



URBANISATION IN ADIL SHAHI SULTANATE OF BIJAPUR

Kiran Sampatrao Jadhav

Assistant Professor in History,
Agasti Arts, Commerce and Dadasaheb Rupwate
Science College Akole, Dist.Ahmednagar,

Abstract:

Bijapur plateau, except for its wooded north-western region, is uniformly flat and barren. All agriculture of the Bijapur plateau depends upon a short and capricious summer monsoon, resulting in a most precarious, dry climate. Situated in the “rain shadow” of the Western Ghats whose towering spurs trap most of the rain carried by the south-western monsoon; this plateau averages only 20 to 25 inches of rainfall yearly, and is notorious as one of the most drought-prone regions of India. Hence, when in the sixteenth century urbanization of Bijapur taking place, political sovereignty of Adil Shahi sultanate needed to manage food provision of the city by extensive internal and external food trade. In 1561, a visiting Jesuit had remarked that most of the people of Bijapur city lived in old and torn tents and that not more than ten houses were worthwhile. But, he also conceded that the city was still larger than Goa and its Muslims were “as numerous as insects”. However by the end of sixteenth century Bijapur had emerged as one of the major Islamic urban centres of Deccan region of South Asia (Indian Sub-continent). The early seventeenth century saw the peak growth of the city’s population, estimates of which range from 500,000 to one million persons. This paper therefore deals with urbanization and food management made by the farmers and trading networks of Bijapur city. It focuses on how they brought provisions to urban markets and feed the city. It also questions the means and policies through which the food trade carried on and maintained for over two centuries.

KEY WORDS:

Urbanization, Urban Agriculture, Transports, Food trade, Food provision.

INTRODUCTION-

Bijapur (16° 49’ N, 75° 48’ E) was founded on the ruins of an important town called Vijayapur.¹ It was represented in the early fourteenth century as a turbulent and remote outpost of the Muslim political frontier. It remained as such from 1296 to 1347, when a new Muslim state, the Bahmani Kingdom, opened a period of closer, deeper and more permanent Islamic rule over the plateau. This fifty year span witnessed the rather turbulent period of transition in Bijapur from Dar al-Harb (“the abode of war”) to Dar al-Islam (“the abode of peace”). The establishment of Bahmani rule had removed Bijapur’s status as a remote frontier post, but Bijapur under the Bahmanis never possessed the economic or political importance of Gulbarga or Bidar, the two Bahmani capitals. Nor did Bijapur’s de facto independence (1490), from Bahmani authority suddenly transform the city into a notable centre of Islamic civilization. In 1561, a visiting Jesuit had remarked that most of the people of Bijapur city lived in old and torn tents and that not

more than ten houses were worthwhile. But, he also conceded that the city was still larger than Goa and its Muslims were “as numerous as insects”. However by the end of sixteenth century Bijapur had emerged as one of the major Islamic urban centre. The early seventeenth century saw the peak growth of the city's population, estimates of which range from 500,000 to one million persons.

This paper deals with urbanization of Bijapur during Adil Shahi sultanate in sixteenth and seventeenth century. It aims to focus the urbanization process of Bijapur and questions how a city surrounded by merely flat and barren Bijapur plateau, could transformed into a major Islamic urban centre of the subcontinent. In the course of urbanization the demand of food increases up to great level. This paper therefore interrogates how food provision was made available to cater the need of huge population in the city. What were the measures taken on the administrative level to maintain food and water in the city? The role played by the farmers' and trading networks in the food management of Bijapur city is also aims to study here. It also focuses on how they brought provisions to urban markets and feed the city. It also questions the means and policies through which the food trade carried on and maintained for over two centuries.

URBANIZATION:

Under the early sultans the capital city of Bijapur had very small size of population. In 1561, a visiting Jesuit had remarked that most of the people of Bijapur city lived in old and torn tents and that not more than ten houses were worthwhile. But, he also conceded that the city was still larger than Goa and its Muslims were “as numerous as insects.”²

But it gradually becomes the centre of Muslim civilization. From the ascendancy of Ali I the importance of Bijapur as centre of political authority and business activity grew very much. Its growth was possibly by two reasons. After the confederate victory of the Muslim states of the Deccan against the Vijaynagar in the battle of Talikota 1565, the benefits accruing to Bijapur kingdom as a result of Vijaynagar's defeat were immense. “The entire Raichul Doab, or the region between the Krishna and Tungabhadra rivers long disputed by the governments of Vijaynagar and Bijapur, fell permanently into Adil Shahi administration. Rich in iron deposits, diamond mines, and deep black soils, this area became Bijapur's basis of economic power throughout the remainder of its history.”³ Second, as a result of the decline of the Bahmani kingdom in the last quarter of 15th century and the fall of Vijayanagar in 1565, the capital of both kingdoms lost their importance.

