CHAPTER III

HAIDAR'S CONQUEST OF KANARA (1763 A.D.)

In 1761 A.D. Haidar came to the fore on the political scene of Karnataka as the defacto ruler of Mysore. And this event had considerable impact on the Surrounding region. A shrewed diplomat and a military genius, this Nawab soon launched upon a programme of expansion of his authority. Kanara naturally attracted his attention with its rich resources and trade potentiality. Haidar was aware of the natural resources of Kanara and the brisk trade activities of the Europeans. He obviously thought that he could control these activities and amass wealth by pushing aside the foreigners. This would open up for him the road to advance further north to Goa, the centre of the Portuguese activities. Orme opines that Haidar wanted a safer place somewhere below the Ghâts. He could easily
achieve this in Kanara because of the fact that the powers in that region were weak and divided.

He therefore marched towards this land in the end of 1762 A.D. about a year after his assuming power. Naturally, Bednūr, the capital of the Keladi kingdom, became the first victim. As noted earlier in detail the Keladi ruler at this juncture was queen Vīrammūji and her infant adopted son Sōmāśekhara.

Haidar is said to have invaded Bednūr with an intention of restoring young rāja to the throne of Bednūr. But it was only a pretext. All the contemporary foreign sources indicate that his conquest of Bednūr was fairly easy. Obviously, he did not have to face much opposition. Rodrigues, the Tellicherry linguist, who had gone to Bednūr, informs the English resident at Honnavar, John Stracey, as follows: "the country on all sides was in the utmost consternation". Further he reports "the preparation of the canarees to oppose this force is very little, or rather none at all, and even in the midst of this very consternation, the government do not desist from oppressing the subjects in order to extort money from them; and the not paying the sepoys the greatest part of whom/commanded by one duly/ are run away from them; The inhabitants of this city and adjacent places have fled with all their
Based on this, Tracey reports on 1st January 1763 A.D. to the higher officer at Bombay in these words: "In short the country is in the greatest terror and confusion and as it is in every part in the most weak and defenceless state." But Kirmānī, the court historian of Tippu, however, tries to give a different picture when he says that the fight between the queen of Keladi and Haidar was severe and prolonged for the year. However, his statement does not appear to be correct. The fight could not have continued for more than a month because the English and the Portuguese records specifically state that the campaign ended within a month. It is, of course, natural that there was some kind of opposition which Haidar's army easily overcame.

The occupation of the rest of the country (Kanara coast) was rather a matter of arrangement than of conquest. With 5000 sepoys and 300 Europeans, Haidar marched to Mangalore and took possession of it. Since we know that the factors of Tellicherry received the news of Haidar's capture of Mangalore on 28th January 1763, this event may reasonably be placed before that date. Then he sent a strong detachment of troops to bring other ports on the sea coast under subjection most of which surrendered without resistance. Then came the turn of Honnāvar which port was almost handed over to him without any opposition. This event took place on 29th January 1763. The island fort of Basavarāja
Durga was the next place to fall. Kirmani again tells us that the fort island fell after three days siege. However, this statement seems to be more exaggerated than factual. Thus by the end of March 1763 A.D. the Keladi possession of Kanara came under the complete control of Haidar Ali.

The chieftancy of Svādi became the next target of attack from Haidar. This event took place in 1763 A.D. when General Haibat Jung or Fazul Khan attacked the hill country and overran the whole country. The chief of Svādi, Immaḍi Sadasiva escaped in Goa and sought the help of the Portuguese. But he could not get prompt help from the latter. Thus Haidar annexed this principality to his own territory even as the negotiation was in progress. Thus the conquest of entire Kanara was completed by Haidar in the beginning of 1764 A.D. and the vast area stretching from the Kāli to Chandragiri river came under his possession.

This conquest strengthened the position of Haidar considerably. He amassed much wealth and rich prosperous region. Monsieur Maistre De La Tour, praises this hero above Alexander and Timur. Sri Hayavadana Rao is of the opinion that Haidar wanted to make this region his own kingdom. Subsequently he abandoned it. At last Haidar's conquest in Kanara brought the final doom of the Hindu kingdom there.
This conquest had considerable impact on the foreign traders also. His control of the Coastal ports naturally affected their trade interest. Haidar's construction of dockyard at Mangalore and his anxiety to build vessels in the English marine yard, probably alarmed the Europeans, particularly the English. The apprehension over the situation is well expressed by Stracey's letter which states that he would leave Honnāvar and retire to Anjīdiv. In another letter he adds that the interest of the Company might be affected by the change of government. The participation of the French soldiers in Haidar's conquest in Kanara was good reason for their apprehension. They obviously felt that the French would get certain concession and trade privileges to disadvantage of the English. Their dislike and fear for the changed circumstance is well expressed in letters written by the English resident at Honnāvar to his higher authority at Bombay. For instance the following are worth quoting:

"I imagine your honour and Co. will hardly think it right for us to remain here exposed to the insolence and caprice of a Moorish government...... The Nabob's sole ambition is to make himself as formidable as possible with such an ambitious man at the head, the country can by no means be looked upon in a state of tranquility at present". But the English did not like to lose their prosperous trade in the ports of Kanara which was now under the control of
Haidar. Therefore they appear to have tried to seek the friendship of Haidar. As a result of this they got Firm- 
aund from Haidar on 27th March.

