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VIJAPUR: PLACE NAME

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Vijapur district is located in the northern part of Karnataka state with an area of 10,541 sq.kms. It is located between 16.82° North latitude and

75.72° East longitude.¹ In the north and northwest direction we find Solapur and Sangali of Maharashtra, Gulbarga in the east, Bagalkot in the south and border of Belgaum district in the west. This district was divided into Bijapur and Bagalkot districts in 1997 for smooth and efficient administration. The present Vijapur district consists of 11 taluksviz. Indi, Sindagi, Muddebihal, BasavanaBagewadi, Nidagundi, Talikote, Babaleshwar, Tikota, Kolar, Aalamela and Vijayapur. The district has a total of 648 villages, enriched with river Bhima in the north and river Krishna in the south.

Toponymy plays an important role in studying the cultural history of a region. This gives a clue for the study of history of changed geography. It also provides evidence for the historical event. It needs to be observed that how the present name Vijapur has changed from time to time.

The history of Vijapur is ancient one. The parts of Vijapur district (before the division of the district) such as Aihole, Badami, Bagalkot, Mahakoota, and the places viz. Galagali, Dhoolakheda and Hipparagi which are in present district are related to mythological stories and resembles the description of Dandakaranya region of Ramayana. Thus, it is said that this region was a part of Dandakaranya of Ramayana.²

Famous Egyptian geographer Ptolemy of 2nd century AD, mentioned places like Bendakko (River Bhima), Nagarooru (Nagurof Muddebihal Taluk), Kalligarius (Kalakeri), Patirgala (Hattirkahala) in his book "A Guide to Geography"³ are evidences for study of this region. But, still there are differences in opinions among the historians regarding the places mentioned by Ptolemy, whether they are in Vijapur district or not.

Place names like „Pura“ and „Puri“ which were commonly used throughout India resembles the Dravidian name commonly used for a place i.e. „Uru“. The same can be seen in inscriptions regarding Vijayapura. In ancient Sanskrit literature, the term „Puri“ has been interpreted as town from 2nd century AD.⁴

The inscriptions of 1029 AD which was found in Devur of Sindagi taluk of Kalyana Chalukya ruler Jayasimha-II mentions the Vijapur district as Vijayapura and it is the first available record ever documented till today.⁵ Apart from it, the Vijapur inscriptions of 1033 AD,⁶ 1084 AD, 1151 AD, 1154 AD⁷ and in many such inscriptions, the capital is mentioned as Vijayapura. All these inscriptions belong to Kalyana Chalukya dynasty. The Yadava dynasty inscriptions such as Vijapur inscription of 1196 AD, Padaganoor inscription of 1208 AD, Vijapur inscription of 1234 AD⁸ also interprets the same name „Vijayapura“.

According to a statement, it is said that, a Mandalika of Badami Chalukyas built the town of Vijapur i.e. when Bijjanahalli became the capital of a Mandalika that Vijapur became Bijjarapura and the same might have become Vidyapura.⁹ The villages Gajakanahalli, Bajakanahalli, Chandanakeri, Kyadagi, Katarakeri, Kurubanhatti and Kujanakutticombined together called as Bijjanahalli as per local saying. In course of time, Bijjanahalli became Vidyapura; then Vijayapura traditionally became Vijapur of Bijapur. In the inscriptions Vijayapura and Bijjanahalli¹⁰ (An inscription in the museum states that Swayambhu Siddheshwar of Vijayapura donated 300 acres of land at „Bijjanahalli“ near Kamnavuri) are mentioned separately. Since the name Vijapur is ancient, the argument that both Vijayapura and Bijjanahalli are the same is weakened in the background of the above mentioned inscriptions.

During the administration of Adilshahis, it can be identified that the name Vijapur has changed from time to time. Bahmani Sultan Mohammad gave the places Kanakarti, region from Kalyan to Munjana and Goa, Kanchi, Kalahasti, and the regions up to the ancient capital Mangalaveda, as Jagirs to Yusuf Begh Savi (Khan). There was a village called „Benjanahalli“ among these regions. Yusuf built a fort around this village and named it as „Bijapur“. This event took place in 919 of Hejira (this matches with 1509 AD of Saka Era).¹¹ But the statement that Yusuf converted „Benjanahalli“ into Bijapur doesn't seem reasonable as the inscriptions make it clear that Vijayapura existed during the time of Kalyana Chalukyas, Kalachuris and Yadavas. It may be said that Vijayapura was converted into Bijapur. An inscription of the time of Ibrahim Adilshah-I in 1550 AD says „Mamla Bijapur Kannada“ (Bijapur division of Kannada), the Ibrahim Adilshah-II in the 56th poem of his book *Kitab-e-Nauras* writes „Vidyapura“ (Bijapur was also called as „Beejpura“, „Bejapura“. Here „Beja“ means „waste“ or „wrong“. Ibrahim didn't like this, so he changed it to „Bidya (Vidya)pura“)¹². Later, during the reign of Muhammad Adilshah it was named as Mohammadpura.¹³ Aurangzeb after capturing Bijapur on 13th September 1686, named it as „DharulJafar“ (seat of victory).¹⁴ But this name doesn't remained for many days. Again, it was converted into Vijapur or Bijapur. In 2015, the Government of Karnataka renamed this district as Vijayapura.

Footnotes:

1. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/bijapur>
2. James M. Campbell (Ed.) (1884). *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. XXIII, p.378.
3. Nagegouda H.L. (2006). *Pravaasikanda India*, Issue 1, p. 107.
4. Koppa S.K. (1990). *TardavadiNaadu*, p. 32.
5. SII, Vol. XX, No. 23.
6. Kannada Vishwavidyalaya Shashana Samputa 10, Issue 40, p. 68.
7. SII, Vol. XVIII, No. 165, 156, 157.
8. Kannada Vishwavidyalaya Shashana Samputa 10, Issue 38, p. 78; Issue 74, p. 335; Issue 38, p. 66.
9. Muniswami R. (Ed.) (1999). *Vijapur Zilleya Gazzetteer*, p. 1.
10. Kannada Vishwavidyalaya Shashana Samputa 10, Issue 7, p. 15.

11. Krishna Kolhar Kulkarni and Moulana Mahaboobar Rehman Madani (Tr.) (2014). *Tareekh-e-haptakursi*, p. 202.
12. Abdul Mazeedkhan (Tr.) (1997). *Kitab-e-Naurus*, p. 208
13. Krishna Kolhar Kulkarni and Moulana Mahaboobar Rehman Madani (Tr.) (2014). *Guldasta-e-Bijapur*, p. 115.
14. Krishna Kolhar Kulkarni and Moulana Mahaboobar Rehman Madani (Tr.) (2014). *Basateen-us-Salateen*, p. 202.
- 15.

