

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF RAYALASEEMA

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Abstract:

Rayalaseema districts was ruled by Nandas, Mouryas, Satavahanas, the Pallavas, Greater Pallavas of Kanchi, Chalukyas of Badami, Early Renadu Cholas, Later Renadu Cholas, the Rastrakutas, Banas, Early Vaidumbas, the Nolamba Pallavas, the Chalukyas of Kalyani, the Imperial Cholas, the Pandyas, the Yadavarayas, Yadavas, the Kakatiyas, the Reddis of Kondavidu, Vijayanagara rulers. In the 1799 battle, Tippu was defeated and died in the hands of the British and the Nizam got the territory. But the Nizam ceded the areas which he had acquired from Mysore under the treaties of 1792 and 1799 to the British in return for a subsidiary force. Thus the districts of Kurnool, Ballary, Anathapur and Cuddaph were handed over to the British. These districts were known as the Ceded Districts.

Key words: Nandas, Mauryas, Satavahanas, Pallavas, Chalukyas,, Renadu Cholas, Rastra Kutas, Banas, Vaidumbas, Imperial Cholas, Pandyas, Yadavarayas, Yadavas, Kakatiyas, Reddis, Vijayanagara Rulers.

Introduction

The four southern Rayalaseema Districts namely, Anantapur, Kurnool, Cuddapah, and Chittoor are known as Ceded districts. These four districts were transferred to the British East India Company by the Nizam of Hyderabad in A D 1800 to meet the expenses of the Company's troops stationed in Hyderabad to protect the Nizam under the Subsidiary Alliance System¹. Before the region came under the British, it was a bone of contention between the Sultans of Mysore, namely Hyder Ali and Tippu Sultan, on the one hand and East India Company, the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Marathas on the other in the second half of the 18th century². By 1790, the territories came under the control of Tippu Sultan. A large portion of the area came under the control of the Nizam of Hyderabad after the third Mysore War of 1792. After the defeat of Tippu Sultan in the fourth Mysore War in 1799, the entire region came under the control of the Nizam of Hyderabad³. A portion of Kurnool District which remind with the Nawab of Kurnool after AD 1800 came under the control of East India Company in 1839.

2. Historical Background

In ancient times, the Nandas had their sway over Kurnool district. Even though, the southern boundaries of the Nanda Empire cannot be definitely fixed, the presence of Punch Marked Coins all over India is an indication that Kurnool was under the control of Nandas. Apart from the above existence of Punch Marked Coins, the reference to the rule of Nanda Chakravarthi over Kurnool in the Sri Chaudeswary Puranam and the existence of the place names like Nanda Varman, Nandyal, Mahanandi, and Nadikottur is an indication that the Nandas ruled over this part of Rayalaseema. In about 323 B.C, the Nanda rule came to an end as a result of Chandra Gupta Maurya's conquest⁴.

With the advent of the Mauryas, all the four districts of Rayalaseema came under the Mauryan sway. The Andhras in the south are referred to as Dasyu or Non-Aryan people living in the region. The first reliable proof of early History of the region is available in the Epigraphs of Asoka (c. 274-236 B.C). The Epigraphs were discovered at Yerragudi, Siddapur, Jatinga, Rameswaram and Brahmagiri in Chitaldrug district of Mysore, minor rock edict discovered at Rajula-mandagiri in Pattikonda mandal. The Aryan ruler headquarters were located at Suvarnagiri, i.e., Jonnagiri near Pattikonda⁵.

After the Mauryas, the region was ruled by the Satavahanas. They ruled the region for more than four centuries. The Nasik inscription of the Queen Goutami Balasri, the mother of Goutamiputra Satakarni refers him has the king of Mulaka. Mulaka i.e., Mulikinadu includes some parts of present day Cuddapha district. The village of Satanikota, might have been named after the Satavahanas in Nandikotkur. An Epigraph relating to the Satavahana ruler Pulumayi in Adoni Taluk suggest their sway in the district. The epigraph also refers to a tank by a resident of Vepura. It included in the Janapada ruled by their vassal Mahasenapathi Khandanaga⁶.

