CHAPTER - IX
THE POLITICAL CONDITIONS IN THE PERIOD OF STUDY

The period of our study, viz., the period between the 4th and the 14th centuries A.D. was a very active period in the history of Karnataka. It covered the epoch making rule of such important dynasties as the Chalukyas of Badami and those of Kalyana with the Rashtrakutas intervening the Kalachuris, the Sounas and the Hoysalas. This was the peak period that witnessed the around growth of Karnataka in different walks of life, political, religious cultural, literary and artistic. These dynasties ruled one after the other except of course, the Hoysalas and the Sounas who were ruling simultaneously in different regions of Karnataka. The pattern of administration, or the pattern of life of the people in general, remained the same. They adopted one system of administration and continued one after the other to pursue the goal of Prajñāha and Prajasukha, the goal set forth for the rulers by the master statesmen Kautilya.

Except in the rule of the Sounas and the Hoysalas, the whole of the Deccan excluding the eastern half of Andhra formed one unit of administration, as the kingdom of these successive dynasties. Naturally therefore the vast area
was divided into different provinces which were governed by the local authorities. With inadequate means of communication and also transport, it is understandable that the direct control of the remote areas by the ruling authority at the capital would be practically impossible. Thus, naturally considerable freedom was allowed to and enjoyed by the local governor and many of them tended to be hereditary in character thus giving rise to the institution of feudatory chiefs in the system of administration. Thus big and small families held sway over big and small areas enjoying a great measure of independence almost like a king in their own jurisdiction while they owed their religious allegiance either really or nominally to the emperor, the overlord. They were such a part and parcel of the empire that the king heavily depended upon them for safeguarding the interest of the kingdom especially on the borders, to keep the invading enemies at bay. Of course, there have been instances when such feudatory families exploited the weakness at the centre and established themselves as suzerain rulers many times toppling the governor at the centre. In the period under study we come across large number of such feudal families which contributed most to the around growth of different regions under the control, thus contributing to the overall growth of the kingdom in question. It is worthwhile setting
out here a bird's eye view of the political history of Karnataka of the period under study that can serve as a background to the study of the feudatory families which flourished during this period.

The history proper of Karnataka starts with the beginning of the 4th century A.D. with the foundation of the Kadamba dynasty in the Banavasi region by Mayūraśarma, a spirited young man from Talgunda. His father Bandhuśana appears to have wielded some authority probably under the Pallavas. An occasion arose when Mayūraśarma resisted the Pallava authority and declared himself independent. Later during the reign of Kākusthavarma, the Kadamba dynasty rose to prominence. Kākusthavarma involved himself in wars with the Pallavas and fostered friendship with the neighbouring kings, through matrimonial alliances. He maintained such relationship with the imperial Guptas, the Vakatakas and so on. No sooner Kākusthavarma had died, the Kadamba kingdom was split into two among his two sons viz. Śāntivarman and Kṛishhuvavarma I who commenced their independent rule simultaneously at Banavasi and Tripurvata respectively.

Śāntivarman was soon succeeded by his son Hṛṣīgēśvarma. In order to expand the territory of his kingdom Hṛṣīgēśvarma brought himself into conflict with the Ganges and the Pallavas who were his hereditary rivals. The traditional
enmity with the Pallavas continued in the rule of Ravivarma, the successor of Hrigesvara. Ravivarma is stated to have defeated the Pandyas, the Kongalvas and the Alupas. Thus his kingdom extended up to the river Narmada. Ravivarma was soon succeeded by his son Harivarman. Immediately after the commencement of his rule, he had to face the onslaughts of Virapariva. II of the Triparvata line and was soon defeated by him and his capital Banavasi was also captured. These internal quarrels among themselves in the kingdom gave rise to the opportunitic elements finally resulting in the ousting of the Kadambas by the Chalukya Chief Pulakesi I. Thus the Kadambas laid firm foundation for the Kannada Kingdoms of the subsequent days. Many a feudatory family also rose during this period. Simultaneously with the Kadambas, the Ganges established their hegemony in the southern Karnataka covering regions of the present day Mysore and Kolar regions and the surrounding area.

