INTRODUCTORY

1. Scope

The present thesis seeks to throw light on the social, economic and religious conditions of the people of the Deccan between 1347 A.D. and 1527 A.D. This period covers the Bahmani rule from the date of its foundation to the date of its practical extinction.

The political history of the Bahmani dynasty has been studied by modern writers like H.K. Sherwani, G. Yazdani, P.N. Joshi and others. They have based their accounts mainly upon medieval chroniclers like Firishta and Syed Ali Tabataba. Firishta has described the Bahmani rule as an introductory chapter to the history of the Adil Shahis of Bijapur. The author of Burnan-i Maathir viz. Tabataba has also dealt with the same subject

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1 P.M. Joshi is the only author to have written on the subject of this thesis. His article is to be found in the Appendix known as "Economic and Social Conditions under the Bahmanis" in the History of Medieval Deccan, I, pages from 207 to 222. H.K. Sherwani, the leading authority on the Bahmani rule, in his Srinagar Lectures (1962) entitled Cultural Understanding in Medieval India, and in his Heras Memorial Lectures (1968), Cultural Trends in Medieval India, emphasizes the evolution of the composite culture. See also J.N. Choudhary, "Social and Economic Condition of the People under the Bahmani Sultanate", IHQ, IV, 1928.
as an introductory chapter to the history of the Nizam Shahis of Ahmednagar. These two chroniclers have concentrated on the kings, the courtiers and their wars. Other aspects of the Bahmani rule, like the conditions of their subjects, are not dealt with in their works. "There is no positive evidence to enable us to form an accurate picture of the condition of people during the whole of the Bahmani period. The accounts of the Muslim chroniclers are full of details regarding military campaigns and wars against infidels without any reference to the history of the people."¹ About the neglect of Deccan history, Sherwani writes: "Like the political history of the Deccan, the cultural history of that important region has also been more or less ignored or curiously passed over even by some of our most distinguished scholars. Dr.Yazdani's 'Bidar, its History and Monuments' and his articles in the Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica and the Archaeological reports of the erstwhile Hyderabad State, fill a great gap."²

² PIHO, Poona, 1963, p. 23.
The relations of the Bahmanis with the Hindus were of various kinds. The Velamas of Telangana cooperated more or less with the Bahmani rulers and sought their help against their hereditary enemies, the Reddis. The common people, that is, the Hindus, had to adjust their religious beliefs and practices so that they could become more acceptable to their political masters. Several Hindu religious leaders tried to readjust Hindu society to the changing times. A cultural synthesis between the Hindus and Muslims was sought to be effected in Deccan society by both the Hindu and the Muslim saints of the period under study.

The ruling classes also could not always stand aloof, and had to lessen the severity of their rule so that the local people would not rebel against them. Hence, there was a give-and-take between the Bahmani rulers and their Hindu subjects.

The evidence is neither plenty nor always contemporary. Hence, only a few aspects of the life of the people have been selected here for treatment depending upon the availability of evidence. However, this thesis seeks to show, to the extent that evidence is available, the condition of the people under Bahmani rule. This is
necessary because it is believed that we have no sources. 
Secondly, it also tries to show again, contrary to accepted 
opinion that the Bahmani rule was not oppressive, as is 
made out exclusively on the basis of Persian sources. The 
new sources on which this thesis is based are of three 
kinds, (i) Contemporary works like Sivatatva Chintanani 
and Guru Charitra, (ii) Later works which contain earlier 
traditions and (iii) Modern traditions which continue age-
old practices which throw light on earlier conditions.

2. Sources

Nature of Sources

The contemporary source material on the history of 
the Bahmanis of the Deccan is extremely meagre. Hence, 
reliable and useful evidence is drawn from near 
contemporary and later works to supplement our 
interpretations regarding the economic, social and 
religious conditions prevailing during the 14th and 15th 
centuries in the Deccan. An attempt is also made to 
reconstruct the history of the Bahmani times with the 
help of literary sources, specially Hindu sources, which 
had remained so far unutilised. Whatever is available has,
for convenience, been divided into the following sections:
(i) Literary sources, (ii) Foreign accounts and (iii) Inscriptions, and (iv) Coins, and (v) Excavations.

