



POWER AND TRADE RELATIONS IN ADIL SHAHI SULTANATE OF BIJAPUR**Kiran Sampatrao Jadhav**

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INTRODUCTION

Adil Shahi Sultanate of Bijapur had ruled for a period of 200 years. A populated, productive and well-administered hinterland, control on the ports on both coast, easy communication between ports and interior markets, advantage of trade and access to overseas market were the key points behind the trade potential of sultanate. Adil Shahi government was primarily a military organization and the civil institutions were depending upon the military power. This power was controlled and exercised by various group of nobles, who on many occasions were directly or indirectly influencing trade and commerce. This paper explores the nobility of Adil Shahi Sultanates mainly to trace out their participation in the trade. An attempt has been made here to analyze the role of Adil Shahi nobility to look into; their commercial activities particularly the role in overseas trade, on the basis of Persian sources and their translations, Travel Accounts, Factory Records, various Gazetteers, and other Secondary sources. It is argued that the Deccani Sultanate as well as other Indian kingdoms of the time except Chhatrapati Shivajiⁱ did not have a navy, as they were not greatly concerned with issues of political control over the seas. However, access to sea was very important for these states as an economic resource consequently they supports to the merchants for seaborne trade. This situation was suitable for the nobles involved in mercantile activity, who used the state to bolster their commercial activities. Sultans, nobles and other merchants were involved in such trade. This paper deals with the involvements of Adil Shahi nobles in the overseas trade activities.

**TRADE DEVELOPMENT IN THE SULTANATE:**

Adil Shahi Sultan (1489-1686) ruled 200 years over the substantial part of Deccan. 'This period can be divided in three stages, firstly, the 'establishment and consolidation' (1489-1558), secondly 'cultural syncretism' (1558-1627) and finally was the 'stagnation or decline' (1627-1686) stage'.ⁱⁱ All stages possess different aspect and potential of trade development. An attempt has been made here to study the development of trade in the second and third stage. Political

expansion, trade related events and activities are analyzed here to assess the development of trade and commerce during this period.

Second stage has been seen as the height of the Bijapur Sultanate, in political, economic and cultural terms. During this period, the sultanate started to expand in the south part of the Deccan; however this expansion was completed during the third phase. The trade and commerce against the background of the physical growth of the kingdom under Sultan Ali I Adil Shah and cultural syncretism under Sultan Ibrahim Adil Shah II was flourished. Third stage was seen as stagnation or decline, as it passes through the ups and downs of the kingdom under Sultan Muhammad Adil Shah, Sultan Ali Adil Shah II and Sultan Sikandar Adil Shah. During this period sultanate expanded to the east coast of India, and got access to the ports of this coast as well. However, from the 1660s, access to the ports on both coasts began to be rather difficult, due to various reasons.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN TRADE

Satish Chandra pointed out the involvement of political figures in the overseas trade. They were kings, princes, other members of royal family, administrators and military officials and nobles who took to trade. Beside the Mughals, there were officials from the state of Bijapur and Golconda, and from the smaller Hindu states of the south – Ikkeri, Tanjavur, Madurai etc.”ⁱⁱⁱ On the line of the study to find out the political participation in the trade, following observations, indicate that there were such actors in Adil Shahi Sultanate of Bijapur particularly during the first half of the seventeenth centuries.

As mentioned earlier during the second stage of Adil Shahi rule, sultanate’s trade and commerce reached to its height. The activities of various noble and trade related participation were noted in the contemporary sources during this period. ‘The royal ships of Bijapur with free cartazes were exempted from the dues according to the article number 14 of the treaty of 1576 between the Portuguese and the Adil Shahi Sultanate. Article 19 further said that one of the six royal vessels could bring horses from Hurmuz to Dabhol. This was a special concession as the trade in horses was a royal monopoly of Portugal and ordinarily no Indian ship was allowed to carry horses on the board’.^{iv} This indicates the trade by the royal ships with the help of these concessions. Around the second decade of the seventeenth century, the governors of Ponda were given extra powers and were sent as ambassadors to the Portuguese viceregal court, during that period the relation between the Bijapur court and Portuguese authorities was deteriorated. Portuguese authorities gave its reason to the Bijapuri court, “The reason given by the Portuguese authorities to the Bijapuri court was that, since 1617, when a residential complex was constructed for the governors and ambassadors in that area, the governors and the ambassadors to the Portuguese court at Goa, crossed the borders regularly and carried on illegal trading activities, taking advantage of their diplomatic immunities”.^v This is the testimony for the engagement of governors and ambassadors of Adil Shah in the trading activities in the second decade of the seventeenth century. Khwaja Noor, the Bijapuri ambassador, was accused in a Portuguese letter of 8 May 1620, addressed to the Adil shah, of abusing the diplomatic immunity by carrying on private business between Goa and some neighboring states. It was alleged that Khwaja Noor had a house in the vicinity of Goa where, on the pretext of visiting his family, he carried out some of his business, in this way depriving the Estado da India of the custom dues that would normally have been levied. The ambassador who was posted on a permanent mission, spent less time in the Portuguese capital than was necessary for the work he had been assigned to carry out. He made use of “Ari Sinai, Vitula Nayaka and Norna Sinai for his personal commercial activities although they were supposing to helping him in his official duties”.^{vi}

