

NCERT Notes: Vijayanagara Empire [Medieval Indian History Notes For UPSC]

Vijayanagara Empire was founded by Harihara and Bukka and the reign was from 1336 A.D to 1672 A.D.

By the end of the Sultanate Period, Multan and Bengal were the first territories to break away from Delhi and declared independence and many other territories in the Deccan region rose to power.

The Vijayanagar Empire (1336-1646 A.D.)

- Harihara and Bukka founded the Vijayanagar City in 1336 A.D. on the southern banks of Tungabhadra
- They made Hampi the capital city.
- They served under Vira Ballala III, the Hoysala King

Vijayanagar Empire was ruled by four important dynasties and they are:

1. Sangama
2. Saluva
3. Tuluva
4. Aravidu

Harihara I

- In 1336 A.D. Harihara I became the ruler of Sangama Dynasty
- He captured Mysore and Madurai.
- In 1356 A.D. Bukka-I succeeded him

Krishnadeva Raya (1509-1529 A.D.)

- Krishnadeva Raya of the Tuluva dynasty was the most famous king of the Vijayanagar Empire
- According to Domingo Paes a Portuguese traveller "Krishnadeva Raya was the most feared and perfect king there could possibly be".

Krishnadeva Raya's Conquests

- He conquered Sivasamudram in 1510A.D and Raichur in 1512A.D
- In 1523 A.D. he captured Orissa and Warangal

- His empire extended from the river Krishna in the north to River Cauvery in the south; Arabian Sea in the west to Bay of Bengal in the east

His Contributions

- An able administrator.
- He built large tanks and canals for irrigation.
- He developed the naval power understanding the vital role of overseas trade.
- He maintained friendly relationships with the Portuguese and Arab traders.
- He increased the revenue of his government.
- He patronized art and architecture.
- It was during his period the Vijayanagar Empire reached its zenith of glory.
- Krishnadeva Raya was a great scholar.
- Ashtadiggajas: A group of eight scholars adorned his court and they were:
 1. Allasani Peddanna – the author of Manucharitra, he was also known as Andhra Kavitaipitamaha
 2. Nandi Thimmana – the author of Parijathapaharanam
 3. Madayyagari Mallana
 4. Dhurjati
 5. Ayyalaraju Ramabhadra Kavi
 6. Pingali Surana
 7. Ramaraja Bhushana
 8. Tenali Ramakrishna

Battle of Talikota (1565 A.D.)

- The successors of Krishnadeva Raya were weak
- The combined forces of Ahmednagar, Bijapur, Golconda and Bidar declared war on Vijayanagar during the rule of Ramaraya
- Ramaraya was defeated. He and his people were killed mercilessly.
- Vijayanagar was pillaged and ruined.

The Glories of the Vijayanagar Empire

Administration

- Well-organized administrative system
- The king was head of all powers in the state.
- Council of Ministers – to assist the King in the work of administration.
- The Empire was divided into six Provinces.
- Naik – a Governor who administered each Province.
- The provinces were divided into districts and the districts were further divided into smaller units namely villages.

- The village was administered by hereditary officers like accountants, watchmen, the weights men, and officers in charge of forced labour.
- **Mahanayakacharya: He is an officer and the contact point between the villages and the Central administration.**

The Army

- The army consisted of the infantry, cavalry and elephantry.
- The commander-in-chief was in charge of the army.

Revenue Administration

- Land revenue was the main source of income
- The land was carefully surveyed and taxes were collected based on the fertility of the soil.
- Major importance was given to agriculture and in building dams and canals.

Judicial Administration

- The king was the supreme judge.
- Severe punishments were given for the guilty.
- Those who violated the law were levied.

Position of Women

- Women occupied a high position and took an active part in the political, social and literary life of the empire.
- They were educated and trained in wrestling, in the use of various weapons of offence and defence, in music and fine arts.
- Some women also received education of high order.
- Nuniz writes that the kings had women astrologers, clerks, accountants, guards and wrestlers.

Social life

- The society was systemized.
- Child marriage, polygamy and sati were prevalent.
- The kings allowed freedom of religion.

Economic conditions

- Controlled by their irrigational policies.
- Textiles, mining, metallurgy, perfumery, and several other industries existed.

- They had commercial relations with the islands in the Indian Ocean, Abyssinia, Arabia, Burma, China, Persia, Portugal , South Africa, and The Malay Archipelago.

Contribution to Architecture and Literature

- The Hazara Ramasami temple and Vittalaswamy temple was built during this period
- The bronze image of Krishnadeva Raya is a masterpiece.
- Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu and Kannada literature were developed.
- Sayana wrote commentaries on Vedas.
- Krishnadevaraya wrote Amuktamalyada in Telugu and Usha Parinayam and Jambavathi Kalyanam in Sanskrit.

Decline of the Empire

- The rulers of the Aravidu dynasty were weak and incompetent.
- Many provincial governors became independent.
- The rulers of Bijapur and Golconda seized some areas of Vijayanagar.