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BEDAR RULERS IN MEDIEVAL KARNATAKA

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Abstract:-Bedar tribe is most backward and living away from civilized areas such as forests and hilly areas. Still people of this tribe were actively ruled many parts of Karnataka including Chitradurga, Bellary, Gulbarga, Koppal, etc from Vijayanagar Empire to British period. Even many of the bedar people were actively took participation in freedom struggle against the British. The paper described on Bedar rulers of Karnataka.

Keywords: Bedar Rulers , civilized areas ,Bedar community .

INTRODUCTION:

In Kannada language the term 'Bedar' means Adivasis or hilly people with hunting as their occupation. Bedar community is also called as 'Valmiki' tribe, 'Balmiki' tribe or 'Beda' tribe. They were now grouped under the Scheduled Tribes in Constitution of India.

Bedar, Bendar, Berad-The great hunting and agricultural tribe of the Karnataka, identical with the Boyas of Telangana and the Ramoshis of the Maharashtra. They call themselves Kanayamkula, "descendants of Kanayam", Dhorimkulam "children of chiefs" and Valmika Kshatriyas "Kshatriyas descended from Valmiki". They are a wild and fierce looking people, of coarse features and dark complexion and bear an evil reputation as highway robbers and dakaites. Their predatory habits have been greatly repressed, and they are now largely employed as village watchmen (Hassan, 1920).

The Bedar tribal community can be found in several places of Karnataka. They are also known as Beda, Berad, Boya, Bendar, Berar, Burar, Ramoshi, Talwar, Byadar, and Valmiki. The word 'bedar' has an etymological significance. The word has been derived from the word bed or bedaru, which signifies a hunter. The ancestors of Bedar tribes were the Pindaris. However, some claim that their ancestors were Tirole Kunbis. The origin of the name of the tribe is not properly known. It is said that the meaning of the term bedar is without fear. Bedar community people are brave and as such, many of the rulers have given higher posts in their army to Bedar people. Even many of the rulers were also ruled different parts of Karnataka since ancient age to independence.

Bedar Rulers in Karnataka:

The historical information sources reveal that the Beda community tribe is having its own rich heritage in the ruling of parts of Karnataka and also revolted against the British. It is noted that Maharshi Valmiki, Kirata Bhil, composed the Ramayana. He is considered to be an avatar in the Balmiki or Bedar community.

According another faith, Bedars were belong to Kshatriya clan. Kartaveeryarjun, Kshatriya king of Chandravamsha killed Jamadagni. Parashuram, son of Jamadagni was angry with Kartaveeryarjun and Kshatriyas and as such, he attacked all the Kshatriyas twenty-one times to destroy them. The Kshatriyas were ran into the forests and become Bedars. Finally, they used to prey Sri Renuka Yellamma, mother of Parashuram for their survival (Laxmidevi, 2009).

Bedar community was very popular for adventure and braveness and as such, they loved to participate in wars. Many of the Kings were appreciated the Bedar tribe and consequently, many of the Beda people were joined and got higher positions in the armies of many of the rulers. According to Buchanan, Kadambas were first Kannada rulers and belonged to Bedar community (Ayyar, 1988). The Bedar Army were popular during the Ganga and Chalukya dynasties in Karnataka and it is highlighted that there were majority of the soldiers and officers in the armies of Ganga and Chalukya Kingdoms (Yatagal, 2008).

The rulers of Kammatadurga were helped the Bedar community to settle around the Kammatadurga. Mummadisingha was first Palegar of Kammatadurga as recorded in inscriptions of 1280-1287. He was able to fight with the Yadavas of North and Hoysalas of South. The records also reveal that Kampilaraya, son of Mummadisingh defeated the army of Mohammed-bin-Tughlaq twice. Later in 1327, Mohammed-bin-Tughlaq was defeated and killed Kampilaraya and finally the Kammatadurga or Kampli was destroyed by Tughlaq. The Beda tribe joined the army of Vijayanagar rulers.

Sri Krishnadevaraya was ruling over the Vijayanagar Empire from 1509 AD to 1529 AD. In about 1562, there were very well known Nayakas in the Vijayanagar army were 'Boya Ramappa' and 'Tipparaju', the Boya Chief of Pulivendakonda and the palegars of Kotakonda-Kappatralla. Bedar people under the leadership of Kalappa Naik first settled at Adhoni and Dambala, situated in the Raichur Duab, which was then a bone of contention between Krishna Raylu, the king of Vijayanagaram, and Ismail Adil Shah, the Sultan of Bijapur. The Bedars, taking advantage of the disturbed limes, raided and plundered the country far and wide, so that, for the time being, they were the terror of the surrounding districts. During Vijayanagar rule, these Nayak kings were assigned the duty of protecting the province of Tungabhadra. After the fall of Vijayanagar, the kings of Sholapur became independent and only came under Bijapur court in name. The Bijapur court was always afraid of Beda Nayak Kings. Partly by colonisation and partly by conquest, they gradually extended their territories until, under Pam Naik I. (1674-1695), they founded a State, and fixed their capital at Vakinagir, two miles west of Shorapur.

