

EPILOGUE

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The rule of Yadavas of Devagiri was a unique landmark in the history of India in general and in the history of Deccan in particular as the Yadava rulers held their sway over the Deccan for about five hundred years and were the last great Hindu rulers of ancient India making great contribution to art, architecture and literature and governed their territory with administrative system of ancient Hindu model.

Both in ancient and medieval period of monarchical rule, there was one underlying current which can be called the rhythm of history and that was the hereditary monarchies had inherent weakness of decline and fall, no ruling family could produce the chain of able rulers. This inherent weakness is minimised only in modern republic states and democracies. This being the case with ancient and medieval India, different dynasties that ruled were subjected to the vicissitudes of their fortunes. Therefore, the national monarchies ruling over the sub-continent of India were rare as in the case of a weak-ruler feudatories rose up declaring their independence.

During the declining days of Rashtrakutas, Yadavas who were the feudatories of Rashtrakutas began mustering the strength to make bid to establish new kingdom. This process of building an independent domain began in the days of Yadavas chieftain Dridhapahara who probably lived in the later part of the ninth century.

The Yadavas who were known as the rulers of Devagiri rose from feudatory position to the governors of an empire and their power reached the height of glory in the days of Singhan Second who ruled from 1210 A.D. to 1246 A.D. He was a mighty General with untiring zeal for military expeditions. He invaded Gujarat for four times. In the end of his rule his empire included the Konkan, Lata, Maharashtra, Vidarbha, part of Mysore and Andhra Pradesh. Eventually he established his sway over the whole of the territory ruled over by the later Chalukyas of Kalyani. Thus he established himself as the supreme lord of the Deccan.

The Yadavas could control such a vast territory at least for some period by the system of network of administration which they partly inherited from their predecessors and partly added to it by innovating new offices as exigencies demanded from time to time.

In fact, Mauryas were the first rulers who extended their administration to the south and inaugurated the age of the systematic pattern of administration linking the village to the higher administrative units by chain of hierarchical offices. Since then, the administration in Deccan went on evolving further until the Muslim state in the form of Bahamani kingdom came into being in the year 1340.

The Satavahanas who were the first known rulers coming from the south, ruled south India in the background of Mauryan administration though they also added much to it. They must have had the departments like police, finance, judiciary, army etc. The Satavahanas divided their territory for the administrative purpose into Aharas or Rashtras with a central town called Nigam for each Ahara or Rashtra. Whether the Rashtra or Ahara was subdivided into other administrative units consisting of some villages, is not known. Some of the towns (Nigam) had their Nigam Sabhas.¹ Villages which were the last administrative units must also have had their Sabhas as guilds² and had their own Sabhas but the references to it are lacking.

A notable change appears to have occurred in the days of Vakatakas. Vakatakas' was a highly centralised government and the ministers under them enjoyed the hereditary position. The ministers were both warriors and civil administrators. Even in provincial, district and subdivisional administration, the officers appointed occupied their position hereditarily. The principle of hereditary succession appears to have been the set practice in the days of Vakatakas in the Deccan.³ Bhukti Rashtra and Rajya are the names of territorial divisions mentioned in the Vakatakas' Records.⁴

We get some ideas of the village administration in the

age of Vakataka as the elders of the village of Kadambgiri are referred to in the record. This refers to the elders' body of the village to which the inscriptions of the later period make references. The council of village elders presided over by the village headman was obtained in the other area of the south in this time.⁶

The terms Rashtra, Vishaya and Nadu occur in the inscriptions of Chalukya of Badami. But their sizes seem to have varied greatly and names like Banraja-Vishaya is a proof that these were once the independent states but later became the subordinate divisions of Chalukyas' empire.⁷ It is very difficult to say much about the Chalukyan period as the records are not unanimous in giving the names of the officers, governing the different divisions of Chalukyan empire.