“Ali Adil Shah I, after the victory at Talikota, completed the construction of Bijapur's outer wall. Prior to its construction, the city had lain exposed to the flat plateau with only a small citadel, built by the kingdom's first ruler at its centre stretching just over a quarter of a mile in diameter and surrounded by a moat, this citadel offered little protection to any of the city's population other than its garrisoned troops.”⁴

But the construction of an outer wall nearly two miles in diameter rendered far greater security than ever before to the city as a whole. It also contributed to the further centralization of Adil Shahi power. This prompted numerous nobles to move from outside to within the city where they built lofty palaces of their own.

All of this building activity—the wall itself, palaces for the nobility, aqueducts, the Jami Mosque, the Gagan Mahal or the royal palace within the citadel—caused an appreciable influx at Bijapur of thousands of artisans, masons, stonecutters, and others constituting an urban proletariat.⁵ A noted French historian of modern times, Fernand Braudel says, “Towns are like electric transformers. They increase tension, accelerate the rhythm of exchange and constantly recharge human life. Towns generate expansion and are themselves generated by it.”⁶ Indeed, the swelling of population within the walls reached such a state that already in Ali Adil Shah I's reign clusters of suburbs began appearing beyond the outer wall. The suburbs spread in circumference of 15 miles of Bijapur. The noted suburbs were Fatehpur, Ibrahimpur, Aliabad, Shahpur or Khudawantpur, Chandpur, Inayatpur, Ameenpur, Nawabpur, Latifpur, Fakirabad, Rasoolpur, Allahpur, Padshahpur, Rambhapur, Aghapur, Zohrapur, Khadijapur, Habibpur, Salabatpur, Yarbipur, Tahwarpur, Sharzapur, Yakoobpur, Afzalpur, Nauraspur, Dayanatpur, Sikandarpur, Quadripur, Khawaspoor, Imampur, Ayinpur, Bahamanhalli, etc.⁷ The most important suburbs, Shahpur, sprang up by the western wall of the city. Populated primarily by artisans, Shahpur became important as a great commercial emporium, especially for textile goods.⁸ In and around of suburbs of Shahpur only a million people lived. According to Mirza Ibrahim Zubari, under the Muhammad Adil Shah there were existed 90,000 houses in the suburbs of Shahpur. From all side the gates of Bijapur were thoroughly connected with roads, and the people living with and without fort had good amenities.

The growth of the city reflected the commercial prosperity of the entire kingdom. Cotton grown in the interior, especially in the Raichur Doab and the Dharwar region, was sent to the Konkan coast where it

was woven into calicoes and muslins and then exported to points all around the Arabian Sea. It was from Ali Adil Shah I's reign, too, that one hundred and eighty sailing vessels plied the coasts from Gujarat to Bengal in service of Adil Shahi government and that diplomatic contact was established with the three great Muslim monarchs of the age: the Ottoman Sultan Sulaiman, the Safawi Shah Tahmasp, and the Mughal Emperor Akbar. Thus by the end of Ali Adil Shah I's reign the city of Bijapur had become one of the major Islamic urban centre of the subcontinent.

Under the aegis of Ibrahim II and Muhammad Adil Shah, Bijapur's significance in all respects grew further and it became an important city of the Deccan. On the basis of the estimation of James Campbell, two million of population was resided within and outside of fort of Bijapur.

The city attracted the people of different profession and calibre. Further the liberal patronage of the rulers encouraged them to leave their home to make Bijapur their surrogated motherland. Several envoys and travellers like Mirza Asad Beg, Mandelslo, Jean Baptiste Tavernier, Baldacus, Ogilby and other praised the greatness of Bijapur in their accounts. Migration of Qadiri Sufis into the Bijapur was an important phenomenon of urbanization. Sir Hamilton Gibb describes Qadiri Sufi order, as urban order. "Urban" orders, wrote Gibb, were "founded and maintained by elements of the city population which were in fairly close association with the Ulama and the madarsas."⁹ "The decline of Bidar and the rise of Bijapur as an important urban centre saw the migration of many Qadiri Sufis from the former to the latter city. At the same time, many of Bijapur's Qadiri Sufis began, from the late sixteenth century, coming to Bijapur directly from Arab lands rather than by way of Bidar. But the rise of Bidar as a major Qadiri center in the fifteenth century marked an important phase in the evolution of the order in the Deccan, for it clearly established a tradition of orthodox, urban Sufism that could be merely transplanted to Bijapur with the rise of that city as a centre of Islamic political power."¹⁰

