



THE HISTORY OF ADIL SHAHI KINGDOM OF BIJAPUR

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(1) Yusuf Adil Khan (1489-1510)

Yusuf Adil Khan, by carving out a new State of his own from the Bijapur province of the tottering Bahmani Empire, established a new line of the Adil Shahi Sultans with Bijapur as its capital. The new dynasty ruled over the part of Deccan for nearly two hundred years, from 1489 to 1686 when it was finally absorbed in the Mughal Empire by Aurangzeb. The history of Bijapur is a record of almost continuous struggle for existence with both the external as well as internal forces. A possible community of faith and interest and dynastic-matrimonial alliances among the Deccan Sultans were powerless to curb their ambition of territorial aggrandizement. The Adil Shahi Sultans tried to acquire the hegemony of the Deccan, and this goal obviously clashed with that of the Nizam Shahis of Ahmadnagar and the Qutb Shahis of Golconda. Factionalism was the major internal disruptive force which the Adil Shahis had inherited from the Bahmanis. Since it was a multi-national and multi-racial state, three factions-Afaqis, Dakhnis and Habashis played a major role in shaping the destiny of the Adil Shahi dynasty and eventually continuous party strife proved fatal for the kingdom. The alternation of Sunni and Shiah doctrines with the change of ruler too had its repercussions on the nobles, who were the virtual pillars of the kingdom.¹



After the assumption of autonomous rule by Yusuf Adil Khan the first hostility against him was initiated by the Bahmani Prime Minister Qasim Barid. He did not like the independent authority exercised by Yusuf at Bijapur. Qasim wished to curb the power of Yusuf and his own authority over Bijapur. He induced Vijaynagar to join with him in attacking Yusuf's territory. The same time he approached Bahadur Gilani, who was the thanadar and virtual ruler of Goa and Konkan, to invade Yusuf's territory. The Vijaynagar forces marched to Raichur doab and attacked Raichur and Mudgal, while Bahadur occupied Jamkhandi. Through shrewd diplomacy Yusuf made peace with Vijaynagar and then concentrated on Qasim. In an action Yusuf emerged victorious.²

Since then the major part of the Yusuf's reign was spent in warding off the territorial encroachment of neighbouring rulers. In 1510 he came in clash with the Portuguese at Goa, who captured that fort from the Bijapuris. But, later in the same year, Yusuf recovered it. Thus by his able statesmanship and diplomacy Yusuf weathered the initial storms with fortitude and laid a solid foundation of the new dynasty and the Kingdom.³

After a reign of twenty two years Yusuf died in 1510. At the time of his death the Bijapur state extended from Dabul in the north-west to Goa in the south. The rivers Bhima and Krishna formed the northern and southern boundaries, while on the east the boundary reached at the confluence of the two rivers, near Raichur.⁴

Yusuf Adil Khan was a ruler of versatile genius and varied accomplishment. He was a great admirer and patron of learning and he invited scholars and poets from Persia, Arabia, Turkey and other countries. Though a pioneer of Shiah doctrine in the Deccan, he adopted a considerate and impartial attitude towards the Sunnis and created an atmosphere of harmony between followers of various creeds. With the change of his faith to Shiism he established close diplomatic relation with Iran.⁵

(2) Ismail Adil Khan (1510-1534)

Yusuf Adil Khan was succeeded by his younger son Ismail. As he was too young to direct the affairs of the kingdom, the brunt of the rule fell to the regent Kamal Khan. Kamal Khan restored the Sunni doctrine in the state. By this act he gained the affection of the people and secured by his affability the support and allegiance of the nobility. He established friendly and cordial relations with the neighboring rulers, by putting to an end their existing discord and hostility. It was due to the skill and sagacity of Kamal Khan that the splendor and elegance of the Adil Shahi dynasty reached a crowning point. Kamal Khan wielded great power and influence in the court he harboured evil designs to depose Ismail and himself usurp the throne, but his attempt failed by the ingenuity of the Queen-Mother.⁶

The rule of regent Kamal Khan was a period of hectic military activities against three contiguous neighbors- Ahmadnagar, Bidar and Vijaynagar, as a result of which considerable territorial gains were made. The kingdom now extended beyond Dabul in the north, to Goa (which was lost to the Portuguese) in the south, and sloping eastward, the rivers Nira and Bhima formed the north-eastern boundaries, the farthest point being the confluence of the two rivers. The doab region (Raichur and Mudgal) was lost to Vijaynagar, but the Bijapuri arms now penetrated far into the Tilangana, right up to Kovilkonda.⁷