The governor of Ponda seems to have been a political merchant. For example, "Most of the times the Portuguese authorities had grievances against the governors of Ponda either because they carried on some commercial activities or because they made frequent journeys between Goa and their own districts, all of which annoyed the Portuguese very much."^{vii}

B.S. Shastry also mentioned such participation, "The treaty of 1576 had provided for an Adil Shahi resident envoy in Goa. One of the grievances of the Portuguese against such envoys was that the latter preferred to reside in Bicholim or Ponda, just outside the Portuguese borders, violating thereby the treaty requirement. What was the more offensive to the Portuguese was that the envoy used to take undue advantage of the provision of diplomatic immunity to smuggle articles of trade during the course of their visit to Goa. Complaints were frequently lodged at Bijapur against such practices, but they drew little attention. The Portuguese then issued specific orders that such envoys should live in Goa, and informed the Adil Shah that he would be otherwise treated as an ordinary merchant with his good subject to inspection and taxation."^{viii} This information reveals the fact that the Portuguese court was suffering due to the activities of the officials of Adil Shah, they were the diplomats and were trying to earn money by trading, and for these activities they had used their diplomatic immunity.

Portuguese authorities were sometimes aggressive over the trading activities of Adil Shahi Governors and took strong measures to control such activities. For example, the Portuguese captured a ship belonging to the Sultan at the port of Daman and confiscated all the goods and persons travelling in it, even though the ship carried a Portuguese cartaz. In addition, some horses were also seized at the port of Chaul.^{ix}

Sometime the Adil Shah also engaged in trade or the Portuguese allowed Adil Shah some concession for trading and gave him a Portuguese cartaz for that purpose. This practice was misused by some officials and by the name of Adil Shah and on even an invalid cartaz they dared to travel for overseas trade, 'On 26 September 1631, a ship belonging to the Sultan of Bijapur was captured off the Persian coast at Tamaran. It was reported that the Cartaz, which the captain showed, did not belong to the ship. The sultan was informed about this incident and that the owner of the ship did not carry a valid cartaz.'^x

Portuguese Viceroy complained about Khwaja Mohammad Raza, the ambassador of the Adil shah, that he 'did not behave as ambassador and indulged in certain malpractices, which were prejudicial to both governments.'^{xi}

By using the influence of the king some people tried to trade some valuable items such as pepper and horses, 'In the year 1636, the Portuguese authorities captured a ship belonging to the sultan of Bijapur, although it had a cartaz given by the Conde de Linhares, as retaliation for their acceptance of the English and Dutch embassies.' However, when the sultan complained, the Portuguese authorities in Goa responded that the ship was carrying some illegal items, such as pepper, that were strictly prohibited being carried on a non-Portuguese ship.^{xii}

When the Portuguese became aware about the threat of a joint attack by Dutch with the help of Adil Shah, they offered Adil Shah and his influential nobles heavy bribes and gifts. By taking advantage of this, some noble would try for trade or the Portuguese may have inspired them for trading to overcome the threat of Dutch. "Around 1640 there was an agreement between the Dutch and the Adil Shah to attack Goa jointly. The plan was not realized because the Portuguese paid a heavy compensation for the vessel they had confiscated. The Portuguese also went out of their way to appease the Adil Shah on instruction from the home government in Portugal. Heavy

bribes or gift were given to Adil Shah and his men in an attempt to get the Dutch out of Vengurla in vain.”^{xiii}