FOOD PROVISION:

The capital city Bijapur of the Sultanate was flat and barren, hence not able to produce required amount of foodstuff at the nearby area. Therefore, for the need of food depended on the overall produce of the state. Agriculture was the main occupation of the people and the state accrued major part of its revenue from it. Revenue was taken in the form of cash and kind as well. The Adil Shahi Sultan knew that the prosperity of the state lies in flourishing agriculture. The Desais and the Hawaldars in the parganah was duty bond to cause the soil to be cultivated and the region to prosper. If the villagers due to oppression and warlike situation had left their villages the officers had to bring them back and give assurance (Qual) and make them settle down and carry on with cultivation. During the worst famines the Bijapur government did have some granaries to cater to the food requirements of the famine affected people. The epigraphical evidences show that granaries existed in Bijapur and Raichur forts. Sultan Muhammad constructed the Ambaar Khanah (building for keeping grains) in Bijapur. Certain Abdul Muhammad (noble) built a granary in Raichur in the year 1622-23 in the reign of Ibrahim Adil Shah II.¹¹ It is likely that in other forts towns as well the granaries might have been constructed. In famine and warlike situations the preserved foodstuffs were of great help. Probably the food stuffs were meant for the royal members and soldiery. We cannot set aside the fact that the common people in the rural areas must have been not suffered in famine days. "Some kind of rationing was, perhaps, also introduced for; Muhammad Adil Shah had fixed the quantity of food grains to be consumed by slaves and officers. He passed orders that all seminaries attached to the mosques and tombs should be well provided with food and other things needed by the teachers and the students. The generosity of Muhammad was extended to all classes of people. Free food was distributed to the poor and to the Muslim and Hindu way fares. Provision was also made for the free distribution of medicine."¹²

WATER WORKS:

Bijapur is a dry-place known for scarcity of water. However, Adil Shah Sultan made an elaborate arrangement of pure wholesome water for the population residing within and outside fort. The water works of Torvi are attributed to Ali Adil Shah I. across the valley of Torvi, a masonry dam was constructed, which fed the reservoirs of Torvi and Afzalpur (Takiya). From this reservoirs an underground canal of 8 x 6 feet carried water nearly three miles in the city of Bijapur. The Arkillah trenches and tanks of the palaces were filled with this water.¹³ Later probably the Asar Mahal tank got connected. C. Schweitzer is of the opinion that the Torvi aqueduct is in itself a very credible engineering achievement of the Sultanate.¹⁴

It seems the city was least benefited by Torvi source, as its main supply of water was for the great suburbs of Shahapur. Hence to augment the existing water supply in the city Sultan Muhammad

constructed 'Jahan Begum' lake in the south of Bijapur. From where water was brought in the city through earthen pipes. For distribution, relieving water pressure, and to trap the silt 12 open square Ganjs (towers) were constructed. The wells and tanks of palaces and mosques got filled with this water. It means water was reached in every corner of the city. The tanks of Mustafa Khan and Chini palaces (in east and south of citadel) were filled from the wells close by. The water being drawn by a manual or bullock labour into an elevated cistern, which ran into the tank of the palace through earthen pipes. To supplement the water needs of the people in and around the city the Sultan and the nobles constructed wells like Taj Baudi, Chanda Baudi, Badi Baudi, Ilal Baudi, Mubarak Khan Baudi, Nagar Baudi, Ikhlas Khan Mosque Baudi, etc. As in the city there are many such wells existed around Bijapur in the palaces like Torvi, Tikota Khadijahpur, Utal, old suburbs, etc. Any army investing the city could easily be cut off the outer water supply from Torvi or Begum tank, but the wells within the walls would supply water to the besieged. Captain Sykes reports, within the walls, there were 700 wells with steps (Baudis) and 300 without steps (kunhas or small wells).¹⁵

BAZARS AND PETHS:

The civil side of the Adil Shahi administration was not forgotten. Elaborate municipal regulations were introduced. Orders were issued to keep the market clean and some kind of planning was to be followed while building the shops. Bijapur was a big business centre in the medieval ages. The manuscript map of Bijapur shows the following market places established respectively by the Adil Shahi Sultans in and around Bijapur.

