

The Successor States of the Bahamani Kingdom



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Abstract

The late fifteenth century was a time when there was a surge in conflicts between various groups in the Deccan – the former provincial governors, important nobles and Qasim Barid, originally a *kotwal*, who had made himself all-powerful under the Bahmani sultan, Shihab-uddin Mahmud. They were all involved in interplay of rivalries with one another. As a result, a number of temporary alliances were being formed between these groups to win positions of strength. Many smaller nobles were either defeated or won over, and their territories added to the already existent dominions of the provincial governors or continued to remain under the weak rule of the Bahmani sultan at Bidar. Such a state of affairs led to the formation of the five successor states, which came about with the break-up of the Bahmani Sultanate. The successor states were Ahmednagar, Berar, Bijapur, Golconda and Bidar. In this context the present article deals with successor states of the Bahmani Kingdom.

Keywords: Nizam Shahis, Imad, Qutub, Barid, Adil, Shiism, Mathas, Sunnism, Dakhni Culture

Introduction

It is interesting to note that the rivalries and antagonism between the *Afaqis* and *Dakhnis* that had played a major role in destroying the unity of the Bahmani Sultanate had become almost inconsequential after 1492 CE. It was now replaced by a major rivalry that ensued between Qasim Barid and Yusuf Adil Khan, both provincial governors of the provinces, Qasim Barid, however, had the support of the *Dakhnis* of Bidar when he was being opposed by another *Dakhni*, malik Ahmed of Ahmednagar. The older parties of nobles had now given way to the formation of semi-independent states whose rulers were trying to consolidate their position within their particular dominion. The provincial governors and more important nobles, thus, no longer represented separate blocs against the sultan, but were themselves the emerging rulers of independent states. Many of the provincial governors in a bid to establish their own independent state even did not mind allying with their old enemy of Vijayanagar, particularly in the conflicts with larger states. Or occasionally, some of the Bahamani successor states came together to contest against Vijayanagar from where they felt they could gain some territory – “Salma Ahmed Farooqui, (2011) A Comprehensive history of Medieval India”.

The formidable rivalry between the *Afaqis* and the *Dakhnis* did not allow the groups to come together, which resulted in them retaining their separate identities. The Bahmani sultans were sunni in faith, while under the growing influence of the *Afaqis* the five successor states mostly followed Shiism. This may appear paradoxical but relations between Deccan India and Persia led to the formation of new local elites and minority groups in the Deccan. Mercantile and diplomatic exchanges enhanced the bonds between the Safavids of Persia and the people of the Deccan. Persian travelers, such as adventurers, artisans, scholars and mystics had come to the Deccani courts in various capacities, some on a permanent basis and some in transit. Thus, important judicial and religious personnel from Persia began to form the new intelligentsia in the newly formed successor states. Under this influence, Shiism became the state religion of the successor kingdoms, probably to establish an affinity with Persia; likewise the nobles in the respective kingdoms chose to follow Shiism in order to come closer to the rulers. The role that Shiism was to play in local society was crucial – it was religious phenomenon as well as an important factor affecting the political and social environment of the region. In this connection the present article highlights the important features of the successors states of the Bahamani Kingdom – “Salma Ahmed Farooqui, (2011) A Comprehensive history of Medieval India”.

Aim of the Study

1. To Study the Reasons for the break-up of the Bahamani Sultanate.
2. To know the political strategy of provincial governors.
3. To analyze the regional co-operation among five states.
4. To know the power of *Afaqis* and *Dakhnis*.
5. To explore the successor states of the Bahamani Kingdom.

Research Methodology

The study is historical as well as analytical and based on the historical records, which consists of primary and secondary sources. The primary data were collected from lithic records, monuments and other unpublished works. The secondary data were collected from State Archives of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh., various books, journals and articles etc. are also used in the present study. The primary and secondary source material has been of great help in the development of the present paper.

