INTRODUCTION
AND
APPROACH

My principal object is to know so far as I can, the manners of peoples, and to study the human mind; I shall regard the order of succession of kings and chronology as my guides but not as the object of my work.

— Voltaire
Chapter One
INTRODUCTION AND APPROACH

This study is a comprehensive cultural history of the Yadava age in the annals of the Deccan. In Indian history the Deccan has been one of the major political and geographic units. The Yadavas are one of those ruling dynasties that have, one by one, filled its annals and kept up its political continuity almost unbroken from the 1st century B.C. By the close of the 12th century, these believers in the Lunar race became masters of the Deccan and in the opening years of the 14th, they were crushed by the militant believers in the Crescent. They are known as the Yadavas of Devagiri. Yet, they were no new dynasty to rise all of a sudden. They had been vassals of the Rashtrakutas and the Later Calukyas for over three centuries before they acquired the imperial mantle.

The present thesis is an attempt to understand their period intensively and to comprehend it in its larger context of Indian history. It is an effort to encompass as many aspects of life of the times, as would be warranted by the sources. The study has a two-fold aspect. Firstly, it is a dynastic history and secondly it is a regional study in Indian history and culture. Hence a definite approach towards Indian history is a pre-requisite of such an undertaking and it needs to be defined first.

Approach Towards Indian History:

The history of India is a complex phenomenon. Its long course appears an irregular patchwork of political dynasties and becomes perplexing to the mind. This initial confusion takes one to the
fundamental problem of the meaning of Indian history and the place of the innumerable dynasties in the main theme. An examination of this problem would help us to understand and evaluate our chosen dynasty.

It may be noted that the crowd of kingdoms is only apparently confusing. The dynasties need not be deemed as static pieces composing the course of history. If the entire past is seen with a comprehensive and synthetic view with the due reference to the time and space factors, the same mass of history begins to reveal its own meaning and discloses the pattern, it has followed. This convinces us that Indian history is really a dynamic process and the dynasties have a definite role in its making.

There are certain factors operating behind the change and continuity in Indian history. The study of the principles and factors operating behind the change in Indian history may be termed as the Dynamics of Indian history. The present author has shown in a separate study how this dynamics elucidates the complex course of Indian history and explains the dynamic role of the innumerable dynasties. It may be profitably summed up here.

India, a country with a continental character, is well-known for its diversity. This diversity expressed in culture and politics is basically geographic, because the Indian sub-continent is cut up into a number of river basins separated by hill ranges and forest belts. These basins since earliest times became centres of civilization and during the course of history assumed political lives. So the existence of certain distinct geographic and economic units giving rise to cultural diversity is major fact to be noted in Indian history. Thus the sub-continent is seen
divided into certain historical-geographic units. By historical-
geographic units is meant, those major geographic units of India, 
which have, either continuously or recurrently, been political 
entities through history. Of course, this cannot be rigidly so. 
The political boundaries are always subject to frequent changes 
as 'state after all is an artificial contrivance by which geogra-
phical regions are welded into a working unit'. But an important 
study of the political frontiers in India from the days of Asoka 
to Aurangzeb, has shown that these frontiers are not as arbitrary 
as they are commonly thought to be. This beautiful work by Dey 
has brought out the reverence paid by the political frontiers to 
the geographic and economic factors. (See fig.) This helps us 
to discover certain permanent pieces in the political kaleido-
scope and a broad pattern of certain historical-geographic units 
is discerned. The Deccan has been one of such historical-geographic 
units.

