CHAPTER XI

SVĀDI RULERS

The principality of Svādi or Sōde marked its appearance in the Ghāt region of Kanara in the early part of the fourteenth century, attained its zenith in the middle of the seventeenth century and ended its political entity in the middle of the eighteenth century. In the beginning, the principality was confined to the region round about Sirsi in the North Kanara. Subsequently it extended its border up to the sea, taking in the coastal stretch from the river Mirjan in the South to the Cape Ramas in the North. The head of this principality was at Sonda or Svādi in the Sirsi Taluka of North Kanara.
The chiefs called themselves Svādi Puravarādhīśvara. In the course of three centuries of its existence these came into contact with contemporary rulers like the Vijayanagara emperors, the Keladi Nāyakas, the Adilshahis of Bijapur, the Marāṭhas and the Europeans. After the battle of Rakka-sa-Tangadi, they continued for long time as vassal of the Vijayanagara Emperors and gradually they rose to prominence and became one of the prominent political powers in Kanara. The political career of Svādi chiefs begins with Arasappa I, as a subordinate of Immadī Devarāya of Vijayanagara. Inscriptions indicate that there was a close contact between the two families but there is no evidence to support the opinion of Buchanan who states that two families had blood relationship. The earliest reference to this chief is found in an epigraph of 1431 A.D. from Hosakoti which speaks of his subordinate position under Vijayanagara emperor Devarāya Mahārāja. The only information we get about him was that he died in that year and his nine queens committed sahagamana. Strangely enough, no useful information is coming forth regarding the history of Svādi from 1431 to 1555 A.D. No epigraph belonging to this principality has been discovered yet. Only from the Portuguese account we hear of trade agreements between them and the Svādi chief in 1528 A.D. and in 1530 A.D. But it is not known who the ruling king was and it is almost known how far these accounts are reliable.
From 1555 A.D. onwards we get almost connected accounts of this family till its end. In this year figures an Arasappa, whose relationship with one noted above is, however, is not known. But there is no doubt that both belonged to the same family. He may be thus designated as Arasappa II. In an epigraph of 1555 A.D. he is described as a ruler of Somadapuri (i.e. Svādi). The ruling king of Vijayanagara then was Sadāśiva. Inscriptions indicate that he continued to be a subordinate of Vijayanagara rulers, Sadāśiva as well as Venkaṭapatiraya.

The political career of Arasappa was marked by his clash with Chikkamakkananāyaka in 1585 A.D. Obviously, Keladi Nayaka planned this invasion with a view to extend his authority in Kanara and he seems to have been successful also. It is stated that Arasappa sought the help of the Adilshahi ruler but it was not much use.

It seems that the cordial relationship between the Sultan of Bijapur and the Svādi chief did not continue for long, because in 1593 A.D. we notice Arasappa facing an attack from the Adilshahi forces led by Manjun Khan. Ferishta says that Arasappa resisted the Bijapur forces, but finally he had to submit and agree to pay annual tribute and presents.

Not much is known about Arsappa's relations with the Portuguese. The accounts of the latter make us believe
that the relationship was friendly. One of the accounts says that when the Dutch tried to intrude in Kanara coast in 1602 A.D. Arasappa drove them back with the help of the Portuguese.

Arasappa was a patron of different religions. He made munificent grants to Jain basadis. An epigraph dated in 1562 A.D. records his pilgrimage to Sravanabelgola and his granting money for worship in that place. He was a devotee of Akalankadēva of Biligi. Desai, P.B. has pointed out that his contact with the latter was due to his close relationship with the Biligi chiefs as pointed out earlier. He made liberal grants to temples and mathas also. In 1591 A.D. he is said to have repaired Agrahāra in memory of his mother Changamma. In 1593 A.D. he made grants of land to the temple of Lord Trivikrama at Svādi built by Vādirāja Svāmi. An epigraph of 1598 A.D. speaks of his grants of land to the temple of Madukēśava at Banavāsi. The active career of Arasappa II came to an end in 1602 A.D. and in the same year he was succeeded by his son Rāmachandra. A copper plate inscription of that year depicts him as a feudatory of Vijayanagara king Venkaṭapati-raja.

The only event that took place during his rule was a fierce attack of Venkatappanayaka of Keladi. The Keladi-nripaviśayam tells us that the king was routed thoroughly.
One of the Portuguese records of 1629 A.D. also speaks of the land worth twelve pagodas from this chief by Keladi Venkaṭappa. Possibly Ramachandra did face reverse. But he continued to rule his principality unaffected.