If such trade took place, the Portuguese sometimes punished, but more often restored the rights, in order to maintain peaceful relation. ‘Again in 1644 another vessel was captured at Hormuz for not carrying a cartaz. It belonged to an important person of Bijapur and Adil Shah recommended its restoration with its cargo on the grounds of prevailing to peaceful relations. The permission was granted’.^{xiv} This ‘important person’ might have been Ekhlash Khan, as such an incident happened with his ship in July 1644, at the time that he was the Wazir of Muhammad Adil Shah. ‘A similar event occurred two years later when, on 18 July 1644, a ship belonging to Ekhlash Khan was captured in the Straits of Hormuz with all his merchandise and personal belongings.’^{xv} This incident indicates that a noble like Ekhlash Khan was engaged in trading activity during the period of Muhammad Adil Shah.

‘Mir Kamaluddin Mazendarani was an important person from this point of view; he was active during the period 1615 – 1635. Obviously an astute politician, Kamaluddin also mediated between the company and a succession of local governors, as well as in the court at Golconda. As later references in the English record show, he kept his relations with all the Companies on a sound footing, rendering them services, but expecting services in return. By 1616, in addition to his overseas trade, he was clearly involved in a big way in the qafila trade to Bijapur, Goa and Surat. He seems to have been on good terms with the authorities in both Surat and Bijapur – the VOC (Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie) factors carried letters from him to the Shahbandar and Mutasaddi of the former port to facilitate the recovery of the effects of one of their factors, David van Deynsen.’^{xvi}

Khan-i Khanan, commander-in-chief of the Bijapuri army, gave the ‘*kaul*’ to the Dutch to trade and got them *farmans* from Adil Shah. He asked passes for his ships in 1652, but the Dutch refused passes for his ship to proceed to Achin and Queda. Instead of these places, the Dutch offered him passes for Tenasserim and Pegu. This did not satisfy the Khan and he decided to send one ship to Achin without a pass. In 1655, one of the Khan’s ships, while returning from Achin without a pass was attacked by a Dutch ship cruising in the Bay.’^{xvii} It seems that the Khan-i Khanan was engaged in trade activities and he used his power, sometimes even forcefully, to perform his business.

Ekoji, commander of Bijapur, conquered and occupied Tanjore in 1675. The Dutch approached him for confirmation of their trading rights on the Coromandel Coast. After negotiations between Ekoji and Peter Verwer, they agreed and signed a treaty in 1676. As per the treaty Bijapur agreed to surrender all claims over Nagapatnam, ten old villages, Poyyur and Veli gardens and Ekoji was to hand them over to the Dutch. In return for territorial cessions, the Dutch company agreed to give Ekoji one tusker elephant and cash. The money payment was to consist of “1200 pon per annum for fourteen old villages of the Company at 10 *panams* of 31/2 *mattu* per *pon*; 300 *pon* for Negapatam; making in all 4200 *pon* and one tusker elephant to be handed over by the end of the year.” Ekoji approved and authorized the Dutch to establish a mint at Negapatam for the minting of *panam*, *varahan* and *pagoda*. The profits earned after meeting the expenditure of the mints were to be divided equally between the Dutch company and Ekoji. Further, one of the representatives of Ekoji was to stay in the mint for the verifications of accounts and profits.’^{xviii}

The Nayaka kingdom of Ikkeri around Kanara coast came under Bijapur in the seventeenth century. The position of this small kingdom shows considerable development from the sixteenth century. In that century, the position was very similar to that prevalent in Malabar, where small

groups operated more or less independently, but were broadly under the control of one king. The incorporation of the coast into the Nayaka kingdom of Ikkeri brought about crucial shifts in the relationship between trade and politics. The position of quasi autonomous group such as the *hanjamana* of Basrur was undermined; and trade on the coast began to be increasingly associated with individual Saraswat merchants, often of great influence in the Ikkeri court, who traded in pepper and rice. The seventeenth century records mention the names of such persons as Mange Nayak, Rama Kini and Vithala Sinai, who traded in ports such as Bhatkal, Basrur and Manglore.^{xix} Bhatkal and Basrur were the important ports of the Adil Shahi Kingdom in seventeenth century. Saraswats and Navayat Muslims dominated the external commerce of the Kanara region from 1500 to 1650.^{xx}

These observations show that there were political merchants in Adil Shahi kingdom of Bijapur particularly during the first half of the seventeenth centuries. Hence Khwaja Noor, the Bijapuri ambassador to Goa during the second decade of seventeenth century, Ekhlash Khan, Wazir of the Muhammad Adil Shah, during 1650s, Mir Kamaluddin Mazendarani during the period 1615 – 1635 and the Saraswats Mange Nayak, Rama Kini and Vithala Sinai of the Kanara region in seventeenth centuries display the features as well as qualities of political merchants.