(i) Literary Sources

Kannada

1. **Sivatata Chintamani**

This is a contemporary work by Lakkanna Bandesa,\(^1\) who flourished between 1405 A.D. and 1463 A.D.\(^2\) and was Prime Minister of Devaraya II (1424 A.D. - 1446 A.D.) of Vijayanagara. He is said to have composed this work in 1450 A.D.\(^3\)

\(^1\) H. Deveerappa and Pandit S. Basappa have edited this work and published it in Mysore in 1960.


He was born in Virupakshapura, in Kolar district, and was the son of Heggadadeva and Somayamma. He wielded considerable influence on the political and military affairs of the kingdom. This is well attested by foreign travellers. Abdur Razzaq, who was his contemporary and admirer, has acknowledged the greatness of Lakkanna Dandesa, who was known for his administration of justice and noble character. According to Razzaq, Lakkanna Dandesa was next to the king in administration. He belonged to the Virasaiva sect.

_Sivatatva Chintamani_ is an important and useful source on the history and philosophy of the Virasaiva movement. It gives a vivid description of many Saiva and Virasaiva Deccan saints who lived in the spreading over Andhra, Maharashtra and Karnataka between 1300 A.D. and 1450 A.D. The account of each saint is brief, but in some cases Lakkanna Dandesa has given greater details about the miracles which the saints are said to have performed. He also mentions the places where they flourished, along with reasons for their importance.

Lakkanna Dandesa also tells that those several Saiva and Virasaiva saints lived a simple life by following
different professions. This gives us an insight into the economic activities of the people of the Deccan. Among these saints there were poets, skilled workers, and also women. They laid stress on Sivabhakti, or devotion to Siva, and exercised a great influence on the people. Under the banner of Sivabhakti, they achieved social integration and devotional cultural synthesis, comparable to what was achieved by the Warkaris in Maharashtra.

The account furnished by Lakkanna Dandesa of these Sāiva and Virasaiva saints is reliable, as he was Prime Minister of a great empire, with unique opportunities to get information even from enemy kingdoms. He might have heard about them when he went on military campaigns against the Bahmani kingdom. He might also have invited them to stay with him in Vijayanagara. His house appears to have been open to Saranas, or saints, of all countries including those under Bahmani rule. Saints or Saranas from all parts of the country flocked to Kalyana in Basaveshwara's time, in Lakkanna Dandesa's time also Vijayanagara became a magnet for Saranas and therefore Lakkanna Dandesa calls Vijayanagara as Kalyana.
2. **Abhinava Dasakumara Charite**

This is another contemporary work,¹ by Chounda Raja, who is believed to have lived at Pandharapur during the first quarter of the 14th century.² He belonged to the Bharadvaja gotra and was the son of Madhusudana and Mallavva. He was a devotee of Lord Vithala. Chounda Raja has called himself "uddandamanohara prachura sishyam," 'Vithalapadambajatabhramam', 'Haripadasohananapankara-Madhuvritam' etc.

Abhinava Dasakumara Charite is composed in two parts and is a translation of Dasakumara Charite of Dandi, the famous Sanskrit poet. While narrating the story (katha) of Visruta at the end of the second part, he has described Pandharapur, the centre of Bhagawat cult and the Warkari movement, then lying within the Bahmani territory, in colourful terms. This description of Pandharapur is not found in the original Sanskrit work; it was Chounda Raja

1. S.C. Narasimhachar and M.A. Ramanujayanagar have edited it; it was published in Mysore in 1902.
2. R.S. Panchamukhi writes that Chounda Raja lived about 1225 Saka - 1303 A.D. - Kannada Sahitya Parishat Patrike, Bangalore, 1948-49, p. 44.
who added it. Hence, this part is important for us as it is of contemporary value.

Purandara Dasara Kirtane

It is a collection of poems of Purandara Dasa a popular Kannada poet who lived between C.1480 and 1564. His birth place is a matter of controversy. It is said that he was from Purandargad near Poona. It is also said that he was born in Sankalapur near Raichur district. In any case, he was born and bred in the dominions under Bahmani rule in the last quarter of the 15th and the first decade of the 16th century. He also appeared to have lived for some years in Pandharapur. He was a fervent devotee of God Vithala of Pandharapur. All his songs and with this God's name (Purandara Vithala). From Pandharapur, he moved to Vijayanagara in the times of Krishnadeva Raya and died there in 1564. He had travelled widely through the Deccan and South India. He is one of the greatest of the saint-poets of Karnataka. His poems incidentally throw considerable light on crops cultivated in the Deccan during this period, food and food habits and dress and other aspects of the life of the people.