The epigraph of 1602 A.D. referred to above speaks of his constructing a temple for Rama, Sīta and Lakshmana and grant of three villages Singanāhallī, Huvinamane and Kappagaddē for the temple for religious ceremonies to be conducted there. These images are said to have been worshipped in the palace of Venkaṭapatiraya at Vijayanagara (Venkaṭapatī Mahārājara Ārabhya Aramaneyallī Poojēsikondū Baruva, Mamma Mane Dèvarāḍa Sītā Lakshmana Ramachandra). The rule of Ramachandra came to an end in 1618 A.D. 19

The successor and the son of Ramachandra was Raghunāthanāyaka. He came to power in 1618 A.D. Like his father he continued to owe his allegiance to the Vijayanagara ruler Venkaṭapatiraya. 20

During this period also, the relationship of Svādi with Keladi continued to be hostile. In view of the death of Venkaṭappa, Raghunāthanāyaka seems to have thought of taking revenge against the reverses suffered by his father at the hands of the latter. He attacked the Keladi and according to one of the Portuguese records dated in 1630 A.D. he secured the alliance of the Biligi chief. 21 The result
however, was no way favourable to him. Keladi Virabhadra pushed back the invader and the hostility ended with a treaty between the two.  

Raghunāthanāyaka was an ardent devotee of God Madhukēśvara at Banavāsi. He presented to god an exquisite carved black stone for conducting different celebrations in the temple. He also made donations for conducting different celebrations in the temple. It is said that in the later days of his career he became a follower of Virāśaivism.

Raghunāthanāyaka was succeeded by his son Madhulinga nāyaka in 1638 A.D. In his rule also the Svadi relationship with the Keladi Nāyakas did not improve. In his zeal to punish the Keladi ruler, Madhulinga even supported the Portuguese when the fort of Honnāvar in possession of the latter was attacked by Sivappanāyaka of Keladi in 1654 A.D. This naturally enraged the Keladi Nāyakas who took an opportunity of invading Svadi in 1666 A.D. The Keladinripāvijayam tells us that the Svadi chief was no match for the invader and he overran Sirsi, Harūru, Bōlūr, Puliyakaṇa, Karavūru, Banavāsi, Badanagūdu etc. Madhulinganāyaka had to sue peace (Sandhi Mukhadāla Sōdeya Madhulinganāyakam, Bēdikollai). Finally Sivappa withdraw his forces from the Svadi region as a result of the treaty.
The effect of this treaty did not last long. In 1663 A.D. the next Keladi ruler Bhadrappa once again attacked the Svādi and gained an upperhand. But he thought it wiser to strike a treaty rather than pursue his victory when he heard that the Svādi chief approached the Sultan for help. Once again a treaty was entered into and the Keladi forces withdrew from Svādi.

Madhulinganāyaka's rule ended in about 1665 A.D. It was believed that he was succeeded by his son Sadāśivanāyaka. But three inscriptions show that the succession went to Rāmachandra who was the son of Madhulinganāyaka, obviously he was brother of Sode Sadāśivanāyaka.

The rule of Rāmachandra appears to have witnessed the revolt of some kinsmen of him in 1670 A.D. But it is not known who these kinsmen were. However, this incident was of no serious consequence.

Another feature of this period was that Rāmachandra tried to extend his authority below the Ghats. In 1672 A.D. his general Gōvindanāyaka managed to capture Ankola, which was under the influence of the Adilshahi, and Mirjān over which the Keladi Nayaka had a hold. However, Rāmachandranāyaka could not keep these places for long.

Yet another interesting feature of this period was the contact of Svādi with the Marathas. It is even said that the
Svādi king became subersservient to Sivājī. But we are not sure of the historicity of this view.

Like his predecessor Rāmachandra II was a zealous patron of religion. His inscription of 1668 A.D. records a grant of Surger village in Umbalaballi Sīme to Śrī Narasimhabhārati of Kūdali Sringēri Svāmī. An epigraph of 1674 A.D. from Honehalli records an interesting information that in that year Svāmī of Honehalli performed Sōmayāga which was conducted by Agnihotri Kesava Bhatta of Kaṭoka. It is also said that Sruti Bhatta was invited from Kāsī to guard the performance. This sacrifice was conducted for the prosperity of Rāmachandranāyaka.