Pam Naik was the bravest of the dynasty and helped Sikandar Adil Shah, the last of the Bijapur Sultans, in subduing his rebel nobles and in his wars with the Generals of Aurangzeb. The Sultan, in gratitude, granted him a magnificent Jagir and conferred upon him all the insignia of royalty with the titles "Gajag Bahirand Gaddi Bahari Bahadur". Pam Naik styled himself Raja, a title which has since descended to his successors. He organized the State, dividing it into provinces, over which he appointed Subedars. He was also a great builder, and raised new forts, constructed roads and tanks, and built stately temples. It was in his time that the kingdoms of Bijapur and Golconda were subdued by Aurangzeb. In his successor, Pid Naik Bahari (1695-1725 A.D.), the power of the Bedars had reached its zenith. He strongly resisted the power of Aurangzeb and defeated the Imperial forces in pitched battles. At last the Emperor took the field in person and besieged the Bedar strong-hold of Vakingira. The fort made a gallant stand, but was reduced ultimately by Zulfikar Khan, the best of Aurangzeb's Generals. It was, however, retaken by the Bedars immediately on the depasture of Aurangzeb. Pid Naik removed the seat of government from Vakingira to Shorapur, which he founded on a hill. He introduced many reforms and ruled the State in greater splendour than any of his predecessors. After a glorious reign of 31 years he died in 1726 A.D.

The later history of the Shorapur Rajas is blended with that of the Nizams of Hyderabad, whom they acknowledged as their suzerain lords, paying an annual tribute of 1,45,000 rupees. Though brave; they were not able rulers and were not infrequently involved in the wars of the Nizams with the Marathas and other contemporary powers. The decline of the State had already commenced and was hastened by internal dissensions, mal-administration and reckless extravagance, until, after a brief revival under the administration of Colonel Meadows Taylor, it was confiscated on account of the rebellion of the Raja Venkatappa Naik against the British Government (1858) and ceded to Hyderabad State under the Nizam in 1860 A.D.

The Chitradurga Palegar family was of the Beda or Balmiki caste and belonged to one of the hunting hill tribes. After the end of Vijayanagar dynasty, many of the Bedar Palegars were went to Chitradurga and Nayaka rulers of Chitradurga who ruled from 1568 to 1779 were strongest rulers among Beda rulers. Matti Timmanna Nayaka (1568-1589) was the first ruler of Chitradurga Palegar family. He was brave and also a great administrator, who developed the revenue system. His rule was also richest and memorable as all the people were satisfied with his rule. Later, Obanna Nayaka (1589-1602), son of Matti Timmanna Nayaka was ruled Chitradurga. Many of the rulers of Nayaka dynasty such as Kasturi Rangappa Nayaka (1602-1652), Madakari Nayaka-II (1652-1674), Obanna Nayaka-II (1774-1775), Chikkanna Nayaka (1675-1686) and Madakari Nayaka-III (1687-1689) were ruled the Chitradurga province.

Surpur in Gulbarga district was also ruled by the Nayaka dynasty from (1636-1858). Narasimha Nayaka was Palegar under Vijayanagar Empire and his successors Veerabommana Nayaka, Singappa Nayaka, Odera Nayaka, Kallappa Nayaka, Chinna Hanama Nayaka, Havinayaka, Pedda Somanayaka, Ugra Singha Nayaka, Madakari Nayaka, Veera Jhampa Nayaka, Balasoma Nayaka, Hire Pam Nayaka and Raja Venkatappa Nayaka were ruled the Surpur province. Many of these rulers were struggled against strong rulers such as Maratha Emperor Shivaji and Mughals and defeated their army. Raja Venkatappa Nayaka was popular ruler and not agreed to rule under the Nizam and the British and as such, revolted against the British and defeated by the British army.

Anegondi, a historical place in Koppal district was also ruled by Bedar Nayakas. Similarly, many of the Nayakas were ruled Gudagunte and Guntagol in Raichur district. Deodurga taluka in Raichur district was also ruled by Nayakas. Vasudeva Nayaka was the first ruler of Deodurga and he began his administration in Chandanakeri and Deodurga. Kilacha Nayaka, son of Vasudeva Nayaka was succeeded in Deodurga. Later, Kolli Rangappa Nayaka was took power in 1766 and he was popular ruler in Deodurga. Many of the rulers of Beda community such as Krishnappa Nayaka, Venkatappa Nayaka, Pidda Nayaka-III were ruled Deodurga and Chandanakeri.

Kanakagiri in Koppal district was also under the rule of Nayakas. In 1436, Parasappa Udicha Nayaka was established Kanakagiri province. In 1510, it was extended by Udicha Nayaka, son of Parasappa Nayaka. The religious contributions were much appreciated as they have built many temples in the region.