Such geographic units and sub-units have been the cores of 
the environmental diversity of India. These units became the 
centres of civilization and assumed individualities. Thus the 
basis for the development of the regional cultures of India has 
been provided. They may be termed as the centrifugal forces in 
Indian history because they have always tried to assert themselves 
whenever the imperial force was weak. These local and regional 
units, when politically and culturally consolidated released 
supra-regional forces. Thus there is a conflict and confluence of 
the centrifugal forces. At the same time, through history, in the 
movement of peoples ideas and technology within the country, is 
seen a centripetal force making a conscious and constant attempt
at unity, political and cultural. Thus the continuous operation of these two forces, centrifugal and centripetal, is a crucial factor in understanding the meaning of Indian history. In fact in one sense, the whole of Indian history can be viewed as a conflict between the centripetal and the centrifugal forces. It is a story of alternating periods of these two forces. Whenever the imperial authority was strong, the regional and local states have accepted it, but no sooner it became weak than they tried to assert their independence. But the nature of this conflict is deeper than this and must be properly appreciated. It should be noted that such a conflict between the forces of concord and discord as a disintegrative as well as an integrative role. This explains the 'unity-in-diversity' of India, which is a result of the interaction of these two forces, operating through history. The concept explains the problems and peculiarities of Indian history and culture. Moreover, this in no way is a case against unity. On the contrary, only by gracefully accepting the existence of the centrifugal forces we can study the part played by them in the making of the country's personality. The personality of a country is its physical frame-work superimposed by its culture through history. The personality of India is woven by both these forces, centripetal and centrifugal, and both must be given due place in the reconstruction of Indian history.

The importance of these centrifugal forces, in the making of Indian history would be further realised if their relative strength against the centripetal ones is brought out. The same has been shown by the work of the present author already noted. The chart discloses the short-lived character of the major empires in Indian history and the relative longivity of the periods of
the absence of the central authority. This shows how fallacious it would be if the place of the various local and regional dynasties is misunderstood or under-estimated in the reconstruction of Indian history. They have nourished and developed the regional cultures and made distinct contribution to the national heritage. At the same time they have served as cores of political disunity. Thus their objective study would help us to understand the problems and peculiarities of Indian history and culture.

One long period in Indian history gives us the maximum scope for the study of these forces. It may be called the post-gupta and the pre-sultanate period or at least a large part of it. This longest period of the lack of central authority has received lesser attention of the historians in the reconstruction of history, because Indian history has remained empire-ridden. Moreover, it calls for giving every minor detail its due in the over-all picture. This fact was probably further responsible for treating the period, especially its later part, as one of general decadence. But such conclusions are historically unwarranted. Great cultural achievements of the period in the various fields like painting, architecture, music, medicine, law, mathematics, astronomy, grammar, poetics, philosophy and fiction cannot be overlooked by the historian. Absence of political unity does not imply cultural sterility. Moreover, during this period a vital cultural phenomenon in Indian history was taking place. It is the rise of the modern Indian languages. It must be given its due consideration in the history of India. Such a phenomenon cannot be an isolated event; its roots in the social, religious and political conditions must be traced historically.
All these and allied interesting problems, appealed to the mind of the present author during his study of Indian history. Then it was felt that in order to give a shape to these ideas a particular dynasty from this period be selected for an intensive study. The choice fell on the 'Yadavas of the Deccan and their Times'.

The aim of the present study is not simply to relate facts and events; nor to justify anything. It is to know as much possible about the life of the times as the sources would permit, and to comprehend it as a whole, in wider contexts. The study is, in one sense an essay in the understanding of human life as such, though its scope is limited in time and space.

REFERENCES

1 Raikar Y.A., Indian History - A Study in Dynamics, Baroda, 1960.


3 No attempt should be made to identify these units with modern linguistic states, which would be misleading. Our aim is to trace the diversity as and when it existed and the part played by the environmental factors in it. History after all, is ultimately framed by the cumulative effect of a number of factors, other than environmental also.

4 Subbarao, B., Personality of India, Baroda, 1958, p.8.

5 Subbarao, B., Regions and Regionalism in India, The Economic Weekly, Bombay, September 20, 1958, p.1215.
POLITICAL FRONTIERS IN INDIAN HISTORY
ASOKA TO AURANGAZEB

(WIDTH PROPORTIONATE TO FREQUENCY)

(AFTER SPATE)