The next chief Sadāśivarāya the brother of Rāmachandra II commenced his rule in 1682 A.D. He was the most important king in the family and he ruled for longer years, than his predecessors. It is interesting to note that he changed his title from Nayaka to Rāya. He recognised the army with an intention to prevent the aggression from the Marāthas and Muslims. He also tried to expand his authority and have conquered five regions north of the river Gangāvalli. The changing conditions of the Adilshahis obviously helped him to achieve his aim.

THE SVĀDI AND MUGHALS

There is reason to believe that Sadāśivarāya came into contact with the Mughals. According to English records of 1685 A.D. the latter occupied the town of Karwar which
had come under the authority of the Svādi. Another English record of 1698 A.D. informs us that the king of Svādi was paying tribute to the Mughals. In this context the Marathas Bakha says that the king of Svādi acknowledged the authority of the Mughals. Further it tells us that Sadāśiva visited the court of Mughals at Delhi and paid respect to Badashaha. Though Italian and English travellers like Gemelli and Hamilton mention the payment of tribute by the Svādi king to the Mughals, the latter could not consolidate their authority in Kanara. It now, therefore, wrong to hold that Sadāśiva was a subordinate to the Mughals.

SVĀDI AND THE PORTUGUESE

The expansion of the Svādi principality towards the border of Goa marked a new era in the political and economic relationship between the Svādi and the Portuguese. This was strengthened by conclusion of two treaties between these two in 1691 A.D. and 1706 A.D. According to the first treaty, the Rāja of Svādi was allowed to have house at Goa for the sale of pepper produced in his kingdom. He was given permission by the viceroy to keep ten armed men in his house at Goa for its protection. The chief also agreed to permit the Portuguese to have a house in his dominion and to exempt the Christians from the payment of taxes. Further the Portuguese
were allowed to build churches in the Svādi principality wherever the Christian population lived. Through another treaty of 1706 A.D. the Svādi chief secured Bicholim (a place in Goa). Further he was promised of assistance by the Portuguese against any aggression especially the Marathas.

**SADĀŚIVA AND THE ENGLISH**

In 1698 A.D. the Marathas raided the Svādi principality. Sadāśivārāya suspected that this was due to the instigation of the English. In retaliation he refused to supply required quantity of pepper to the English. Then the latter negotiated with merchants of Bhatkala and Honnāvar. Such action of the English enraged Sadāśiva. He decided to take severe action against them. He started drawing his forces resolving to assault the English factory at Karwar. But the Marathas raid encouraged him to go ahead his plan of invasion. Yet with an intention to control the activities of the English, he built fort on the mouth of the river, Kāli (i.e. modern Sadāśivāgad). The construction of fort began in 1698 A.D. and was completed in 1705 A.D.

Inspite of his hectic activity Sadāśivārāya did pay attention to religious activities. An epigraph of 1713 A.D. found in the Madhukēśvara temple at Banavāsi records of his construction of a stone Mantapa in that temple. He was a patron of literature. He is said to have composed on polity, Sadāśivārājanīti. By his friendly relationship with...
various powers, he controlled the activities of the English and averted the inroad of the Marathas. He was responsible for the expansion of commercial activities in the coastal region.

It is said that the reign of Sadāśivanāyaka came to an end in the year 1697 A.D. and he was succeeded by his son Basavalinga in that year. But the Keladinripaayam and an epigraph notice the reign of Sadāśiva beyond that year, i.e. 1715 A.D. and this can be taken as the end of his rule.

Basavalinga succeeded his father in 1715 A.D. Soon after he came to throne he tried to expand his authority over neighbouring areas. It is stated in the Maratna Bakhar that his commander Kallapaiyya, conquered the fort of Mahendra-gad, Kadra, Madurgad from the Mughals. Phonda was also conquered by him. The Desai of Phonda and Yellappa and other chiefs were under his authority.

**BASAVALINGA AND THE ENGLISH**

One of the important events in the reign of Basavalinga was his conflict with the English. The construction of the fort at Sadāśivagad had rendered the English at Karwar as prisoners in the Chitakula and Karwar. The demolition of the fort at Nandyāla (near Karwar) by his predecessor, Sadāśivana-nāyaka endangered the English settlement at Karwar. The movement of the English ships to and fro in Karwar zone were now
controlled by the Svādi chief. This hastened the conflict between the two from 1716 A.D. to 1717 A.D. Sensing the danger of an attack from the Svādi chief, George Taylor, the chief of Karwar factory sent an express letter to the Governor at Bombay in which he requested speedy help. But before the arrival of the English fleet in Karwar, Basavalinga had already besieged the English factory there.

