

11th History Lesson 7 Notes in English

7. Bahmani and Vijayanagar Kingdoms

Introduction

- At the beginning of the fourteenth century, when the Delhi Sultanate was preparing to extend southwards, the Deccan and south India were divided into four kingdoms: **the Yadavas of Devagiri (Western Deccan or present Maharashtra), the Hoysalas of Dvarasamudra (Karnataka), the Kakatiyas of Warangal (eastern part of present Telengana) and the Pandyas of Madurai (southern Tamil Nadu).**
- During the two expeditions of the general **Malik Kafur, first in 1304 and then in 1310**, these old states faced defeat one after another and lost most of their accumulated wealth to the plundering raids of the Sultanate army.
- The Tughluq dynasty continued its southern expeditions into southern India under the rule of his military officers.
- **Muhammad Tughluq (1325–51)** even tried to make Devagiri (**renamed as Daulatabad**) as the capital to command the vast conquered territory more effectively. But his experiments failed and brought misery to the people.
- When he shifted the capital back to Delhi, his subordinates in the south declared independence. Thus Madurai became an independent Sultanate in 1333.
- Zafar Khan who declared independence in 1345 at Devagiri shifted his capital to Gulbarga in northern Karnataka.
- He took the title, Bahman Shah and the dynasty he inaugurated became known as the **Bahmani dynasty (1347– 1527).**
- A few years earlier, in 1336, the Vijayanagar kingdom was inaugurated by the Sangama brothers Harihara and Bukka at Vijayanagara (presentday Hampi) on the south bank of Tungabhadra.
- During the next two centuries these two states fought continually and bitterly, to control the rich Raichur doab, and also the sea ports of Goa, Honavar, etc. on the west coast, which were the supply points of the horses needed for their army.

Sources

- There are several kinds of sources– literary, epigraphical, and archaeological– available for the study of this period.
- Several Persian accounts written by the court historians of the Bahmani Sultanate, relating to Bahmani– Vijayanagar conflicts have survived.
- Though they contain some biased and exaggerated information they provide rare eye-witness accounts relating to the battles, the palace intrigues, the life and sufferings of the people on either side, etc. which are lacking in inscriptions.

- The Kannada and Telugu literature, like Manucharitram, **aluvabhyudayam**, etc., patronized in the Vijayanagar court, give genealogical, political and social information.
- The Telugu work Rayavachakamu gives interesting details about the Nayak system under Krishnadevaraya.
- Several foreign visitors who came to South India during the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries wrote about their travels which throw useful light on the political, social, and cultural aspects.
- Of them, **Ibn Battutah a Moroccan traveller (1333-45)**, **Abdur Razzak from Persia (1443-45)**, **Nikitin, a Russian (1470-74)**, the Portuguese visitors **Domingo Paes and Nuniz(1520-35)** provide markedly rich information.
- Thousands of inscriptions in Kannada, Tamil, and Telugu, besides a number of copper-plate charters in Sanskrit are available and the above sources add to the epigraphical information.
- There are a rich variety of archaeological sources in the form of temples, palaces, forts, mosques, etc. Numismatic evidence is also available in abundance.

Bahmani Kingdom

Alaudin Hasan Bahman Shah (1347-1358)

- Rivalry with the Vijayanagar kingdom over the fertile Raichur doab, lying between the Krishna and Tungabhadra rivers, not only marked the early history of the Bahmani kingdom, but continued to be an enduring feature over two centuries.
- Bahman Shah had also to contend in the east with the rulers of Warangal and Orissa.
- In order to facilitate smooth administration, as followed in the Delhi Sultanate, he divided the kingdom into four territorial divisions called tarafs, each under a governor. Each governor commanded the army of his province (**Gulbarga, Daulatabad, Bidar, and Berar**) and was solely responsible for both its administration and the collection of revenue.
- The system worked well under a powerful king, but its dangers became apparent under a weak ruler.
- For the greater part of his reign of eleven years Bahman was engaged in subduing the unruly in his kingdom and in establishing order.
- His attempt to exact an annual tribute from the state of Warangal, the **Reddi kingdoms of Rajahmundry and Kondavidu**, led to frequent wars.
- Bahman Shah emerged victorious in all these expeditions and assumed the title Second Alexander on his coins.