Significance of the Study

The present study is aimed of examining and evaluating the successor states of the Bahamani Kingdom. The present study falls in the area of political strategy of provincial governors to establish an Independent States during Medieval Deccan, which in turn falls within the range of political history of Medieval India. The researchers in the field of political history nominated historical research during the pre-independent period. The post independent period however witnessed a short decline in the study of political history. But the study of successor state of the Bahamani Kingdom will be widen the scope of political history of later Bahamani Empire for further research.

A critical review of the existing literature and also the aim and objectives of the study on hand brings forth the importance of the study.

Review of Literature

Studies on the successor states of the Bahamani Kingdom are in general are numerous. However, specific studies like the present one are few and far between.

Mehta J L, in his famous book titled *Advanced "Study in the History of Medieval India"* has given the history of the successor states of the Bahamani Kingdom which still appended to the his works, excellent as the work was for the time and for the sources and historical material at their disposal, it suffered from the neglect of the evidence available in the various forms in literature, which go a long way towards filling up the many gaps that in respect of that history.

Among the general studies Hukumchand "History of Medieval India" deals with the Administration Division under five Shahis Ruler in a Pan-South Indian Context. This study also deals under the veneer of a uniform political system during post Bahamani's rule.

Salma Ahmed Farooqui's book entitled "A Comprehensive history of Medieval India" is one of the most scholarly and qualitative work on the history of the successor states of the Bahamani Kingdom.

This book explains the establishment of five shahi states. In this work author has elaborated the political strategy of provincial governors to establish an independent states.

Satishchandra. "Medieval India" is one more qualitative work on the administrative system in the rule of the successor states of the Bahamani Kingdom.

Thus, it becomes clear from the above studies that, they have concentrated much on the political and administrative aspect of five shahi states. Though there were some vague studies concentrating on the political history but they were related to particular reason and no effort has been made exclusively to study the successor states of the Bahamani Kingdom at macro level, therefore this research study has been initiated to fill the research gap on the successor states of the Bahamani Kingdom

The Successor States of The Bahamani Kingdom**The Nizam Shahis of Ahmednagar**

The Nizam Shahi kingdom which lay in the northwestern part of Deccan, between the states of Gujarat and Bijapur, was the first sultanates to gain independent among the Bahamani successor states. The Nizam Shahis claimed to have descended from Malik Hasan Bahri, originally a Hindu, who had created a good name for himself by aiding Mahmud Gawan in the wars of the Bahamani Sultanate. This goodwill made it easy for the successive rulers to don the role of the sultans of the Nizam Shahi dynasty. When Malik Hasan Bahri of Bidar was murdered in 1486 CE, his son, Ahmed Nizam ul Mulk fought against the forces of Qasim Barid of Bidar and Yusuf Adil Khan of Bijapur, establishing his headquarters in Junnar in western Deccan by declaring independence under the name of Ahmed Bahri Nizam Shah¹. He ruled from 1486-1510 CE. This was a time when shifting political alliances were being formed and broken.

Taking advantage of his close proximity with the Marathas, Ahmed Bahri Nizam Shah tried to strengthen his position by taking over the territories of Daulatabad and Panhala in 1499 CE. To further

increase the territorial boundaries of his kingdom, he also tried to add Khandesh to his list of acquisitions. He is credited with founding the capital city of Ahmednagar in the latter part of his reign. Known as Bhinar in early Yadava times, the new capital of the Nizam Shahis was named after its founder sultan². Ahmed Bahri Nizam Shah was an illustrious ruler with a great amount of talent and character. Although an absolute despot, he was modest, brave and forgiving he had the good fortune, like Shivaji, of being served well by his officers.

