Chapter IX

Conclusion
Hampi, a world famous remarkably for its monuments of varieties largely of the late medieval period and as a historic capital, for nearly 200 odd years of a very large empire in the history of South India covering a vast area evidently provides immense scope for study in great detail. Nay, the city had a long history as known from the varieties of archaeological remains of different periods going back to at least the Neolithic time of circa 2000-1000 B.C. What is particularly and strikingly noteworthy is the availability of foreign accounts of itinerants from different countries at different times. These accounts contain a grand description of Hampi in its glorious days. Indigenous poets writers also in their works had poetically narrated about this beautiful city. Traditionally too Hampi is both important and sacred. It is believed to be Kishkinda of the Ramanaya. At least from about the Christian era as known so far the early Chalukyan period. Thus, Hampi has a long interesting history almost continuously over a period of 2000 years.

In the last decades of the 19th century, Bruce Foote had discovered some proto historic site such as the ash mounds in Nimbapura, Venkatapura etc., and from the beginning of the century. Hampi began to attract both scholars
and visitors, who gave an account of Hampi in ruins in their own ways. Many history books dealing with Vijayanagara kingdom do speak about Hampi briefly. There are quite a few research papers dealing with pre-Vijayanagara Hampi, sculptures, monuments. Inscriptions as many as 350 from the place have been edited and published and from 1975 onwards, archaeological investigations by way of excavations and explorations by the State and Central departments of Archaeology. Scholars particularly from England, America, Germany etc., have been carrying out commendable studies on Hampi monuments and sites. Some individual Indian scholars in a similar way have been and are studying Hampi by taking certain aspects for example a set of monuments of Vijayanagara period, sculptural aspects etc. Thus, there are two important impressive aspects of the place Hampi - 1. its richness in archaeological remains and abundant literary works concerning the place. 2. Investigations bringing to light every year new evidences from the place besides, there are valuable publications in big number but differently on different aspects and mostly of the Vijayanagara period. A critical review of all these viz., the archaeological potentiality, the literary sources and the publications indicates that there is no systematic consistent and solid attempt to coordinate the source materials and the researches to
reconstruct the history and culture of Hampi from the earliest times to the fall of Vijayanagara and Hampi does need such comprehensive and critically coordinating approach for the reconstruction of its history. In the preceding chapters the much needed attempt has been made for the first time, but the limiting the studies to the examination of the archaeological evidences and using the literary sources for interpretation and filling up the gaps wherever necessary and possible. In detail the development of the cultural life from the Neolithic to the beginning of the Vijayanagara in relation to the environment and tradition in all possible aspects based on the latest discoveries has been reconstructed. This has given but only the necessary background but also the probable factors prompting Hakka and Bukka to develop Hampi into a capital city of their kingdom.

Although there are valuable publications on the city and its layout in the recent times, here they have been studies in all its aspects by coordinating both the literary and archaeological evidences comprehensively such as extent, the forts and gateways, the areas between the fort, the royal complex, the sacred complex area, the bazaars and the roads residential quarters etc. Thus, it has been possible to get a clear picture of the entire city and its layout. Also, broadly the development of the city is traced. In keeping
with Indian tradition from the beginning of the historical period, the Vijayanagara city too centers around the temple and is temple dominated. The city layout is structured by lanes in accordance with the social structure, the Varnas and the jatis such as separate areas for the brahmanas, the vaisyas, the artisans and even for the alien people such as Moors etc., etc., Thus there were different planning and order in the city layout providing full security to people and the palace complex.

The society as in the preceding periods was found to be highly hierarchical with well defined duties and functions of every community. However, generally, there was very high degree of harmony in this segregation. The Hindu tradition and practices were naturally dominant with hierarchy but the aliens such as the Arabs, the Portuguese besides the Muslims were accommodated and treated well as if they were part and parcel of the society. Nay, the Hindu society received certain alien cultural elements and made it their own as evident in the art forms and characteristics and also in dress and ornaments. Even in the army the Muslims and the Arabs were serving loyally. Popular arts such as wrestling hunting and etc., were popular amusements of the people.

