



BIJAPUR AND VIJAYANAGARA POLITICAL RELATIONS

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Abstract

This paper examines the intricate political and cultural relations between the Bijapur Sultanate and the Vijayanagara Empire in South India from the 14th to 17th centuries. Both empires frequently engaged in territorial conflicts, particularly over the fertile Raichur Doab region, but also interacted through trade and diplomacy. The study highlights key battles, such as the Battle of Talikota in 1565, which significantly weakened Vijayanagara but did not result in its immediate collapse. Cultural exchanges, temporary alliances, and religious tensions further shaped their relations. By analyzing these interactions, the paper provides insights into the factors that influenced both empires' rise and eventual decline.

Key Words: *Bijapur Sultanate, Vijayanagara Empire, Raichur Doab, Battle of Talikota, Deccan Sultanates, South Indian history, Political rivalry, Trade relations, Cultural exchange, Religious tensions.*

Introduction:

The Vijayanagara Empire and the Bijapur Sultanate were two dominant powers in South India during the medieval period, each striving to expand its influence across the Deccan Plateau. Established in 1336 C.E. by the Sangama brothers, Vijayanagara grew into a bastion of Hindu culture, arts, and architecture, while Bijapur, founded by Yusuf Adil Shah in 1510 C.E., became a center of Islamic culture and Deccan architecture. A key element in their rivalry was control over the Raichur Doab, a fertile area that changed hands multiple times throughout the period. Though primarily marked by military conflicts, their relationship was also characterized by periods of diplomatic and trade interactions, particularly through Portuguese Goa. This paper delves into the political, cultural, and religious dynamics that defined Bijapur and Vijayanagara's relations and examines the long-term impact of their rivalry.

The Vijayanagara Empire was established in 1336 CE by brothers Harihara I and Bukka Raya I. South India's Deccan Plateau served as the foundation for the empire. The Bijapur Sultanate was established in the Deccan in 1510 after Yusuf Adil Shah defeated the Raichur Doab from Vijayanagar.



Two important historical dynasties in South India, Vijayanagara and Bijapur, have a complicated relationship that is characterized by both war and cross-cultural interaction. The Vijayanagara empire is renowned for its cultural accomplishments, trade, and prosperity. Through Hindu patronage in particular, it promoted literature, art, and architecture, creating a vibrant cultural scene.

Raichur Doab was the initial cause of the animosity between the two empires. The ruler of Bidar, another border state, Qasim Barid, intended to attack Bijapur and sought Narasimha Raya's assistance. He enticed him with the promise of a fertile and prosperous area called Raichur Doab, which is situated between the Krishna and Tungabhadra rivers. Bijapur was in hands of Raichur. Raichur is 222 kilometers away from Bijapur and 169 kilometers away from Hampi.

The 16th century saw the rise of the Bijapur Sultanate, which is renowned for its Islamic culture and Deccan architecture. It aimed to increase its power in the area and frequently ran afoul of Vijayanagara and other nearby rulers.

The Sultanate of Bijapur, situated in the western Deccan and South India, was ruled by the Adil Shahi dynasty in 1518 C.E. In 1490 C.E., it declared its independence from the Bahamani Empire. It gained complete independence following the fall of the Bahamani Empire in 1527 C.E. Under the former, Bijapur was a taraf, or province. It was one of the five states that made up the Deccan sultanates, which were established after the Bahmani Sultanate.

During the reign of the Bahmani rulers, there were a number of conflicts, but neither side regularly breached the borders of Krishna or Tungabhadra. The Doab, the area between these two rivers, was the site of almost all of the fighting. When the Bahmani dynasty fell and the Mohammedan kings who succeeded it continued to quarrel, Vijayanagara's popularity rapidly increased. The doab effectively became Vijayanagar territory, and even though the Bijapur rulers frequently retook the forts of Raichur and Mudgal, they did not hold them for very long.

When the Vijayanagar army overran Raichur and Nandyal, Bijapur Sultan Yusuf Adilshah was unable to hold back and declared war, signing a pact with Narasimha Raya in which he gave up two of the latter's territories. Raichur was frequently switched between Bijapur and Vijayanagara. In terms of commerce, Goa, which was owned by the Portuguese, was crucial to both Empires. The distance between Goa and the capitals of both empires is equal. There are 330 kilometers between Goa and Bijapur and 329 kilometers between Goa and Hampi.