The Imad Shahis of Berar

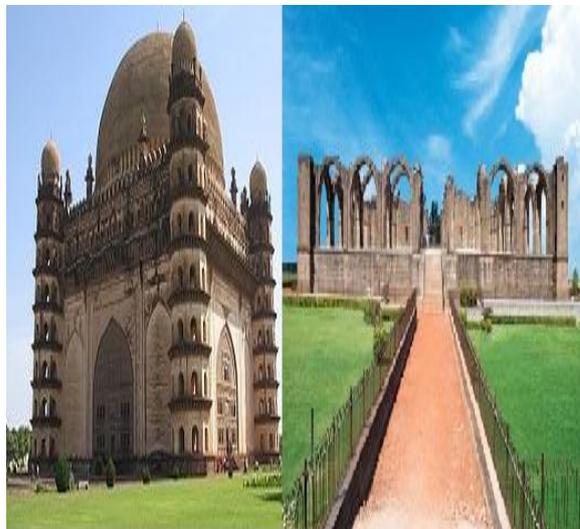


Berar was one of the original four provinces of the Bahmani Kingdom. The founder of the Imad Shahi dynasty, Fathullah Imad Shah, was originally a *Brahman* who converted to Islam under the Bahmani Sultan, Muhammad Shah III, and had been made a military officer. Like Malik Hasan Bahri, he too had assisted Mahmud Gawan in his campaigns in 1472-73 CE, in return for which he was made the governor of the Narnala were strengthened under his orders. Dismayed at the state of affairs at the Bahmani capital after the execution of Mahmud Gawan, Fathullah declared his independence in 1490 CE and ruled for 20 years³. He was succeeded by his son, Alauddin Imad Shah, who ruled for another 20 years from 1510-30 CE. From the time of the inception of the Sultanate, Berar had quarrels with Ahmednagar. Burhan Nizam Shah Ahmednagar claimed Pathri, a place lying within the borders of Berar, as his patrimony. This sparked off a war between the two sultans in which Pathri fell into the hands of Burhan Nizam Shah in 1518 CE. In this endeavour, Alauddin Imad Shah sought the assistance of Bahadur Shah of Gujarat⁴. This was not a well thought out action for it provided an opportunity to the ambitious ruler of Gujarat to gain foothold on the Deccan.

During the reign of the next ruler, Darya (1530-62 CE), the hatred continued between Berar and Ahmednagar. Darya tried to forge an alliance with Bijapur on order to counter Ahmednagar.

The Adil Shahis of Bijapur

The Adil Shahis along with the Qutb Shahis formed the two principal successor states of the Bahmani Sultanate in the Deccan. The Adil Shahis remained in power from 1489-1689 CE.



Yusuf Adil Khan of Turkish descent was the son of king Agha Murad of Turkey⁵. He came to the Deccan and joined the office of Mahmud Gawan in the court of the Bahmani sultan at Bidar. His bravery and personality raised him rapidly in the sultan's favour, resulting in his appointment as the governor of Bijapur. He declared independence in 1489 CE to establish the Adil Shahi sultanate and ruled till 1510 CE under the name of Yusuf Adil Shah.

Ibrahim Adil Shah, the next ruler in power from 1535-58 CE, appointed Asad Khan as his prime minister. In contrast to Ismail Adil Shah⁶, Ibrahim showed leanings towards Sunni Islam and adopted a pro *Dakhni* stand by giving military and court appointments to *Dakhni*. During his reign there were victories won against Vijayanagar and Ahmednagar. When the Portuguese attacked the western borders of Bijapur, had to sue for peace. Inscriptions of the period show that Ibrahim Adil Shah continued to be a Sunni, although the state religion was Shiism⁷. One of the inscriptions in the fort of Bijapur, interestingly, has the Shia *kalmia* dated 1539 CE, while on the other hand it is significant that on his mausoleum there is an inscription that has recorded the names of Allah, Muhammad and the four caliphs in order of their succession, as well as all other companions (of the Prophet)⁸. This could have been permitted only by a person who was a devout Sunni. It shows that whatever his pretensions may have been with the Shah of Persia, Ibrahim died a Sunni.

