

6. Vijayanagar Kingdom

▪ The Vijayanagar Empire (1336-1646):

- Harihar I and his brother Bukka Raya I in Deccan in the wake of the rebellions
- Against Tughluq rule founded the Vijayanagar Empire in 1336 AD.
- The empire is named after its capital **city of Vijayanagar**.
- The ruins of this city, which surround modern **World Heritage site Hampi**, can be found in modern Karnataka, India.
- Although the empire continued to exist until 1646 AD, it lost its importance in 1565 AD after a key military defeat (**The battle of Talikota**) by the Deccan Sultanates.
- The empire extended over the southern part of India which included the territories of Trichinopoly, Mysore, Kanara, Chingalpet and Kanchivaram. It was on the south bank of Tungabhadra River.
- The empire was always at war with Bahamani kingdom and other Muslim rulers of northern Deccan, collectively referred as Deccan sultanates.
- There were four dynasties, which ruled over Vijayanagar- **Sangama Dynasty, Saluva Dynasty, Tuluva Dynasty** and **Aravidu Dynasty**.

Sangama Dynasty	It was the first dynasty to rule over the Vijaynagara empire. The founders of the empire, Harihar I and Bukka belonged to this dynasty. It ruled from 1334 AD to 1485 AD.
Saluva Dynasty	This dynasty succeeded Sangama dynasty as the second dynasty of the empire. It ruled from 1485 to 1505 AD. They ruled over almost the whole South India.
Tuluva Dynasty	This was the third dynasty, which ruled Vijayanagar Empire. It ruled from Tuluva dynasty. The most famous king of Vijayanagar Empire, Krishna Deva Raya belonged to this dynasty. It ruled from 1491 AD to 1570 AD.
Aravidu Dynasty	It was the fourth and last Hindu dynasty to rule Vijayanagar kingdom in South India.

▪ Society and Economy under Vijaynagara Empire

1. **Allasani Peddana**, in his *Manucharitam*, mentions the four castes that existed in the Vijayanagar society.
- **Viprulu or Brahmins** followed the traditional profession of teachers and priests. They sometimes also performed duties of soldiers and administrators. This is confirmed from the **narration of Domingo Paes**.
 - **Rajulu or Rachavaru** was generally associated with the ruling dynasty. The rulers as well as generals were actually Sudras, but called rachavaru because of their position. As in the case of other parts of South India, the Kshatriya Varna seems to be absent here.

- **Matikaratalu or Vaishyas** were the same as merchants who carried on trade and commerce.
- **Nalavajativaru or Sudras** were mainly agriculturists, but some of them carried on several other professions. They were not segregated, although considered inferior.

2. The practice of dancing girls attached to temples was also in vogue. **From the account of Paes**, we learn that Devadasis held a highly respectable position in society, and were given land grants, maidservants, etc.
3. The plight of widow was pitiable, but they could remarry.
4. The state encouraged widow remarriage by not levying any tax on it.
5. **The prevalence of Sati or Sahagamana** in the Vijayanagar Empire is proved from both inscriptions and foreign accounts of the period.
6. Chess: It was a game promoted by the state and players were rewarded.
7. Untouchability: It existed and various classes **such as Kambalattars, dombaris, jogis and maravars were treated as untouchables.**
8. **Slavery: It was quite common and Nicolo de Conti** says that those failed to repay debts became the property of the creditor.

▪ **Religion and Philosophy**

- Early Vijayanagar rulers were followers of Shaivism. **Virupaksha** was their family God. Later they came under the influence of Vaishnavism. However, Shiva continued to be worshipped.
- Vaishnavism was professed in various forms. **Srivaishnavism of Ramanuja was highly popular.**

- **The Dvaita system of Madhava was also practiced.**

- Epics and Puranas were popular among the masses, especially since they served as a means of education among women.

▪ **Economic Conditions**

The Vijayanagar Empire was one of the richest state then known to the world. Several foreign travellers, who visited the empire during the 15th and 16th Centuries, have left glowing accounts of its splendor and wealth.

- **Agriculture:** It was in a flourishing condition. It was the policy of rulers to encourage agriculture in the different parts of the empire and to increase agricultural production by a wise irrigation policy. **Nuniz**, the Portuguese traveller, speaks of the construction of a dam and excavation of canals.
- **Industries:** The agricultural wealth was supplemented by numerous industries, the most important of which were **textiles, mining and metallurgy**. Another important industry was **perfumery**.
- Industries and crafts were regulated by **guilds**.