Goa was taken from Bijapur by the Portuguese in 1510 CE. Since Bijapur and the Portuguese were already at odds, the Portuguese chose to stay friends with Sri Krishnadevaraya.

An officer named Syed Maraikar (Cide Maricar), who was assigned to buy horses from Goa, stole 40,000 gold coins and fled to Bijapur. Despite Sri Krishnadevaraya's instructions to turn him over, Ismail Adil Shah, the king of Bijapur, provided him sanctuary. Sri Krishnadevaraya was furious and made the definite decision to invade Bijapur. Since the money that Syed Maraikar had escaped with was regarded as a meager sum by the Vijayanagara emperor, Sri Krishnadevaraya's advisors initially sought to prevent him from attacking Bijapur. However, because Bijapur Sultan had hurt his ego, Sri Krishnadevaraya took it seriously. Even though his ministers first opposed Sri Krishnadevaraya's plan to invade Bijapur, they eventually came up with superior plans for defeating Ismail Adil Shah when they were unable to reverse his choice^{1&2}.

The Vijayanagara ruler and Sri Krishnadevaraya's direct successor, Achyutha Devaraya (1530–1542), was likewise hostile against the Bijapur Sultans. The invasion of Bijapur by Achyutha Devaraya was described in full in Canto XI of Achyuthabhyudayam.

Though Achyutha Devaraya also had hostile relation with Bijapur, he also tried to pacify the differences between Deccan Sultans³.

The Portuguese-Vijayanagara Empire relationship persisted after Sri Krishnadevaraya's rule as well. On January 26, 1546 C.E., Vijayanagara Emperor Sadasivaraya and Portuguese Governor D. Joao de Castro signed a business agreement. The pact states that the governor of Goa permits Arabs and Persians to stop their ships in their ports and that they are not allowed to sell their horses to Bijapur. It was mandatory for the Vijayanagara Empire to purchase the horses with prompt and appropriate payment. The merchants of Vijayanagara are required by Sadasivaraya's command to ship their goods to their ports at Barsur and Honavar, where Portuguese merchants will promptly purchase them. Sadasivaraya forbade the selling of iron and saltpetre to Bijapur and instructed his people to purchase such items as soon as they became available on the market⁴.

Although Sri Ranga III (1642–72) was an effective ruler, by the time he came to power, things had gotten worse than ever before. The Odeyars of Mysore grew too strong for him, his feudatories were treacherous, conflicts raged within his dominion, and the Nayaks of Madura and Tanjore, two neighboring kingdoms, were overrun. His work was rendered more challenging by the Golconda and Bijapur Sultans' meddling in South Indian affairs⁵.

Ali Adil Shah I (1558–1580 C.E.), the son of Ibrahim Adil Shah, signed a pact with Aliya Ramaraya of Vijayanagara in order to keep cordial ties. Ali Adil Shah I came to the latter's palace to comfort him after his son passed away. Ali Adil Shah I is the son of Aliya Ramaraya's wife⁶.

In order to reclaim the lost lands of Kalyani and Sholapur, Ali Adil Shah I fought the Nizamshahis in 1558 with the help of Aliya Ramaraya. The Vijayanagara army's looting of Ahmadnagar went beyond all bounds. To obtain Kalyani for Bijapur, Ramaraya acted as a mediator between Adilshahis and Nizam Shahis in 1561 C.E. Nizam Shah conquered Kalyani in 1562 CE. Although Ramaraya arrived to aid Bijapur, his troops showed no interest in the conflict. Adli Adil Shah became suspicious of Ramaraya for the first time, thinking that he might have made a covert agreement with Nizam Shah. Nizam Shah's army was defeated by Ali Adil Shah I, who defeated them all by himself. He continued to work with Ramaraya to construct the "Shahdurg fort" for the time being. From Golconda, Ramaraya took Chanpura, Kovilakonda, and Panagal; from Bijapur, he took Bagalkot and Yadgir. Over time, Ali Adil Shah I firmly concluded that Ramaraya is nothing more than a crafty opportunist who takes advantage of the rivalry between Deccan Sultans. Following this insight, the four Deccan Sultans put aside their prior disagreements and formed coalitions to oppose Aliya Ramaraya. Three lakh soldiers were gathered by the united armies, while Ramaraya, who was by this point eighty years old, had six lakh soldiers. Two Muslim Ramaraya officers switched sides with the army they commanded on January 23, 1565 C.E. His Nizam Shah apprehended Ramaraya and decapitated him. Tirumala Raya repaired each Deccan Sultan's fort and made peace with them.