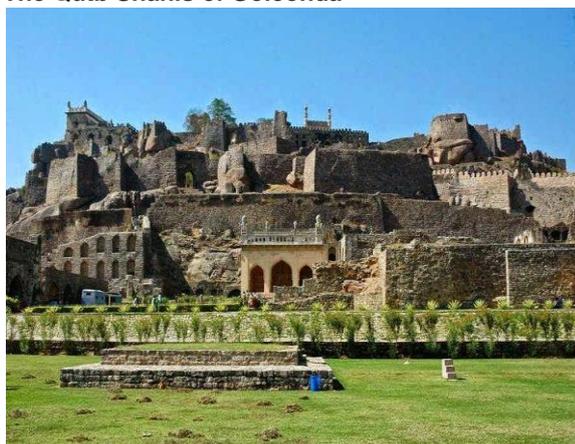
Ali Adil Shah I, who ruled from 1558 – 80 CE, reverted into an alliance with Vijayanagar to besiege Ahmednagar in 1559 CE; but later joined the other Muslim states of Ahmednagar in 1559 CE; but later joined the other Muslim states of Ahmednagar⁹, Bidar and and Golconda against Vijayanagar in the battle of Talikota in 1565 CE.

The long reign of Ibrahim Adil Shah II, also known as Ibrahim II, stretched from 1580 – 1627 CE.

Becoming the ruler at the young age of nine, he was put under the charge of two regents – Kamal Khan and a Habashi, Ikhlas Khan. Upon growing older, he fought bravely with the help of his regents against Ahmednagar and other opposing forces. Wars with the neighbouring states, which were a common feature of this period, continued unabated. He sent an embassy to Emperor Akbar's court in 1603 CE, and it was believed that a secret treaty was made by virtue of which Bijapur was to be Mughals to attack Ahmednagar¹⁰. Bijapur was left in peace by Akbar for some time. After the fall of Ahmednagar, Ibrahim II sent a message of goodwill to Akbar and gave his daughter in marriage to Akbar's son, Prince Daniyal. Ibrahim II annexed Bidar in 1619 CE, arousing the wrath of Malik Ambar who marched against the new city of Naurasapur that was being built by Ibrahim II. By and large, Ibrahim II was victorious in his ventures except for the loss of Janjira to the *Habashi* naval generals in 1619 CE.

Ibrahim II greatly improved the land revenue system and settlement patterns in Bijapur by implementing, with necessary modifications, the revenue organization of Raja Todar Mal¹¹. He constructed aqueducts for the supply of water to all parts of the city; and also built the spacious audience hall of Gagan Mahal. Though a Sunni he was tolerant towards all faiths and employed *Brahmans* and Marathas in his service on a large scale. He maintained friendly relations with Portuguese of Goa and protected the Christian missionaries. He beautified his capital city with fine architecture too. It was at his command that Ferishta wrote his famous history, *Gulshan-i-Ibrahimi* also known as *Tarikh-i-Ferishta*. After his death the kingdom began to decline.

The Qutb Shahis of Golconda



The Qutt Shahis ruled the kingdom of Golconda from 1518-1687 CE. In the Bahmani Kingdom, Sultan Quli Hamadani had risen in position and was rechristened Khawas Khan and conferred the title of Qutb-ul Mulk. In 1493 CE, he was also appointed the tarafdard or fief-holder of the province of Tilangana under the Bahmani sultan, Shihab – uddin Mahmud. With the weakening of the position of the Bahamni sultan, the loyalty and respect that fief holders had for royal authority began to diminish and most of them assumed royal titles and declared

themselves independent¹². The same was the case with Sultan Quli Qutb-ul-Mulk, who established the Qutb Shahi lineage in 1518 CE, with Golconda as its capital. His ancestors hailed from the Turkman tribe of *Qara Qyunlu* of Persia, which had the black sheep as their emblem. He enjoyed a long and prosperous reign lasting for 35 years from 1518-43 CE.

Sultan Quli Qutb-ul-Mulk strengthened the already existing fortress of Golconda situated on a hillock on the northern bank of the river Musi, about seven miles from Hyderabad. It was surrounded by strong walls within which the city of to an aristocracy. The revenue farmers, who acted as a middle or contact zone between the state and civil society, represented this aristocracy. Revenue farming was advantageous, since in a way it guaranteed the state with a steady flow of income by ensuring a fixed amount of revenue. On the other hand, assigning of fiscal rights to an aristocracy also led to instability within the state, as the revenue farmers sometimes acquired long term fiscal rights, developing local roots. The delegation of administrative and fiscal rights seems to be justified by the increasing inability of the Qutb Shahis to centrally control and administer large peripheral areas with the help of salaried ministers and officers. Provincial units such as *tarafs* and *parganas* were granted in the form of *jagirs* to the *amirs* and *wazirs* of the royal court. Every minister had a *jagir*, but this was hardly ever in the proximity of the capital. The *jagirdar* was like an absentee landlord who stayed in the capital, and his nominees known as *hawaldars* and *thanedars*, transacted the daily administration with the help of hereditary officials and landholders.