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3. The Pallavas

With the decline of the Satavahana power, the Pallavas rose to prominence. The Pallavas were divided into the Pallavas of the Prakrit charters, the Pallavas of the Sanskrit charters and the Greater Pallavas. During the reign of Skandavarman of the Prakrit charters, the kingdom extended its sway upto the Krishna in the North and the Arabian Sea in the west. The Pallava ruler Vishnugopa of Kanchi was defeated by the Gupta ruler, Samudragupta in the middle of the 4th century AD. despite the fact that the territories were regained again lost to Karikala Chola during the time of Trilochana Pallava. Once again the Pallavas regained their authority over the region by Simhavishnu (AD 560 -580). The Pallavas under Mahendravarman I (AD 580-630) lost part of the northern territories of his kingdom to the western Chalukya ruler Pulakesin II. Despite certain difficulties the successors of Narasimhavarman I held their sway over the territory till the end⁷.

4. Greater Pallavas of Kanchi and Chalukyas of Badami

After the rule of Pallava Simhavishnu (AD 574-600), the region had to face the long drawn conflict between the Chalukyas of Badami and the Greater Pallavas of Kanchi. The territories lost during the reign of Pallava Narasimhavarman I was regained by the Chalukyan king Vikramaditya I (AD 654-681) with the capture of Vatapi. The territories were also extended to the south of the Tungabadra and Krishna. During the reign of Vikramaditya (AD 681-96) and Vijayaditya (AD 696-733), there was conflict with Pallavas. Vijayaditya was succeeded by Vikramaditya II (AD 733-44). Kirttivarman II(AD 744- 57) ruled and lead invasion into the Pallava kingdom. With the death of Kirttivarman in a battle with the Rastrakutas in AD 757, the Chalukyas disappeared⁸.

5. Early Renadu Cholas

Parts of the Cuddapha district were ruled by the Renadu Cholas. These rulers claim descent from the family of Karikala Chola of the Tamil territories. The ruler Punyakumara belonged to the family of Karikala. This region was visited by Hiunen-tsang during AD 640-641.

6. Later Renadu Cholas

There were references about the Renadu Chola rulers namely Vikramaditya I, Saktikomara, Vikramaditya II and Satyaditya. Two more rulers namely Mahichola and Manu Chola were referred. Another Renadu Chola ruler was Jada Chola Maharaja.

7. The Rastrakutas

The Rastrakutas eliminated the Chalukyas of Badami in AD 757. By the close of the 9th century AD, the Pallavas had to content with the emerging power of the Pandyas. The Pandyas and imperial Cholas had emerged in south India. These powers had extended their influence on this region. The Banas, the Nolambas, the Westren Gangas and the Vaidumbas were involved in the wars in the region⁹.

The Pallava rule came to an end in the region with the overthrow of the Pallava ruler Aparajitha by the Chola ruler Aditya I (AD 871-907) and the annexation to the Chola kingdom of Tondaimandalam. Aditya I conquered large areas and annexed them to his kingdom. Thus, the Chola kingdom extended between Sri Kalahasti and Madras in the north and the Kaveri in the south by the middle of 10th century. The Vaidumbas and two Bana kings namely Vikramditya II and Vijyaditya III were defeated by Parantaka I. Their defeat compelled them to seek refuge with the Rastrakuta ruler Krishna III from the onslaught of the Cholas. Krishna III defeated the Cholas. Thus, Cholas lost much of the territory. He appointed officers to look after Tondaimandalam during his reign. To govern Pulinadu, Vajjara deva was appointed. Even though the Chola ruler Gandraditya (AD 949-957) to recover the territory lost to Krishna III failed. At a later date Tondaimandalam was recovered from the Rastrakutas by the Cholas¹⁰.

10. Banas

The Banas claimed descent from Mahabali, the Asura king. During the 4th century AD, the Banas were the feudatories of the Pallavas. The territory extended from Punganur in the west to Sri Kalahasti in the East. The river Palar formed the southern boundary they also occupied parts Anantapur, Cuddpha and Kolar¹¹.

The Banas involved in conflicts with the Pllavas, the Western Chalukyas, the Rastrakutas and the Cholas and the feudatory dynasties namely the Vaidumbas, the Western Gangas and the Nolambas. Through matrimonial alliances strengthen their position. The western Gangas defeated the Banas and ousted from power. The Bana territory thus passed into the hands of the Chola ruler Parantaka I.

