

## UNIT 109 – UPSC - Vijayanagar Kingdom

### India's History : Medieval India : Foundation of Vijayanagar (Deccan) - 1336

## The Vijaynagar Kingdom

After the departure of Muhammad bin Tughlak from the Deccan, Harihara declared independence. He and his brother Bukka I under the guidance of famous Hindu saint and the head of Sringeri Math, Vidyaranya, who is also identified with the distinguished jurist Madhav Mantri, established the mighty Hindu Kingdom of Vijaynagar (the City of Victory) in 1336 AD. Vijaynagar illuminated the landscape of Deccan History for 229 years (1336-1565 AD). By 1347 AD, Malerajya and Palasige of the Goa Kadambas were incorporated into the Vijaynagar Empire. Goa formed a strategically and commercially important province on the western border of the Vijaynagar Empire.

## Hampi - The Capital of Vijayanagar Kingdom



The first settlement in Hampi dates back to 1st century AD and a number of Buddhist sites belonging to that time have been found nearby. Hampi was the capital of the mighty Vijaynagar Empire. Vijaynagar was one of the largest Hindu empires in India. Krishnadevaraya (1509-1529) was the greatest ruler and controlled almost all of peninsular India south of Tungabhadra River. The town of Hampi in 14th century had a population of half a million people. Seven concentric lines of fortifications protected the city. It maintained a huge army to protect it from other kingdoms. The Vijaynagar Empire flourished, as it controlled both cotton and spice trade routes of southern India. Medieval historians refer to Hampi as an important center of trade. However, the glory of Vijaynagar was short lived. With the death of Krishnadevaraya, the combined armies of the five Muslim kingdoms-Bidar, Bijapur, Golconda, Ahmednagar and Berar-destroyed this mighty empire in 1565.

## Vijayanagar Coinage

In the South, the Vijayanagar contemporaries of the Delhi Sultanate and Mughals, were the other dynasty whose currency presents a rare example of a standardised issue which later provided a model for the European and English trading companies. The Vijayanagar period saw the advent of European traders especially the Portuguese. Krishnadevaraya encouraged foreign trade and this necessitated wider use of currency. Coins of the Vijayanagar kingdom was largely struck in gold and copper. Most Vijayanagar gold coins bore a sacred image on the obverse and the royal legend on the reverse. Amongst the significant gold coins of the Vijayanagar Empire were those bearing the image of the deity of Tirupati, i.e., Lord Venkatesvara represented either singly or with his two consorts. These coins inspired the 'Single Swami' Pagodas of the Dutch and French and the 'Three Swami' Pagodas of the English East India Company.

