

# THE MRATHAS IN KARNATAKA

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The activities of the Marathas began in Karnataka when Ranadullah Khan, the Bijapur commander, invaded Karnat in c 1637. Shahji Bhosle had compained him, Bangalore and surrounding regions were conquered from Kempegowda's family and granted as Jahgir to Shahji by the Adilshah, and the jahgir also included areas like Hoskote, Kolar, chikkaballapur, Doddaballapur and Sire. Another part of his Jahgir was in the north at Kanakagiri near Raichur. Shahji reled like a king and he was given enough autonomy. He builty a palace, Gourimahall, in Bangalore. He continued the administrative set-up in the area, founded by Vijayanagara and continued by the Kempegowda family. He issued his own coins and in imitation of the Bijapur coims. He patronized many Sanskrit and Marathi Scholars like Jayaram Pindya, Malhari Bhatta and Naropant Hanmante.

Shahji warred against Kanthirava Narasaraja of Mysore a number of times, but did not succeed in gaining anything. When shahji was taken captive by the Bijapur army (1648) as his son Shivaji had revolted in Maharashtra, Kanthirava captured Magadi from Kempegowda, a subordinate of Bijapur, Shahji could not help the latter as he himself was in prison at that time. But, later, when Kanthirava attacked another Bijapur feudatory, Jagadevaraya of Chennapattana, Shahji, with help of another

commander, Khan Muhammad, defeated Kanthirava and levied tribute on him.

Later, Shahji went to Kanakagiri and in his absence his sons, Sambhaji and Ekoji. Looked after the administration of Bangalore Jahgir. Shahji died in 1664 at Hodigere near Chennagiri (Shimoga district), and his son Ekoji succeeded to the Bangalore jahgir.

Ekoji clashed with Doddadevaraya of Mysore in connection with the affairs of Madurai and Erode. Ekoji was defeated together with the Madurai army. This made the Mysore ruler bold, and he started encroaching upon the Bijapur territories in the neighbourhood of Mysore. In 1675, Ekoji conquered Tanjore, and shifted his head quarters to this newly conquered place.

In 1677, Shivaji who came to the sound asking for the share of his father's southern Jahgir, conquered the whole of the Bangalore Jahgir, But, later he presented Bangalore, Sira and Hosakote to Dipabai, Ekoji's wife, but retained Kolar, Doddaballapur and Chiddballapur. After Shivaji's death, these regions were inherited by his son Sambhaji whose records are found in the region, including the Nandi Hill inscription in Sanskrit (1680). Harji Raje Mahadik, Sambhaji's brother-in-law at Jinji, was looking after the administration of these areas till it was conquered by the Mughals in 1687-89.

After 1677, Chiddadevaraya Started encroaching upon the Bangalore Jahgir of Ekoji. But, the Mughul commander Kasim Khan captured Bangalore in 1686. Bangalore was given on lease to Chikkadevaraya by the Mughuls. Thus, before 1690, the Marathas lost their Banagalore Jahgir, and

Sira. Hoskote , Kolar and Doddaballapura also fell in to the hands of the Mughuls.

## **SHIVAJI AND KARNATAKA :**

Shivaji has stayed in Bangalore as a boy, and scholars like Prof. Shejwalkar has felt that he was inspired from the example of the atmosphere of the Vijayanagara empire (nourished by Kempegowda family) at Bangalore in founding his independent Hindu Kingdom. Kanthirava Narasaraja Odeyar, successfully defying Bijapur attacks, also must have inspired him. Shivaji has started activities against Bijapur in 1646 and the conducted many campaigns in Karnataka in the Bijapur in 1646 and the conducted many campaigns in Karnataka in the Bijapur territory. His commander Netaji Palkar Plundered Raibag, Gadag and Lakshmeshwar in 1659-60. Shivaji attacked Mudhol in 1664, and killed his father's enemy, Baji Ghorpade, and plundered Khanpur and Hubli on his way back. He also plundered Basrur, Ankola and Karwar in 1665 on the coast. Later, he helped Keladi Chennamaji in a civil war in the Keladi Kingdom in 1673.

On his way back, Shivaji plundered Ankola and Karwar again, and also Hubli, placed under Bijapur. On his way Tanjore in 1677, Shivaji captured the fort of Koppal, which was formerly a part of his father's Kanankagiri Jahgiri while returning from Tanjore, his capture of Bangalore, and retaining Kolar region have been already noted. Later, in 1678, the whole tract of land between the Tungabhadra and the Krishna came under his control. He had to struggle hard to retain the territory till his death in 1680. The forts at Ramdurg, Kotkol, Bhimgad, Vallabhagad and parasgad

(Belgaum District) and Gajendragad, Nargund and Sriphthgad (Dharwad District) were built or repaired by him. A Kannada inscription of his at bhdrapur (Dharwad District) testifies to the fact that he had complete control over the region.