11. Early Vaidumbas

The Vaidumbas ruled the areas from Proddatur to Kolar. The Epigraphs belonging to Vaidumbas were found in Kamalapuram area. There was reference to the town of Vaidumbas namely Vaidumbavrolu. It may be the early capital of the Vaidumbas. They claimed that they were the lords of Kalukada or Kalakada, situated on the right bank of the Satyavati River.

The Vaidumba rulers namely Ganda Trinetra, Manuja Trinetra and Bhuvana Trinetra ruled Cuddapha and Renadu areas¹².

12. The Rastrakutas

The Rastrakutas succeeded the Chalukyas of Badami as an imperial power. Dantidurga, founder of the Rastrakuta dynasty was a subordinate of the western Chalukya ruler Vikramaditya II (AD 733- 744). The rule of another Rastrakuta ruler, Govinda III (AD 793-814) was represented by an inscription at Hulibidu (Alur). Govinda III was succeeded by his son Sarva Amoghavarsha II in AD 814. The Chalukya ruler of Vengi destroyed the territories of Rastrakutas. It resulted in a conflict in which the Eastern Chalukyan army was defeated at Cumbum. The Rastrakutas ruled the area till AD 973¹³.

13. The Nolamba Pallavas

The region was ruled by a minor dynasty known as the Nolambas or the Nolamba Pallavas. There were eleven rulers in this dynasty. They ruled over Nolambavadi 32,000. They came into conflict with the Banas, the Vaidumbas, The Cholas and the Rastrakutas.

With the accession of Mahendra I in AD 878, the Nolamba dynasty gained considerable strength. Mahendra, the most powerful of the Nolambas extended his conquests on all sides. Pulinadu appears to have continued under the rule of the Nolambas even at the latter half of the 10th century AD¹⁴.

14. The Chalukyas of Kalyani and the Imperial Cholas

In AD 973, the western Chalukyas of Kalyani displaced the Rastrakutas from power. So, the Rastrakuta feudatories slowly shifted their allegiance to the Chalukyan dynasty. The Nolambas who were at first moved so close with the Cholas were won over by Taila II (AD 973-97), the Chalukyan monarch. A sizable portion of Nolambavadi remained under Taila's control till his death in AD 997. As a result of conflict between the Chalukyan and the Cholas led to the recognition of the Tungabhadra as the boundary between them. After Vikramaditya V (AD 1007-15) and Ayyana (AD 1015), Jayasimha II (AD 1015-42) came to power. He recovered the lost territories. The conflict between the Chalukyas and the Cholas left Jayasimha defeated. He was driven beyond Tungabhadra. His successor Someswara I (AD 1042-68) resulted in his defeat in AD 1054. He led an expedition against the Cholas at Gooty in AD 1059.

The feud between Someswara II and Vikramaditya VI led Someswara II to enter into an alliance with Chola emperor Kulottunga I and waged a war against his brother. It resulted in the accession of Vikramaditya VI in AD 1076¹⁵.

At the end of the reign of Vikramaditya (AD 1076-1126), his Hoyasala subordinate Vishnuvardhana Bittiga revolted against him and defeated Irungola, the Nidugal Chola chief and captured various places. He also occupied Nolambavadi, the Nidugal fort and the Tereyur. The lost territories were regained by Vikramaditya. During the reign of Someswara III (AD 1126-38), Vishnuvardhana recaptured Gangavadi, Nolambavadi and Banavasi. The weak rule of Taila III (AD 1149-63) after Jogadekamalla II (AD 1133-55) witnessed the invasion of Kalachurya Bijala. It resulted in the overthrow of the Chalukyan monarch. The Chalukyan power survived for some time. The last Chalukyan ruler to rule was Someswara IV (AD 1184-1200). It was during this time, the Hoyasala subordinate Balala II invaded the Chalukyan Empire, defeated the monarch and captured his capital¹⁶.

