

B.L.D.E. Association's

**S. B. Arts & K.C.P. Science College,  
VIJAYAPUR- 586 103.**



## ASSIGNMENT

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MEDIVAL

KARNATAKA

NAYAKAS

OF

CHITRDURGA

Guided By -  
Prof. D. S. Hugar Sir



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# NAYAKAS OF CHITRADURGA

## \* Introduction :-

In the centuries between the collapse of the Vijayanagara Empire in late 1500s and the death of Tipu Sultan in 1799, it was an era of dynamic change, during which petty rulers and chiefs, variously called "little kings", nayaks and poligars in historical accounts, fought war after war against outsiders and each other. Mysore was ultimately the most successful of these polities and its history dominates what has been written about this period. Several smaller kingdoms, most notably Chitradurga and Keladi [Bednur, Bednore] endured into middle 1700s and were of considerable regional importance.

Between 1500-1800, Chitradurga was at times a province of Vijayanagara an independent kingdom, a tributary of Mysore, and finally a Mysore province. In spite of this tumultuous past, the Chitradurga nayakas have received so little attention from modern researchers that, until recently, its story was only a modest footnote in Karnataka history.



### \* Origins of the Chitradurga Nayakas :-

Chitradurga was one of several central Karnataka regions governed by local chieftains well before the rise of Vijayanagar, which inherited control of the region from the Hoysalas in the 1300s. By the 1500s, it was largely dominated by Bedar (Valmiki) families who traced their origins to Southern Andhra Pradesh from which they had emigrated with their herds. Like most of the families that rose to power in the 1500s, the Chitradurga nayakas based the legitimacy of their rule on their relationship with Vijayanagara kings, who appointed several of their line as local governors after they attracted the attention of the Vijayanagara rulers through acts of daring and bravery.

One such ruler was Timmanna Nayaka, who was attacked by a Vijayanagara force in the early 1560s because he had raided neighboring poligar territories. In a daring act of bravery and sheer arrogance, Timmanna Nayaka decided to steal the horse of the Vijayanagara prince who commanded the forces sent against him. Under cover of night, he stole into the enemy camp and found the prince's horse. Before he could make his getaway, a groom arrived to re-tether the horse. Hiding literally at the groom's feet, Timmanna Nayaka lay unnoticed in the darkness as the groom drove the



tether rope peg through his hand. Pinned to the ground, Timmanna Nayaka waited for the groom to leave, cut off his hand to free himself, and rode away on the prince's horse. It is said that the event convinced the Vijayanagara army that they could not defeat Timmanna Nayaka and they sued for peace. The Vijayanagara King formally appointed him as the governor of Chitradurga and he enjoyed a brief interlude of favor at court. Regrettably, it did not last and he died in prison at Vijayanagar.

Chitradurga Fort is the most visible modern reminder of the nayakas who once held sway across this part of central Karnataka. Although traces of older fortification walls can still be found there most of the standing walls and gateways were constructed by the Chitradurga nayakas and Tipu Sultan. This fort was effectively the heart of the kingdom.

#### \* Madakari Nayaka :-

Ontisalaga Madakari Nayaka or Madakari Nayaka V was the last Nayaka ruler of Chitradurga, India. He belongs to Bedar Nayaka caste and is considered to the greatest of the Nayakas of Chitradurga and also Sirsi and Karigundi. He ruled from 1754 to 1779. He also gained the title of Eppatelu Palegarara Ganda by Peshwa Madhavrao I after he



helped him win the Nidagallu Fort. He died in 1779 Srirangapatana. He died in Srirangapatana Prison after captured by Tippu Sultan and his father.

Kasturi Rangappa Nayaka II was his Predecessor. It is interesting to note that Madakari Nayaka V was elected by prominent people of the town. On the hope of wresting control of this principality, the chiefs of Rayadurga, Harapanahalli and Savanur unitedly attacked Chitradurga in 1759 and a battle took place at Hosakere in which Chitradurga emerged victorious.

#### \* The Fall of Chitradurga Nayakas :-

Chitradurga's political position became untenable in the mid 1700s after it was caught between the Marathas and Haider Ali of Mysore in their struggle for control of central Karnataka. Gambling that the Marathas would eventually prevail, the Chitradurga rulers entered into secret negotiations with them. Had the plan succeeded, they would have a valuable ally in their continuing military conflicts with the Keladi (Bednore) Kings of modern-day Shimoga district; it may have even helped them to sustain their rule into the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.



Haidar Ali, however, proved to be more than equal to the task of dealing with Chitradurga and thwarting the regional ambitions of the Marathas.

After three sharp clashes with Chitradurga in the 1760s & 1770s, Haidar Ali finally took the fort in 1779 and the region became a Mysore province. Madakari Nayaka IV, the last ruler of Chitradurga, and his family were imprisoned at Srirangapatana, where they died. To break the power of the Bedar caste in the region, which had loyally supported the Chitradurga nayakas, Haidar Ali is said to have moved more than 20,000 Bedars from Chitradurga to Srirangapatana, the young men of which were pressed in his Chela battalions and recruited into his army. As Mark Wilks, the historians and early British Resident at Mysore, noted in the early 1800s, Chitradurga soldiers in the Mysore army enjoyed a reputation for bravery and military effectiveness in the Mysore wars that followed in the late 1700s.

Among the many heroes and heroines of Chitradurga, mention must be made of Onake Obavva, the wife of a common soldier, who, while fetching water during one of the several sieges of the fort, heard the muffled sound of enemy soldiers attempting to enter the fort walls through a small crevice that was just big enough for one person at a time to crawl



through. Hiding silently next to the crevice with an onake or pestle, she killed each soldier as his head appeared in the opening and dragged his body inside the wall. By the time her husband and others came to her aid, many dead soldiers lay around her. Onake Obavva's courage and quick thinking single-handedly saved the fort that day. Her bravery is commemorated in Chitradurga by the name of Onake Obavva Stadium and by an extraordinary new sculpture near the DC office. The sculpture was commissioned by the Govt. of Karnataka and brilliantly executed by the distinguished sculptor Ashok Gudigar.

#### \* Conclusion :-

The spiked guns stood like mute witnesses of the carnage. Madakari, fell into the hands of the enemy. He died in the prison of Srirangapatna. Thus ended the rule of Madakari Nayaka and the freedom of Chitradurga. Chitradurga was annexed to the Mysore Kingdom.

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