CHAPTER-V

RELATIONS WITH BIJAPUR AFTER 1565 AD

The battle of 1565 AD had far reaching consequences on the history of Vijayanagar. It has been described as the Climacteric of Vijayanagar empire. The first and foremost consequence of the battle was the sacking of the fair city of Vijayanagar by the victorious allies. As soon as the defeat in the battle became obvious, Tirumala the only surviving brother of Rama Raya fled to the city of Vijayanagar not to defend it but to carry away as much of royal treasures as possible along with Sadasiva - the de-jure sovereign of Vijayanagar. Tirumala along with Sadasiva Raya fled to a place of safety, namely the fort of Penugonda in the interior of the Vijayanagar kingdom. With his flight "the city left without any authority to maintain order, fell.an easy victim to thieves and robbers. Soon the Mohammadans came spreading death and destruction."2

Enemy troops were said to have stayed at Vijayanagar for a period of 6 months3 during the course of which they took to systematic destruction of the beautiful city. As most of the jewels and precious stones were already transferred to another place by Tirumala, the allies had to exert much in order to grab whatever was left at Vijayanagar.
Buildings were razed to the ground in their search for treasures, also the poor inhabitants who had taken shelter in the nearby jungles were diligently searched for by the Muslim soldiers and when found tortured till something was extracted from them."

However before they left Vijayanagar they received an embassy from Tirumala (Ferishta refers to Venkatadri in this instance but most likely he was referring to Tirumala) "who escaped from the battle to a distant fortress, sent humble entreaties to the kings to whom he agreed to restore all the places which his brother had wrested from them."  

Thus the Raichur Doab, the constant irritant in the relations between Vijayanagar and Bijapur was finally lost by Vijayanagar.

Though the Deccani Sultans destroyed the city of Vijayanagar, they could not destroy the kingdom of Vijaynagar. This was because there was total lack of unity and understanding between the Sultans differences soon cropped up among the allies and so they dispersed towards their own respective kingdoms.

As result of their liesurely destruction of Vijayanagar, it fell into gradual decay and could not regain its ancient splendour. But this could be said only of the city of Vijayanagar. As far as
the kingdom of Vijayanagar was concerned it not only survived but was successful in keeping the Mohammadans at bay for another century. Hence S.K. Aiyyangar says "Even after the transfer of his capital from Vijayanagar to Penugonda, in 1567 AD, Tirumala was strong enough to interfere in the affairs of the Sultans of Bijapur Golconda, and Ahmadnagar with great credit and success." The city of Vijayanagar being no longer the seat of Government lost its importance.

Raichur Doab which was the bone of contention between Bijapur and Vijayanagar was lost forever. The scene of activity now shifted to the region round the river Krishna - "The region South of the river Krishna between north latitude 15° and 16° became the debatable land and the zone of Hindu Muslim conflict was pushed one degree of latitude southward."

Another result of the disastrous battle of 1565 AD was that Vijayanagar no longer played an aggressive part. It was merely content in defending its territories from the forward thrust of the Mohammadan kingdoms. That is the reason why the battle of Talikota is regarded as the milestone that separated
the era of Hindu splendour in the South India from the age of Muhammadan expansion.

The period following the battle of 1565 AD was a period of anarchy. Tirumala, the only surviving brother of Rama Raya, had to deal effectively with the fissiparous tendencies in the empire. Whatmore, his own position as the sole regent of Sadashiva Raya was not unchallenged - Rama Raya had two sons Krishnappa and Peda Tirumala. Krishnappa died in the battlefield, but Peda Tirumala or Timma was not the man to leave power to drift into the hands of Tirumala uncontented. He aspired to succeed his father Rama Raya as the regent of the nominal emperor. The fact that he was the grandson of Krishna Deva Raya (being the son of Tirumalamba the daughter of Krishnaraya) enhanced his position greatly. Dr N.Venkataramanayya has opined that the reason for Tirumala's shifting his capital to Penugonda was merely to frustrate the ambitions of Timma who had a large following in the Vijayanagar city "Tirumala must have found the atmosphere of the capital uncongenial to the advancement to the advancement of his plans. Therefore he left Vijayanagar and retired to Penugonda where he could pursue his designs unhampere."^8
Not only Timma, but various relations and dependants who were elevated to high positions by Rama Raya showed no inclination to obey Tirumala. As a result many chiefs declared their independence. Prominent among them were Koneti Kondaraju of Adavani, Velapa Raya of Bankapur. These places being situated on the northern borders of Vijayanagar the Sultans of Bijapur would definitely take advantage of such a situation. Not only on the northern borders but the southern part of the kingdom of Vijayanagar too was not free from disturbance. The nayakas of Madura, Senji and Tanjore started extending their dominions and for all practical purposes were independent of royal control.

Thus the developing situation was bound to tempt the external invaders and it was not necessary to wait for long. Ali Adil Shah - though in possession of Raichur was not satisfied with it. His appetite for further share in the spoils of Vijayanagar was kindled when Pedda Tirumala, the son of Rama Raya, sought his help to dethrone Tirumala from the throne at Penukonda. Ali Adil Shah moved with an army to Anagoondy in order to place Timraj, the son of Ramraj on the masnad of Penukonda and to depose Venkatadri (Tirumala) hoping by degrees to acquire for himself a portion of the
territory of Beejanuggur. Once again we witness the familiar instance of Vijayanagar nobles inviting foreigners in their midst to settle their internal problems.