Hampi being the capital city of a very large empire was
found to be a very important centre of trade and commerce attracting merchants even from abroad such as the Chinese, the Arabs etc. Agriculture, no doubt, the traditionally the most important economy and that supported this vast population. The lands were well measured and the taxes, were fixed in accordance with the fertility and produce of the lands. A very good network of water supply through canals, tanks and wells was really an engineering feat almost unprecedented to meet the demand of the vast population and agriculture. A part of the water supply mechanism even now in use. What is really strikingly is their wealth and the material prosperity of the city frequently describing by the itinerants so much so the city was praised eloquently to the most prosperous in the whole of Asia. The period has produced the largest number of coins, gold, silver and copper of various which were the unit of transaction. People led in general more or less a luxurious life.

Unlike the preceding periods and owing to the cosmopolitan character of the city many languages were in use such as Persian, Arabic, Tamil, Telugu besides Sanskrit and Kannada that were there since the beginning of the Christian era. Hampi even before its becoming the capital was the home of the celebrated scholars and poets such as Harihara,
Raghavanka, Sayanacharya, Purandara dasa, Kanaka dasa who composed their works. Especially in Vijayanagara period, Hampi being the capital, the ruler patronized art and literature and there were many eminent poets in the court of the rulers especially of Krishna deva raya. Some of the rulers themselves authored works of great merit as for example, king Krishna deva raya wrote Jambavati Kalyana, Amuktamalyada and etc. Although Kannada was the most popular language and of the region and had attained a very high degree of literary excellence, the language of the most common people is found to be highly vernacular and highly defective as evident in the inscriptions. It is during this period what is called the Dasa Sahitya flowered and developed profusely and Purandara dasa was considered to be the supreme among the Dasas. Thus, Hampi occupies a very prominent place in the literary productions in the history of Kannada literature.

In the sphere of religion all the religious practices and beliefs of Jaina, Saiva, Vaishnava were continued besides there were some important religious developments the impacts of the Vaishnava and the Saiva traditions particularly of the Alvars, the Nayamnars and the Puratanas had deep impact on the life of the people. Besides, the Madhva sect that originated in Karnataka also had considered degree
of influence in the city. However, the Srivaishnavism seems to be highly dominant especially from the period of Krishna devaraya what is most popularly striking was the community festivals on large scale in a very grand manner. It is this that had impressed most besides the economic prosperity, the itinerants especially the Vijayadasami and the Deepavali. The poojas and the celebrations in the temples were highly elaborate and ritualistic that were almost unprecedented. Relatively the temple grants enumerated various items of the poojas and performances, the details of which were never available for the preceding periods. All these traditions from the Taming, again for the first time to be noticed during the Vijayanagara times.

It is in the field of art and architecture that Hampi in the whole of South India has a unique place. The art of painting begins with the cave art of the Neolithic times and flourished on the Vijayanagara period in all its grandeur. The tradition of architecture and sculpture goes back to the Iron-age-Megalithic period that is of first million B.C. and the classical art is evidenced at the beginning of the Christian era in terms of stupa architecture and sculpture but in the Vijayanagara period the architectural and sculptural ramifications are so wide and varied including the
alien art forms i.e., the Indo-Sarsanic, especially the secular architectural forms and varieties have no parallel in south India. In the domain of sculptural art, in continuation of traditional arts, the Saiva the Vaishnavas of the preceding periods, there are new trends in relation to the religious developments in sculptural arts representing the religious concepts of the Madhouse Veerasaive sects particularly. Another important development is the portraits sculptures and new forms of Veeragals.

Thus, the cultural development in Hampi area from the Neolithic times to the end of Vijayanagara has been reconstructed critically in different aspects especially the urban city, society, religion, literature and art through the ages but varying degrees in accordance with the availability of evidences, literary and archaeological as well as other sources. However, it is not exhaustive since each aspect needs a still more thorough study. Further, use of the latest and scientific approach for understanding the nature of the society in all its aspects through the ages is decetaratum what the present attempt is a sort of providing consistent and critically coordinated frame work of the cultural development in the region for further detailed study.