When Ismail began to rule himself he re-introduced Shiah doctrine in the Bijapur Kingdom, he further strengthened the religio-diplomatic ties established by his father with Iran. Due to community of faith between the rulers of Iran and Bijapur, Ismail exercised the diplomatic pressure on the Sunni Ali Barid, for the release of the Iranian ambassador who was detained and humiliated at Bidar. This gesture earned Ismail great honour. The Shah of Iran, in a letter acknowledging the courtesy of Ismail accorded him the royal title in 1519. Consequently, several practices of the Shiahs and their culture were introduced in daily life at Bijapur and closer contacts with Iran were firmly established.⁸

(3) Mallu Adil Khan (1534-35)

In accordance with the will of Ismail Adil Khan his eldest son Mallu succeeded him. Ismail had appointed Asad Khan Lari as the Protector of the kingdom with full powers to rule. However, Mallu by his lewd and licentious behavior incurred the displeasure of the leading nobles, including Asad Khan. Eventually, through the conspiracy of Punji Khatun (Queen-mother of Ismail Adil Khan) he was dethroned after a short reign of seven months.⁹

(4) Ibrahim Adil Shah I (1535-58)

The concerted efforts of all, enthroned Ibrahim, another son of Ismaeel. Soon after his accession he acted against the father's policy. He decided the Sunni faith and prohibited wearing of scarlet cap of *Twelve Imams*. He enrolled the Deccanis and Abyssanians and removed the foreigners (*Afaquis*) with the exception of Asad Khan, Khoosh Geldy Khan, Roomi Khan and Shujaat Khan Kurd. He even ordered Asad Khan, a staunch Shia, to adopt Sunnism. He replaced his language Persian with Hindi. Now the Brahmins managed the public accounts and exercised greater

influence, the twist in the state policy must have been promoted by the Maratha royal mother Bubuji Khanum. Alike his father Ibrahim was constantly engaged in wars throughout his reign.

He ruled for 24 years, however he was not able to expand his territories. His army consisted of 30,000 cavalry, mostly Marathas, 23,000 infantry and 150 war elephants. His royal treasury consists of 1,50,00,000 Hons, diamonds, pearls and some other valuables. He was fond of vague suspicion which led him shedding of blood of innocent people. He even killed the physician who failed to cure him. He also suspected Asad Khan and Saif-ul-Mulk. There were heavy punishment even for minor mistakes. He encouraged and pleased the ryots. He favoured Marathas, the Brahmins, the local Muslims and the Africans. During his reign various monuments like The Solathambi (16 Pillars) Mahal and old Jama Masjid including some beautiful gardens.

(5) Ali Adil Shah I (1557-80)

Ali was second son of Ibrahim and grandson of Asad Khan. He was imprisoned by his father due to his Shia practices. Soon after the death of his father Ali was crowned at the Dargah of Shaikh Shamsuddin Miran at Miraj. From Miraj Ali marched to Bijapur and stayed at Kishwar Khan's gardens. To commemorate his accession a new town Shahpur, was built.

He had successful campaigns against his neighbouring states which caused extension of boundaries of his kingdom and collection of enormous wealth. His army constituted of 80,000 cavalry, 10,000 infantry and 735 war elephants. His kingdom was expanded from Nira to Tungabhadra in south, from Bankot to cape Ramas in the west, and on east it comprises of Raichur, Udgir, Malkhed and Bidar, and on north it was surrounded by Akkalkot, Naldurg, and Kalyani. He distributed 150 lakhs Hons among the deserving the people. He donated 16000 Hons for marriage of his servant's daughter.

Ali was well versed in religion, logic, sciences, syntax, etymology and grammar. He was conversant with the intricate problems of arts and sciences. He was calligrapher and could write in *Thulth*, *Naskh* and *Riqua* styles of Arabic and Persian writings. He was very much fond of writing and reading that he used to big boxes of books on his tours.

Though he was Shiah but he respected Sunnis and Hindus. He behaved like a Sufi. He always had a company of Sadhus and fakirs. He wore simple clothes and often sat and slept on floors and ate simplest food. He instructed his court men and officials to avoid animal hunting. His palace was devoid of decorations and embellishment. Ali is considered to be a great builder of the Adil Shahi dynasty. He constructed the forts of Bijapur(1565), Dharur(1567) and Bankapur(1573). He also rebuilt the fort of Naldurg and repaired many others.