In the course of the military campaign the Svādi forces inflicted a crushing defeat on the English. They besieged the Gun of the English factory and blockaded all the means of supply to the Karwar factory from its headquarter, Bombay. The attempts of the English to secure the help from the Portuguese were not materialised. Finally, they had no other alternative but to seek peace terms with Basavalinga. According to it both parties had to restore the ships which were captured by them and also return the prisoners taken in the course of war. Further, the English agreed to give a big sum of money to the Svādi chief. Thus Basavalinga was successful in keeping the English in their proper place.

This clash presented to the Portuguese to increase their influence in the Svādi. By refusing to help the English at Karwar, they earned the admiration and friendship of the Svādi chief. There is a treaty in 1742 A.D. in which they persuaded Basavalinga not to allow any other European nations into his country except the Portuguese.
Basavalinga had to face frequently the Maratha incursion throughout his reign. In order to safeguard his interest against this, he tried to secure the Portuguese help. For instance, in 1725 A.D. the Dessay of Kūdal invaded Ponda and his forces were repulsed by the Portuguese help. But the English records of 1742 A.D. say that the Maratha menace was averted by paying off money.

IMMADI SADĀŚIVA

Basavalinga was succeeded by his son Immadi Sadasiva in 1745 A.D. He was the last independent ruler of the Svādi principality. His rule witnessed the constant raids of the Marāthas. For instance, in 1750 A.D. they forced Sadasiva to hand over the Panchamahal region. i.e. Mirjan, Ankola, Sīvēśvara, Kadra, Karwar and Phonda. But the chief got back these places after paying tributes to the Marathas. Again in 1758 A.D. the Marathas invaded the Svādi principality under the pretext that certain amount of the tributes had not been paid. The Svādi chief was not in a position to pay the tribute. He thought of evading the tributes by securing the help of the Portuguese. But he could not secure their help against the Marathas. According to Perron, in 1758 A.D. the Svādi chief was once again at war with the Marathas. One of the Portuguese accounts of 1760 A.D. the chief secured Phonda through the good office of the Portuguese viceroy.
SADĀŚIVA AND THE PORTUGUESE

Knowing the weakness of Immadi Sadāśiva the Portuguese tried to secure strategic fort, Sadāśivagad, for themselves. This led to conflict between the two. In the course of one such skirmish, the Svādi chief seized some Portuguese vessels, which however, returned under the threat of invasion. 73

The Portuguese once again declared war on the Svādi chief on the pretext that the Jesuits procession was not allowed to pass by the side of Hindu temple. This event took place in 1750 A.D. In the fight the Portuguese took possession of Sadāśivagad and the other forts like Kurmughad (near Karwar) Ximpim (in Goa). Thus they gained firm hold in the Svādi principality. 74

In 1759 A.D. a treaty was signed whereby the Svādi chief agreed to pay certain amount of money to the Portuguese. In addition to it, he handed over five villages in the neighbourhood of Salsette to them. 75 But this fact is not corroborated by the Svādi sources. Again in 1762 A.D. the treaty was renewed and according to it the Portuguese agreed to restore island Kurmughad and Ximpim to the Svādi chief. 76

IMMADI SADĀŚIVA AND THE ENGLISH

Immadi Sadāśiva's relation with the English was not cordial. Once he sought the help of the English against the
Maratha invasion. But the English did not respond to him. He then tried to secure the French assistance by promising to grant them certain trade privileges at Karaar. This had an effect on the English who had a representative to Svādi for negotiation. But mainly due to the Portuguese interference he forced the English to leave Karwar. This event took place in 1752 A.D. 77

THE FALL OF THE SVĀDI PRINCIPALITY

The chiefs of Svādi, who had withstood all kinds of threat of extinction from the neighbouring powers, especially from the Marathas nearly for a century, at last succumbed to Haidar Ali. After consolidation of his conquest, Haidar sent one of his generals Fazza Khan to the hilly region of Svādi with an instruction to conquer that principality. This event took place in the month of 1763 A.D. 78 He overran the whole of Svādi and took possession of the ports like Ankola, Sivāvara and Pir. Immādi Sadāśiva became helpless and fled to Goa for safety. 79 Before this event took place, the Svādi chief, Sadāśiva sent an envoy to Haidar to request him not to invade his kingdom. But Haidar did not pay any heed to his request of the chief. Instead he is said to have ordered the envoy to be put under heavy guard. The Portuguese envoy was told by his superiors to interpose himself on behalf of the Svādi chief and assist in his
negotiations with Haidar. But in the meanwhile, Haidar invaded the principality of Svādi and annexed it to his territory as the negotiations were in progress.