With the rise of Pulakesi I, the Chalukya king of Badami (circa. 540-566 A.D.) started a new epoch in the history of Karnataka. The empire attained its zenith and glory during the reign of Pulakesi II and he kept no less a person than Harshavardhana at a safe distance in a victorious encounter with him on the banks of the river Narmada. With Vatapi (Badami) as their capital the Chalukyas
brought about the political unification of Karnataka as it were, while fighting with their mighty adversaries.

Pulakēśi I was succeeded by his son Kirtivarma I to the throne in 560 A.D. He commenced the work of consolidation of the empire by putting down the unruly elements within the kingdom and by expanding his authority outside. The Halas, the Mauryas, the Kadambas and the Gangas were all subdued. The Chālukya ruler occupied Venavēsi, he subdued the chiefs of the Maurya lineage who were ruling in Konkan and their territory was placed in charge of Dhruvarāja Īndravarma of the Bappura family. The other rulers who were vanquished by Kirtivarma I were the Ālupas of South Kannara, the Halas of Malavēdi in the Bellary-Kurnool area and the Gangas of Talakēṣ. The victorious king performed the Amisyoma and Bhusuvrarna sacrifices and earned the title of puru-rana-parākrama i.e. valiant in many battles. The Sendrakas who were formerly the feudatories of the Kadambas transferred their allegiances to the Chālukyas. Kirtivarma married a princess of this family who was a sister of Sennāmnda. He had four sons, Pulakēśi II, Vishṇuvardhana, Dharaśraya, Jayasimha and Buddhavarasa.

As Pulakēśi II was too young to shoulder the responsibilities of the kingdom at the time of the death of his father, Mangalāśa, the younger brother of the deceased
monarch succeeded to the throne in 596 A.D.

Mangalēśa continued the policy of expansion. His major victories was over the Kaṭachohuri empire extending over the territories of Mālwa, Gujerat and Viśarbha. The Chālukya monarch subdued Svāmirāja, a subordinate chief of the island of Rēvati who had turned hostile and placed his territory under the charge of Dhruvarāja Indravērma who was governing Konkan.

Although Mangalēśa was only a regent during the minority of his nephew Pulakēśī II, he tried to keep the latter out of his rights to the kingdom with a view to securing the kingdom for his own son. But Pulakēśī II mustered strength and support, sensing the plot, maintained power around him and struck a final blow to Mangalēśa and himself became the king.

Pulakēśī II ascended the throne in 610 A.D. The civil war during the closing years of Mangalēśa's reign had brought ruin on the Chālukya empire. Pulakēśī II himself became the master of Vatāpi. He had to begin the work of building up the Chālukya power all over again. He was equal to the task and succeeded very soon in inaugurating the dawn of the brightest day in the annals of the Chālukyes of Badami and making his power respected throughout the country and even in the court of Khusru of Iran (Persia). He
brought the entire Deccan under his rule. This vast area appears to have been divided into three broad divisions, of the main land under him directly, the Vengi region placed under his brother Kabja Vishnuvardhana and the Nasik region placed under his another brother Dharaéraya Jayasimha. There were of course many feudatory rulers in different areas.

Under his efficient rule, the Chelukya empire attained its zenith of power and glory. His supremacy was accepted by the vast areas between the rivers Narmadâ and Kaveri and his influence spread even beyond India.

After a successful rule of more than three decades Pulakêśi II was confronted with a grim situation. The danger came from the south. Narasimhavarma I who had succeeded Mahendravarma I to the Pallava throne resolved to avenge the defeat of his father at the hands of Pulakêśi II. He invaded the Chelukya country at the head of a great force and rapidly advancing to the capital Vatâpi made himself the master of the city and its fortress. The blow was swift and strong and as nothing more is heard of Pulakêśi II, it is fair to assume that he lost his life in the encounter. This event took place in about 642 A.D.

This was a great calamity to the new empire which passed into a temporary eclipse. For about thirteen years
the Chalukya empire remained in a disintegrated state with no central authority. Pulakesi II left behind five sons, viz., Adityavarma, Chandrāditya, Vikramāditya I, Rānarāgaravarma and Jayasimha. Probably some feudatory chiefs stood by these sons.