Mohammed I (1358-1375)

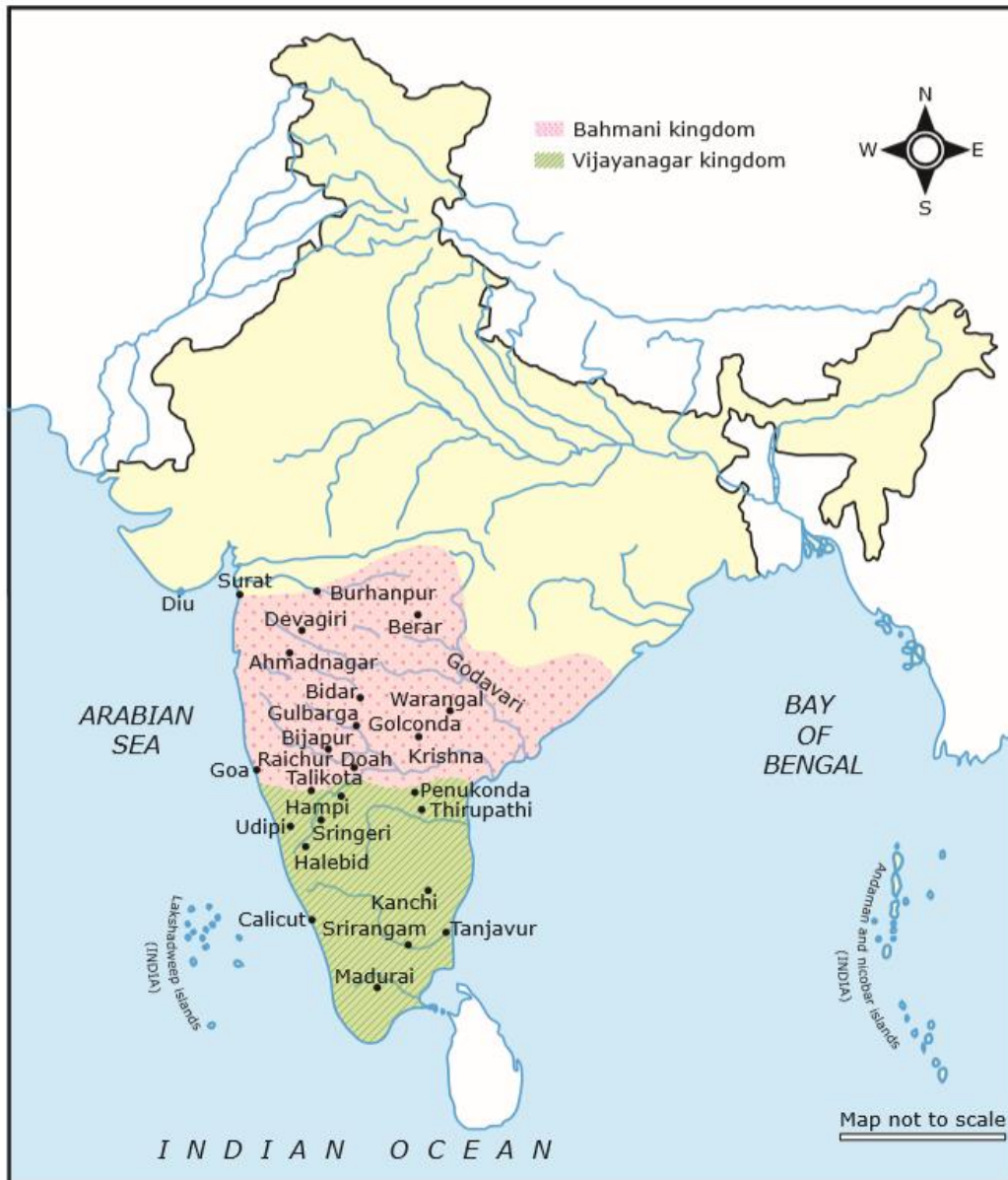
- **Mohammed I succeeded Bahman Shah.** There was a decade-long war with Vijayanagar, most of which related to control over the Raichur doab. Neither side gained lasting control over the region, in spite of the huge fatalities in battles.