Tirumala, finding himself in a precarious position and not yet in a position to defend his capital with his own indigenous resources, paid the enemy back in the same coin. The only way to divert the attention of Ali Adil Shah from Penugonda was to create tension on Bijapur's borders. With this view he wrote both to Moortza Nizam Shah and his mother Khooza Sultana for assistance. The traditional enmity between Bijapur and Ahmadnagar was exploited by Tirumala with success to defend his own kingdom. No doubt, he was well trained in this school of diplomacy by his brother Rama Raya. In return for this help, Tirumala agreed to send his troops under the command of his son to attack the Bijapuri frontiers. The terms of agreement was thus worked out. The queen unwilling to witness the aggrandisement of the king of Bijapur and acting by the advice of Molla Inayut Oolla took her son with her and marched at the head of an army to Bijapur. This created a diversion in favour of Vijayanagar. "Ali Adil Shah was compelled to retreat
expeditiously from Anagoondy and return to protect his capital before which he found the Ahmadnagar army encamped.\textsuperscript{15}

Thus this attempt by the Bijapuris to extend their southern boundaries proved futile. Tirumala was able to counter their attack effectively taking recourse to some adept diplomatic moves. However, this success was only a transient one as Ali Adil Shah was prone to try once again to fish in the troubled waters of Vijayanagars.

In or about the year 1568 AD there were strong rumours to the effect that Tirumala assassinated the lawful king Sadasiva Raya and founded a new dynasty on the throne of Vijayanagar. That these were mere rumours is proved by the existence of a large number of inscriptions and the village Kaifiyats which refer to a living Sadasiva who ruled till 1576 AD. An inscription from Sambedu in South Arcot dated 9th May 1575 AD asserts that Sadasiva was the ruling sovereign of that time. So, Dr. Venkataramanayya surmises, "As a matter of fact, Sadasiva whether imprisoned or outside was so docile that he never caused one moment's anxiety to Tirumala. There was no reason why Tirumala
should attempt to get rid of him by means of assassina-
tion. What happened in reality was Tirumala gave up all pretence of obedience to Sadasiva and began to rule in his own name.

False as the rumour was, it was welcome news to Ali Adil Shah who was waiting for a favourable opportunity to overcome his earlier failure to capture Penukonda. Apart from this, there were other factors which prompted him to march once again towards the kingdom of Vijayanagar. As pointed out earlier, Tirumala had sent his troops under the command of his son to attack the southern frontier of Bijapur while the Nizamshahi troops laid waste the Western frontiers. Tirumala incurred the wrath of Ali Adil Shah who after squaring up his differences with Nizamshah turned his attention to Vijayanagar. Another reason was that Ali Adil Shah had made an attempt to seize Goa from the Portuguese but even after a siege of seven months he was unable to wrest Goa and had to suspend his hostilities. This was a big blow to his prestige and so to salvage a part of it he turned his attention to Vijayanagar where the conditions were ripe for a foreign invasion.
On his way back from Goa where he had suffered heavily, he despatched Ankus Khan to Adoni with 8000 horse, a body of infantry and a considerable train of artillery in 1570 AD. The strong fort of Adoni was under Koneti Kondamaraju who had asserted his independence soon after the battle of 1565 AD. After engaging the Mohammadan forces in several battles Kondamaraju was forced to seek shelter in the fortress where he shut himself up. Perishta pays glowing tribute to the strength of the fort of Adoni. He says "Adoni is situated on the summit of a high hill and contains many ponds and fountains of clear and sweet water with numerous princely structures. The rayas of Beejanuggur regarding it impregnable had all contributed to make it a convenient assylum for their families and it was fortified with eleven walls, one with another so that it appeared impossible to reduce it by force." Only the vigour and determination of Ankus Khan was responsible for the victory of Bijapur and Adoni passed into their hands. The loss of Adoni was a terrible blow to the prestige of Tirumala and it exposed the weakness of his kingdom to the Mohammadans.

The reason for the failure of Tirumala to send any timely help to Adoni is hard to explain. But it
should be noted here that while Ankus Khan was busy against Adoni, Ali Adil Shah deputed his general Maly Khan against Penugonda. "With the object probably of preventing any possible help reaching him (Koneti Mondamaraju) from that place". Here the Mohammadan general had to face defeat at the hands of Savaram Cennappa. Thus the humiliation of the loss of Adoni was mitigated to some extent by the able defence of the capital of Penugonda.

Notwithstanding the failure to subdue Penukonda, the capture of Adoni greatly enhanced the military reputation of Ali Adil Shah who wanted to press his advantage further. But for this, it was necessary to neutralise the Nizam Shahi factor. With this purpose in mind, he sought an interview with Murtaza Nizam Shah on his borders. At the meeting "it was agreed that the latter (Nizam Shah) should be allowed to occupy Berar and that Ally Adil Shah should be permitted to conquer as much of the dependencies of Beejanuggur as he thought proper, without any interference on the part of Moortaza Nizam Shah". Thus Ali Adil Shah was able to secure Nizam Shah's neutrality in the event of Vijayanagar and Bijapur war.
"It was a shrewd deal on the part of Adil Shah, for Karnatak was rich in mineral resources, wealth, man-power, agriculture and above all it was strategically very important. Contrary to it, Berar was always open to attack from the rulers of North India. In short Karnatak was an asset whereas Berar proved a liability to the Nizam Shah." \(^{23}\)

