

VIJAYANAGARA AND BAHMANI KINGDOM (PART-4)

B.A. PART-3, PAPER-5

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BAHMANI KINGDOM

The Bahmani Sultanate was a Persianised Muslim state of the Deccan in South India and one of the major medieval Indian kingdoms.

As a revolt against Muhammad bin Tughlaq of the Delhi Sultanate, Bahmani Kingdom was founded by Zafar Khan, of Turkish origin in 1347 A.D., who took the title of Ala-ud-din Hassan Bahman Shah. Its capital was at Gulbarga and later Bidar . A total of eighteen Sultans ruled over this kingdom. Often at war with the neighboring Hindu Kingdom of Vijayanagara, the Bahmanis disintegrated into independent sultanates called Deccan sultanates after the attack of Krishnadeva Raya and the death of the great Wazir of Bahmani Sultanate Mahmud Gawan.

BAHMANI KINGDOM

The Bahmani kingdom comprises the parts of the current day's Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Andhra Pradesh which were within the territory of Delhi Sultanate.

Rulers of the Bahmani Kingdom

The details about the different rulers of the Bahmani kingdom are given below:

Muhammad Shah-I (1358-1377.A.D.)

- ◉ He was the next ruler of the Bahmani Kingdom.
- ◉ He was an able general and administrator.
- ◉ He defeated Kapaya Nayaks of Warangal and the Vijayanagara ruler Bukka-I.

BAHMANI KINGDOM

Muhammad Shah-II (1378-1397.A.D.)

- ◉ In 1378 A.D. **Muhammad Shah-II** ascended the throne.
- ◉ He was a peace lover and developed friendly relations with his neighbours.
- ◉ He built many mosques, madrasas (a place of learning) and hospitals.

Feroz Shah Bahmani (1397-1422 A.D.)

- ◉ He was a great general
- ◉ He defeated the Vijayanagara ruler Deva Raya I.

BAHMANI KINGDOM

Ahmad Shah (1422-1435 A.D.)

- ◉ Ahmad Shah succeeded Feroz Shah Bahmani
- ◉ He was an unkind and heartless ruler.
- ◉ Conquered the kingdom of Warangal.
- ◉ Changed his capital from Gulbarga to Bidar.
- ◉ He died in 1435A.D.

Muhammad Shah-III (1463-1482 A.D.)

- ◉ In 1463A.D. **Muhammad Shah III** became the Sultan at the age of nine
- ◉ Mahmud Gawan became the regent of the infant ruler.
- ◉ Under Mahmud Gawan's able leadership the Bahmani kingdom became very powerful.
- ◉ Mahmud Gawan defeated the rulers of Konkan, Orissa, Sangameshwar, and Vijayanagar.

BAHMANI KINGDOM

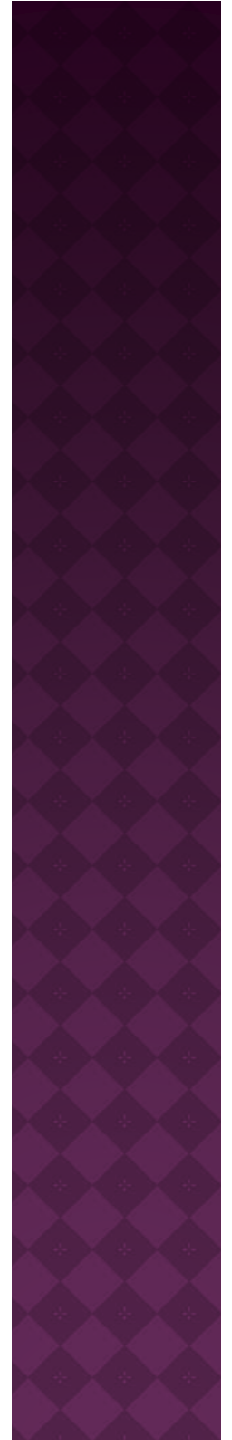
Mahmud Gawan

- ◉ He was a very wise scholar and an able administrator.
- ◉ He improved the administration, systematized finances, encouraged public education, reformed the revenue system, disciplined the army and eliminated corruption.
- ◉ In 1481 Mahmud Gawan persecuted by the Deccan Muslims who were jealous of him and sentenced to death by Muhammad Shah.