- Two bitter wars with Vijayanagar gained him nothing. But his attack on **Warangal in 1363** brought him a large indemnity, including the important fortress of Golkonda and the treasured turquoise throne, which thereafter became the throne of the Bahmani kings.
- Mohammed I established a good system of government that was followed by all the successor sultanates as well as by the Marathas later. He appointed a council of eight ministers of state:
 1. Vakil-ussaltana or lieutenant of the kingdom, the immediate subordinate of the sovereign.
 2. Waziri-kull, who supervised the work of all other ministers;
 3. Amir-i-jumla, minister of finance;
 4. Wasir-i-ashraf, minister of foreign affairs and master of ceremonies;
 5. Nazir, assistant minister for finance;
 6. Peshwa who was associated with the lieutenant of the kingdom;
 7. Kotwal or chief of police and city magistrate in the capital, and
 8. Sadr-ijahan or chief justice and minister of religious affairs and endowments.
- He took strong measures for the suppression of highway robbery. Institutional and geographic consolidation under Muhammad Shah laid a solid foundation for the kingdom. He built two mosques at Gulbarga.
- One, the great mosque, completed in **1367**, remains an impressive building. The next hundred years saw a number of Sultans one after another, by succession or usurpation.
- All of them fought with their southern neighbour, but without gaining much territory.
- In 1425 Warangal was subdued and their progress further eastwards was challenged by the Orissan rulers.
- The capital was shifted from Gulbarga to Bidar in 1429. The rule of **Mohammad III (1463–1482)** is worthy of mention because of his lieutenant Mohammed Gawan, a great statesman.

Mohammed Gawan

- A Persian by birth, Mohammed Gawan was well-versed in Islamic theology, Persian, and Mathematics. He was also a poet and a prose-writer.
- The **Mohammed Gawan Madrasa in Bidar**, with a large library, containing **3000 manuscripts**, is illustrative of his scholarship. Gawan served with great distinction as prime minister under Mohammad III and contributed extensively to the dynamic development of the Bahmani Kingdom.
- Gawan fought successful wars against the rulers of **Konkan, Orissa and Vijayanagar**. He was known for his administrative reforms.

- He used Persian chemists to teach the preparation and the use of gunpowder. In his war against the Vijayanagar Kings in Belgaum, he used gunpowder.
- In order to tighten the administration and to curb the power of provincial governors, who functioned virtually as kings, Gawan divided the existing four provinces of the Bahmani Sultanate into eight.
- This not only limited the area under the rule of each governor but also made the provincial administration more manageable. He placed some districts in the provinces directly under central administration.
- Gawan sought to curtail the military powers of the governors by allowing them to occupy only one fort in their territory.
- The other forts remained under the Sultan's direct control. The royal officers who were given land assignments as pay were made accountable to the Sultan for their income and expenditure.
- The administrative reforms introduced by Gawan improved the efficiency of the government, but curtailed the powers of the provincial chiefs, who were mostly Deccanis. So the already existing rivalry among the two groups of nobles, **Deccani Muslims and Pardesi (foreigner) Muslims**, further intensified and conflicts broke out. Gawan became a victim of this tussle for power, although he remained fair and neutral in this conflict.
- Jealous of his success they forged a letter to implicate Gawan in a conspiracy against the Sultan. Sultan, who himself was not happy with Gawan's dominance, ordered his execution.
- Gawan's execution augured ill for the Sultanate. Several of the foreign nobles who were considered the strongest pillars of the state began to leave for their provinces, leading to the disintegration of the Sultanate.
- After the Sultan's death five of his descendants succeeded him on the throne but they were kings only in name.
- During this period the Sultanate gradually broke up into four independent kingdoms: **Bijapur, Ahmadnagar, Berar and Golkonda**.
- Bidar where the Bahmani Sultan ruled as a puppet became the fifth one.
- Among these Bijapur became powerful by annexing Bidar and Berar in course of time. Though Ahmadnagar and Golkonda acted independently they finally joined with Bijapur to fight with their common enemy, Vijayanagar.
- Vijayanagar was utterly routed in the **battle of Talikota or Rakshashi-Tangadi in 1565**. Thereafter, within a century, the Sultanates were vanquished one after another and taken over by the Mughal state.



