



RISE AND FALL OF CHALUKYA DYNASTY IN KARNATAKA: IN THE HISTORY OF MEDIEVAL INDIA

***Dr. Basawaraj**

Associate Professor, Dept. of History, Diwagath Diwan Timmappa, Government First Grade College Lalahalli

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Abstract

One of the most powerful dynasties in medieval South India, the Chalukyas of Kalyani (973–1189 CE) had a long-lasting effect on the political, cultural, and religious climate of the area. During their reign, many religious institutions were patronized, temples were built, and different sects, such as Shaivism, Vaishnavism, and Jainism, were supported. The Chalukyas upheld a pluralistic stance, encouraging the peaceful coexistence of various faiths, in contrast to many modern rulers who supported a single religious tradition. Patronage of religion was a calculated tactic to establish legitimacy and strengthen power, not just an act of devotion. In addition to funding religious festivals and granting grants to temples and monasteries, kings and nobles also commissioned intricate temple complexes, including the well-known Virupaksha Temple at Pattadakal and the Mahadeva Temple at Itagi. These architectural wonders strengthened the connection between the monarchy and religious organizations by acting as both sociopolitical hubs and places of worship. Literary sources and inscriptions from this era emphasize how religious endowments bolstered the Chalukyan state. Patronage given to scholars, poets, and theologians enhanced the kingdom's intellectual and artistic life, while land grants to Brahmins and temple trusts guaranteed the success of religious institutions.

Introduction:

The purpose of this research is to study the Rise and Fall of Chalukya Dynasty in Karnataka. The Chalukya dynasty was a powerful and long-lasting dynasty that ruled over southern India for over six centuries, from the 6th to the 12th century. The dynasty had its origins in the 6th century with the Early Chalukyas, who were known for their patronage of art, literature, and architecture. The rock-cut temples at Badami, Aihole, and Pattadakal are excellent examples of the architectural style of the Early Chalukyas. The Rashtrakutas, who were a feudatory of the Chalukyas, overthrew the Chalukya dynasty in the 8th century and established their own

dynasty. However, the Rashtrakutas continued to use the Chalukya name and ruled over the Chalukya empire for over two centuries.

The Chalukya dynasty's impact on southern India's culture and history is still evident today. Their architectural achievements, such as the rock-cut temples and other structures, continue to draw tourists from around the world. The Chalukya dynasty's legacy in art and literature also continues to influence contemporary Indian culture. The rise and fall of the Chalukya dynasty is a reminder of the cyclical nature of history and the importance of preserving cultural heritage for future generations. The Chalukya dynasty's story is a fascinating one, and it provides a window into the rich and complex history of southern India.

Objective of the study;

To study the Rise and Fall of Chalukya Dynasty in Karnataka.

Research methodology:

This study is based on secondary sources of data such as articles, research paper, books, journals and websites.

Divisions in Chalukya Dynasty:

- **Chalukyas** governed as three separate but related dynasties i.e. **Badami, Eastern and Western Chalukyas** during this time.
- The "**Badami Chalukyas**" the first dynasty, ruled from Vatapi (modern Badami) from the middle of the sixth century.
- They become independent and rose to dominance under Pulakeshin II's reign.
- **Jayasimha** was the first ruler of the Chalukyas dynasty but the real founder of the Chalukyan dynasty was **Pulakesin I (543–566 CE)**.
- The **Eastern Chalukyas** founded an independent state in the eastern Deccan after Pulakeshin II death. They ruled Vengi until the 11th century.
- The **Chalukyas of Vengi** separated out from the **Badami Chalukyas**.
- In 624 A.D, **Pulakeshin II (609–642 AD)** placed his brother **Kubja Vishnuvardhana** as governor of the newly gained region of eastern Deccan.
- After Pulakeshin II death, his brother Kubja Vishnuvardhana developed an independent state.
- In the western Deccan, the decline of the Rashtrakutas in the middle of the 10th century led to the emergence of **Western Chalukyas**. They ruled till the 12th century.
- The **Western Chalukya** Empire is also known as the **Kalyani Chalukya** Empire.
- **Tailapa-II**, who was a feudatory of the **Rashtrakuta**, established this dynasty.
- For 200 years, they were at odds with the Cholas as well as the eastern Chalukyas of Vengi.

Important Rulers of Chalukya Dynasty:

1. Pulakesin I (543 – 566 AD):

Jayasimha was Pulakesin's grandfather and **Ranaraga** was his father. His forefathers were vassal monarchs, most likely from the **Kadambas or Rashtrakutas**. **Pulakesin I (543–566 AD)** was the real founder of the Chalukyan dynasty. He established a strong fortification at

Vapati (modern Badami) in Karnataka's Bijapur district and declared independence by sacrificing a horse. The name 'Pulakesin' may be a **Sanskrit-Kannada hybrid** word meaning "tiger-haired".

2. Kirtivarman I (566 – 597 AD):

After his father, **Pulakesin I**, died in 566 AD, Kirtivarman I seized the throne. Kirtivarman inherited a small empire based on Vatapi, which he greatly expanded. His empire **stretched** from the Konkan coast of modern-day Maharashtra in the north to Karnataka's Shimoga region in the south. And from the Arabian Sea in the west to Andhra Pradesh's Kurnool and Guntur districts in the east. According to the Pulakesin II Aihole inscription, Kirtivarman was "**the night of doom**" for the Nalas, Mauryas, and Kadambas. He performed the **Bahusuvarna-Agnishtom Yagya** which is mentioned in the Mahakuta pillar inscription.