FIVE SUCCESSOR STATES

Muhammad Shah-III died in 1482. His successors were weak and the Bahmani Kingdom disintegrated into five kingdoms namely:

- Bijapur
- Ahmednagar
- Berar
- Golconda
- Bidar



CULTURAL CHANGES

The Bahmani Rule predominantly institutionalized Islamic culture in Deccan which was reflected in *literature, art, architecture and other spheres of life*. The rulers attached great significance to the advancement of culture in Deccan and contributed notably for the cultural promotion of the region. They invited scholars, saints, artists and other cultural personalities from the Middle East and enabled them to institutionalize the salient features of Persian culture which enhanced the status of Deccan in several ways. The rulers raised a new nobility based on aliens coming from Iraq, Iran and Central Asia. Scholars have studied the development of language and literature of Bahmani Kingdom under three heads namely – Arabic, Persian and Urdu.

CULTURAL CHANGES

The rulers had highest respect for Islam and championed the growth and development of Arabic literature. It was due to the fact that the West Coast had direct trade relations with Persian Gulf. The commercial transactions between Deccan and Middle East prompted the rulers to promote Arabic language and literature as a prominent means of communication.

Literature

The Bahmanis emerged as the patrons of literature and encouraged many Arabic scholars during the regime of Alaud-din Bahman Shah, Sultan Muhammad Shah II, Muhammad Shah III and Mahmud Gawan who were great patrons of learning and culture.

CULTURAL CHANGES

Some of the prominent literary works of this period include - Gesu Daraz Bande Navaz's *Diwan* (collection of poems), Sahabuddin Ahmad Daultabadi's *Bahre Mawwaj*, Mullah Daud Bidari's *Tohafutul Salatin*, Azari's *Bahaman Nama* and so on.

Mahmud Gawan played a crucial role in the promotion of literature and academic excellence in Deccan.

The Sufi movement popularized the Deccani language which emerged as a language of the Muslim ruling class of Deccan. It was developed in a similar way like north Indian Urdu. The Sufi saints and scholars also developed Dakhani grammar and produced a literature in Dakhani for the ruling class.

CULTURAL CHANGES

The Bahmani rulers also developed Persian language which enjoyed royal patronage. They also made Islamic learning highly popular in the Deccan.

The Bahmani court was adorned by scholars like Anju Mulla Issac Surhindi, Hakim Hasan Geelani, Mulla Qutbuddin, Shaikh Azari and Mahmud Gawan. The Bahmani rulers patronized Persian and Arabic while the Rayas of Vijaynagara encouraged Sanskrit, Kannada and Telugu.

The learned people hailing from distant countries migrated to Deccan in the hope of improving their fortunes. They were welcomed, honoured, rewarded and elevated to high positions in accordance with their talents.

CULTURAL CHANGES

Their works, which are mostly in Persian, enriched the contemporary Indo-Persian literature.

A sizeable chunk of Arabic, Urdu and Persian literature dealing with religion, mystic, epistolographical and lexicographical subjects were written by various scholars under the patronage of Bahmani rulers. Urdu language which was born in the north became a prominent means of communication in Deccan. Khwaja Band Nawaz Gesu Daraz was the foremost scholar in Deccan who produced a treatise in Urdu and Persian script entitled *Mirat ul Ashiqin*.

