

## MARATHA PRIVILEGES OVER BIJAPUR

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### ABSTRACT

Mughal ruled India during medieval times. But then also some regional powers like Marathas played very important role in contemporary political circumstances. With the qualities of bravery and loyalty, Maratha clan secured respectful posts and a big hand in the army of Adilshahi rulers of Bijapur.

Due to changed political scenario and conspiracies, Mughal urged Marathas for help and against their help they offered them exclusive rights over six Subhas of Deccan. Bijapur was one of them. Maratha started collecting "Chouth", "Sardeshmukhi", "Rehdari", "Swaraj" etc. from Bijapur. Later all six Subhas of South (Mughal dominated) were in

Maratha influence.

**KEYWORDS** : *Medieval Indian history and Marathas, South Indian politics.*

### INTRODUCTION

Medieval Indian history and Marathas has been an integral part of each other. Although Medieval Indian politics and history was dominated by mohammedan rulers but then also regional sovereignty of different regions of India was secured by regional rulers. In this series, Maratha played very important role in South Indian politics and with the span of time they proved themselves as a major power of contemporary Indian politics. It is correctly said that Englishmen Conquered India from Marathas, not from Mughals.

With special reference to Bijapur, we can trace historical development of Marathas and Bijapur. It seems intermingled with each other. Marathas are addressed as "Bergies" in old Bijapur Chronicles. Bijapur was one out of five outshoots of Bahmani dynasty and major part of Maratha land was under Bijapur and Ahmadnagar. So Marathas were a part of their administrative structure in a big number. With the decline of Nizamshahi (Ahmadnagar), many Maratha sardar shifted to Bijapur. Bijapur was established by Yusuf Adilshah in 1493 A.D. and Maratha leader Balaji Naik Nimbalkar played important role in this context. Yusuf Adilshah awarded him jagir of fultan.<sup>1</sup>

In the same way Ali Adilshah was strongly assisted by Maloji Nimbalkar in the battle of talikot in 1565 A.D. Maratha leader Sawant favored Yusuf Adilshah against Portuguese and received exclusive

rights on Bijapur land. Ghorpade is another Maratha name which proved loyalty towards Adilshah rulers by joining hands against Shahji. On the order of Mohammad Adilshah, Baji Ghorpade arrested Shahji Bhosale.<sup>2</sup>

With this act of Ghorpade, we can conclude that Maratha clan was too much loyal. Under the leadership of Shahji Bhosale, Adilshahi rule got extension from west to far east.<sup>3</sup>

Some more powerful Maratha Sardar in Adilshahi regime were medaji, Yashwantrao, Bajirao, Sindhoji, Mambaji Pawar, Mambaji Bhosale, Khanduji, Ambaji and Manaji. It should be mentioned here that some out of these Maratha sardar hereditary served their services to Adilshahi rulers. During the regime of Ismail as well as Ibrahim Adilshah, Maratha sardar became more trustworthy. When Kamaal Khan Dakhani (one of Adilshahi (Commander) revolted against Ismail Adilshah, Maratha Cavalry entitled "Gora-Raut" was formed and Maratha became major part of Adilshahi Army. In Contemporary Natural and political circumstances, Maratha clan was Incredible. Maratha's fortification techniques and Gurillah war method made them backbone of Adilshahi Dynesty.

Maratha Sardar received vast land portions and Jagirs against their loyal support and enjoyed independent rule over their Jagirs. Maratha Sardars played conclusive (conclusive) role in the question of succession and land disputes during Adilshahi. It should be mentioned here that Maratha clan was not a ruling clan but with its qualities of bravery and loyalty, it established itself as an important part of Adilshahi Dynesty. On the other hand Mughals were getting powerful day by day and Major part of Indian land was under their sovereignty. In 1717 A.D. Farrukhsiyar was Mughal ruler and Hussain Ali was commanding general (subedar) of South. After some time disputes between Farrukhsiyar and Hussain Ali got worse. Mughal emperor asked Marathas for help against Hussain Ali. Maratha power was under leadership of Shahu Maharaj and he agreed for help. With the permission of Farrukhsiyar's permission Shahu Maharaj started collecting "Chouth" and "Sardeshmukhi" from Bijapur and Karnatic land.

Many more officers with Marathas, were ordered to not to obey Hussain Ali. So Marathas got Prerogative Rights over Bijapur and established themselves as representative of Mughals on Bijapur Land. Hussain Ali officers were suspended.<sup>4</sup>

With a political conspiracy and fore view Hussain Ali understood the strong political position of Marathas and joined hands with Marathas by giving exclusive rights to them. He allowed Marathas to collect "Chouth" and "Sardeshmukhi" and also agreed to give "Swaraj" Land.<sup>5</sup>

At that time Peshwa Balaji Vishwanath was in service and he demanded Fateh Bhosle's rule over old Bijapur. His demand was quickly sanctioned. So it was finalized that Marathas will collect taxes entitled "Chouth", "Sardeshmukhi" with "Rehdari". According a contemporary historian Khafi Khan, Marathas were collecting 35% of total annual taxes by collecting "Chouth" and "Sardeshmukhi" and by collecting additional "Rehdari Tax", they were collecting (claiming) about 50% of tax from Bijapur. In such manner Marathas had equal power over Bijapur.<sup>6</sup>

With these arrangements Marathas started collecting revenues from Bijapur, Barar, Khandesh, Aurangabad, Bidar and Hydrabad. Tributary states of Tanjore, Trichanapalli and Mysore were also bound to pay taxes to Marathas.

Peshwa Balaji Vishwanath conquered three "Sanad" (Sanads) from Sultan Muhammad Shah. For many times these sanads were challenged by many Mughal rulers and ministers. Sultan Farrukhsiyar was one of them. But in 1719 A.D. Prince Rafiuddaraj Sanctioned privileges for Marathas. Land which was conquered by Shivaji, was known as Swaraj land and according the agreement of 1719 A.D., Shahu received many rights over Swaraj land. Swaraj territory includes Pune, Supa, Indapur, Wai, Maval, Satara, Karad, Katao, Fultun, Malkapur, Tarla, Panhala, Aajra, Junnar, Kolhapur and Bijapur

Karnatak. Shahu additionally received territory of kopal, gadag and halihal. Some more land of Shundavi, Jovoor, Choul, Bhimgad, Bhimri, Kalyan, Rajapuri, Dhabul, Javali, Rajapur, Akola and Kodak came under the administration of Shahu. In such manner shahu became defacto ruler of a big territory of Bijapur Subah.<sup>7</sup>

Maratha Collected about Rs. 7,85,80,560, Aana 12 Paise 05 from Bijapur land as different taxes.<sup>8</sup>

In such manner Maratha gained exclusive rights over Bijapur land from Mughal Emperor. And later became defacto ruler of South by collecting different taxes from six Subhas of Deccan, which were under Mughal authority. Marathas secured equally important place in political as well as economic scenario of south India. Each Subah was equipped with Maratha officers like Kamvisdar, Gumashta, Sarishtedar and two adjoining tax officers.<sup>9</sup>

We can conclude that Marathas, with their exclusive rights established themselves as revenue collector of Bijapur land. Although it took sometime to achieve position of ultimate political power of South.

Securing political as well as revenue rights, from Mughals, were a very big advantage for Marathas, as it gave a direction to contemporary Indian Politics.

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