(6) Ibrahim Adil Shah II (1580-1627)

At the time of accession to the throne Ibrahim was only nine years old, and the management of the court devolved successively on Dakhnis nobles. But Ibrahim's aunt Chand Bibi, the dowager-queen, really controlled the affairs of the State. It was her diplomatic farsightedness which prevented the regents from usurping the Adil Shahi throne, and she tried to maintain the semblance of sovereign authority by exercising some control over the regents. The period of regencies (1580-90) was marked by intrigues and struggle for supremacy at the court, which created semi-anarchical conditions. The struggles for power between afaqi and Dakhni nobles led to the emergence of a third group of Habashis who controlled, for some time, the destiny of the Adil Shahi dynasty.¹⁶

A unique event in the history of Adil Shahi dynasty happened during the reign of Ibrahim when the city of Bijapur was invested for twelve months (1580-1581) by the united armies of the Confederate Sultans of Ahmadnagar, Berar and Golconda. However, Shah Abul Hasan, through his diplomatic maneuvers, saved the kingdom. When Ibrahim began rule himself in 1590, he re-introduced the Sunni practices instead of Shiah doctrine, which were prevalent under the regents. But

he was tolerant to all the creeds. He was also able to maintain equilibrium of power between various factions of his nobilities, thus achieving great powers by a harmonious blend.¹⁷

Ibrahim exercised his sovereignty over Malabar and compelled its rulers to pay him annual tribute. The Nayaks of Karnataka and Mysore were also forced to pay tribute. The kingdom in 1605 extended along west coast from Bankot in the north to about Bhatkal in the south, (except Ankola, Gersoppa, Honavar). The northern boundary was reached to river Nira, on the east the district of Raichur, Malkher and Bidar separated it from Golconda, while Akkalkot, Naldurg and Kalyani became frontier provinces, alternately overrun by the troops of Ahmadnagar, Bidar and Golconda.¹⁸

Ibrahim entered into matrimonial alliances with the Nizam Shahis, the Qutb Shahis and the Mughals. The Bijapuri Princess Khadijah was married (in 1580) to the Ahmadnagar Prince, Ibrahim himself married (in 1586) the sister of Qutb Shah, and gave his daughter in marriage to the Mughal Prince Daniyal. With the Mughal onslaught on Ahmadnagar, Bijapur for the sake of her own security to maintain a buffer state between her and the Mughal State, came to the rescue of his sister kingdom. And in 1597 the Bijapuri and the Mughals clashed for the first time, at the battle of Sonepat, in which the Mughals emerged victorious. Since then active diplomatic relations between Ibrahim and Akbar were established.¹⁹

In 1602 Ibrahim built a new capital Nauraspur. But on the astrologers guidance he did not actually shift he capital. However, being very much fond of the place, he spent most of the time in his newly built lofty palaces at Nauraspur. Ibrahim's reign lasted for almost half a century. In 1627, at the time of his death Bijapur had attained great power and territorial expansion. He left a flourishing State with a full treasury and an army nearly 80,000 cavalry and more than 200,000 infantry.²⁰

He was a remarkable man with a versatile genius and evinced keen lively interest in every branch of fine arts. He was liberal patron of letters, and a galaxy of scholars of almost all branches of learning adorned his court. He gave asylum to mystics, savants and Sufi-saints. Ibrahim strove hard to evolve a distinctive Deccani culture, incorporating what was best in indigenous and foreign traditions. He devoted his life to music, poetry, painting and calligraphy. He was an author of note and composed the remarkable *Kitab-i-Nauras* embodying the collection of songs in the Deccani idiom. Ibrahim patronized a new Deccani school of painting and a series of paintings in the *Nujumu-l-Ulum* are the earliest examples of Bijapuri School, which reached its zenith in his reign.²¹

(7) Muhammad Adil Shah (1627-56)

With the assistance of two Bijapuri nobles-Daulat Khan (later entitled Khawas Khan) and Mirza Muhammad Amin Lari (last entitled Mustafa Khan), Muhammad Adil Shah rose to the royal position in 1627 at the nearly youthful age of sixteen years. Muhammad's radiant rule of thirty years saw some earth shattering verifiable occasions.²²

Bijapur moved toward becoming accomplice with the Mughals in the eradications of Ahmadnagar. Muhammad kept up neighborly relations with Shah Jahan and made peace-Treaty of 1636, after the annihilation of Ahmadnagar. What's more, by a Farman of Shah Jahan he got confirmation for the security of the autonomy of Bijapur from the Mughal power and offered on him the title of "Shah" in 1648, the main leader of Bijapur to get such an acknowledgment from the Mughals. The Treaty of 1636 with the Mughals fixed the development of Bijapur in the north. So Muhammad Adil Shah broadened his territories westwards into Konkans, southwards into Mysore, and eastwards into Karnataka. Amid his rule, the kingdom accomplished its most prominent broadening, power and brilliance, and his territories extended from Arabian Sea to the Bay of Bengal.²³