In about 655 A.D. Vikramāditya I, the third son of Pulakesi II freed the Chalukya empire from Pallava occupation and thus relieved the empire of the eclipse caused by the three kings i.e. the Chola, the Pandyas and the Kerala kings who were the feudatories of the Pallavas. He fought with the three generations of the Pallava kings Narasimhavarma, Mahendravarma II and Parameswaravarma I. He went with his large forces as far as Malliyur to the west of Kanchi in 670 A.D. with a view to occupy it.

In these exploits he was greatly assisted by his son Vīnayāditya and grandson Vījayaśānti. During the absence of Vikramāditya I these two princes maintained peace at home, protecting the capital and the empire.

In about 681 A.D. Yuvintegral Vinyaditya succeeded his father to the Chalukya throne. His reign was comparatively peaceful. He bore the title Yuddhasmallī. He was soon succeeded by his son Vījayaśānti, who began his rule in 696 A.D. A major event during his reign was another war with
the Pallavas in which his son Vikramāditya II commanded the army and levied tribute from the enemy i.e. Pallava Paramēśvararāma II. His rule was long and mostly peaceful. By 733 A.D. he was succeeded by his son.

The rule of Vikramāditya II was eventful. When the Arabs occupied Sind and began to penetrate into the Chālukya territory Avanijēnārāya Pulakēśi, son of Dharēśraya Jayasimha of the Chālukya family of Lāṭa who was governing that area, successfully pushed back the Arabs and earned the apprecia-
tion of the Chālukya ruler.

Soon after this, Vikramāditya II began a successful war against the Pallava ruler of Kanchi, Nandivarman II, Pallavamalla. He took possession of Kanchi and to commemorate this event he caused an account of this achievement to be inscribed on one of the pillars of the Kailasanātha temple of Kanchi. Thus he paid his foe back in the same coin. Sometimes later another expedition was launched against the Pallavas. It was led by his son Yuvarāja Kīrtivarman II who succeeded him in 745 A.D. The Pallava ruler Nandivarman Pallavamalla was defeated.

Kīrtivarman II was the last of the Chālukya house. Somehow he was not able to rise upto the stature of his predecessors and the enemies were not slow to take advantage
of the situation. Prominent among them was Rāṣṭrakūṭa Dantidurgach who was a governor of the present Marathwada region under the Chālukyas. Sensing the weakening power of the central authority he paved the way for his independence, and in 754 A.D. he declared himself to be an independent ruler. Inscriptions of the later Chālukyas of Kālīyena place the blame squarely on Kirtivarma II and state that the kingdom was lost because of the weakness of Kirtivarma II.

The Chālukyas perfected the system of administration by dividing the country into different provinces and placing them under able governors some of them who were the princes. The Lāṭa and the Vengi regions which were administered by the Chālukya princes later on developed into independent dynasties. Many a feudatory family rose during this period and it can be said that the feudatory system of governorship assumed a concrete shape during this period.

The Chālukyas of Dēḍāmi had united Karnataka politically for the first time and the Rāṣṭrakūṭas who inherited the Chālukya empire by overthrowing the Dēḍāmi dynasty in 754 A.D. fostered that unity. The whole of the present states of Goa, Karnataka and Maharashtra, South Gujarat and major parts of Andhra were included in the vast empire of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas. The Rāṣṭrakūṭas, produced a galaxy of gallant kings who played an effective role in the politics of northern
India and asserted their supremacy in that area. As opined by some "the Age of Imperial Kanauj" in Indian History must be called the Age of the Imperial Karnataka as successive kings of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa dynasty levied tribute on the rulers of Kanauj, and once even occupied the highly coveted city and held it under their control for sometime.

Dantidurga was the first king to bring the Rāṣṭrakūṭa family to prominence. He placed his family in the position of an independent ruling dynasty. The political situation proved favourable to him in his endeavours. Consequently he was able to defy the suzerainty of the Chalukyas and establish himself as an independent ruler in the northern part of their kingdom. He was succeeded by his uncle Krishna I in about 756 A.D.