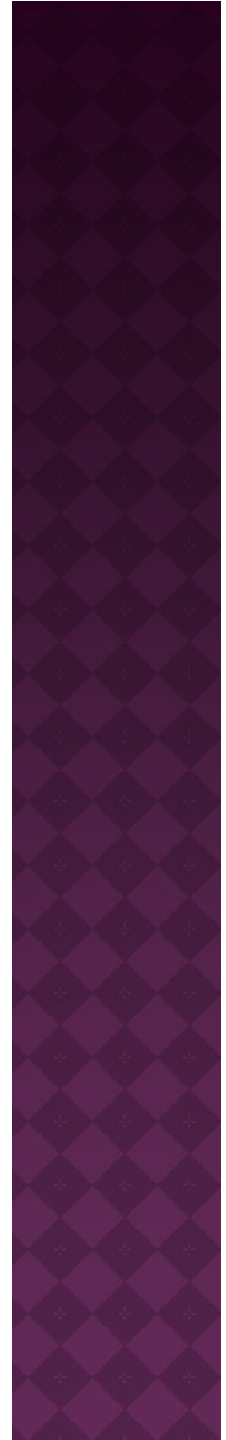
CULTURAL CHANGES

Art and Architecture

The Deccan witnessed the general process of fusion of the Hindu-Muslim cultures with respect to the art and architecture. Historians have pointed out that two entirely different styles of architecture came in contact with each other in medieval India. The temple and the mosque clearly exemplified the Hindu and Muslim beliefs and practices. In particular, the Muslim architecture underwent a significant change because of the influence of Persian Gulf. There is much evidence that the Bahmani sultans employed architects and craftsmen from Persia to build the Jami Masjid at Gulbarga, Chand Minar at Daulatabad and the Madrasa of Mahmud Gawan at Bidar.

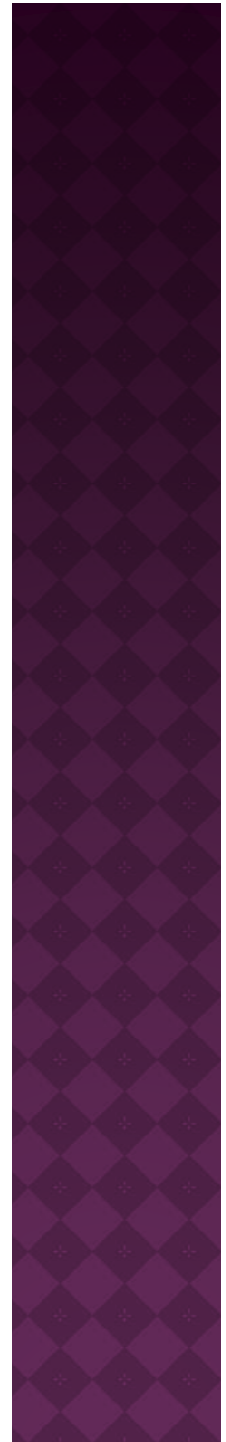
CULTURAL CHANGES

The fortresses built during the period were a mixture of the work of Hindu, Tughlaq and Bahmani sovereigns. Mahur, Bidar, Narnulla and Golkonda are some of the architectural examples of the Sultans. The Golgumbaz in Bijapur shows the skill of the architecture of Bahmani kingdoms. It is one of the largest domes in the world. The Golgumbaz with its enormous dome covers an area of 18,000 square feet. The Mihtar Mahal, which is an ornamental gateway to the courtyard of a mosque, is a notable building.



CULTURAL CHANGES

The monuments of Gulbarga namely – Great Jami Masjid, Takht Mahal, mausoleum of Hazrat Gesu Daraz, the mosque built by Qalandar Khan, Firoz's tomb, the Bidar Fort, tombs of Hazrat Samsu'd Din, Ala-ud-din Hasan, Bahman Shah, Muhammad Shah I, Muhammad Shah II and so on remain as perpetual monuments of the magnificence of Bahmani dynasty. The tombs of the Bahmani Sultans are situated in the East of Gulbarga which demonstrates massive square domed structures and handsome stone tracery on the outer walls. The decorated tombs vividly depict the free intermingling of Hindu and Muslim art. These monuments typify practically all the peculiarities of architecture in vogue in those days.



CULTURAL CHANGES

The Bahmani rulers replaced Tughluq tradition by Dhakani tradition in the fields of art, architecture and culture. The architectural wealth of Bahmani Kingdom reveals extravagant artistic designs or huge buildings built in marble slabs with impressive creative additions. The Bahmani rulers revolutionized the Deccan architecture which bears a testimony to the new influences which were at work.

The arts and crafts in Deccan during medieval India based on metals, alloys, gems and minerals had attained global fame. Sultan Shah Wali of the Bahmani Kingdom brought from Iran the master craftsman Abdullah-bin Kaiser to decorate his palaces.

CULTURAL CHANGES

Bidar had special properties in making the moulds for their creations. Hence *koftgari* became known as *bidriware*. The Iranian craftsman created many artistic treasures after settling down in Bidar.

The rulers of Bahmani Kingdom made great contribution towards the development of art, architecture, education, society and cultural aspects of the Deccan in the medieval period. The Bahmani rulers left to posterity their names in the shape of gardens, dams and magnificent edifices. Their architectural monuments speak of their simplicity and interest in various fields.. The Bahmani rulers inherited Iranian legacy but they were greatly influenced by the Indian culture and brought about cultural rejuvenation in Deccan.