Gudekote, a village in Bellary district was also ruled by Bedar Nayakas. Vijayanagar ruler Sri Krishnadevaraya was granted Gudekote to Hire Bommanna Nayaka. Many of the places such as Lingamma Halli, Jajarakallu, Madenahalli, Laxmipura, Hirehalu and such others were under the control of Nayakas of Gudekote. Gandala Nayaka was first ruler of

Gudekote. He was succeeded by Pennappa Nayaka (1521-1541), Papala Nayaka (1541-1558), Kemmayya Raja (1558-1602), Ramappa Nayaka (1602-1637) and Bommantha raja (1537-1676) and such others. Similarly, Jarimale in Bellary district was also ruled by Nayaka rulers during the Vijayanagar Empire. Papanna Nayaka, Pennappa Nayaka, Immadi Nayaka, Bhoomi Raja, Bommanna Nayaka and such others were ruled Jarimale.

Nayakanahatti, in Chitradurga district was also ruled by Beda rulers. Kate Mallappa Nayaka was of Telugu origin and migrated to this region in 1529. Vijaya Nagar rulers were granted Nayakanahatti to Mallappa Nayaka. Papa Nayaka, Suredevu Papa Nayaka, Kakala Nayaka, Dodlerappa Nayaka and such other rulers were ruled Nayakanahatti consecutively. Similarly, Mattodu, a village in Chitradurga district was ruled by Giriyappa Nayaka and it is revealed that the Nayaka rulers belonged to Giriyappa Nayaka were ruled Mattodu from 1604 to 1779. It is noted that a Sangappa Nayaka, successor of Giriyappa Nayaka has been converted to Veerashaivism. Hartikote is also a village in Chitradurga district, which is also ruled by Nayaka rulers. The founder of Harati kingdom Tipparaja ruled Hartikote from 1340 to 1355. Earlier he was leader of army in Vijayanagar Empire.

The Nayaka rulers were also ruled Karigud, a village in Raichur district. In 1610, Ramachandra Nayaka was established his Kingdom in Karigud. He was got a few villages from the Nizam of Hyderabad as Inam. Katenayaka, Timmappa Nayaka, Ramappa Nayaka, Raja Ramanappa Nayaka and Bharamanna Nayaka were ruled Karigud as successors of Ramachandra Nayaka.

As discussed above, many of the dynasties and rulers of Nayaka (Beda) tribe ruled different parts of Chitradurga, Raichur and Gulbarga in Karnataka. These rulers were contemporaries of Vijayanagar rulers. These rulers were given much importance to religious, cultural and literature in Karnataka.

The Bedar people are also brave and self-respected community. It was revealed from the history during the British administration. The Bedas (hunters) of North Karnatak were known from the earliest times for their courage, valour and loyalty. Their chief occupations were hunting and service in the army. They were indomitable warriors, loyal to their leaders and their country. Hunting is the main occupation of Bedas in forests. As such they used to possess arms, ammunitions and weapons and they are the objects of worship of these people. As the Bedas think it is their right and privilege to keep different types of arms and weapons, they are brave and also they think that any interference in their right to possess arms and weapons arms was an act of sacrilege towards their religion.

On 18th September 1857, the British Government passed the Disarming Act, by which every person who wishes to possess arms had to obtain a license. Those who had arms were to hand over them to the Government. British were not believed the religious faith of Bedas to keep arms and weapons. Such Act shows discontent among all the hunters living in India. Many of the people belonged to hunting and martial communities (like Sikhs) saw the Act as a national insult.

The Bedas would not part with their weapons, which were to them as much means of subsistence as objects of worship. A determined and desperate opposition to the Arms Act came from Halagali, a small town in the Mudhol Samsthan. Its population consisted of a large majority of Bedas, and they refused to submit to the order demanding registration and licences for their weapons. They knew that in most other places the people, convinced of the futility of resistance, had handed over their weapons to the Government and obtained licences for those which they retained; they knew also that the Government was powerful enough to crush them if they did not obey. But still they resolved to face any calamity rather than give up their right (Krishnarao and Halappa, 1962). Finally, majority of the Beda people have not surrendered their weapon and the British forces under the leadership of Malcom attacked the Bedas and hundreds of Beda people were strided against the British and finally, they were defeated against the British army. In the freedom movement, the courage and self-respect shown by the Bedas of Halagali are most remembered all over the history (Sheelavantha, 2011).

Similarly, in 1858, Shorapur or Surpur (in Yadgir district) was ruled by Venkatappa Nayak under the Nizams of Hyderabad. As per the orders of the British and the Nizam, he is forced to pay huge amounts of fee to the British. The financial conditions of the State were critical and poor. As such Beda ruler, Raja Venkatappa Nayaka became aware of the widespread and growing discontent among the people against the foreign intruder all over India, and he decided to stake his all for the freedom of his own land. So he began to enlist Arabs, Rohillas and others in his army. Surpur soon became a centre of plots and schemes. Finally, with adequate preparation, Raja Venkatappa Nayaka revolted against the British army and fought for freedom of his kingdom. But, he was captured by the British and it is said that he committed suicide.

CONCLUDING REMARKS:

It was observed from the antecedents of Beda rulers, the Beda community was popular rulers in different parts of Karnataka during British period. They were brave and ambitious and also freedom lovers, as many of Bedar rulers were revolted against the British. It is noted that even though they were rulers in Karnataka, still the tribe is backward and grouped under scheduled tribe. Many of the Bedar families are living in hilly areas and forests, where there is no civilization.

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