15. Imperial Cholas

The Association of the Cholas with parts of Chittoor and Cuddapah continued for few more decades. The rule of Kulottunga III (AD 1178-1218) was weak. The Sambuvarayas, the Kadavarayas, the Chedirayas and the Yadavarayas constituted the four class of powerful feudatories in the region comprising portions of Chittoor, Cuddapah, Chingleput and the two Arcot districts. The rule of Rajaraja III (AD 1216-1260) was not peaceful. By the close of the last Chola ruler Rajendra III (AD 1246-1279), the hold of the Cholas over the area has weakened. After this there were inscriptions issued by Telugu Pallava chief Vijayagandagopala and Kopperunijnga indicates that they have shared Tondaimandalam between themselves, the former taking the northern half and the latter the southern half¹⁷.

16. The Pandyas

The accession to the Pandya throne of Jatavarman Sundara Pandya I in AD 1251 was an important event. Under his reign, the territories were extended beyond Nellore. He had to clash with Kakatiya ruler Ganapatideva. Maravarman

Kulasekhara I (AD 1268-1308) fought against Hoysala Ramanatha and lost power. He fought against his brother Narasimha III and succeeded in capturing some territory.

17. The Yadavarayas

The Yadavarayas were a local dynasty. They have exercised authority over the eastern parts of Tondaimandalam. Tirukkalattideva Yadavaraya was the first Chief. These rulers have links with eastern Chalukyas and acquired some portions of the Vengi Kingdom. He strengthened his power by entering into matrimonial alliance with the Telugu Cholas. The other successors were Virarakshasa Yadavaraya and Viranarasingadeva Yadavaraya. Tiruvenkatanatha Yadavaraya ruled for 15 years i.e., till AD 1336. He was a subordinate to the Hoysala ruler Ballala III and paid tribute to him.

18. Taxes Levied By the Yadavaraya Rulers

The Yadavarayas have relieved a number of taxes. The taxes were classified as Gold tax, Grain Tax, Tax relating to free service namely Amanji-vagai, tax levied by the assembly of the Natter. The other taxes were levied on Animals, Road cess, a kind of poll tax, profession tax on Merchants, oil –mongers and weavers, license fee for planting gardens and fishing in ponds and poundage on stray Animals. The other Ancient and customary taxes levied were the taxes levied for the benefit of the heir apparent and the queen mother. The other one was the air for ransoming the body of the king if captured by the enemy, occurs as kind of tribute to the paid to the conqueror¹⁸.

In AD 1336, Sri Ranganatha Yadavaraya succeeded to the principality and ruled for 20 years. He accepted the overlordship of the Vijayanagara rulers.

19. Yadavas

Parts of Kurnool and Anantapur passed under the control of the Yadavas of Devagiri. The Eastern territory passed into the authority of the Kaktiyas of Warangal. The Yadavas rose to prominence in the wake of the disappearance of the Western Chalukyas of Kalyani. The Yadava ruler Sighana (AD 1210-46) has issued inscriptions which are found at Peddakothalika and Devarabetta, Gorantla and Parla in Kurnool district.

20. The Kakatiyas

The region came under the Kakatiyas during the times of Rudra (AD 1150-1195). Kakatiya Ganapathi (AD 1199-1262) annexed Tripurantakam and its neighborhood held by Velanadu Chief Prithivisvara. In AD 1291, Rudramba accompanied by Manuma Gannaya and his cousin Annayadeva, defeated Ambadeva and forced him to surrender Tripurantakam and the surrounding territories. Gonna Vitthala, a subordinate of Rudramba also led an invasion against the Yadava territory and captured Adavani (Adoni) and Thumbalam in AD 1294¹⁹.

Prataparudra fought against Ambadeva and his successors, the rulers of Cuddapah and Kurnool in AD 1308 and defeated them and entrusted the conquered territories to Somayanayaka.

The Nayankara system was introduced during the times of Rudrama. It was introduced on an experimental basis. It was referred for the first time in AD 1279, when Rudrama granted a village as Nayankara to Bolinayadu.

After the fall of the Kakatiyas in AD 1323, the region came under the sway of Muhammad- bin-Tughluq. He divided the Deccan and South India into five provinces and placed them under governors. The unpopularity of these governors resulted in the establishment of the kingdoms of the Reddis, the Rayas of Vijayanagar and the Bahamnīs. Several small rulers tried to assert their independence. The Chalukya chief Somadeva was one among these who rose in revolt against the Tughluq rule²⁰.

