



MUHAMMUD GAWAN'S MADARASA OF BIDAR: A STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Bahmani Sultanate was a Kingdom which was a Muslim state of the Deccan in South India and one of the great medieval Indian kingdoms. It was the first independent Islamic Kingdom in South India.

KEY WORDS: *Bahmani Sultanate, Muhammad Gawan's Madarasa of Bidar.*



INTRODUCTION

The kingdom was founded by Muhammad bin Tughlaq who had revolted against the Delhi Sultanate. Nazir uddin Ismail Shah who had revolted against the Delhi Sultanate stepped down on that day in favour of Zafar Khan who ascended the throne with the title of Alauddin Bahman Shah. He was the founder of Bahmani kingdom. The Bahmani capital was Ahsanabad (Gulbarga) between 1347 and 1425 when it was moved to Muhammadabad (Bidar). The Bahmani sultanate reached the peak of its power during the vizierate (1466–1481) of Mahmud Gawan.

LIFE OF MAHMUD GAWAN

Mahmud Gawan was a prime minister in the Bahmani Sultanate of Deccan. Muhammad Gawan belongs to Gilani from the village of Gawan in Persia, was well-versed in Islamic theology, Persian language and Mathematics and was a poet and a prose writer of repute. Later, he became a minister in the court of 3rd Muhammad. A storehouse of wisdom, Mahmud enjoyed the trust and confidence of rulers, locals as well as that of foreign kingdoms, which had great respect for Mahmud. He was a competent and successful general, a capable administrator and patron of art and poetry.

Mahmud Gawan was a great king, prime minister, of Bahmani kingdom. He was a merchant by vocation, arrived in Bidar kingdom ruled by the Bahmani kings in 1453 A.D. He was well versed in Islamic lore, Persian language and mathematics. Mahmud Gawan was known for his profound scholarship in the Middle East before coming to India. Due to his perseverance, honesty, simplicity and learning he earned the goodwill of the Bahmani rulers and held important posts under three successive kings. Mahmud III (1462-82 A.D.) as a young boy studied under his tutorship, and became the grand Vazir or Prime Minister when Mahmud became the king and looked after the administration for nearly thirty years.

ABOUT THE MADARASA

The word Madrassahs derived from Arabic language 'Madarasa', 'Madrasa'. A Madrassah is simply a traditional Islamic school of higher learning. Till the western forces destroyed (18th Century) the indigenous systems of education like the Gurukuls, the Ghatikas, and the Madrassahs, they were the only formal means of education in the medieval sub-continent. A Maqtab was a primary school in the Islamic world while a Madrassah was like a high-school or college of today. In the medieval Islamic world, there were many Madrassahs as big as the universities of the twentieth century, complete with libraries, display museums, and visiting scholar programs. Great scholars and teachers devoted their lives in the Madrassahs for the study of Islam, the Farsi language, and most importantly, to spread knowledge among common people.

MUHAMMUD GAWAN MADARASA IN BIDAR:

Mahammud Gawan was rich due to his international trade but spent his entire earnings on promotion of education. In 1472 A.D. he established a Madarasa in Bidar, then the capital of the Bahmanis. The Madrassah had an imposing three-story building with 100 feet tall minarets in four corners. There were thirty-six rooms for students and six suites for the teaching staff. It also had big lecture halls, a prayer hall and a matchless library of three thousand volumes. Gawan himself had a personal library of more than a thousand books. He used to spend all his leisure time in the library.

The Madrassah building had a large courtyard with nearly a thousand cubicles where students and learned men who came from all parts of the country and East could stay. Boarding and lodging were free. There were 118 students on a permanent basis and countless itinerant scholars.

Mahmud Gawan was familiar with renowned colleges at Samarkand and Khorasan and his own college or Madrassah was modeled on the West Asian architecture. He tried to get renowned scholars from Persia and other West-Asian countries for teaching and heading the now famous college. He built Madarasa with his own salary.

The Madarasa suffered heavy loss due to his sudden death, the building continued in good condition for nearly two centuries. After the capture of Bidar by Aurangzeb in the late 17th century, the ranges of buildings were used for powder magazine and as barracks for a body of cavalry. Unfortunately lightning struck the powder magazine and there was a huge explosion, destroying the greater part of the edifice causing immense damage. Most of the rooms and three minarets were destroyed. Only one minaret and few cubicles have survived today. It was a beautiful monument of Bahamani kingdom.

CONCLUDING WORDS:

Bahmani kingdom was a Muslim empire which was established in South India beginning at Gulbarga and later the capital was transferred to Bidar. The kingdom had given more contributions to the art and architecture. Mahammud Gawan was a great ruler, minister of Mahmud III. He was also a good administrator, architect and he built a great monument Madarasa in Bidar which is high peak of Karnataka state.

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