3. Mangalesha (597 AD – 609 AD):

Mangalesha succeeded his elder brother **Kirtivarman I**, who was most likely his half-brother and left at least three minor sons. Mangalesha "took upon himself the responsibility of governance" because Kirtivarman's son **Pulakesin II** was a minor, according to later **Chalukya inscriptions at Kalyani**. He reigned a kingdom that stretched from **southern Gujarat** in the north to the **Bellary-Kurnool region** in the south. He administered the kingdom during the reign of Kirtivarman, who was preoccupied with military adventures. Kirtivarman and Mangalesha may have alternated administering the kingdom and commanding military battles. Mangalesha rejected Pulakesin's claim to the throne, sent him into exile, and potentially appointed his own son as the heir apparent. Pulakesin II plotted an attack against Mangalesha during his exile, which he was eventually successful and murdered the Mangalesha.

4. Pulakesin II (609AD-642AD):

Pulakesin-II was the most powerful ruler of the **Badami Chalukyas**. He was the first king to issue gold coins in South India. He was too young when his father died, that's why his paternal uncle **Mangalesha** was elevated to the throne (regent king). Pulakesin II ascended the throne after defeating Mangalesha in the Bana territory at **Elpattu-Simbhige**. He is famous for defeating King Harsha on the banks of the Narmada. He also took on the title **Daskshinapatheshwara**, similar to Harsha's Uttarpatheshwara. He defeated Pallava king **Mahendravarman I**, but was defeated and killed by Mahendravarman's son and successor, **Narasimhavarman I**.

5. Vikramaditya I (655 AD - 680 AD):

Vikramaditya was the third son of **Pulakesin II**. He set himself the task of repelling the Pallava invasion and restoring the unity of his father's kingdom with the assistance of his maternal grandfather **Bhuvikarma or Durvineet** of the Western Ganga Dynasty. He was able to put an end to Pallava's thirteen-year occupation and capture Vatapi. He defeated **Mahendravarman II** (Pallava king) in 668 AD and continued his capture of Kanchi for about five to six years. During this time, he plundered the Chola, Pandya, and Kerala kingdoms but did not annex any territory (his army remained in Thiruchirapalli). Vikramaditya took on the

dynastic titles of **Satyashraya** ("refuge of truth") and **Shri-prithvi-vallabha**. **Vikramaditya I**, in addition to the usual Chalukyan titles, assumed the title **Rajamalla**, implying that he became the sovereign of Mallas, i.e. the Pallavas.

6. **Kirtivarman II (746 AD - 753 AD):**

Kirtivarman was the son of **Vikramaditya II**. He was also known as **Nripasimha** (lion among kings). When he succeeded to the throne, Chalukyas seemed to be at their best because the Pallavas were defeated, the Deccan was taken over by the Chalukyas, and the seemingly invincible Muslims were repulsed. However, within a decade, Kirtivarman had lost his glory, as the rising power of **Rashtrakutas and Pandyas** caused trouble for the Chalukya king. The Chalukyas came to an end with Kirtivarman II, who was deposed in 753 AD by **Dantidurga**.

Decline of Chalukyas:

- **Jayasimha** was the first ruler, but the real founder of the Chalukyan dynasty was **Pulakesin I (543–566 CE)**.
- After him, **Pulakeshin II** ruled over the whole Deccan and after his death, there was a brief period of **decline** due to internal feuds.
- But **Vikramaditya II (733–744 AD)** reached the kingdom to its pinnacle.
- After, **Vikramaditya II**, the kingdom began to downfall.
- Within a decade, Kirtivarman had lost his glory, as the rising power of **Rashtrakutas and Pandyas** caused trouble for the Chalukya king.
- In 753 AD, the **Rashtrakuta Ruler Dantidurga** deposed the last Chalukya king, **Kirtivarman II**.
- The Chalukyas of Vengi or Eastern Chalukyas separated out from the **Badami Chalukyas**.
- Rulers like **Kubja Vishnuvardhana** and **Jayasimha I** tried to maintain the kingdom.
- Vengi came to an agreement with the Rashtrakutas and treated them as allies.
- They were able to maintain their independence till the Rashtrakutas were overthrown in 973 A.D. by the Chalukyas of Kalyani.
- Lastly, the Vengi kingdom succumbed to the **Chola empire** and came to an end.
- **Western Chalukyas** was a feudatory of the **Rashtrakuta**, established this dynasty.
- For 200 years, they were at odds with the Cholas as well as the eastern Chalukyas of **Vengi**.
- The Deccan ruling families, the **Hoysalas and the Seuna Yadavas** of Devagiri were subordinates to the Western Chalukyas.
- The Kingdoms of their **feudatories** were founded on the ruins of these two empires, and their mutual antagonisms occupied the annals of Deccan history for over a century.
- In the 12th century, the **Hoysala Empire** finally destroyed the Western Chalukyas.

Conclusion:

The reign of the Chalukyas was a watershed moment in South Indian history. The entire territory between the Kaveri and the Narmada rivers was captured by a kingdom headquartered in Southern India. The introduction of effective administration, a surge in overseas trade and

commerce, and the development of a new architectural style known as Vesara all occurred during the expansion of this mighty empire. They were Vedic culture devotees, and this period is known as the golden age of Karnataka.

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