PREFACE

Mysore came into contact with the Marathas in the 17th century. The decline of the Vijayanagar empire created a political vacuum in the Karnataka. The Mysore Rajas and the Marathas strove hard to fill up the vacuum. They fought with each other for more than half a century for power. Mysore stood as an obstacle to the Maratha expansion in the Karnataka and likewise the princely state of Bangalore which came under Shahji in 1638 resisted the Mysore expansion in the north and north-east. The result was that both powers were involved in unending rivalries and relentless wars.

The problems of the Mysore-Maratha relations in the 17th century have not received proper attention from the scholars. Eminent Maratha historians such as Rajawade, G.S. Sardesai and J.N. Sarkar who have dealt with the history of the Marathas, have not fully utilised the contemporary Kannada sources - literary and epigraphic - which contain much useful data. Scholars on Mysore history such as Wilks and Hayavadana Rao who have examined the political and military aspects of Mysore history have not thrown full light on the relations of Mysore with the Marathas. Wilks was the British resident at the court of Mysore (1803 - 1808) and his work entitled, "Historical Sketches of South India in an attempt to trace the History of Mysore" was written in 1810. His main object was to trace the history of Mysore in the 18th century and as such his study on the problems of the 17th century is very
sketchy. Moreover, a lot of fresh material has been brought to light since he wrote in 1810. In the general histories of South India written by Krishnaswamy Aiyangar, Prof. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri and others, Mysore has not received sufficient attention. Although Hayavadana Rao's works are sufficiently copious on the history of Mysore, the ground he has covered is too vast to bring out the relations of Mysore with the Marathas in their correct perspective. Therefore, this study is an attempt to fill the gap.

This study is classified into five chapters each dealing with the relations of the five Maratha leaders, Shahji, Ekoji, Shivaji, Sambhaji and Rajaram with the Rajas of Mysore. This work is mainly based on the contemporary Kannada sources, literary and epigraphic. An attempt has been made to throw some new light on several problems pertaining to the rise of Shahji in Bangalore, his constant conflicts with the rulers of Mysore, Ekoji's wars with Mysore, Sambhaji's Governorship over the Karnataka territories, Shivaji's Mysore invasion, Sambhaji's invasions of, and Rajaram's relations with Mysore. The frequent Karnataka expeditions organised by the Bijapur Sultans, the role of the Karnataka chieftains, the delicate position of Sriranga Raya (the last Vijayanagar emperor) in the 17th century political set up, the abilities of the Mysore Rajas, the ambition of the Maratha generals and the Mughal intervention in the affairs of the south wielded a great influence on the Mysore-Maratha relations. These factors are closely examined in the study.
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