Kṛishṇa I after assuming power routed Chālukya Kṛitivarma II completely who was still wielding authority, being in possession of the major parts of the Chālukya kingdom. Further Kṛishṇa I won victory over Rāhōppa and he is said to have wrested Pālidhvaṇja. He could be no other than a Chālukya general. After subjugating the Chālukyas, he started on a project to expand his territory. First, he led an expedition towards the west over Konkan which was a part of the Chālukya kingdom. Having annexed the region he placed the
Silāhāra Sanaphulla in charge of this area. He next moved towards the Gangas of Talakeśa. Having subdued them he allowed Ganga Śripuruṣa to rule over the territory. His son Gōvinda II took a leading part in this expedition.

Gōvinda II fought with Viśnupardhana of Vengi in about 769 A.D. and defeated him. He soon succeeded his father Kṛishṇa I in about 774 A.D.

Though Gōvinda II had a brilliant career as a prince, his career as a king was a sad failure and Dhrūva, his younger brother came to the throne in about 780 A.D.

Dhrūva soon proved himself to be one of the ablest kings in the Rāṣṭrakūṭa dynasty. He defeated the contemporary Gōjera-Pratīhāra king, Vatsarāja of Central India and Dharmaḍāla of Bengal and finally levied tribute on the ruler of Kanauj, Indrayudha. Thus he came out successfully in the triangular fights that took place for the supremacy in north-India and stood as the undisputed overlord of the north and spread the Rāṣṭrakūṭa influence in all directions. There was no contemporary power which could oppose him. He assumed various titles Mirupama (unequalled) Kali-vallabha (Vallabha, the warrior) Dhāranvarsha (incessant showerer) and Śrīvallabha (the master of prosperity).

Dhrūva had four sons, KarkaŚtambha (Kambha), Gōvinda III and Indra, of whom the eldest died early. Stembha being
the second son was governing over Ganges. Dhruva chose his third son Govinda III to be his successor as he was found him to be the ablest.

Govinda III succeeded to the throne in 793 A.D. He repeated his father's feat by defeating Gurjara-Pratihara, Nagabhaṭa, Dharmapāla, the powerful king of Bengal and Chakrāyudha of Kanauj. Further he diverted his attention to the political affairs of the south. He led an expedition against the Pallava king Dantiverma who had turned hostile. By his achievements, the Rāṣṭrakūṭa empire attained its zenith of glory. Govinda III was undoubtedly supreme among the Rāṣṭrakūṭa emperors.

Govinda III's son Amoghavarsha succeeded him in 854 A.D. As a young prince he came to the throne and soon he faced adverse circumstances when his own feudatories appear to have revolted against him. Thanks to his cousin Karka of Gujarat who succeeded in getting over these difficulties. He effectively put down the Eastern Chālukyas, the Ganges and the Pallavas with whom however he maintained friendly relations through matrimonial alliances. He married his daughters to Pallava, Vengi and Ganga Princes.

Amoghavarsha I built the city of Malkhed which became the permanent capital of Rāṣṭrakūṭa empire. Being essentially a man of religious disposition he did not plan any
northern expedition. As we have seen, now in south also he maintained friendly relationship with his subordinates and neighbours. Towards the end of his rule his son Krishna II rose against him. This finally led to his abdication of the throne in favour of his son. It is said that even during his reign period he used to periodically retire to the woods for penance, leaving the kingdom to the care of his son. Amoghavarsha carved out a permanent place for himself in the literary history of the country as the author or atleast a sponsor of the earliest known Kannada work Kevinājēmonga.

Krishna II started his reign with wars. In a fight with the Gūjāra-Pratihāra, Bhōja had an upper hand and Krishna II had to retreat and Ganga Vijayāditya of the Vengi Chālukya family regained all the Chālukya territories which had been lost to the Rāṣṭrakūṭa dynasty during the reign of Amoghavarsha. Meanwhile the Chōlas in the south were emerging as a new power. Though Krishna II sought the friendly relationship with the Chōla king Miṭṭiya I, he had to fight with his son, Parēntaka I and Krishna failed in his endeavour. His rule on the whole was not successful. He lost his hold over Malwa and the kingdom of Vengi. His grandson Indra III succeeded him by the end of 914 A.D. for his son Jagattunga had predeceased him.
Indra III renewed the northern expedition occupied Kanauj and held it under his control for sometime. Like Dhruva and Gōvindā III, Indra was successful in extending the Rāṣṭrakūṭa hegemony in the north and capturing the central city of Kanauj. He established the superiority of the military organisation, and diplomacy of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas. He ruled till 929 A.D. and was succeeded by his elder son, Amōghavarsa II.