Tirumala's reign came to an end in 1572 AD. He was succeeded by his son Sri Ranga I. It was during Sri Ranga's reign that Bijapuri forces continued their onslaught on Vijayanagar successfully and this resulted in the permanent loss of territory for Vijayanagar. Sri Ranga could not render much assistance to the rebel chiefs of the Kanara country and their territories were conquered by Ali Adil Shah gradually. Ali Adil Shah deputed his general Mustafa Khan Ardistany against Karnatak. After conquering Adoni and striking a deal with Murtaza Nizam Shah, Ali Adil Shah was emboldened to attack various forts which dotted the Kanara country. The first to be attacked was the fort of Turkal held by Venkata Yesu Raya in 1573 AD (981 AH) \(^{24}\). He could not hold out for long and it fell after siege of seven months."
Mustafa's next target was the fort of Dharwar, one of the strongest forts of Karnataka - The chieftain of Dharwar had also rebelled against Tirumala and was thus independent of royal control. This fort too fell after a siege of six months.

Ali Adil Shah was persuaded by Mustafa Khan to lead his army against Bankapur. Velapa Raya was the chieftain of this fort and he was very powerful having compelled the rayas of Jerreh Chandergutty, and Karoor to become his tributaries. Gaining knowledge of the impending attack of Ali Adil Shah, Velpa Raya after pouring the provisions into the fort, shut himself in it. However, he deputed his son with 1,000 horse and 10,000 foot to harass the enemy. Also he seems to have written to Sri Ranga for help who was helpless to render any assistance - He only gave an advice to Velapa Raya to hold out as long as possible and then if worse comes, to buy off the invader. "He promised moreover to issue his orders to all his vassals to assist him though he could not rely on their obedience." Velapa Raya offered to evacuate the fort on condition of being granted a safe passage for himself and his family. The siege had continued for an year and three months and the death, of his son had weakened Velpa Rayas resolve, The fort surrendered on 30th Dec.1575 AD.
Four months after the reduction of the fort of Bankapur Ali Adil Shah camped in that fort to receive tributes from different chiefs. However, the rayas of Chandergutty and Jerreh were conspicuous by their absence. Ali Adil Shah sent a larger army under Mustafa Khan to reduce the above mentioned forts. Though the Raya of Jerreh made offers of submission, Chandergutty held out for 14 months. Mustafa Khan was able to wrest the fort with the help of Bergy Chiefs. By subduing these forts Mustafa Khan pleased Ali Adil Shah immensely and so he left Mustafa in charge of the management of these newly conquered areas - The subjugation of these forts took nearly three years.

The continued success of the Bijapuri forces frightened the other chiefs of Karnatak who assembled to pay tribute to Ali Adil Shah of their own volition. Shankar Nayak of Karur, Siva Nayak of Jerreh and Rani of Barcelore paid respects to the sultan and promised to pay annual tribute. In this connection Ferishta relates an amusing incident. "On the day which these chiefs received their dresses from the king, women's habits were prepared for Hur Devy Bihari Devy,
the Rani of Barcelore and another rani, which they declined accepting saying that though women in sex, they held their dominions by the power of masculine minds upon which the king gave them men's dresses and applauded their high spirits." 

The policy adopted by Ali Adil Shah towards these new southern conquests needs mention here. He did not annex these principalities into his kingdom. He merely forced the chiefs to accept his overlordship and pay annual tribute. The probable reason for this was that Ali Adil Shah was aware that the other Sultans of Deccan especially Ibrahim Qutb Shah of Golconda was viewing his ascending strength with jealousy and so he was content in merely subduing these forts instead of annexing them into his kingdom - He wants to avoid a clash with Golconda on this issue. For this reason his policy was only conquest and not consolidation.

**Attack on Penugonda:**

Mustafa Khan persuaded Ali Adil Shah to attack the newly established capital of Vijayanagar, namely Penugonda. Ali Adil Shah assembled a large army at Adoni and decided to attack Penugonda - In this venture Hande Chief Timma Nayak turned a traitor to the
cause of Vijayanagar and rendered able assistance to Ali Adil Shah. Accompanied by Mustafa Khan and Timma Nayak Ali advanced towards Penugonda. At this time Sri Ranga Raya was away on a royal tour to Chandragiri. But it is also said that on their approach Sri Ranga left the nobles in charge of the defence of the capital and retired with his treasures to Chandragiri.

The capital was well defended by the Valiant Savaram Chief Cennappa. Most likely that when Sri Ranga was away in Chandragiri Ali Adil Shah suddenly swooped down on Penugonda. During Sri Ranga Raya's absence, the defence of Penugonda fort, fell on the able shoulders of Cennappa who rose to the occasion. Meanwhile Sri Ranga was also not idle. He resorted to the same plan as his father Tirumala and sought to divert the attention of Ali from Penugonda. As Nizam Shah had already come to an understanding with Ali, not to interfere in the affairs of Karnatak, Sri Ranga Raya turned towards Ibrahim Qutb Shah of Golconda.