21. The Reddis of Kondavidu

Prolaya Vema Reddi (AD 1324-53), the founder of the Reddi kingdom had to clash with the Telugu Chola chief of Tripurantakam and occupied it and appointed his son Anavota as its Governor. The Reddies extended their sway over Srisailam and Ahobilam. Anavota ruled during (AD 1353-1364). The Recharla chiefs extended their sway over Srisailam. At this juncture, the Vijayanagara rulers crossed Krishna and established their authority. Thus, the power of the Reddis receded. Again during the tenure of Anavama (AD 1364- 86), succeeded in recovering the territories up to Srisailam. Anavama was succeeded by Kumaragiri, son of Anavota and ruled up to AD 1402. During this period, the Vijayanagara rulers occupied Tripurantakam and Srisailam. Again Tripurantakam was recovered and allowed parts of Srisailam to be retained by the Vijayanagara rulers. At the last years of Kumaragiri's reign, there were attacks all around on the Reddi kingdom. Pedakomati Vemareddy appears to have seized in AD 1402, the throne of Kondavidu to prevent the disintegration. Rachavema, who came to the Throne, was a weak ruler. The Vijayanagar and the Kalinga rulers encroached into the Reddi kingdom. Thus, the kingdom came to a close²¹.

22. Vijayanagara Empire

With the establishment of the Vijayanagara empire in AD 1336 by Hari Hara and Bukka, the territories of present day Rayalaseema region was brought under their control. Bukka extended his sway over Kondavidu, Srisailem, Parts of Cuddapah, Anantapur and Chittoor. All the four dynasties ruled over this region and gave rich endowments to the temples and constructed Rajagopurams and developed irrigation tanks.

After the decline of the Vijyanagar, parts of Chittoor were ruled by Matli Chiefs²². The Velugodu chiefs ruled parts of Veligodu, Nandyal, Owk and Kandनावolu²³. Attempts of the Bahamani sultans and the Adil Shais of Bijapur were not successful in wresting the entire region. Parts of Chittoor, Cuddapah and Kurnool came under the Qutb Shahis of Golkonda. The Nawabs of Cuddapah and Arcot became subordinates to the Asaf Jahis. Daud Khan panni was succeeded by his nephew Dost Ali as Nawab of Arcot in 1732. He died in a battle at Damalacheruvu in 1740 in a battle against the Marathas. After the death of Nizam –ul-Mulk Asaf Jah I, his third son Asaf Jah I came to power. The Carnatic was invaded by the Marathas. Maratha General Balvanta Rao attacked Cuddapah and the Nawab Abudul Majid Khan 1753-1757. Majid Khan was killed by the Marathas. The successor Mushin Khan concluded a treaty with the Marathas and Guramkonda, Rayachoti, Pulivendula, Vempalli, Ornapalli and Jammalamadugu were ceded to them. Mushin Khan killed the Palegar of Punganur and got the Palem²⁴. In the battle of Jammalamadugu the Marathas were defeated by Abdul Aziz Khan. The rule of the Mayanas came to an end after the reign of Halim Khan. In 1779, Hyder invaded a territory and inflicted a defeat on Halim Khan at Duvvur. Hyder Ali collected tribute from the local chiefs of Kurnool and Cuddpah and expelled the Poligar of Koyalakuntla and Cumbum and entrusted the territory to Sayyed Ali Raja. In 1787, Tippu Sultan occupied Raydur. With the death of Hyder Ali in 1782, the local Nawabs made an attempt to revive their rule.

In AD 1789, Nizam Ali Khan out of fear from Tippu concluded a new treaty with the British. The Nizam occupied Adoni and Cumbum from Mysore. It resulted in a crushing defeat on Tippu and concluded the treaty of Sri Rangapatnam on 19th March 1792. As a result, Tippu lost half of his territory. The area extending from the Krishna to the Penneru and beyond the west to the Nizam.

In the 1799 battle, Tippu was defeated and died in the hands of the British and the Nizam. Nizam got the territory. But the Nizam ceded the areas which he had acquired from Mysore under the treaties of 1792 and 1799 to the British in return for a subsidiary force. Thus, the districts of Kurnool, Bellary, Anantapur and Cuddpah were handedover to the British. These districts were known as the ceded districts²⁵.

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