Thus came to an end of independent existence of the Svādi chief in 1763 A.D. In some way or the other, later chiefs continued to enjoy some privileges under the Portuguese protection. It is interesting to note that the descendants of this family continue to exist at Bandode. They have hardly any connection with Svādi. As noticed earlier the Svādi principality was confined to the Ghāt regions nearby. In due course of years it extended up to the sea coast. In the words of Hamilton: "This Rajahs domination reaches from Cape Ramus to Merzee." In a series of treaties with the Portuguese, the Svādi chiefs secured some portions in Goa, namely Phonda Supem and zambool. Thus the principality, on the eve of its downfall comprised the coastal region of Kanara from the mouth of the river Mirjān and Karwar to Sirsi, Yellapura, Supa of North Kanara and Southern portion of Goa state.

To sum up, patronage to all religions including Christianity, liberal support to art and literature and preservation of the principality against the neighbours for some time, are the important achievements of Svādi.
GENEALOGY OF THE SVĀDI CHIEFS

Arasappa I 1431 A.D.

Arasappa II 1501-1602 A.D.

Kamachandra I 1602-1618 A.D.

Kaghunātha 1618-1638 A.D.

Madhutunga 1638-1665 A.D.

Ramachandra II 1665-1682 A.D.

Sadasiva 1682-1715 A.D.

Basavalinga 1715-1745 A.D.

Sadasiva II 1745-1763 A.D.

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REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. Buchanan, A Journey, II, p. 350. Achilles Murisam has in a recent article repeated the view that Svādi and Vijayanagara rulers were connected by marriage. Indian Church Review (1954) p. 9 f. But this view has no basis.

2. ARSIE, 1939-40 B.K. No. 71, S. Silva thinks that Arasappa was installed on the throne in 1555 A.D. (Ref. QJMS, 1974, April) p. 43


4. EI. XXXIV, p. 205


6. EC. VIII, Sorab 301

7. Linganna, Kelaingrapavijayam,Āśvāsa IV, Verse 4, p. 59


10. Unpublished inscription found at Mudabidre. The copper plate is 12" x 6" with a ring.


12. EC. VIII, Sobab, 449, p. 77

13. ARSIE 1939-40, B.K. No. 75. Descriptive Lists (KRI) 1942-45 No. 28

14. SII. No. 253
15. ARSIE, 1939-40, No. 46, p. 23. This epigraph mentions his grant of Kasavali village to certain Virupanna.


17. Āśvāsa V, p. 74.


23. SII. XX, No. 254.


27. Āśvāsa VII, verse 9, p. 97.


31. Desai M.A. is of the opinion that the reign of Madhulinga came to an end in 1674 A.D. Desai M.A. Op.Cit. p. 18. But this is untenable.


35. Ibid. p.316.
38. Orme, Historical Fragments etc. (1972, Delhi) p.36.
40. EI. XXX, pp.79-80.
43. Ibid.
47. Sen S.N. (Ed.) Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri, being the third part of a Voyage round the world by Dr. John Francis Gemelli Careri, (1949, Delhi) p.212
48. Hamilton, A New Account of the East Indies (1930) London 1, p.147
49. It is stated in the Shiva Charitre Shahitya Khandā that the Mughals were driven out by Svadi Commander. p.111 Caluse 496, I express my thanks to Haikar/D.N. my colleague in Vijaya College, Mulki for translating this para.
50. Ibid. p.375-76.
52. Ibid. p.61.
53. Ibid.


60. *Shiva Charitre Sahitya Khanda, III, Clause No. 496.* I have acknowledged my thanks to Shri D.N. Raikar, see also *Malwad, Op. Cit.* p. 73.


73. Kanara, II (GBP).
77. Ibid. p.85.
78. Wilks, Historical Sketches of South India, p.512.
83. Ibid. pp.373,377.

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