The Golconda Sultan "readily agreed to the overtures of Sri Ranga Raya says the anonymous Chronicler of Golconda promising him to oppose Ali Adil Shah and to prevent him from making further aggression."
Accordingly, he detached his general Shah Mohammad Anju, with a light force to skirmish and plunder the borders of Adil Shah's dominions while he prepared to move to the south in support of Sri Ranga Raya. On the Bijanagar frontier he was joined by Shah Mohammad Anju after he had sacked these towns and laid waste the enemy's country agreeably to his instructions. He was shortly afterwards met by Sri Ranga Raya and their junction induced Ali Adil Shah to raise siege of Bijnagar and to return to Bijapur.\(^3\)\(^3\)

But in the Annals of Hande Anantapuram\(^3\)\(^4\) it is said that Ali Adil Shah again attacked Penugonda. Sri Ranga set out to defend his capital and a great battle ensued in course of which Sri Ranga Raya was defeated and fell a prisoner into the hands of Ali Adil Shah.

Accepting the lead given in Annals of Hande Anantapuram Fr. Heras comments - "The immediate result of this victory was the possession of the territories to the north of Penugonda, which never went back into the hands of Vijayanagar emperors."\(^3\)\(^5\)

But we find it difficult to accept that Sri Ranga Raya fell a prisoner into the hands of Ali Adil Shah
or for any other Sultan. The point to be noted here why was Sri Ranga released if he was taken a prisoner? What were the terms of his release? What were the territories that Sri Ranga lost due to his captivity is not revealed anywhere to us. S.K.Aiyyangar believing in the authenticity of the capture of Sri Ranga Raya in the battlefield accredits the Sultan of Golconda with this success. Dr Venkataramanayya wholly refutes the story. According to him, the story is based on the version given by Hande Anantapuram which itself is a "document of doubtful value."

On the basis of the evidence supplied by Basatin-us-Salatin he says that Sri Ranga Raya in order to crush the strength of the invaders, resorted to bribing the Bergy chief (Hudiatum Nayak) and induced him not only to desert Ali Adil Shah but also to harass his camp. This trick frustrated the ambitions of Ali Adil Shah to reduce Penugonda and he was forced to withdraw from there.

Whatever may have been the mode of operation there is no doubt that Sri Ranga Raya was successful in retaining his capital.

Ali Adil Shah died on 9th April 1580 AD and
the kingdom of Bijapur was plunged into disorder and strife. Ibrahim Adil Shah who ascended the throne was only a boy of 9 years. Chand Bibi, the dowager queen took charge as the guardian of the state. It was not smooth sailing for her as the regents chosen by her one after the other were eager to assume complete control by usurping all authority. During the span of 7 months two regents, Kamil Khan and Kishwar Khan were overthrown. Finally Dilawar Khan took over the control of affairs in Bijapur.

This was an opportune time for the Nayaks in Karnataka to throw off the yoke of Mohammadan rule. From now on the Nayaks with held the payment of tribute as and when the time proved opportune.

The first task for Dilawar Khan when he assumed control was to send an expedition to Karnataka under Balil Khan to collect the arrears of tribute. He was joined by Arsappa Nayak of Jerreh. Both proceeded against Shankar Nayak the Raya of Karur who refused to pay tribute. They laid siege to the fort of Karur and one night Balil Khan had the misfortune of falling into the hands of enemy and was kept prisoner in the fort. "Balil Khan after sometime by promises of great rewards, prevailed upon his keepers and a seller of grass to assist in his escape and he was carried out
by the latter upon his shoulders concealed in a bundle of forage. Balil Khan thus had a providential escape. As Dilawar Khan was busy with other problems at home, Balil Khan was not allowed to undertake another expedition immediately.

This was the last attack of the Muhammadans on the possessions of Vijayanagar, during the reign of Sri Ranga I. His reign came to an end in January 1586 AD. He was succeeded by Venkata II. on the throne at Penugonda.

Ibrahim Adil Shah II continued the expansionist policies of his predecessors. Early in 1587 AD he sent his general Balil Khan with 12,000 horse to collect dues from the recalcitrant nobles of Karnatak. The success of Balil Khan was due to the mighty show of Bijapuri army. As the general went back, the nobles stopped, the payment of tributes. This state of affairs continued up to the year 1593 AD when Ibrahim Adil Shah again resolved to humble these chiefs. This time he sent Manjum Khan with a large army. Ferishta gives a detailed account of his activities in the following manner.

"This general on arriving at Bankapur halted and summoned all the Rayas to meet him with their tributes
promising protection to those who obeyed but threatening the refractory with vengeance. Most of them prepared to comply with his demand and intended coming in a body to visit him but as Ganaga Naik who was one of the Principal Rayas of Malabar and had eight or ten thousand horse and foot in his pay went first to pay his respects, the rest jealous of his power and suspecting that he had gone to form some plan against them with Manjum Khan broke off their engagements and withdrew to the mountains. Manjum Khan not thinking it prudent to follow them into an unknown country, marched with Ganga Naik against Jerreh which belonged to Arsappa Naik, who with his allies, to the number of 20,000 endeavoured to interrupt the siege. For three days, bloody skirmishes were maintained by the Bijapur troops who could not make use of their cavalry owing to the nature of the ground so that their success was frequently doubtful. But at length the good fortune of the king prevailed and Arsappa seeing further resistance vain, consented to pay tribute and made a present of two fine elephants to Manjum Khan with many curious and valuable effects for the king. 41

Not only this but Arsappa decided to join, the royal army against Mysore which was formerly a part of the Vijayanagar empire but became independent after
the battle of 1565 AD. It was now under Venkatadri Nayak who held out against the Muslims for 3 months. Eventually the fort of Mysore, being unable to withstand the siege any more, surrendered to the Bijapuri general the booty that fell into the hands of the Muslims included twenty five elephants.