There is some description of the royal court of the Rashtrakutas of Malkhed. The emperor used to attend the court regularly. In the courtyard, military captains were on duty with their select platoons of infantry, cavalry and the elephant corps. Very often the elephants and horses captured from the defeated enemies were exhibited as a mark of imperial might.⁸ The visitors found the emperor sitting on imposing throne wearing a number of costly jewels and ornaments. He was attended by the courtesans and dancing girls, and by servants who acted as his bodyguards. The vassals, foreign

ambassadors, high military and civil officers, poets, doctors, astrologers, merchants and guild representatives of the court also attended. But in the case of Rashtrakutas the information is not available as to how they supervised and controlled the provincial, district and village administration. The Rashtrakutas have large number of feudatories as the extent of their empire was very vast. Their feudatory chiefs paid the tribute and attended the courts.⁹ Rashtrakutas divided their empire into Rashtras and Vishayas. The number of villages included in Vishayas varied from one thousand to four thousand. The Vishayas were sub-divided into Buktis. Sometimes Buktis were also subdivided.¹⁰ The governor of Rashtra was the Rashtrapati who had sufficient military force under him. The head of the Vishaya was the Vishayapati. All these carried on military, civil and revenue administration. The village administration was carried on by a village headman and a village accountant whose posts were hereditary. The village headman was immediately responsible for maintaining law and order, and for protecting the village.¹¹

With the rule of Satavahanas who were the ardent supporters of Brahminism, the process of Brahminisation took speed in the Deccan and for that matter in the whole of south India. Therefore, since then law of primogeniture came into practice in case of royal succession. The rulers in the Deccan by and large practised this principle of primogeniture.

This practice has also been advocated by ancient law givers who wrote their treaties during different chronological ranges. Whether it is Satavahanas, Wakatakas, Chalukyas, Rashtrakutas, Shilaharas or Kadambas, with a few exceptions all practised law of succession of the eldest son. There was inherent weakness in the principle, because there was no guarantee that the principle will always bring the man of ability to the throne because succession is predetermined. It is due to this that the Yadavas who rose later on in the tenth century, built their empire in the eleventh and twelfth ^ucenturies taking advantage of weak Rashtrakuta and Chalukya rulers.

To come to the Yadavas proper, the Yadavas were in no way the revolutionaries in the matters of their administrative institutions. Mostly they continued the administrative system as they inherited from the Rashtrakutas and from the Chalukyas with a few innovations here and there. Their monarchy was hereditary and the eldest son normally succeeded to the throne. But on two occasions Yadavas' throne was contested. In the first instance Bhillama fifth¹² rested power from his nephew. In another instance Ramchandra usurped power from his cousin, Amandev.¹³ The successor succeeded the throne after performing the coronation¹⁴ ceremony which had a great political and constitutional significance.

The protection of subjects and Dharma was considered

to be the duty of the king. The Mahamadapur record of Krishna is referred to as intent on restoring Vedas.¹⁵ The Yadavas had garuda as the state emblem as they were worshippers of Vishnu. Therefore, garuda appears on the seals. On certain records garuda is shown along with Hanuman.

All ancient Indian political thinkers unanimously recommend that the king cannot know everything. Therefore, for proper governing of the state he must appoint proficient ministers. Therefore, Hindu political thinkers regarded ministry as indispensable for the king. Yadavas regarded their ministers as the tongue and the right hand of them.¹⁶ The Gadag inscription of Bhillama-V mentions that his minister Jaitsimha was known for his good qualities.¹⁷ The Yadavas seem to have a smaller ministry comprising sometimes 5 or 7 members. But the earliest record of Seunachandra-II gives the list of nine ministers. The Ministers' portfolios are mentioned as follows: 1) general, 2) counsellor, 3) the chief of the ministers, 4) ministry of peace and war, 5) head of revenue department, 6) minister for foreign department, 7) minister for royal priest, 8) preceptor knowing the treatises of Saivism, 9) minister in charge of general affairs of worship and devotion.¹⁸

This shows that Yadavas covered most of the departments concerning them in the administration. It is also important

that in these records two ministers working in the religious affairs and customs have figured. Hemadri's literature and the inscriptions would reveal the tremendous religious and Brahminical influence in the administration of the Yadavas.

Hemadri, the celebrated prime minister of Mahadeva and Ramachandra, was the superintendent of all the elephant riders, administrator of the whole kingdom, controller of the whole treasury.¹⁹ Because of their exalted positions the prime ministers were given the status of a Mahamandalesvara, Mahasamanta or Mahamandlika. They also received honour from the feudatory chiefs.²⁰ The Mahapradhanas always would not be the prime minister. For example, during the Singhanas' regime there were ten Mahapradhanas, most of them functioned as viceroys of the distant provinces.