Vijayanagar Empire

Origin and Expansion

- There are different traditions regarding the foundation of the Vijayanagar kingdom. It is now generally accepted, on the basis of contemporary inscriptions, that the two brothers Harihara and Bukka, the eldest sons of one Sangama, earlier serving the Hoysala rulers of Karnataka, asserted their independence and laid foundation for a new kingdom in about 1336.
- This happened soon after the death of the **Hoysala king Ballala III** at the hands of the Madurai Sultan. Initially the capital was in or near about Anegondi on the north bank of the Tungabhadra river.

- But soon it was shifted to the **Hoysala town Hosapattana (near Hampi)** on the south bank. The capital was expanded and renamed Vijayanagara, the city of Victory.
- Thereafter, they proclaimed themselves the rulers of Vijayanagara or of Karnata-Vijayanagara.
- Harihara celebrated his coronation in **1346** at this city. Historians call this dynasty started by Harihara as Sangama after the name of his father or forefather.
- Vijayanagara rulers adopted the emblem of the Chalukyas, the boar, or varaha as their royal insignia.
- The Vijayanagar kingdom was successively ruled by four dynasties over a period of more than three hundred years: the **Sangama dynasty (1336–1485)**, the **Saluva dynasty (1485–1505)**, the **Tuluva dynasty (1505–1570)** and the **Aravidu dynasty (1570–1650)**.
- The history of this kingdom can be narrated in four stages. In the beginning, the Vijayanagar kingdom was one among many small principalities of the time, under the rule of some local chiefs in different parts of south India.
- The three big states of the thirteenth century, the Pandyas in Tamil Nadu, the Hoysalas in Karnataka and the Kakatiyas in Andhra had almost been destroyed by the military expeditions of the Delhi Sultanate in the first three decades of the fourteenth century, leaving a big political vacuum.
- The turbulent political situation provided an opportunity to the five Sangama brothers, headed by Harihara, to consolidate and expand the territory.
- Besides, the Muslim Sultanate that had been established in Madurai a little earlier and the Bahmani Sultanate that came up in **1347** started to rule independently of Delhi.
- The Delhi Sultanate itself became weak and did not take much interest in the south. Within the first four decades the small principality became a big kingdom through the military activities of the five brothers in different directions.
- First the entire core area of the Hoysala kingdom in Karnataka was incorporated into Vijayanagar. The coastal parts of Karnataka were soon taken over and remained an important part of the kingdom until the end.
- As this gave access to several port towns, good care was taken to administer this part under a successive line of pradhani or governors. Under Bukka I, attention was turned to Tondaimandalam, covering the northern districts of Tamil area, which was under the rule of the Sambuvaraya chiefs.
- The prince Kampana (**usually called Kumara Kampana**), son of Bukka I, carried out this work successfully with the help of his faithful general Marayana Nayak. He is also given credit for slaying the Madurai Sultan and bringing to an end that Sultanate in about **1370**.
- This is mentioned in Madura-vijayam, a Sanskrit work written by Kampana's wife, Gangadevi. But strangely, the Pandya country including Madurai was not annexed to the Vijayanagar kingdom at that time.
- It became a part of the kingdom only around 1500, more than a hundred years later.

- Until then only the northern and central parts of the Tamil country up to the Kaveri delta were under the direct administration of the **Sangama and Saluva dynasties**.