Manjum Khan could not advance any further as he was called back to assist the Sultan against Prince Ismail at Belgaum. This gave another opportunity for the Hindu Rayas of Karnataka to throw off their nominal allegiance to Bijapur.

Rev Haras has placed the attack on Penugonda by the Bijapuris in the reign of Venkata II as he says that Ferishta has misplaced the events. He credits the superb defence of the capital Penugonda during the absence of Vijayanagar ruler Venkata II to Matala Ananta called as the right hand of the Empire of Karnataka. He further cites the example of Sidhout inscription which says that in the battle of Penugonda he destroyed the pride of the Muhammadan Padishah.

But we have placed the event of this attack on Penugonda in the reign of Sri Ranga I. Ferishta while referring to the general of this campaign names Mustafa Khan who had long since died by the time of Venkata's reign. Moreover Ibrahim Adil Shah was busy
expanding his dominions in the Kanara region where he was obtaining only partial success. The little respite that he derived from these expeditions was spent in solving the internal problems, the most serious of which was the rebellion of Prince Ismail.

Apart from this, the Mughals were knocking on the doors of Ahmadnagar which was bound to create problems for others also. Thus the presence of the Mughal army in Deccan was the main factor which governed the relations between the Southern states. Hence forth, all the diplomatic efforts were needed to keep the Mughals at bay. In these circumstances Venkata II died in 1614 AD and Vijayanagar was plunged into a civil war.

Civil War in Vijayanagar:

Venkata had no sons to succeed him. But one of his queens Bayamma, identified by Dr. N. Venkataramanayya as the grand daughter of Ramá Raya through her mother and a daughter of Gobburí Obaraya was determined to deceive the King. With the help of a Brahmin maid she produced before the king a putative son. Though Venkata was aware of her duplicity he did not question her and encouraged her with the false hope that her pretended son would be his successor. The boy was called Chikka Raya and was regarded for all purposes as the heir apparent.
The vacillating policy of Venkata II as regards his successor is here abundantly clear. He must have either discarded the claims of Bayamma categorically or he must have satisfied her wishes and those of her brother (Jagga Raya) without any hesitation. He did neither. Till the last moment of his life Venkata was silent and then sowed the seeds of dissension by disregarding the claims of this putative son, recognising his nephew Sri Ranga II, the younger son of his brother Rama, the viceroy of Sri Ranga Pattanam.

When Venkata invested Sri Ranga II with royalty it was a bolt from the blue for the nobles. Jagga Raya, who entertained the hopes of becoming the de facto ruler through the putative son of Bayamma was the foremost to be displeased. Immediately he declared his intention to dethrone Sri Ranga and instal his nephew on the throne. Thus he became the leader of the opposition - which included such nobles as Timma Nayaka and Maka Raya.

They informed the king Sri Ranga that they wanted to pay homage but after entering the palace they imprisoned Sri Ranga with his family members and then crowned his nephew as the Vijayanagara sovereign.

In these hard times Sri Ranga the ill-fated king was supported only by Yacama Nayaka, the son of Velugoti.
Kasturi Ranga who was a brave soldier and had received many honours from late king Venkata. When Jagga Raya seized Sri Ranga, Yacama stood steadfast in his support and refused to cow down before the threats issued by Jagga Raya. Not only this, he made plans to rescue Sri Ranga from the clutches of Jagga Raya. With the help of a washerman, Yacama saved the life of young prince aged twelve named Rama Deva but failed in his attempt to rescue Sri Ranga and other members of his family. Gaining knowledge of the efforts of Sri Ranga to free himself from the confines of the palace, Jagga Raya committed one of the most horrible crimes in the history of South India. He ordered all the members of the royal family of Sri Ranga including innocent children to be murdered in cold blood. This act alienated many nobles and strengthened the cause of Yacama Nayaka.

Thus the civil war began in right earnest between the supporters of Rama Deva led by Yacama Nayaka, and the supporters of the putative son of Venkata led by Jagga Raya. This civil war has been characterised by Ramarajiyamu as the Mahabharata war of Vijayanagar empire and the several chiefs who took part in the civil war have been compared to Yudistra, Raghunatha Nayak of Tanjore to Lord Krishna and Jagga Raya to Duryodhana.
In the battle that followed which was fought at Topur or Tohur near Trichinopoly in 1616 AD, Jagga Raya and his supporters were defeated and the rightful cause of Rama deva and Yacama Nayak triumphed. But even after the battle and the installation of Rama deva on the throne, the civil war continued throughout the reign of Rama Deva Raya till 1630 AD.

"The civil war showed the weakness of the Vija­yanagar empire and the lack of support of the feudatories to the imperial cause. This was taken advantage of by the Sultans of Bijapur and Golconda for extending their Sultanate Southwards." 49

The civil war lasting from 1616 AD to 1630 AD demonstrated the internal weakness of the empire. The three Nayaks of the South, namely Senji, Madura and Tanjore though formally under the authority of Ramadeva Raya were for all practical purposes independent.