Amōghavarsa II's reign was a short one (929–930 A.D.) and his younger brother Gōvindā IV succeeded him in May 930 A.D. But his rule was an unhappy one as he was unable to earn the sympathies of the high officials and the people because of his manoeuvre in getting the throne for himself and his questionable dealings. Consequently a conspiracy was formed to oust him, the leaders of the conspiracy were Ganga Butuga II and Arikēsari II a Chālukya prince of Vemulavēḍa. Arikēsari won a decisive battle over Gōvindā IV and his uncle Amōghavarsa III was then anointed as the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king in 935 A.D.

Amōghavarsa III was well advanced in age when he came to the throne. He was religious by temperament also, so his son Krishna III had to take an active part in the political and administrative affairs of the kingdom. He invaded the
territory of the Gūjera-Pratīhāras and captured the forts of Chākaraṇa and Kālinjara. He succeeded his father to the throne in 939 A.D. A special feature of Krishna's career was his southern campaign. He defeated the Chōlas and occupied Tondaimandalam and his victorious march on Rāmēvaram ended with his founding a temple there, named Krishṇēśvara after him to commemorate his victory. In the north he defeated the Paremēras of Halwa and annexed their territory. Krishna III's rule came to an end by 967 A.D. He was one of the most successful monarchs of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa family. Krishna III's son had a premature death, hence the succession passed to his younger brother Khoṭṭiga in 967 A.D.

Khoṭṭiga could not keep up the tempo of conquests because of his lack of foresight and inability as a military leader. This resulted in the decline of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa empire because outside forces who were waiting for an opportunity, lost no time in exploiting the situation. The first ruler to attack the Rāṣṭrakūṭa kingdom was Paremēra king Siyaka Harsha who plundered the capital city. The trusted general Ganga Nārasimha II succeeded in driving away the enemy, but the damage done to the kingdom could not be repaired.

The next ruler Karka II could not also control the unruly elements. Taking advantage of the situation the
feudatories paid scant respect to the master. A conspiracy was organised for the over-throw of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa regime by Taila II who was a scion of the imperial Chālukya house of Kedāmi. He was a subordinate local officer since the time of Kṛishṇa III. He was successful in bringing down the Rāṣṭrakūṭa power and established himself as an independent ruler in 973 A.D.

The Chālukya rule opened up a new epoch in the history of Karnataka and south India with an array of competent rulers who were able to expand their kingdom to its maximum and exhibiting their superiority of strength against the bordering rivals, and were able to establish peace and security in the kingdom. This gave an impetus for all-round development of the region in economic, religious, literary, artistic and cultural fields.

The pace set by Taila II was stepped up by the successive rulers Iyivabedānga Satyaśraya, Jayasimha and Somśvara I. The latter had a continuous fight with both the northern and southern neighbours, Parmāra-Munja and the Chōlas respectively. Munja was thoroughly put down and it is said that he met with an inglorious end in the prison of the Chālukyas. With this, the northern borders of the Chālukya kingdom became almost secure. In the south
Sōmēśvara I had to fight a series of battles with generations of the Chōla kings. In the famous battle of Koppam the Chōla king Rājadhirāja I was killed on the battlefield. His brother Rājendra II became the commander of the Chōla army and continued the fight. The Chōla records claim complete victory for their master, but the existing conditions show that the Chōla army had to retreat to its home. After becoming the king in 1063 A.D. Rājendra II continued his onslaughts in the Chālukya territory but without tangible success. The unruly subordinates like the Silāhāras and Śouṇgas were also brought to back and they turned out to be trusted generals in the wars of their masters. Thus the long rule of Sōmēśvara I was indeed spent in wars no doubt but it was a final stage in the consolidation of the Chālukya power. This hero of many battles can be described as the architect of the Chālukya edifice.