“ Yusuf Adil shah: Markovi Bazar, Thana Bazar, Nagthana Bazar, Dahan Khan Bazar, Markur Bazar, Murad Khan Bazar, Palah Bazar, Mubarak Bazar, and Shahpeth (old) Bazar.

Ismaeel Adil Shah: Kamal Khan Bazar, Naka Bazar, and Bare-Khudavand Bazar.

Ibrahim Adil Shah I: Jagtate Bazar, Rao Bazar, Sher Karkhana Bazar, Rangeen Masjid Bazar, Fateh Zaman Bazar, Karanzah Bazar, Safa Bazar and Shikar Khan Bazar.

Ali Adil Shah I: Shahpeth (new) Bazar.

Others: Ikhlas Khan Bazar, Yusuf Rumi Khan Bazar, Shah Abu Turab Bazar, Abdul Razzaque Bazar, Langar Bazar, Mahmood Shah Bazar, Dad Mahal Bazar, etc.¹⁶

The city of Bijapur thus became an important centre of Islamic culture. Celebrated theologians, men of art and science flocked to it from all parts of the world. The lighter side of life was not forgotten and an atmosphere of carelessness and ease pervaded the city.

Asad Beg, who visited Bijapur during the reign of the Mughal Emperor Akbar, has left behind an expression of his own feeling when he passes through the crowded street of the city: “That palace, which they called Hajjah, was so arranged that each house in it had a double court. Where there are two courts they call it in those parts Hajjah. All round the gate of my residence were lofty buildings with houses and porticos; the situation was very airy and healthy. It lies in of a bazaar of great extent, as much as thirty yards wide and two kos (four miles) long. Before each shop was a beautiful green tree, and the whole bazaar was extremely clean and heard of in any other town. There were shops of cloth sellers, jewelers, armourers, vintners, bakers, fishmongers and cooks. To give some idea of the whole bazaar I will describe a small section in detail. In the jewelers' were jewels of all sorts, wrought into a variety of articles, such as daggers, knives, mirrors, necklaces and also into the form of birds such as parrots, doves, and peacocks etc., all studded with valuable jewels, and arranged upon shelves, rising one above the other. By the side of this shop will be a baker's with rare viands placed in the same manner upon tiers of shelves. Further on a linen draper's with all kinds of cloths shelved in like manner. Then a clothier's. Then a spirit-merchant's with various sorts of China vessels, valuable crystal bottles, and costly cups, filled with choice and rare essences arranged on shelves, while in front of the shop were jars of double distilled spirits. Beside that shop will be a fruiterer's filled with all kinds of fruit and sweetmeats, such as pistachio nuts and relishes, and sugar candy and almonds. On another side may be a wine merchants shop, and an establishment of singers and dancers, beautiful women adorn with various kind of jewels, and fair faced choristers, all ready to perform whatever may be desired of them. In short, the whole bazaar was filled with wine and beauty, dancers, perfumes, jewels of all sorts, palaces and viands. In one street were a thousand bands of people drinking, and dancers, lovers, and pleasure seekers assembled; none quarrelled or disputed with another, and this state of things was perpetual. Perhaps no place in the wide world could present a more wonderful spectacle to the eye of the traveller.”¹⁷

CONCLUSION:

The establishment of Bahmani rule had removed Bijapur's status as a remote frontier post. Bijapur's de facto independence (1490), from Bahmani authority could not suddenly transform the city into a notable centre of Islamic civilization. On the ashes of Bidar and Vijaynagar raised the glory of Bijapur. By the end of sixteenth century Bijapur had emerged as one of the major Islamic urban centre. The early seventeenth century saw the peak growth of the city's population, on the basis of the estimation of James Campbell, two million of population was resided within and outside of fort of Bijapur. Under the aegis of Ibrahim II and Muhammad Adil Shah, Bijapur's significance in all respects grew further and it became an important city of the Deccan. Migration of Qadiri Sufis into the Bijapur during this period was an important phenomenon of urbanization.

The reason for the choice of the present site seems to have been that the crest of the ridge is waterless while within the walls of Bijapur the supply of water is abundant. The under rock teems with splendid springs of which, to judge by the remains of wells and gardens. And the desert to the north where no invading army could find food or fodder was no doubt a valuable defence to Bijapur on the side most open to attack. On the southern side of ridge which overlooks the city there was considerable cultivation. Within eight miles of the walls, is the valley of the Don now as of old the granary of Bijapur. And necessary foodstuff from all around the kingdom was brought to the city by extensive trade and land revenue in kind form.

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