In these circumstances the Bijapur Sultan Ibrahim Adil Shah sent Abdul Wahab Khan against Kurnool. The chief of this place was Gopalaraja, the grandson of Rama Raya, the Regent. He offered stout resistance and was successful in pushing back the Muslims and peace was concluded between Gopalaraja and Bijapur Sultan in December AD 1621.50
The peace was shortlived as Bijapur Sultan did not give up his designs upon Kurnool. He again despatched troops under Wahab Khan against Kurnool in 1624 AD. Distressed by the turn of events Gopalaraja appealed to the neighbouring chiefs for help. As a result Hande and Pemmasani chiefs and Matala Tiruvengalanatha all assembled to oppose the Bijapur forces. But their help proved to be of no avail as all the chiefs being defeated by Wahab Khan fled to their respective dominions. Gopalaraja realising the futurity of continuing the fight any longer fled from the town through the northern gateway of the fort still known as Gopal Darwaza consequently Kurnool passed into the hands of the Mussalman permanently.

Ibrahim Adil Shah was succeeded on the Bijapur throne by Muhammad Adil Shah in Sept 1627 AD. Though tender in age Muhammad Adil Shah possessed tremendous zeal for the conquest of Karnataka and Malnad. The reason besides greed for territorial acquisition was to glorify Islam in the dominion of the Hindus and win for himself the title of Mujahid and Ghazi." For this purpose he chose Randaula Khan who was given the title of Rustam-i-Zaman as the commander of this expedition against Ikkeri which was under the chief named Virabhadra -
Meanwhile, events were also moving rapidly in Vijayanagar. The death of Ramadeva Raya on 24th May 1630, at the early age of 20, is said to have plunged Vijayanagar once again into anarchy and civil war. Since he had no children Ramadeva nominated one of his cousin Peda Venkata as his successor. SK Aiyyangar is of the opinion that two princes Peda Venkata and Sri Ranga III had been recognised by Rama deva as his successors and they stood in relation of uncle and nephew to each other. This led to great misunderstandings between them and was responsible for further expansion of the Muslim power into the South.

Venkata III reigning from 1630-42 AD believed in peaceful co-existence vis-a-vis his Nayaks. Having understood the prevailing times, he rightly came to the conclusion that strict adherence on the part of his Nayaks towards the Vijayanagar sovereign was impossible - So long as they continued to accept his overlordship in theory, it was enough for him. He did not insist on complete subordination of the feudatories of the empire. For this reason Dr.Krishna Swami regards Venkata III to be "the wisest of the later Aravigu monarchs because he understood the political situation of the empire correctly and adjusted his relations towards the feudatories in an amicable way."
Apart from the three traditional Mayakships, Venkata III created a new Nayakship comprising of Chingleput and parts of Chittor districts. This was entrusted by Venkata III to his brothers-in-law Damerla Venkata and Damerla Ayyappa. The eldest of these two, Damerla Venkata resided either at Vellore or Chandragiri as Venkata III required his advice and guidance. So, the administration of the province was carried on by his younger brother Ayyappa with Poonamallee as his headquarters. Sri Ranga III was given charge of the territory north of the Damerla brothers with headquarters at Chandragiri.

Sri Ranga III who was also chosen as heir apparent by Ramadeva along with Venkata III who was the nephew of Venkata was a man of great promise and ambition. Relations soon soured between Venkata III and Sri Ranga mainly because Venkata leaned more towards the Damerla brothers. Sri Ranga was also unhappy with the lenient attitude adopted by Venkata towards his feudatories especially the Nayaks of Senji, Madura and Tanjore. This misunderstanding led Sri Ranga to desert his uncle and make common cause with the Muslims -

Mohammad Adil Shah sent his general Ranadaula Khan against Mysore and other small chiefs of the Karnataka region who were only nominally subject to Vijayanagar.
These chiefs were of Ikkeri, Tarikere, Basavapatnam and Bangalore. Before proceeding against these chiefs Ranadaula sent a proposal to Venkata saying that he would hand over all the conquered territory and be content with mere plunder of the territories. Though Venkata III agreed initially later he repudiated it. Rebuffed by Venkata III Ranadaula Khan made overtures to Sri Ranga, made an alliance with him and with his help Ranadaula marched against Virabhadra Nayak of Ikkeri, who was defeated and forced to flee to a fortress called Bhuvanagiri. Ranadaula then marched against Kempe Gowda, the chief of Bangalore and entrusted the campaign against him to Sri Ranga. In the face of such adversity, Venkata III appealed to his Nayaks for help. Nothing is known of this campaign except that Venkata III was defeated and returned to Vellore in July 1639, having agreed to pay a large indemnity to Ranadaula Khan.

In 1642, the Golconda forces too advanced from the eastern side into Vijayanagar to conquer as much of territory as possible. Capturing several forts on the way, the Golconda army, reached Armagon in south of Nellore district. Venkata III and his brothers-in-law had to retire to the mountains in the Chittoor district where he had to lead a miserable life and died at Narayanavanam on 10th Oct. 1642.
Venkata III was succeeded by his treacherous nephew Sri Ranga on 22nd Oct. 1642. The adjective treacherous is due to the fact that he allied with the Bijapur forces against his uncle. But on seeing a chance of saving the empire he deserted the Bijapur general and came forward as the defender of his ancestral empire.

The Muslim invasions were renewed with vigour during the reign of Sri Ranga III. In 1636 AD Shah Jahan the Mughal emperor, after conquering Ahmadnagar had imposed a treaty upon the Sultanates of Bijapur and Golconda. According to this treaty the Sultanates were free for active operations in the territories of the Vijayanagar empire south of the river Krishna.