The accession of his son Sōmēśvara II in 1058 A.D. resulted in a new development in the family in the form of the rivalry between himself and his younger brother, Vikramēditya VI. The long-drawn tussle resulting in the factions among the feudatories, some siding Sōmēśvara II and others his enterprising brother. Finally Vikramēditya VI became victorious and established himself on the throne in 1076 A.D.
Whether on moral grounds the act of Vikramaditya VI in usurping the throne may be justified or not, it brought glorious days to the Chālukya kingdom. His was a long rule of over fifty years (1077 to 1127 A.D.) and it could by all standards be compared to the rule of Samudragupta and Chandragupta II. All was quiet on the northern borders and Vikramaditya VI had no difficulty in quelling the disturbances. He had to involve himself with Haiwa about three times during his rule in 1077 A.D., in 1083 A.D. and in 1097 A.D. These were on the one hand for establishing his military superiority and on the other to help Jagadeśa, the son of Paramēra Udāyaditya. A touch of sentiment can indeed be seen in his action in bringing Jagadeśa with him to his own kingdom and making him a governor of this and that area and bringing him up like his foster son.

The rivalry with the Chōlas had not died out especially because of the competition for a hold on the Vengi region. Continuous fights finally resulted in the Chālukya control over the Vengi region by about 1120 A.D. The kingdom thus became free of danger from all sides though some trouble arose inside the kingdom in the form of revolts of Visnuvardhana. The latter was effectively dealt with and Hoysala Vishnuvardhana had satisfied himself with his traditional territory around Dvēraśāmudra. The rule of Vikramaditya VI
was a mark of glorious period in the history of Karnataka. Religion which played a very important role in the life of the people, received all impetus. Different religions like Śēiva, Vaishnava, Jaina received ample patronage. Large number of temples came to be constructed which fostered not only religion but also art, architecture and education. The king took a vow of performing Nitya-ṃūrī-dāna i.e., donation of land everyday. Since these donations wore to be recorded and this resulted in the writing of large number of inscriptions which helped the development of script on one hand and literacy among people, on the other. It resulted in the economic affluence of the kingdom which exhibited itself in the construction of large number of artistic temples, munificent donations and encouragement to music and dancing.

Rightly did Bilhana say "Never was seen on earth in the past nor was there any likelihood of seeing in the future, a king like Vikramāditya VI". This glory was marked by starting his own era by the king, the Chāluṅa Vikrama Era. It survived for hundred years after it was commenced.

The history of Chāluṅa kings after the rule of Vikramāditya VI is not of great significance. The successors Somesvara III, Jagadekamalla II and Teila III tried there best to foster the vast kingdom, but trouble was bring inside, but Hoysala Visuvarthana had revolted against the
king. Kalachuri Bijjala was also planning to do so. Visnuvardhana's revolt was untimely because of the mighty ruler on the throne, but Kalachuri Bijjala had more propitious time and his move appears to have been cautious, calculated and prolonged. Belonging to the feudatory family of Kalachuris who were the governors of Terikäju, the modern Sholapur region with Mangalwêda as their headquarters, Bijjala figures as a subordinate of Somêśvara III, in 1135 A.D. he had close relationship with the Châlukya kings through matrimonial alliances. He was the grandson of Vikramâditya VI through the latter's daughter. He had added advantages. He continued in that position even during the rule of the next Châlukya king Jagadêkamalla II only to watch the deteriorating condition and when the propitious time arrived he gave a final blow and ousting Tella III declared himself the king of Kalyêna in 1156 A.D.

The Kalachuri rule was a short one of not more than twenty five years. Politically it is significant because it shook the very roots of the Châlukya kingdom. But in the religious and social domain it had much more significance. The period saw the rise of an extraordinary luminary in the form of Basaveśvara who began his career as an officer under Bijjala. Ideological differences between the two resulted in the separation of the two which ultimately led to a social and religious revolution, Bijjala belonging to the traditional
pattern fostering rituals and class consciousness and Baseyavara flouting both.