The Vijayanagara Empire persisted for 107 years (until 1672 C.E.) following the battle of Talikot (1565 C.E.). This demonstrates unequivocally that the Vijayanagara Empire was not destroyed by the Battle of Talikot, which resulted from Bijapur's alliance with other Deccan Sultans. It undoubtedly diminished their prior power and compelled them to move their center of power.

Through a series of invasions, the rulers of Bijapur and Golconda had taken control of a significant chunk of the Vijayanagara Empire by the time of Sriranga I (1572–1585 C.E.)⁷.

Andugula Suranna's book "Rama Raajeeyamu," also titled "Narapathi Vijayamu," praises Aliya Ramaraya as "Vijayapur Bhaya Dhayaka," which translates to "terrifier for the city of Bijapur," and lists his accomplishments and titles. Despite their cordial relationship, this title suggests that Aliya Ramaraya had the upper hand and that Bijapur was afraid of him. Ramraya's poor diplomatic strategy, which incited rivalry among Deccan Sultans, led to his demise and dealt the Vijayanagara Empire a fatal blow⁸.



Bijapur was likewise vanquished by Aliya Ramaraya's successor, Tirumala Raya I. The Vijayanagara dynasty rulers were likewise not allowed to live in harmony by Ali Adil Shah's successors. In 1592 C, Ali Adil Shah's son Ibrahim Adil Shah II launched an invasion of Pengonda. The current emperor, Venkatapati Raya, retreated to Chandragiri, but his army persisted in the conflict and decisively defeated the army of Bijapur⁹.

Defeat of Vijayanagara in 1565 C.E. in battle of Tallikota (also called battle of Rakshasa Thangadi) was not the end of Bijapur and Vijayanagara conflict. Even after the battle, Vijayanagara survived as Penugonda its capital and their conflicts too.

Internal dissension for power among Vijayanagara authorities gave hope to Ibrahim Adil Shah II to invade on Kurnool in 1619 C.E. Gopalaraja, a local chief gave tough resistance and forced them to flee. Ibrahim Adil Shah II was stubborn and finally in 1624 C.E. he conquered Kurnool and then onwards it continued under the possession of Bijapur Sultans and they also invaded on the Vijayanagara Palegars till the disintegration of Bijapur Empire in 1686 C.E.

Each parties offended others religious sentiments that widening the gap further more. As the religious sentiments were hurt the Hindus who had good relations with Bijapur became antagonists to it and Muslims who were once friends of Vijayanagara became antagonists to it. Though Ramaraya adopted Ibrahim Adil Shah, the happiness and amicability was short lived as the age old Ramaraya offended the religious sentiments of Ibrahim Adil Shah¹⁰.

From the beginning Vijayanagara rulers had hostility with the Bijapur Sultans. The friendly relation which started with Aliya Ramaraya was only short lived. Each others' religious sentiments also hurt during the battles due to the over enthusiasm of soldiers during which furthermore widened the rift between the Deccan Sultans and Vijayanagara Empire. Sri Krishnadevaraya's firm decision to weaken Bijapur army was facilitated by his friendship with Portuguese. Bijapur cavalry became weak as Portuguese prevented Arabs and Persians from selling horses to Bijapur from Portuguese ports. Mainly the indulgence of Vijayanagara rulers in the affairs of Deccan sultans, interference in their trade, and hurting of religious sentiments were the main reasons for the conflict. The attitude of Aliya Ramaraya further added fuel to the fire which ultimately brought down the continuation of glory of Vijayanagara Empire.

Conclusion:

The relations between the Bijapur Sultanate and Vijayanagara Empire were complex, defined by both conflict and cooperation. While territorial disputes and religious tensions



frequently led to warfare, trade relations and temporary alliances also played a significant role in shaping their interactions. The defeat of Vijayanagara in the Battle of Talikota marked a turning point, but it did not signal the immediate collapse of the empire, which persisted for another century. The rivalry between the two powers, influenced by personal egos, religious sentiments, and territorial ambitions, contributed significantly to the political landscape of medieval South India. Ultimately, both empires succumbed to internal dissension and external pressures, signaling the end of an era.

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