sanskrit. He wrote a poem 'Amuktamalyada' in Telugu. He extended his patronage to Sanskrit, Telugu, Kannad and Tamil scholars alike. The noted Telugu poet Allasani Peddana flourished in his court.

As a patron of art:

He was a great builder and founded the city of Naglapur. He got several 'Gopurams' and 'Mandapas' built. He constructed the Krishnaswami temple and the statue of infant Krishna installed in it. He also built several ponds for irrigation.

As an administrator:

He decentralized his empire into different administrative units. A province was placed under a governor who was usually a military commander.

Encouragement to trade and commerce:

The ruler made special arrangements for providing trading facilities at ports.

CONCLUSION

Describing the achievements of Krishnadeva, Nilakanta Sastri has observed, "He was in no way less famous for his religious zeal and catholicity. He respected all sects of the Hindu religion alike, though his personal leanings were in favour of Vaishnavism... Krishnadeva's kindness to the fallen enemy, his great military prowess and above all the fabulous wealth that he conferred as endowments on temples and Brahamans, mark him out indeed as the greatest South Indian monarchs, who shed a luster on the pages of history."

The qualities and achievements of Krishnadeva as, "Krishnadeva Raya was always anxious to promote the welfare of his subjects. His liberal endowments endeared him all the more to his subjects. He was polite and amiable in private society, wise and far-sighted in council, eloquent and cultured when he listened to literates, dignified and awe inspiring in his public duties.

Krishnadeva was formidable in war and indeed a jewel among all the princes. Under him Vijayanagara attained the zenith of its greatness and prosperity.” He further went on to say, “There is no ruler among the sovereigns of the Deccan, both Hindu and Muslim, worthy of Krishnadeva Raya.”

Causes of the downfall of the Vijayanagara Empire:

1. A despotic government.
- 2- Wars of succession.
3. Weak successors of Krishna Deva Raya.
4. Continuous wars with the neighbouring Bahamani Kingdom.
5. Lack of control over the provincial governors.
6. Social evils.
7. Lack of fanaticism among the Hindus as compared with the spirit of “jihad” among the Muslims-war against infidels.
8. Rise and fall as the law of nature.

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