In about 1182 A.D. Someshvara I succeeded in ousting the Kalachuris and in occupying Kalyana. But the situation went out of his control. His northern feudatory, the Seunas Bhillama was already at work and planning to become independent. From the time of Bhillama V the family did not even recognise the Kalachuri authority. Bhillama fast moved towards Kalyana and gradually occupied considerable portion of the northern region of the Chalukya empire. In the southern region Hoysala Ballala II was not slow to take advantage of the situation. He crossed the river Tungabhadra and occupied Belvola, the heart of Chalukya kingdom. The net result of all this was the exit of Someshvara IV from Kalyana in about 1185 A.D. Though he survived till about 1200 A.D. the Chalukya empire came to an end by that year.

As seen above, the Seunas, also known as the Yadaves of Devagiri were the rivals of the Hoysalas for taking possession of the western Chalukya dominions. They established their independent rule in the latter half of the 12th century A.D. but their political career had commenced with the rule of Seunachandra I in circa 835 A.D. His successors continued to hold their sway over the northern portion of Nasik region and the surrounding areas as the subordinates of the
Rāṣṭrakūṭas and later on of the Chālukyas of Kalyāṇa. The Kalachuri usurpation of the Chālukya kingdom did not affect them much. Instead, it appears to have marked the first stage in their struggle for independence. Mallūgi II (1155-1165 A.D.), far from accepting the authority of the Kalachuris challenged Bijjala and fought with him. His son, Bhillasma V, stepped up the efforts and the political conditions were favourable to him. The Kalachuri successors of Bijjala could not rise to the occasion and Bhillasma vigorously pursued his expansionist programme. By the time Somesvara IV succeeded in ousting the Kalachuris, he had already grown too strong for the latter and severe battles were fought between the two. Inscriptions of Somesvara IV claimed resounding victories for him against Bhillasma who is even described as fleeing the battlefield.

To turn to the Hoysalas, they also achieved independence in the wake of the fall of the Chālukyas. But their history commenced with the beginning of the 11th C. A.D. The family entered the arena for supremacy of power with Vishnuvardhana, an ambitious young hero who made himself bold to challenge the mighty Vikramāditya VI. Encouraged by small victories below the Tungabhadra, he jumped across the river to overrun Hoḷāmbavāḍī and even to occupy Bankāpur. But the iron hand of the Chālukya emperor forced him to retreat and there was a lull for about a score of years. Following the decline of Chālukya power, Vishnuvardhana's grand-son Ballāla II renewed
the effort of his grand-father. Circumstances were now more favourable because of the weakness of the Chalukyas. Like Bhillama V in north he moved swiftly across the Tungabhadra and occupied the land of Belvala. Pressures on all sides forced Chelukya Somesvara IV to quit the capital resulting in the two rivals Bhillama and Ballaja coming directly face to face with each other. Both being mighty, resourceful and ambitious, the struggle had to end in a sort of compromise, as a result of which the erstwhile Chelukya kingdom extending from Narmada to Kaveri, stood to be divided with Tungabhadra as the dividing line. This was effected in the days of Bhillama's grandson, Singhasa II towards the close of 12th Cent. A.D.

Other political changes had taken place in the south. The Andhra region was now under Kakatiyas and the region below Kaveri, under the Pandyas. Mutual rivalries between the Seunas and the Kakatiyas, the Sowas and the Hoysalas and the Hoysalas and the Pandyas lead to occasional incursions into the kingdoms of each other. The harvest of this rivalry was best reaped towards the end of the next century i.e. the 13th century by Malik Kafur and his ruthless master Alaoudin Khalji. The net result of all this was the wiping out of the southern kingdoms and Muslim occupation of practically the whole of the south. The south had to wait for over three
decades to force the Muslims out of the region with the rise of the Vijayanagara empire.

This in brief is the account of the political situation in the region coming under our study. It is to be noted here that though one dynasty succeeded the other in successive centuries the pattern of administration in its essentials did not change. This is mainly because of the decentralised system of administration in the different parts of the kingdom under different feudatory families. These feudal lords protected their respective regions and contributed to the continuance of the traditions, customs, practices of the land, including the system of administration. It is thus that they played a vital role in the growth and continuance of the cultural values at length. Hence these families and their contributions deserve a thorough study. The present work is a small attempt in that direction.
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