Vijayanagar – Bahmani conflict

- From the beginning, both the Bahmani and Vijayanagar kingdoms were in constant conflict. The contest for territory, tribute, and the control of horse trade were the major subjects of conflict.
- Each of them wanted to annex and dominate the fertile area between the Krishna and the Tungabhadra (**the Raichur doab**).
- Though neither of them succeeded fully, much bloodshed took place for some transitory success. Some historians argue that religious rivalry between the Hindu Vijayanagar and the Muslim Sultanate was the basic cause of this continuous fight.
- Actually the Vijayanagar kings fought also with many Hindu, non-Muslim rulers, like those of Warangal, Kondavidu, Orissa, etc., in which Muslim rulers took part as allies sometimes and as enemies on other times.
- The control of horse trade that passed through Goa and other ports was another reason for the fighting. Horses were necessary for the armies of both sides.
- In spite of continuous fighting, the Krishna river was more or less the dividing line between the two powers.
- In coastal Andhra, the power struggle was between the Gajapati kingdom of Orissa and Vijayanagar. Vijayanagar could not make much headway until the time of **Devaraya II (1422–46)**, who defeated the Orissan army in some battles.
- But these conquests were only to extract tribute, and no territory was added. Devaraya II was the greatest ruler of the Sangama dynasty.
- He strengthened his cavalry by recruiting trained Muslim cavalry for his army and giving archery training to his soldiers.
- **Abdur Razaak**, the Persian ambassador who visited the **Zamorin of Kochi and the Vijayanagar court during this time states that Devaraya II** controlled a vast area. He received tribute from the king of Sri Lanka too.
- Vijayanagar empire went through a crisis after Devaraya II. Quarrels on account of succession and the inefficient successors encouraged the Gajapati king to dominate the coastal Andhra.
- Between 1460–65, the Gajapati army attacked many times and it conducted a victorious expedition even up to Tiruchirappalli on the Kaveri river, causing much destruction on the way and plundering the wealth of many temples.
- Taking advantage of the situation, the feudatories assumed independence. Thus, Tirumalaideva and then Konerideva began to rule independently in the Thanjavur–Tiruchirappalli area for some decades, during the interregnum before the rise of the Saluva rule.

- Power passed on to the trusted commander **Saluva Narasimha** who defended the kingdom from the Gajapatis and recovered parts of coastal Andhra. Around **1485 Saluva Narasimha usurped the throne and declared himself as king**, starting the short-lived Saluva dynasty.
- He was assisted by his general and great warrior Narasa Nayak, who tried to quell the rebellious local chiefs in the south. Saluva Narasimha died in 1491 leaving his young sons under the care of Narasa Nayak.
- Narasa Nayak became the de facto ruler and took several steps to safeguard the country until his death. In about **1505**, his elder son Viranarasimha started the third dynasty, known as the Tuluva dynasty.
- He had a short but eventful reign and was succeeded by his younger brother Krishnadevaraya.

Krishnadevaraya (1509–29)

- Krishnadevaraya is considered the greatest of the Vijayanagar kings. He built upon the strong military base laid by his father and elder brother.
- He tried to keep the greatness of the kingdom intact, by undertaking many military expeditions during much of his reign.
- Early in his reign he fought with the rebellious Ummattur chief (near about Mysore) and brought him to submission.
- He then had to fight almost continuously on two fronts, one against the traditional enemy, the Bahmani Sultans and the other against the Orissa king Gajapati.
- There are several inscriptions graphically describing his seizure of many forts like Udayagiri, under the control of Gajapati, during the course of this eastern expedition. Finally, he put a pillar of victory at Simhachalam.
- Krishnadevaraya had to undertake more than one expedition to repulse the Bahmani forces, which were intruding into his territory on a regular annual basis.
- In some of these ventures the Portuguese, trying to establish their power in the Malabar and Konkan coast, helped Krishnadevaraya with military aid, and got permission to build a fort at Bhatkal.
- Though he was quite successful for a time, his victories made the warring Bahmani sultans to become united for their survival.
- There are some other reasons for the celebration of Krishnadevaraya as the greatest ruler of Vijayanagar.
- He made very large donations to many of the greatest Siva and Vishnu temples of the day - **Srisailem, Tirupati, Kalahasti, Kanchipuram, Tiruvannamalai**, Chidambaram, etc.
- He added towering gopuras to many of those temples, which survive to this day. Contemporary foreign visitors like **Paes and Nuniz**, who visited Vijayanagar left glowing tributes to his personality, and the grandeur and opulence of the city.

- His court was also adorned by some great poets like Allasani Peddana. He himself is considered a great scholar and is author of the famous poem **Amuktamalyada (the story of Andal)**.
- But his crowning achievement, as a clever administrator, was the reorganization of the Nayak or nayankara system and giving legal recognition to the system. This is explained below under administration.