The qualifications of ministers are also laid down in the records. For example, Seunachandra-III said that valour, liberality, mercy, cleverness, virtue, truthfulness, energy and good conduct should be the qualities of the minister.²¹ It is important to note that minister should be, in the Yadava records, a man of letters. Ramchandra's minister Purushottama ruthlessly put down all the traders and made all the people conform to the rules of conduct laid down for the four varnas and ashramas.²² Here the followers of Mahanubhav sect are referred to. The ministers were to a great extent generals in

war times and administrators in peace time. Whether the ministers of the departments had their own subordinate bureaucratic staff in the capital under them is not clearly known. Sometimes Sainyadhipati and Dandanayakas are mentioned. They seem, generally, to be both civil and military officers. For example Vankavadeva was the Senapati and was a governor of Banavasi-1200, but Altekar thinks that Mahaprachanda dandanayaka was the war minister and Dinkar Desai translates this as the great mighty master of the staff. The officers called Dandanayakas are also mentioned. All these designations, probably, meant for the officers of the military skill or war bravery. Rajaguru is another minister who is mentioned in the records. He must have been the royal preceptor advising the king on religious and spiritual matters.

Amatya was the revenue minister and figures first as Mahamattya of Seunachandra-II.²³ Sunk-Vargade, Sulkadhyaksa or Sunkaadhikari are the terms used probably to indicate the revenue officers. The minister in charge of treasury was known as Lakmipati and the minister who looked after the royal bed-chamber was Sayapala. Thus Yadavas gave importance to military, revenue, civil administration etc. by appointing able ministers from time to time.

The territories under Yadavas were quite extensive from Narmada in the north and northern Mysore districts in the south. Especially during the Singhana period, the territory under them

formed two categories: 1) The territory directly governed by them, and 2) territory under the feudatories. The territory governed by them was divided for administrative purpose into desa, vishya, mandala, khampana and grama. The largest unit under them was desa which can be identified with the province. The Seunadesa, Kuntaladesa, Amradesa, Beluvoladesa, Karahadadesa, Kundidesa, Pandyadesa, Manadesa are mentioned in the records.²⁴

The officers governing the desa were appointed by the king. Whether these desadhipatis enjoyed their position by heredity is not known. But for lack of communication and even conventionally they enjoyed almost independent position. There were many land grants which they gave on their own.

Some inscriptions of Singhanas' time make us believe that Vishya was larger administrative unit than desa. For example Karnata-Vishya is mentioned as bigger unit than desa.²⁵ The kingdom of eastern Chalukyas is called Vengidesa in some records and Vengimandala in other.²⁶ But by and large under Yadavas, desa indicated a provincial unit. The Vishya formed part of province under Yadavas. Perhaps it was equivalent to district. But nomenclatures were very much interchangeable.

The feature of the administration of feudatory was that they owed alligence to the ruling king, paid fixed tribute and rendered military services. Otherwise, for their internal

administrative purpose, they were independent. They had their own ministers and other administrative retinue. A large number of feudatories are mentioned in the Yadava records. In case of revolt on the part of feudatory, Yadavas punished them severely.

In certain cases the office of the governors of provinces tended to become hereditary though this was not followed as a rule. The officers were transferred from one region to another. For example, the division of tardavadi was governed by Soyideva in 1192 A.D. and in 1199 A.D., Sankarasa became its governor.²⁷ Sometimes governors appointed their officers on their own. Sometimes some person governed more than one administrative unit. For example, Mahapradhana Chaundisetti figures as the governor of the two beluvala and such other districts as Banavasi, Pandyanadu, Taradvadi etc. In records king's minister Basavarasa was ruling over Sindavadi 1000 made a gift of some plots of land for the service of the god Amritesvara of Gopinatha and also several Brahmanas.²⁸ This shows that the ministers and governors worked with much independence in their functioning. Not only this but the provincial governors appointed their own prime ministers and other officials, for their administration. The Yadavas' governors were strict and efficient for their administration. They were also merciful and showed respect to Brahmanas and learned.²⁹ When provincial governors were on military

expeditions, they used to gift away lands to the Brahmanas. For example, Mallisetti, the minister of great king Kanharayadeva gave at Paundarikakshetra a village named Tambrapuri to the Brahmanas of various gotras.³⁰

What was true of the Yadava governor seems to be true of the feudatory chiefs. The only difference was that the feudatories did not take out military expeditions independently. They only helped their paramount lord whenever they were asked to do so.