Sambhaji (1680-89) struggled hard to retain control over the Kolara region. In alliance with Keladi, he warned against Mysore to prevent the latter's encroachment over his possessions. Finally he lost his territory in South Karnataka to the Mughuls before his own death.

After the death of Sambhaji (1689) at the hands of Mughuls, Rajaram being helped by the keladi queen Channamma is too well known. After Rajaram's death, under the leadership of his queen Tarabai, the Marathas continued their struggle against Aurngazeb who had camped in the Deccan. Santaji Ghopade and Dhanaji Jadhav harassed the Mughul army so much that, but for their menacing activities, the local Kannada Palegars (like Mysore or Keladi) would have been wiped out early by the Mughuls. On the death of Chikkadevaraya of Mysore in 1704, Aurangzeb ordered his commanders to attack Srirangapattana and take all its treasures. But, the Marathas prevented the Mughuls from doing so. The Marathas won many battles like Dodderi (1695) and Basavapatna (1696) against the Mughuls in Karnataka.

## PESHTWA ACTIVITY :

After the death of Rajaram (1700), many parts in north Karnataka fell to the share of the Chhatrapati of Kolhapur. By the Treaty of Warna (1731), the region upto Koppal, and the Kannada coast up to Ankola was to be handed over to Kolhapur.

In 1714 Chhatrapati Shahu of Satara has secured the right of collecting Chauth from the six Southern Mughul Subas from the Marathas emperor. This gave rise to a series of deprivations of the Marathas in Karnataka. The territories to the north of the Tungabhadra were directly under their control, though certain territories were under Kolhapur and other under Satara, and these areas had been the scene of conflict between the two powers for long.

Peshwa Baji Rao (1720-40) conducted two campaigns in Karnataka, one in 1726 upto Chitradurga, and the second upto Srirangapatana in 1727. He collected Chauth from all chieftains, big and small, on his way. This was followed by the expedition led by Raghuji Bhosle, sent from Pune, who collected tribute from Mysore in 1740. In 1747, Peshwa Nanasaheb (or Balaji Rao, 1740-61) sent his cousin Sadashiv Bhau, who levied tribute on all princes upto Keladi. This was followed by the four expeditions of Nanasaheb Peshwa. In 1753, he reached Srirangapatana. His second campaign of 1754 was directed against the Keladi Kingdom. His third march was against Savanur which was subdued in 1756. Finally, in 1757, he collected tribute from Mysore by again reaching Srirangapatana.

After the defeat of the Marathas at Panipat in 1761, the Marathas could not pay attention to their southern belongings, and Haider Ali subdued Keladi and Sonda, the allies of the Marathas in Karnataka, easily. But, soon, Peshwa Madhav Rao(1761-94) defeated haider at Anavatti in 1764 and Haider signed a treaty with him in 1766. Madhav Rao conducted a second campaign, and collected tribute from Sira, Doddaballapur and Hoskote. The third campaign undertaken by him in 1769 was short, but he sent his commander Tryambak Hari to Srirangapattana where he defeated Haider (at Chinakurli, 1771) and levied a war indemnity on him. The role of the Marathas in the Fourth Anglo-Mysore war helped the British highly.

Haider's power to the South of the Tungabhadra confined the Maratha activity up to that river, Haider and Tipu had captured Dharwad, Nargund and Badami more than once. Haider had even tried to court the alliance of the Marathas of Kolhapur against the Peshwa. But, he finally did not gain much.

After the fall of Tipu, the Marathas secured the territories to the North of the Tungabhadra. They retained the area till 1818, when it was acquired by the British, Mutual squabbles in Pune, the Peshwa capital, and the weak rule of Baji Rao II (1802-18) created disillusion in the Kannada regions regarding Maratha rule. The British could occupy the region without much resistance (The territories included Dharwad-Belgaum-Bijapur region). But, Many Maratha princes like those of Kagwad, Jamkhandi, Mudhol,



Ramdurg, Nargund, Sandur, Miraj, Sangli, Akkalkot, Jatt, Kurundwad, Budhgaon, Wadgaon, etc., continued to rule over Kannada regions, many of them till 1947. Savanur was a Muslim feudatory of the Marathas till 1818.

The rule of the Marathas in Karnatak did not leave behind pleasant memories. The imposed Marathi on the Kannada masses, Their campaigns to collect Chauth, followed by the Pindaris, left only bitter memories in Karnataka, and they were considered only as plunderers. The importance gained by the Brahmin community in the days of the Peshwas, also made the Maratha administration unpopular.

The rule of the Marathas resulted in Kannada losing its ground for long from public life in regions to the North of the Tungabhadra. The Warkari cult spread in Karnataka, centering round God Vithala of Pandharpur. The impact of leaders like Gokhale and Tilak was easily felt in the North Karnataka region during the present century, due to the area's proximity to Maharashtra. This helped the awakening of national feelings. On the Dalits of North Karnataka, the impact of Dr. Ambedkar was deep and direct.