The battle of Talikota

- At Krishnadevaraya's death, his son was a small child and so his younger brother Achyutadevaraya became king.
- Soon some succession disputes started as Ramaraya, the son-in-law of Krishnadevaraya wanted to dominate the affairs by crowning the infant as king.
- Achyutadevaraya was however supported by **Chellappa (also known as Saluva Nayak)**, the greatest Nayak of the day who controlled a major part of the Tamil area.
- Soon after, however, Chellappa became a rebel himself and Achyutadevaraya had to take a big expedition to the south to subdue him. He had some encounters with the Deccan sultans too.
- After his death in 1542, his nephew Sadasivaraya succeeded him and ruled for about thirty years (1542–70).
- But real power lay in the hands of Ramaraya, who got support from many of his close kinsmen (of Aravidu clan) by appointing them as Nayak of many strategic localities.
- Ramaraya, a great warrior and strategist, was able to play off the Bahmani Muslim powers against one another.
- He entered into a commercial treaty with the Portuguese whereby the supply of horses to the Bijapur ruler was stopped.
- He fought with the Bijapur ruler and after some time, he allied with the Bijapur ruler against Golkonda and Ahmadnagar. This divide and rule policy provoked much enmity against Vijayanagar.
- Forgetting their mutual quarrels, the Deccan states, joined hands to wage the last great battle against their common enemy.
- The battle was fought at Talikota or **Rakshasi-Tangadi in January 1565** in which Ramaraya, in spite of his old age, personally commanded the forces along with his cousins and brothers. In the final stages, the battle was lost.
- Ramaraya was imprisoned and executed immediately. The victorious Bahmani armies entered the Vijayanagar city for the first time in their history, and ransacked it for several months laying it waste.
- This battle is generally considered the signal for the end of Vijayanagar. The king Sadasiva and some of his retinue escaped to Penugonda.

- Tirumala, brother of Ramaraya, declared himself king in **1570**, starting the Aravidu, that is the fourth dynasty.
- After this his sons and grandsons ruled the truncated kingdom for two generations, probably up to 1630.
- There were some more kings who ruled as fugitives until 1670 without a permanent capital. Real power was wielded by the many Nayak chiefs in various parts of the country.
- Some of them feigned loyalty to the king while others opposed him. There were fights between the loyalists and others.
- In 1601 there was bitter fighting near **Uttaramerur between the loyalist Yachama Nayak of Perumbedu and the Nayak of Vellur (Vellore)**.
- In this quarrel Vellur Nayak was supported by Tanjavur, Madurai and Senji Nayak, who had become independent rulers.

Administration

- The king was the ultimate authority in the kingdom. He was also the supreme commander of the army.
- He was assisted by several high-ranking officers. The chief minister was known as the mahapradhani. He led a number of lower-ranking officers, like **Dalavay (commander), Vassal (guard of the palace), Rayasam (secretary/ accountant), Adaippam (personal attendant), and Kariya-karta (executive agents)**.
- As Harihara I and his immediate successors consolidated their territorial acquisitions, they tried to organize the territory by creating administrative divisions called rajyas or provinces each under a governor called pradhani.
- Some of the prominent rajyas were the **Hoysala rajya, Araga, Barakur (Mangalur), and Muluvay**.
- As and when new conquests were made they were put under new rajyas. By 1400, there were five rajyas in the Tamil area: **Chandragiri, Padaividu, Valudalampattu, Tiruchirappalli and Tiruvarur**.
- The pradhani was either a royal member or a military officer not related to the royal family. The pradhani had his own revenue accountants and military to assist in his administration.
- Within each rajya, there were smaller administrative divisions like nadu, sima, sthala, kampana, etc. The lowest unit was of course the village.
- The rajyas lost their administrative and revenue status under the Tuluva dynasty due to the development of the Nayak system under Krishnadevaraya.

Nayak System

- The term Nayak is used from thirteenth century onwards in Telugu and Kannada areas in the sense of a military leader or simply soldier.