Inter-local trade, intra-regional trade, long distance trade and overseas trade are the main trade pattern in medieval India. These patterns were also in practice in Bijapur kingdom during the period of present study, and in the case of overseas trade, we find the involvement of the state. Nobles involved in mercantile activity used the state to bolster their commercial activities, and therefore, the state was more involved in trade patterns. This is indigenous trade pattern. However, this is not to be confused with European style mercantilism, but is perhaps a form of mercantilism nonetheless; maybe not one that could lead to the same kind of capitalism that emerged in the west, but perhaps a state-sponsored growth in capital.

CONCLUSION:

The involvement of various Bijapuri nobles in the external trade of the Sultanate is observed in the various sources. Khwaja Noor, the Bijapuri ambassador to Goa during 1620, is frequently mentioned in Portuguese records as someone who was using his official position to trade from Goa. A ship belongs to Ekhlash Khan was captured in the Straits of Hormuz for not carrying a cartaz on 18 July 1644. Mir Kamaluddin Mazendarani an astute politician was also involved in such trade. The English records show that he kept his relations with all the companies on a sound footing, rendering services to them, but expecting services in return. Another such political merchant on the Coromandel was Khan-i-Khanan, the Adil Shahi general and governor of Karnatak, he was involved extensively in overseas trade, owning ships and having merchants trade on his behalf. The activities of Khwaja Noor, Ekhlash Khan, Mir Kamaluddin Mazendarani and Khan-i-Khanan have been briefly analyzed within the framework of political merchants. It is clearly seen that there were close relations between the power and the trade.

ⁱ Except Chhatrapati Shivaji no medieval ruler tried to establish navy. Chhatrapati Shivaji established a powerful navy and protected the trade and also gains political control over some part of Arabian Sea.

ⁱⁱ Dr. Kiran Jadhv, 'Trade and Commerce in Adil Shahi Sultanate of Bijapur', unpublished Ph. D. thesis, Savitribai Phule Pune University, 2015, pp. 116-152.

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- ⁱⁱⁱ Satish Chandra, *Medieval India: From Sultanat to the Mughals, Part 2, Mughal Empire (1526-1748)*, New Delhi, Har-Anand Publications, 1999, Reprint, 2011, p.405.
- ^{iv} B.S., Shastry, *The Portuguese Commercial Relations with Bijapur in the Seventeenth Century*, in Teotonio D'souza (ed.), *Essays in Goan History*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1989, p.42.
- ^v Afzal, Ahmad, *Indo Portuguese Diplomacy during the 16th and 17th Centuries (1500-1663)*, Originals, Delhi, 2008, p.299.
- ^{vi} Ibid. p.301.
- ^{vii} Ibid. p. 299.
- ^{viii} B.S., Shastry, *The Portuguese Commercial Relations with Bijapur*, p. 47.
- ^{ix} Afzal, Ahmad, *Indo Portuguese Diplomacy*, op. cit., p.302.
- ^x Ibid. p.307.
- ^{xi} Ibid. p.308.
- ^{xii} Ibid. p.312.
- ^{xiii} B.S., Shastry, *The Portuguese Commercial Relations with Bijapur*, pp. 45-46.
- ^{xiv} Ibid. p.43.
- ^{xv} Afzal, Ahmad, *Indo Portuguese Diplomacy*, op. cit., p.317.
- ^{xvi} Sanjay Subrahmanyam, Chapter VI, 'External Commerce and Political Participation', in *The Political Economy of Commerce: Southern India 1500-1650*, Cambridge University Press (First South Asian Edition), Delhi, 2004, p. 316.
- ^{xvii} M.A.Nayeem, 'Bijapur's Relations with the European settlements in India', in 'The Heritage of The Adil Shahis of Bijapur', Hyderabad Publishers, Hyderabad, 2008, pp.75-76.
- ^{xviii} Ibid, p.76.
- ^{xix} Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *The Political Economy of Commerce: Southern India 1500-1650* op.cit., p.339.
- ^{xx} Ibid.p.337.