As already mentioned Sr. Ranga III had formed an alliance with Ranadaula Khan to invade Mysore, Ikkeri, Tarkeri Bangalore etc. But when Venkata III died in 1642 AD he deserted his ally and ascended the throne of Vijayanagar. Now his priorities were entirely different. He wanted to save his ancestral kingdom from the Muslim onslaught and also wanted to vindicate his rights vis-a-vis his feudatories.

"Sri Ranga was a ruler of ambition and drive and he wanted to revitalise the moribund imperial system. His predecessor was satisfied with maintaining the semblance of power and powerful feudatories of the empire, taking advantage of the king's weak policy tried
to enhance their power and strengthen their position. Sri Ranga was not prepared to allow this to continue and soon after his accession planned to assert his authority over his vassals. This brought him into conflict with Tirumala Nayak of Madura.  

But Sri Ranga could not muster the support of his nobles. On the contrary they cold-shouldered him and formed an alliance against him. In this league were Tirumala Nayak of Madura, Venkappa of Senji, and Vijayaraghav of Tanjore. However this alliance was made secretly known to Sri Ranga by Vijayaraghava of Tanjore. "Perhaps he was forced to join the alliance against his own conscience and therefore he withdrew from it at the last moment and informed Sri Ranga of the league against him".  

We are told that Sri Ranga marched against the Nayaks burning and plundering the country side along the route until he reached a place called Cettipattu and awaited the arrival of the rebels. Dr. Venkataramanayya further says that Sri Ranga marched against the Nayaks with 100 elephants, 12,000 horses & 30,000 foot and inflicted a defeat on the forces of the Nayak of Senji and forced him to submit. But the Nayaks of Tanjore and Madura offered stubborn resistance. Dr. Krishnaswami has pointed out certain inconsistencies
in the above version of Dr. Venkataramanayya. Firstly Tanjore was not in the league and secondly he expresses the doubt as to how Sri Ranga was able to mobilise such a large force with his limited resources — However this much is certain that Sri Ranga did gain a victory over the Nayaks which forced them to appeal to Bijapur and Golconda for help. The victory of Sri Ranga is mentioned in a letter dated Oct. 1645 which says that Sri Ranga brought all his great lords under his command which had not been there 40 years before.66

In response to the appeals of help from the Nayaks of Madura and Senji, the Golconda forces under Mirjumla marched from the east and those of Bijapur under Mustafa Khan from the west. Thus Sri Ranga was hemmed between the jaws of those 2 invasions which would converge at Vellore. He had to abandon this campaign against the Nayaks of Madura and Senji and march towards Vellore.

Meanwhile Mustafa Khan marching towards Vellore, reached Bukkapatnam in Chittoor district.67 At this juncture he (Sri Ranga) appealed once again help from his feudatories but to no avail. On the other hand, the Nayaks had determined to get rid of Sri Ranga and massed 60,000 soldiers in the neighbourhood of Vellore.68 Thus, there was no option for Sri Ranga but to surrender to Mustafa Khan. He, sent his ambassador...
Venkaru. Somayaji to make peace with Mustafa Khan. But this was only to gain some time to tide over his internal problems. He is said to have sent an army against the Nayaks under his Dalavay Rama Raya. But he was surely defeated near Tindivanam. This defeat forced Sri Ranga to seek Mustafa Khan's help against the Nayaks. Mustafa's main aim was to get large sums of money and not to help either Sri Ranga or his enemies. But Sri Ranga was too poor to satisfy the demands of Mustafa who occupied Kudiyattam and Vrinchipuram (N. Arcot dt) and reached a place within 3 miles of Vellore. Even the Dutch records mention that Sri Ranga suffered a severe defeat near Vellore and was forced to pay what all he had as indemnity to Mustafa.

These defeats sobered the attitude of Sri Ranga towards his Nayaks. He realised that in these trying circumstances it is impossible to vindicate his sovereign rights from the Nayaks and so offered them favourable conditions which were accepted by them. The Nayaks responding favourably incited Sri Ranga to chalk out measure for the defence of the country. and he left Vellore in order to meet them. This meeting was disappointing and failed to provide any results. Dr. Proenza says - "pleased with their good disposition, he joined them to better concert together the means of defence and attack."
But here the Indian character was revealed. Narsinga spent more than a year with the three Nayaks in the midst of festivities, feasts and pleasures, during which the Muhammadans quietly achieved the conquest of his dominions. Soon joys gave place to jealousies and division. Rejected again by the Nayaks, Narasinga established his court in the forest of thieves (kallans) lying to the north of Tanjore where he spent 4 months, a prey to all discomforts, his courtiers soon abandoned him and this grand monarch one of the richest in India, was forced to beg for help from the king of Mysore, once the vassal of his crown. The ruler of Mysore who gave shelter to Sri Ranga was Kanthirava Narasa and Sri Ranga was in Mysore from 1647 to 1652 AD.