The provincial governors seem to have maintained a large bureaucracy. Mahapasayita or Pasaytita, Hemmeyanayaka, Lakkahananayaka and Karana are the officers mentioned in the record.³¹ This shows that the provincial administration under Yadavas was almost left with independence to the charge of the governors though the governor was appointed by the king from time to time and he was also transferred whenever necessary from one province to another. Whether he and his officers enjoyed tax free land in lieu of their services or they were given a revenue of particular area as payment or they were directly paid either in kind or in coin, is not explicitly mentioned in the records. It is quite likely that the Yadavas are not much known for issuing coins. They either gave tax-free land to the officers if officers were hereditary or they must have paid in kind as money economy is not important feature of the economic aspect of Yadava rule.

The Indian villagers from the ancient past were almost independent for historical reasons and were self-governed through their Sabhas under the leadership of village headman. The village bodies which were responsible for village administration of all sorts were known by different terms such as Mahajanas, Nakharas, Settis, Settiguttas, Mummuridandas, Okkalus, Hittu etc. in the records of the Yadavas. In the Yadava period the village headman was a gaunda or gauda. Gaunda was the centre of village administration. The village headmanship was bestowed upon a distinguished person by the king and sometimes it was hereditary. The term gauda is equivalent to Patel or Patil and derived from Sanskrit terms.³² He was responsible for law and order in the village and performed the judicial functions of criminal nature in the village. In other words security of village was his duty. His responsibility to the state was to collect the revenue from the village and pay it to the state regularly. Because of his multifarious duties towards the villages the village headman is described as father and mother of villagers.³³ The office of the gauda was hereditary and granted tax-free land for his maintenance.³⁴ The village headman had no fixed remuneration but was paid for his services in many ways. He was usually given rent-free Inam land.³⁵

According to Altekar the village headman enjoyed taxation in kind and received a share of the most of the

articles produced or sold in the villages.³⁶ Another officer of equal importance in the village was Senabova. His duty was to keep the records. He was the author of many epigraphs.³⁷ Another officer was Rakshapala, the police officer of the village. An inscription from Nidugundi refers to such officer.³⁸

Mahajanas of the Agrahara village are mentioned. Agrahara villages were of the Brahmins and these villages were exempted from the government tax. The Mahajanas function as a village body in Agrahara villages. They were learned and proficient in all arts and sciences. They formed the Sabha or the assembly and they used to assemble in the local temples to discuss the matters concerning the village. A Yadava inscription calls such a Sabha as a dwelling place of the goddess of learning, Sarasvati.³⁹ The Mahajanas had powers to make grants. Mahajanas enjoyed judicial powers also. They acted as the trustees of the temples. The mahajanas also took interest in irrigation works and construction of tanks.⁴⁰

Aiduhuri, Ugura-munnuravaru, Doni-Sasiruaru, Ubhayanadesi, Kuliya-ainurvaru, Samaya-Sasirvaru or other village assemblies are mentioned but their nature is not known. The rulers often consulted them in matters of village affairs.⁴¹

Thus the villages played an important role in maintaining themselves their affairs at all kinds through their village assemblies guided by village headman.

it seems that the local bodies of the villages levied and collected their own taxes for the welfare of the villages and towns. Market town taxes were collected on all items of marketable commodities. The marriage tax also was levied by certain villages.

Thus, the village administration was an independent unit in itself. Its administration was traditional and conventional. It was almost cut off from the provincial and district administration for want of communication.

Any state in pre-modern period in India sustained on three factors namely, the ability of the king, economic ability of the state and the strength of the armed forces. As Yadavas rose up taking advantage of weaknesses of their feudal lords viz., Rashtrakutas of Malkhed and Chalukyas of Kalyani, their glory and power also depended upon their military ability to combat with their neighbouring monarchies like Kakatiyas and Hoysalas in the south and Gurjaras and Parmaras of the north. Each king always attempted to expand his territory at the cost of others' weakness. A monarch had to keep on combating or in war position always. Therefore, right from the village to centre the officers and the men were expected to be armed and alert. In most of the cases there was no difference between civil and military officers. Some officers worked as civil officers in time of peace and in time of war they worked as military officers. Therefore, in one way the ancient or medieval

India was a military or police state. But this applies only in the case of protection and expansion of the territory of the kingdom. Most of the Yadava kings, therefore, were great warriors and military leaders. For example, Bhillama-V led personally the military campaign against Hoysalas, Jaitugi against the Kakatiyas, and the Singhana against the Malvas and Gurjaras.