- Assigning the revenue of a particular locality to the Nayak for their military service is found in the Kakatiya kingdom during the thirteenth century.
- This is similar to the **iqta system practiced by the Delhi Sultanate** at that time. But in the Vijayanagar kingdom the regular assignment of revenue yielding territory in return for military service is clearly found only from about 1500 or a little earlier.
- Inscriptions refer to this revenue assignment as **nayakkattanam in Tamil, Nayaktanam in Kannada, and nayankaramu in Telugu**.
- The practice became established during the reign of Krishnadevaraya and Achyuta Devaraya. This is supported by the evidence of inscriptions and by the accounts of Nuniz and Paes.
- Nuniz says that the Vijayanagar kingdom at that time was divided between more than two hundred captains (his translation for Nayak) and they were compelled in turn to keep certain number of military forces (horses and foot soldiers) to serve the king in times of need: they were also required to pay certain amount of the revenue to the king in particular times of a year, **like during the nine-day Mahanavami festival**.
- **Nuniz'** statement is also supported by Telugu work Rayavachakamu, which refers to the practice during the time of Krishnadevaraya.
- Later-day vamsavalis (**family history**) of the Palayagars, who were mostly successors of the old Nayak families, support the fact that the Nayak system was perfected during the time of Krishnadevaraya. Most of these Nayak were the Kannadiga and Telugu warriors besides some local chiefs. They belonged to different castes, Brahmana as well as non Brahmana.
- The non-Brahmana Nayak again had different social backgrounds: traditional warrior groups, pastoral and forest clans (**Yadava, Billama**), peasant families (Reddi), merchants (Baliya) and so on.
- Some of the prominent **Nayak, like Chellappa under Krishnadevaraya**, were brahmanas. This system worked smoothly as long as there were strong kings like Krishnadevaraya.
- These chiefs controlled production within their Nayaktanam territories by creating commercial centres (pettai) and markets, by encouraging settlement of cultivators and artisans with tax concessions, by creating and maintaining irrigation facilities, etc.
- Many of them started as high officials (**commander, governor, accountant, etc.**) and served as the king's agents. After the **Talikota battle, the Nayak chiefs became more or less independent of the Vijayanagar king**.
- Some of them, like those of Madurai, Tanjavur, Ikkeri, etc. established powerful states controlling many smaller chiefs under them. The seventeenth century was the century of these bigger Nayak kingdoms.

Society and Economy

- Continuous warfare and the resultant widespread sufferings were common features of all early and medieval societies. Bahmani and Vijayanagar period is no exception to this.

- Perhaps the scale looks larger due to the availability of many eye-witness accounts. The other consequences which were enduring over the centuries were the displacement and migration of people.
- During the three centuries of this chapter, we find such migrations everywhere. The conflicts in the Bahmani courts were much due to the migration of **Turks, Afghans and Persians into the Deccan**.
- As far the Vijayanagar area is concerned there took place migrations of Kannada and Telugu warriors and their followers into Tamil areas and elsewhere.
- Many of the Nayaka chiefs belong to these language groups. Peasants, artisans and other toiling groups were also part of this migration.
- The other consequence was the widening gap between the ruling class and the ruled.
- All the foreign visitors refer to the enormous riches and affluence enjoyed by the rulers, the officials and the upper echelons in the capital cities like **Vijayanagar, Bijapur**, and the like, in contrast to widespread poverty among the masses. They also refer to the prevalence of slavery.
- The state had to derive their revenue only by taxing the people. It is found that during the **Sangama dynasty** when the Vijayanagar rule was extended to new areas, their officers were harsh in tax collection, which provoked the toiling people to rise in revolt.
- One such revolt took place in **1430** in central parts of Tamil Nadu. This was the revolt in which all the basic producers joined forgetting their caste differences.
- The revolt took place due to the unjust and arbitrary tax demands of the government including the pradhani (governor), his military bodies, and the landlords.
- It is said the Vijayanagar Prince intervened and pacified the revolting people by allowing tax reduction. During the sixteenth century, under the Nayak system, the local Nayakas tried to encourage craft production, like weaving, by giving tax concessions now and then.
- The Vijayanagar period witnessed striking development in the field of nonagrarian crafts.
- Until the thirteenth century the economy was mainly agrarian. From the fourteenth onwards the economy became more commercial. With the beginning of the era of money economy, circulation and use of coined money increased manifold.
- Artisans like weavers, smiths, and masons became more prominent in the society. These nonagrarian groups were generally called the **pattadaior (workshop people) and kasayavargam** -that is- the group that pays taxes in cash.
- Large number of commercial and weaving centres came up in northern Tamil Nadu, Rayalasima and coastal Andhra.
- Naturally the textiles formed an important commodity exported from south Indian ports.
- Textiles became main commercial attractions for the Portuguese and other European traders who started coming from the early sixteenth century.