During this period, there were some swift developments in the Tamil country. Golconda forces under Mirjumla advanced against Senji and Tanjore who had no option but to surrender. Tirumala Nayaks realising that it was his turn to face the invasion of Mirjumla appealed to the Sultan of Bijapur against Golconda. Bijapuris provided an army of 17,000 cavalry. Tirumala tried to save the fortress of Senji. But the Golconda forces came to an understanding with Bijapur army and withdrew from Senji. With the result Senji was conquerored easily by Bijapur. After Senji, Bijapur
army marched against Tanjore and Madura. Vijaya Raghava of Tanjore fled from his capital and Tirumala had to sue for peace. "Thus Tirumala had to reap the consequence of his own fallacious policy". 76

But soon rifts appeared between the forces of Bijapur and Golconda over the division of the territories conquered recently. So, Mirjumla opened negotiations with Kanthirava Narasa to rebel against Bijapur and encouraged Sri Ranga to return to Vellore 77. Sri Ranga who was a brave prince seized this opportunity raised a large army, reconquered Vellore from Bijapur and rested himself there in AD 1652. 78

Even now, Sri Ranga was not left free to enjoy peace for a considerable time - Tirumala Nayak, resenting even this belated success of Sri Ranga at establishing himself at Vellore, again enacted the treacherous role. Says Fr. Proenza "Tirumala instead of co-operating in the restablishment of the affairs of Narasinga who could save the country, recomenced negotiations with the Mohammadans and urged them to declare war against the ruler of Mysore whom he should have sought for help." 79 As a result of this invitation the Bijapuri army not only invaded Mysore but also marched against Vellore in 1653. Sri Ranga made peace with Bijapur general, Khan Mohammad, by which he ceded the fort of Chandragiri and its surroundings to Sri Ranga. 80
In the meantime relations soured between Abdullah Kutb Shah and his general Mirjumla who wanted to convert his southern conquests into an independent kingdom. For this reason, Abdullah Kutb Shah grew terribly angry and wanted to teach him a lesson. With this purpose in mind, he secretly encouraged Sri Ranga to reconquer some of his territories and he occupied Tirupati, Kanchi and Pulicat.

But when Mirjumla entered the services of Mughal Emperor Shahjahan and the threat of his intervention in south ceased Abdullah showed his true colours - He sent his forces to re-establish his authority in the Karnataka and even the fort of Chandragiri given to Sri Ranga by Khan, Mohammad in 1653 was occupied by the Golconda army.

Thus was Sri Ranga driven out of Vellore and Chandragiri by the Golconda and the Bijapur Sultans respectively. These developments took place in 1658 AD. There are no traces of Sri Ranga's presence in the region round Vellore or Chandragiri after 1658 AD.

At this juncture Sri Ranga was given shelter by Sivappa of Ikkeri. According to Sivatattvaratnakara gaining knowledge of the pitiable conditions of the emperor Sivappa came to his help. He is said to have marched against Vellore, defeated the enemies of Sri Ranga and
captured it. Krishna Swamy and Dr. Venkataramanayya refuse to identify Velapura with Vellore in Tamil country. According to them it is Belur in Mysore against which Sivappa led an army and conquered in 1659 AD. He was assisted by the chieftains of Sode, Bilige, Tarkerer and Haripura. Belur was then handed over to Sri Ranga. Belur was under the control of the ruler of Mysore Kanthirava Manasa. He had refused to help Sri Ranga when he was driven out of Vellore by the Golconda and Bijapur armies and so on this score, he was an enemy of Sivappa. The rule of Sri Ranga over Belur is attested by a number of inscriptions from there.

Tirumala Nayaka, the ruler of Madura was succeeded by his grandson Chokkanatha Nayak (1659-82) who reversed the policy of his predecessor towards Sri Ranga. There are many inscriptions of Chokkanatha Nayak which proclaim loyalty to Sri Ranga. A copper plate grant from Srirangam in AD 1662 mentions that he regarded Sri Ranga as his sovereign. Chokkanatha wanted to atone for the misdeeds of Tirumala Nayak by driving out the Muslims from Vellore and reestablishing Vijayanagar—In this noble endeavour he was supported Damerla Ayyappa and the Nayak of Tanjore. This confederate army was opposed by the Devaraja the ruler of Mysore and both
the parties clashed in the battle of Erode in 1670 AD. But the supporters of Sri Ranga were defeated. Damerla Ayyappa lost his life and Belur was captured by Deve-raja of Mysore. Sri Ranga was forced to take shelter at Ikkeri. He lived for only two years more and died on 16th December, 1672. With the death of Sri Ranga, the Vijayanagar kingdom also came to an end.
NOTES

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12. Ibid p.p 131-32
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17. Briggs III p 134
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24. Briggs III p 135
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32. F S p 302
33. Briggs III p 435
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35. Heras - Asavidu Dynasty p 270
36. Sources p 19
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38. Briggs III p 142
39. Ibid pp 157-58
40. F S p 310
41. Briggs III p 155
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53. FS pp 338-39
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55. Krishnaswami - T C under Vijayanagar p 342
56. FS Vol I pp 341 - 42
57. Ibid p 343
58. Ibid p 346
59. Ibid p 347, Foster - English Factories in India(1642-43) pp 44 - 5
60. FS p 348
63. Krishnaswami - T C under Vijayanagar p 351
64. FS p 353
65. Ibid
66. W. Foster p 289
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68. F S p 355
69. T C under Vijayanagar p 355
70. F S Vol I p 355
71. W. Foster p 24-25
72. Nayaks of Madura p 264
73. F S p 360
74. La Mission Du Madura III p 43 Translated by S. Sathejanatha Iyer, Nayaks of Madura p 264 Appendix A
75. T C under Vijayanagar p 357
76. T C under Vijayanagar p 358
77. Nayaks of Madura Appendix A
78. F S I p 365
79. W. Foster 1651 - 54 p 33
80. F S p 366
81. W. Foster p p 93, 95, 97 - 98
82. F S p 366
83. Sources p 347

84. Ibid

85. E C V B 1 no 80, 81, 82


87. Sathianathaier - Tamilhan in 17th C p 54