Their army had important military officers such as Senadhipati, Rauta, Dalavayi and Sakal Sainyadhipati. The military officers came from different castes. For example Singhanas' general Kholesvara and Rama were Brahmins, Savanta, Thakkura were Kshatriyas, Chaundisetti, Mallisetti and Aryakallisetti were Vaishyas.

The Yadava army comprised infantry, cavalry and the elephant force. Chariots do not seem to have formed a part of the army. The commander of the cavalry forces was known as Pattasahanadhipati Peyiyasahani, the general of Bhillama-V held two posts of Pattasahanadhipati and Ghodeya-Raya.⁴³ Mutgi inscription refers to Peyiya Sahani as a king of cavalry. The commander-in-chief of the army was designated as Mahaprachandanayaka or Senadhipati. The soldiers of Yadavas wore necklaces of three bands of multi-coloured beads over their covered necks. Their iron bracelets were shaped like snakes and daggers adored their waists. They wielded many

weapons with skill and were accompanied by bards who sang of their former deeds of valour and roused them to fresh endeavour and achievements.

The actual strength of Yadava army is not recorded. But when Bhillama-V invaded Hoysala territory in 1191 A.D., he had infantry having 20,000 soldiers and cavalry of 12,000.⁴⁴ Another inscription of Bhillama-V records 20,000 soldiers and 10,000 cavalry. This indicates the exaggeration, giving discount to the strength of Yadavas' infantry and cavalry. When Shankaradeva, Ramachandra's son returned to the capital on the occasion of the Alla-ud-din's invasion Muslim records tell us that Shankaradeva had five lacs soldiers, ten thousand horses and eight powerful elephants. This shows that they had very big infantry under them. Yadava army had a naval wing also. This they developed probably after annexation of Konkan to their kingdom. Hemadri refers to a naval engagement between the Silahara King Somesvara of Thana and Yadava king Mahadeva.⁴⁵ Ramchandra's officer Paschimasamudradhipati is mentioned. He had under him one Sahadeva who was designated a Konkanadhikari. We do not know the number of ships that belong to the naval squadron of the Yadav army. They must have encouraged shipping activity after they took charge of Kadamba fleet by defeating the Kadambas.

They seem to have organised fort administration well. A

record states that the fort was the navel of the wheel of the sovereignty of a king.⁴⁶ Among the four-fold division of the forts as Sthaldurga, Jaladurga, Giridurga and Vanadurga, we frequently come across Giridurga in the Yadav records. The capital Devagiri was itself a hillfort much difficult to reach the royal palace built on the top of the fort. The administration of Devagiri fort must have been organised well appointing different officers at different stages for the protection of the fort. But these details are not available in the records. In the Ramachandra's period we come across one Hemadideva who was a great master of hillfort.⁴⁷ Fort Devagiri perhaps was constructed by Singhana. It seems to have attracted the attention of the Muslim rulers so much that one of them ultimately decided to shift his capital from Delhi to Devagiri.

Loot, Arson and killing seem to be the guiding principles of warfare and the Yadava army tried hard to excel in them wherever they went. They carried fire and sword when Singhana invaded Gujarat. People of Gujarat fled to different regions fearing killing, looting and arsoning.⁴⁸

In spite of all this network of administration the Yadava rulers in the last part of the 13th century do not seem to be vigilant administrators. Yadavas also might not have a network of spy system to get the information regarding the developments in different areas. Otherwise Ala-ud-din Khalji, who came all the way from northern part to Devagiri without

any resistance indicate the negligence towards administration and military alertness. It is because of the lack of administrative qualities on the part of Devagiri rulers in the last part of the 13th century that the empire which had sustained for three hundred years growing enormously in extent, collapsed like a cardboard house by one stroke of Ala-ud-din Khalji.

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