Similarly the Portuguese also feared that their interest would also be harmed. Actually they lost much of their influence in Kanara coast. However, the Nāyakas of Keladi had permitted the Portuguese to have a factory at Mangalore to build churches in the kingdom and to take food grains from Kanara. They were anxious whether Haidar would continue these privileges. Fortunately for them, Haidar intended to be on friendly terms with them. As a result of this they seem to have trod a different line of action. They did not like the upperhand of Haidar, but it seems that they did not express any resentment of that; outwardly, at least, they appreciated it. For instance, one of their records proudly says: "he initiated negotiation with them, not they with him". The Viceroy congratulated Haidar on his victory in Kanara and assured friendship.

The Marathas were unhappy at the rise of Haidar Ali. Their interest was, of course, different from those of the foreigners. All along they were trying to get some tributes from the Keladi Nāyakas. Now they were deprived of it. An English record indicates "as the Morattas will be disappointed of very large tribute by his conquest of
this country, it is to be supposed they will use their
endeavour either to wrest it from him or else oblige him
to pay the same tribute they formerly received, "but the
Morattas alone I believe he is little afraid". All the
contemporary sources confirm that the extermination of
the Keladi kingdom strained his relation with the Marathas.
This strained relation between the two turned into clash
of interest. This clash of interest naturally resulted
in a conflict between Haidar and the Marathas, the discus-
sion of which, however, is beyond the purview of this
thesis.

It is, however, to be noted that Haidar's conquest
of Kanara brought it into the main stream of Indian history
in general and south Indian history in particular.
REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. In this chapter we are concerned with Haidar's motive of conquest of Kanara and his occupation of it and its impact on contemporary powers in Kanara. Regarding his early career, the event leading to his conquest of Bednur and other activities of him are left out here, as these are elaborately dealt by several historians, like, Wilks, Beveridge, and Hayavadana Rao in their Whks, A Historical Sketches of South India .. etc. I, pp. 261-270, 292-330, 358,359,370,387,486. Beveridge Henry, A Comprehensive History of India (New Delhi Ed.1974) II, pp.301-305. Hayavadana Rao, History of Mysore II, Chs.X,XI.


4. It is interesting to note that Haidar, before the conquest of Bednur, met young prince, one of the claiments for the throne of Bednur, and urged latter to surrender the Suba of Mangalore with the tract country from a communication from thence to the frontier kingdom of Mysore, says Monsieur Maistre De La Tour, History of Hyder Shah (1855, Ed.) p.56.


6. Ibid. 393.


8. Secretariat Inward Letter Book No.17, 1763, p.16 (unpublished document kept in Maharashtra Archives Bombay Secured through V.G.Khobrekar). Letter dated 1st January 1763. On the basis of this document, it is difficult to believe the statement of Kirmani that the
campaign against the queen of Bednur took place in 1762 A.D. (Kirmani Op.Cit.,p.140).

9. It seems that this prince was Chennabasavanayaka, the adopted son of Basavappanayaka II. About this matter, one of the English records says: "Haider Ally Khawn has brought in his company, the former Rajah who however, has always been looked upon as dead, but this news is not to be depended for a certainty". (Ref., Secretariat Inward Letter Book No.17, 1763, p.19). About the story of this prince See Buchanan, A Journey, II p.291, Wilks, Op.Cit., I p.503. But strangely enough the Portuguese account of Haidar's conquest of Kanara dated 26th January 1764, and poet Lmganna are silent on this matter.


16. Public Department Diary, No.40, dated 16th February 1763, p.125, Details see Mascarenhas, Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan in Canara (Un published thesis, submitted to Bombay University,1931), p.9-15. Udayavar K.M. Hyder Ali Khan of Mysore (Un published theses submitted to Bombay University,1934) p.121-171. A letter of Haidar to Conde De Ega, the viceroy of Goa. This letter was written from Mangalore towards the end of January 1763 A.D. In this letter Haidar wrote "I (wish to) inform you that I, marching with my army on Bednur and conquering the lands, made necessary arrangement for it, and from there I proceeded to this (region of) Mangalore which I also put in order". Shastry B.S. QRHS, XIV,(1974-75) No.2,p.75.


22a. It is said that after conquering Bednūr Haidar came to Mangalore and fixed the tributes of feudatory chiefs such as the Banga, the Chauta, Sāmanta etc. In the next year these chiefs lost their principalities as they could not pay tribute. See Aigal, Dakshina Kannada Jelleya Prachina Ithihasa, pp.226, 227, 283, 324, 325 and 357.


28. See, Note No.18.


32. Ibid. p.23, Letter dated 14th January 1763.

34. Secretariat Inward Letter Book p.108,130, dated 22nd February and 3rd March 1763.


38. Livro Do Correspondencia Do Canara. No.2,2ff.p.155. ORHS.

39. ORHS. p.76, But it is interesting to note that the Portuguese factor at Mangalore was instructed by the Portuguese viceroy to observe Hyder's character, family and armed strength, the number of European soldiers working with him, and other aspects of his life and court, as he was conquering territories with lightening speed and therefore vigilance was necessary against him. Ibid, p.76.

40. Selection from Peshwa Deftar XXVII No.193,214, See for details (Kamatha S.U. OJMS, LXI 1970, p.71), See Maratha Activities in Kanara of this thesis.


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