Like the Adil Shahis, the Qutb Shahis patronized Shiism. They supported Shia *ulema*, built mosques and *ashurkhanas* for the commemoration of Imam Hussain's martyrdom, seminaries and Shia burial grounds. They had the Friday prayer sermons read in the name of the Twelve Imams and of the Safavids. Twelve *ulema* of the Usuli School predominated in Golconda. As a consequence, Shiism became the religion of the ruling elite, popularized with royal support. Despite this, Sunnism that had been followed by the Tughlaqs and Bahmanis in the Deccan seemed to predominate.

The Barid Shahis of Bidar



Although Bahmani power lingered on without much ado till 1538 CE, direct control at Bidar was in the hands of Qasim Barid's son, Amir Barid, who upon his father's death formed the sultanate of the Barid Shahis at Bidar. The Barid Shahi rulers of the small state of Bidar, now in Karnataka, ruled from about 1531 CE until 1619 CE. They were ministers under the Bahmani sultans at their new capital of Bidar. When the Bahmani kingdom disintegrated, the sultans retained a small principality around Bidar.

Qasim Barid had taken over complete control at Bidar from the time of Shihab-uddin Mahmud by getting appointed as the Bahmani prime minister¹³. Though he declared his independence in 1487 CE, he had to fight hard for his existence against Bijapur. He joined the other Muslim states against Bijapur and even sought the assistance of Vijayanagar whenever it suited his purpose. Despite Qasim Barid's attempts, Bidar did not become a fully independent sultanate of the Barid Shahis before 1531 CE. Real power had by then passed into the hands of Amir Barid, the son of Qasim Barid, and his grandson, Ali Barid, who assumed the royal title of Shah in 1542 CE. Like his grandfather Ali Barid followed a hostile policy against Bijapur, but Bijapur always gained an upper hand. Ruling till 1579 CE, Ali Barid Shah was followed by short-lived rulers. In 1619 CE, Ibrahim Adil Shah II of Bijapur invaded Bidar and took captive its ruler, Ali Barid II, and annexed Bidar to his kingdom. However, Bidar was taken under Mughal sway by its viceroy, Aurangzeb, in 1657 CE, and formally annexed to the Mughal Empire in 1686 CE. After the breakup of the Mughal Empire, Bidar fell into the kitty of the Nizam of Hyderabad in 1724 CE. Later when the state of Hyderabad was partitioned in 1956 CE, the city of Bidar and the district were transferred to the Mysore state.

Conclusion/ Findings

Thus, evolving from the disintegration of the Bahmani Kingdom, the five sultanates of Ahmednagar, Berar, Bijapur, Golconda and Bidar – of which, Ahmednagar, Bijapur and Golconda were the largest and the most powerful – were merged in systems where there was a community of religion and common interests, yet the pursuit of short sighted and selfish goals prevented them from presenting a united front to their common enemies like the Vijayanagar rulers or the Mughals. This ultimately led to their annexation to the Mughal Empire. Conflicts between the *Dakhnis* and *Afaqis* or frontier disputes between Bijapur and Ahmednagar for controlling Sholapur, and even between Ahmednagar and Berar were not uncommon. During this period of mutual conflicts, Golconda tried to maintain a balance of power as the extinction of belligerent states would endanger its own existence. It always tried to retain a diplomatic stand. But the one over-riding factor was that the five sultanates together represented a Deccan, which is viewed as quintessential and multicultural.

Suggestions for Further Research

There is wide scope for the Research Scholars and Teachers to conduct a Research on the successor states of the Bahmani Kingdom. Present

study is having good future towards minor and major research projects

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