CHAPTER-I
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 Batuta's travelogue and in the vilasa copper plate
grant 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 Harihara 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
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 Vidyaranya. 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 Vidyaranya, 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-à-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, Bukka 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
played a stellar role in checking the Mohamrnadan 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. It was only because of the efforts of Saluva Narasimha that "instead of breaking up under the weight of heavy blows delivered by the Gajapatis and Asvapatis, Vijayanagar Survived for another century to achieve glory and splendour that had never been surpassed by any other Hindu state." 3

From his death bed, in 1491 AD Saluva Narasimha appointed his general Narasa Nayaka, as the regent of the empire. Narasa Nayaka installed Immadi Narasimha as the throne of Vijayanagara. 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 Deva Raya
4. Sadasiva Raya

Krishna Deva Raya (1509-29 AD) was an energetic and war-like king of Vijayanagar. He made inroads into the Mussalman realms in the north and made Vijayanagar a power to reckon with in South India. Though Bahmani empire ceased to exist, Vijayanagar had to deal with five energetic successor-States in Deccan namely, Bijapur, Golconda, Ahmednagar, Bidar and Berar. Vijayanagar rulers had to contend more frequently with Bijapur and Golconda Sultans. Krishna Deva Raya was successful in pushing the Vijayanagar territories beyond the Krishna and Godavari and even carried the war right to the capital of Bahmanies not once but twice. On the north eastern front, Krishna Deva Raya was successful against the Gajapatis of Orissa and annexed such strong forts as Udaigiri, Kondavidu, Kondapalli etc. This constitutes one of the most brilliant campaigns of his times.

By this time, Portuguese succeeded in discovering a sea route to India. The main purpose of the Portuguese was to capture the trade in pepper which was in great demand in the European markets. At that time, the trade of the western coast of India was under the control of
the Mussalman-merchants. So, the Portuguese had to face their resistance and also the hostility of the local rulers — especially the zamorin of Calicut. Initially, the Portuguese dealings were with the vassal kings of Vijayanagar-like the rulers of Gersoppa, Honavar etc. But from 1505 AD onwards they started direct negotiations with the Vijayanagar Kings. The vijanagar kings were in constant need of horses of good breed for their cavalry. So, they befriended the Portuguese. The various embassies exchanged by Vijayanagar and Portuguese, the treaties signed between them reveal the diplomacy of Vijayanagar kings.

Achyuta Raya:

Krishna Deva Raya nominated his brother Achyuta Raya as his successor. During Achyuta's reign, the kingdom was plunged into civil war as his accession was sought to be undone by Rama Raya the son-in-law of Krishna Deva Raya. In the end there was an agreement between the two, according to which, Achyuta Raya gave Rama Raya the right to rule a small part of the empire without Achyuta's interference. Inspite of being engrossed in the civil war, Achyuta Raya succeeded in capturing Raichur and Mudgal from the Adilshahies.

Sadasiva Raya 1542-1576 AD:

Achyuta Raya was succeeded by his young son Venkata I. After a few months he was murdered and finally Sadasiva Raya
a nephew of Achyuta was placed on the throne by Rama Rayao. Sadasiva Raya was only the nominal ruler throughout his long reign. The actual ruler was Rama Raya. During his reign, the power of Vijayanagar rose to great heights. He was the first Hindu ruler of the South who played one kingdom against another and enhanced his power and prestige. Rama Raya was the first Vijayanagar ruler who showed an inclination to entangle himself in the interstate politics of the Mohammadan kingdoms. But he overreached himself. His action only succeeded in rousing the jealousies of the Deccan Sultans against the growing power of Vijayanagar. So, in order to crush the power of Rama Raya, they joined hands to form the league of 1565 AD. This league comprised of Golconda, Bijapur, Ahmednagar Bidar and Berar.

The battle of Rakshsi-Tangadi had disastrous results on Vijayanagar. Rama Raya was captured and killed. The Vijayanagar army was laid in dust. Before the Muslim armies descended on the city of Vijayanagar, Tirumala Raya, fled with the king Sadasiva Raya to Penugonda.