More to Know:

1. Little Kingdoms in Ramanathapuram and Pudukottai

The kingdom of Ramnad was inaugurated by the **Madurai Nayak Muthu Krishnappa** in the early years of the seventeenth century. The inhabitants with martial tradition had served as soldiers under Pandyan, Chola and Vijayanagar kings, and were spread into Tirunelveli and other southern parts of Tamil country. They also served in the armies of Nayak rulers and were traditional Kavalkarars, whose responsibility was to give protection to village, temple and other administrative bodies. The temple at Rameswaram was under the protection of a kaval chief who also assumed the title of **Udaiyan Sethupati (meaning the Chief who was lord of bridge or causeway, as he controlled the passage between Rameswaram and Ceylon)**. Pudukottai was a small principality situated between the Nayak kingdoms of Thanjavur and Madurai. It constituted a buffer between the Chola kingdom and the Pandyas. Like the inhabitants of Ramanathapuram, Pudukottai also had inhabitants belonging to martial tradition. Hence their region could attain the status of **"little kingdom"** under Tondaimans. The Tondaimans served great royal households of **Raja Sethupathi and Nayak kings of Madurai and Thanjavur**.

According to some later-day tradition, **Vidyaranya (also called Madhava)**, a renowned Saiva saint and Sanskrit scholar, is said to have persuaded the brothers to abandon their service to the Tughluqs and also to renounce Islam that they had adopted when they were imprisoned by the Sultanin Delhi. Vidyaranya is believed to have played an important role in the foundation of the Vijayanagara kingdom. This is doubt fulas, according to some inscriptions, **Vidyaranya lived at the end of the fourteenth century, nearly sixty years after the foundation of Vijayanagar**.

Golkonda Fort

The Raja Krishna Dev of the Kakatiya dynasty with Warangal as capital constructed the Golkonda Fort on a granite hill. During **1495–1496** the fort was handed over to **Sultan Kali Kutub Khan as a Jagir (land grant)**. He reconstructed and rechristened the mud fort into a granite fort and called the place Muhammed Nagar. Later, the Golkonda fort came into the possession of the Bahmani dynasty. Still later, the **Qutub Shahi dynasty** took over and made Golkonda its capital. Golkonda fort owes much of its present grandeur to Mohammad Quli Qutub Shah, the fifth sultan of Qutb Shahi dynasty. The subsequent generations saw Golkonda being fortified further with several additions and the formation of a beautiful city within. By the 17th century, Golkonda was famous as a diamond market. It gave the world some of the best-known diamonds, including the **'Kohinoor'**. The Golkonda Fort is located about 11 kms from Hyderabad on a **hill 120 meters high**. The Golkonda Fort is popular for its acoustic architecture. The highest point of the fort is Bala Hissar. There is said to be a secret underground tunnel which leads from the Durbar Hall to one of the palaces at the foot of the hills. The Golkonda Fort also houses the tombs of the Qutub Shahis. There are two individual pavilions on the outer side of Golkonda which serve as major architectural attractions. The Fort comprises four other small forts within itself. It has cannons, draw bridges, royal chambers, halls, temples, mosques, stables, etc. The **Fateh Darwaza** or the Victory Gate is the

entrance to the fort. Aurangzeb laid siege to this **Golkonda fort in 1687** for about eight months but in vain. It was due to the treachery of an Afghan gate keeper, the fort finally fell.

Turquoise is a semi-precious stone sky blue in colour. Turquoise throne is one of the bejewelled royal seats of Persian kings described in **Firdausi's Shah Nama**.

The Vijayanagara kings issued a large number of gold coins called Varaha (**also called Pon in Tamil and Honnu in Kannada**). These gold coins have the images of various Hindu deities and animals like the bull, the elephant and the fabulous **gandaberunda (a double eagle, sometimes holding an elephant in each beak and claw)**. The legend contains the king's name either in Nagari or in Kannada script.