Other than regional development, Bijapur likewise achieved peace and flourishing amid Muhammad's rule. His kingdom yielded a yearly income of seven crore eighty four lakh rupees, other than five and half crores of tributes from vassal rulers and zamindars. Social exercises like

verse, painting and engineering likewise got an extraordinary stimulus. Muhammad Adil Shah did his best to imitate the wonderful customs left to him by his flexible father. Dissemination of general instruction and religious lessons were one of his main concern, and he did his most extreme to enhance the financial and instructive benchmarks of the general population. The epic sepulcher of Mohammad Adil Shah, now named "Gol Gumbaz" portrays even right up 'til the present time, following a slip by of three centuries, the wonderfulness that Muhammad's rule had achieved. It is the best basic triumphs of Indo-Perso-Ottoman design of Adil Shahi period.²⁴

Muhammad was the principal leader of Adil Shai tradition to make a takeoff from the orders against figure and picture painting which was conscientiously clung to till his dad's rule. He presented fresco-painting and representations, the cases of which are-the dividers of Asar Mahal, Pavilion of Kumatgi and Sat Manzil. Mohammad's rule seen the ascent of Shivaji to distinction and his establishing of a free Maratha State, which was at first cut out from the Bijapur Kingdom. Notwithstanding the considerable transcendence and power Muhammad accomplished he neglected to check the ascent of Marathas to autonomy. It might be contended that his approach of tranquil trade off in a roundabout way helped rise of Maratha country and statehood.²⁵

(8) Ali Adil Shah II (1656-72)

After the death of Sultan Muhammad in 1656, his son Ali ascended in Bijapur. Earlier the Adil Shahi Prince, as soon they ascended were encircled with the internal problems of the regents. However, Ali was in the midst of external troubles posed from Mughals and Marathas. In 1661, Ali took stern actions against the rebel vassals of the Carnatic and tackled the internal and external dangers. He was addicted to various kinds of things, hence he died of paralysis at thirty-fifth of age on December 1672. he had two sons-Hussain and Sikandar; and one daughter, Padshah Bibi Shahr Banu.²⁵

Ali was a brave and generous ruler. Nusrati, his court poet composed Ali Namah in which he versified military campaigns of his patron. Ali personally used to take part in military encounters like his ancestor. He successfully thwarted the Mughal attempts on Bijapur. Ali was himself a poet and a patron of art and literature. His court was full of poets, scholars and masters of fine arts. Under his rule Dakhani Urdu and painting Schools were established. He was a great builder as well. He completed his own gigantic mausoleum called Ali Rauzah (popularly called Bara Kaman). He also constructed Husaini Mahal, Ali Mahal, and many mosques in the city.²

(9) Sikandar Adil Shah (1772-86)

Sikandar, an infant of four years was placed on the throne of Bijapur in 1672. The history of his reign is really the history of regents and *wazirs*. It was a period marked by chronic civil war among the factious nobles, independence of the provincial governors, and paralysis of the central administrations, occasional Mughals invasions, secret alliance but pretended hostility with the Marathas, and final absorption of Bijapur in the Mughal Empire.³⁰

Thus, the all-round deterioration further crippled the political situation. The prestige of Bijapur was so seriously damaged by internal disruption that the Mughal general Diler Khan almost coerced and humiliated Sikandar. Despite several sacrifices and desperate attempts on the part of Sikandar, he could not satisfy the growing greed of Mughals. Sikandar's alliance with Sambhaji further aggravated the Mughal-Bijapur reactions. At last Aurangzeb himself marched out in 1685 with a large army to fulfill the ambition of his life. After desperately defending his capital and standing prolonged siege of 1685-6, Sikandar succumbed to the Mughals, and in 12th September 1686 Bijapur was occupied and annexed by Aurangzeb.³¹

Thus ended the glorious career of about two centuries of the great “Adil Shahi” monarchy. The grandeur and glory of the Adil shahs is still alive in their mighty and lofty monuments and specimens of fine arts.³²

CONCLUSION:-

While studying the religious policies of Adilshahi rulers I came to know in what contrast the founder of Adil Shahi Dynasty, Yusuf Adil Shah did established the Adil Shahi kingdom. How he tried to maintain the social and religious equilibrium in his kingdom by his various policies like maternal relationships and by not changing any policies regarding the religious matters was studied and examined. The successive rulers followed the rules and regulations of their former rulers. The later part shows the secularist and anti-religious nature of Yusuf Adil Shah as a great ruler.

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