The kingdom of Vijayanagar survived for another century. For more than half a century after the battle, the imperial authority was a living and potent force in South Indian politics and anti-Muslim resistance was offered effectively and even with credit.
Aravidu Dynasty:

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  
6. Venkata III  
7. Sri Ranga III

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

Sri Ranga I (1572-65 AD):

Tirumala was succeeded by his son Sri Ranga. He had to face Golconda invasions from the east and Adilshahi invasions from the North. With great difficulty Sri Ranga was able to repulse the Adil Shahi attack on Penugonda. His problem was aggravated by the division of the empire amongst all his brothers—an arrangement made by Tirumala Raya. These brothers did not send timely aid to the rescue of Sri Ranga. Since he had no sons, he was succeeded by his brother Venkata II in 1585 AD.
Venkata II (1585-1614 AD):

He was the ablest of the Aravidu rulers. He worked hard to revive the old glory of Vijayanagar and reconquered many of territories taken by Golconda during the reign of Sri Ranga I with the help of his able generals like Yachma Nayak, Matli Ananta and Pemmasani Timma. He had good relations with the Portuguese and renewed the old treaty with them. Jesuit fathers were also present at his court. He had excellent rapport with them.

Sri Ranga II:

Venkata II's death in 1614 AD plunged Vijayanagar into civil war. He had no sons and nominated his nephew Sri Ranga as his successor. But this was challenged by Jaggaraya, the brother-in-law of Venkata II who wanted to install the putative son of Venkata on the throne. In the battle of Topur in 1614 AD the cause of Ramadeva Raya, the son of Sri Ranga II was upheld.

Rama Deva Raya (1614-30 AD):

Civil war continued unabated during his reign. Taking advantage of these disturbed conditions — the Bijapur and Golconda armies advanced into the interior of the kingdom — Kurnool was conquered by Bijapur.

Venkata III (1630-42 AD):

The process of disintegration of Vijayanagar
accelerated during his reign. The Nayaks of Madura, Tanjore and Gingee, became independent for all practical purposes. Realising the futility of crossing swords with them because of the advancing armies of Bijapur and Golconda, Venkata patched up his differences with them. These armies of Bijapur and Golconda played havoc with the kingdom. They captured much of Vijayanagar territories. Venkata III was helpless in resisting these invasions due to lack of resources as well as co-operation from his nobles.

**Sri Ranga III (1642-72 AD)**

He was the last king of Vijayanagara. Sri Ranga III was the nephew of Venkata III. The dissolution of the empire was completed under his rule. The Nayaks of Tanjore, Madura and Gingee became so powerful that they flaunted their authority openly and also joined hands with the Sultans of Bijapur and Golconda against Sri Ranga III. The situation became so bad that in 1642 AD he was driven out of Vellore by the invading armies. Later, Bijapur and Golconda divided the territories of Vijayanagar between themselves. Sri Ranga continued to live up to 1672 AD but his condition was pathetic. He had to seek shelter of the ruler of Mysore region as he had no place to call his own. Such was the miserable end of the mighty empire of Vijayanagar. "The empire passes
out of existence with him, as he passes out of view almost unobserved."  

Howsoever independent the rulers of a kingdom might choose to be, the growth and decay of the kingdom are to a certain extent determined by external factors. This is especially true with respect to Vijayanagara. Foreign relations are motivated by the desire of the states to reconcile to the fact of co-existence. In other words, it is the problem of adjusting the actions of states to each other.

The foremost task of a student of foreign policy is to throw light on the ways in which states attempt to adjust their behaviour to that of others i.e. whether the state concerned reacts in a violent manner, resulting thereby in a war between the two states or whether the state attempts to tackle the situation in a diplomatic manner through negotiations. An analysis of foreign policy leads us to examine the principles, interests and aims that go to the building up and execution of the policy.
NOTES

1. Vide Appendix I "A forgotten chapter of Andhra History" by Somasekhara Sarma.