- It was common practice for people of the same trade to live in one and the same quarter of the city.
- Abdur Razzak, the Persian diplomat and traveller, mentions about the flourishing trade and lists 300 sea ports.
- The most important commercial area on the West coast was Malabar, with its important port of Cannanore. It had commercial relations with the islands of the Indian Ocean, Burma, the Malay Archipelago and China in the East, and Arabia, Persia, South Africa, Abyssinia and Portugal on the West.
- Among the exports, the main items were **cloth, spices, rice**, iron, saltpetre, sugar, etc. The main imports consisted of **horses, elephants, pearls**, copper, coral, mercury, China silks and velvets.
- Ships were used for coastal and overseas trade. Vijayanagar had its own ships; the art of ship-building was known, but we do not know if ocean-going ships were built.
- **Barbosa, another Portuguese traveller**, says that South India got its ships built in the Maldiv Islands.

▪ **Coinage**

- The Vijayanagar emperors issued a large number of gold coins, called **Varahas** or **Pagodas** (Varahas because the most common symbol was **Varaha**-the Boar incarnation of Vishnu).
- Harihara I and Bukka I used the Hanuman symbol in their coins.
- Krishna Deva Raya's coins had the figures of **Venkatesh** and **Balkrishna**.
- Achyuta Raya used **Garuda** while Tirumala maintained the original Varaha.

▪ **Standard of Living**

- The accounts of **foreign travellers speak of the high standards** of living of the upper and middle classes.
- The splendor of the capital city bears testimony to the wealth, which was, however, the monopoly of only a section of the population.
- But the **prices of articles were low** and the minimum necessities were probably not beyond the means of the common people.
- However, producers, mainly agricultural producers, apparently got inadequate prices for their produce.
- Another main defect of the economic system was that the common people had to bear the brunt of taxation, which was quite heavy and the local authority's sometimes-adopted oppressive methods of collection.

▪ **Art and Architecture**

- Within **Hampi**
- Built in Dravida Style.
- Virupaksha temple (Pampavati temple): 170ft tall Gopuram.
- Hazara Rama temple: tall Prakara around it, walls contain sculptures of Ramayan and Mahabharata
- Vittala swami temple: Famous Monolithic Charriot and musical pillars. Laxminarasimha statue of 20ft.
- **Secular Temples**
- Lotus mahal: 2 storied palace in the shape of lotus.
- Elephants Stables (Gajashala): Indo-persian style.

- Queens bath.
- **Outside Hampi**
- *Veerabhadraswami* temple at Lepakshi: Mural paintings on ceilings, Huge monolithic Nandi statue.
- *Chintala Venkata Ramana* temple at Anantapura.
- *Varada Rajula temple* at Kanchi: Famous for Golden lizard sculpture on wall.
- *Sri Ranganatha Temple* at Srirangam : with 1000 pillared mantapa.

▪ **Krishna deva Raya (1509-1529 AD)**

Major Achievements

- **Ashtadiggajas** (Eight literary scholars) were present in his court.
- The author of ***Manu Charitramu*** was the greatest among Ashtadiggajas.
- Krishna Deva Raya, a poet himself wrote the book ***Amuktamalyada***.
- Krishna Deva Raya was a great builder as well. He built the **Hazara Rama temple** and the **Vittalaswami temple**.
- He also founded a new city called **Nagalapuram**.

▪ **Foreign Travelers visited Vijayanagar Kingdom**

Ibn Battuta	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He is from Morocco, North Africa. • He left an account of Harihara I's reign in his book Rehla
Niccolo de-Conti	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He was an Italian merchant scholar. • Visited during the period of Deva Raya II. • Left an account in Travels of Niccolo Conti
Abdur Razzaq	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persian scholar who visited during the period of Deva Raya II. • He was an ambassador to

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timurid empire. • His accounts about the reign of Deva Raya II was found in Matla.
Athanasius Nikitin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Russian merchant traveller to visit India. • He described the conditions of the Bahmani kingdom under Muhammad III
Ludvico de Vorthemo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Italian merchant traveller. • He was the first Christian to make the holy pilgrimage to Mecca.
Duarte Barbosa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portuguese writer. • Gives a detailed account of governance under Krishna deva Raya. • He gives details of the Indian ocean littorals and inhabitants.
Dominigo Paes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He was Portuguese Merchant. • He gives descriptions of ancient city Hampi under Krishna deva Raya.
Fernao Nuniz	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portuguese traveller and horse trader. • He visited during the reign of Achyuta Raya. • He gave detailed account on the history of Vijayanagara. • He also gives the cultural aspects and position of women during this period.
Marco polo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Merchant traveler from Republic of Venice. • Reputed traveller who also spoke about Kakatiya's