1 Purandara Dasara Kirtane, parts 1 to 5, Udupi, 1929, 1930, 1932.

2 Prabuddha Karnataka, Yugadi Sanchika Durmahi Samvatsara and R.S. Panchamukhi, Purandara Dasara Jivana Charitra, (II end), Hospet, 1964, Passim.
1. Riddhipura Varnana

This work by Narayan Vyas Sahaliye, or Naro Vyas, was written after 1363 A.D.\(^1\) It tells us about the feasts and festivals of the people, along with the political set-up of Maharashtra in the region of Khandesh during the latter part of the 14th century.

2. Guru Charitra

This is an important work on the life and work of a great saint, Narasimha Saraswati of Ganagapur, in the district of Gulbarga. The author has given his name as Saraswati Gangadhar. He belonged to the family of Sayamdeva Sakhare, the first important member of the Sakhare family, which was wholeheartedly devoted to the Datta Sampradaya. Saraswati Gangadhar wrote this Charitra in Marathi, although his mother-tongue was

\(^1\) Y.K. Deshpande of Yeotmal has edited it. See, H.K. Sherwani and P.M. Joshi, (eds), HMD, II, Hyderabad, 1974, p. 589.
Kannada. The author has given his genealogy, from which it is clear that he was the fifth member of the family of Sayamdeva Sakhare. The following is the genealogy of this family:

1. Sayamdeva Sakhare,
2. Naganath Sakhare,
3. Devarao Sakhare,
4. Gangadhar Sakhare and
5. Saraswati Gangadhar Sakhare.

These five generations of the family would have lived over a period of 100 years. Hence, it can be said that Guru Charitra must have been composed by Saraswati Gangadhar 100 years after the death of Narasimha Saraswati, which is said to have taken place in about 1458 A.D. It might have

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1 CC., Ch. I.

R.K.Kamat edited it. It was published in Bombay, in 1968.
been composed in about 1480 Saka or 1558 A.D. B.G. Deshpande thinks that Guru Charitra was composed in about 1470 Saka or 1548 A.D.¹

It is an invaluable near contemporary source material for our study, as it describes the career of Narasimha Saraswati, who lived in the middle of the 15th century. In this connection, P.M. Joshi writes as follows: "The work was based on oral traditions and information passed on by Sayamdeva to his son and grandson, the latter of whom handed over this corpus to his grandson, Saraswati Gangadhar..."² Further, he considers it as an important source and comments as follows: "Like the work of the post-saints of Maharashtra, the Guru Charitra has won


¹ The date mentioned above has been commonly agreed to by most of the scholars like Pangarkar, Gadre etc., Sri Krishna Rao Kapatral, a famous research worker of Karnataka, has published a small pamphlet in Kannada about the problem of the date of Narasimha Saraswati and the possible date of composition of GC. He, too, has the same opinion.

² HMB, II, p. 590.
for itself a place in the spiritual life of the people of Maharashtra throughout the centuries and is held in great veneration as a sacred text by a large number of the Maratha people."¹ In brief, Guru Charitra gives us an insight into the social and religious activities of the people of medieval Maharashtra and Karnataka. It particularly helps us to see the Bahmani rule in its proper perspective.

3. Ekanath

In general, the compositions of poet-saint of Maharashtra are useful source material as they give insight into the life of the people. Namadeva, who lived about 1350 A.D., refers to the activities of Muslims in his compositions, which are held in veneration to this day.

Similarly, Ekanath, who lived between 1533 A.D. and 1599 A.D. produced a good number of works, which contain glimpses into the life of the people of Maharashtra during the 16th century. In one of his Abhangas,²

¹ HMD., II, p.590.
Ekanath has referred to the story of Damaji Pant, who lived in the Bahmani period. Ekanath's compositions are useful as he was a near-contemporary.

4. **Tukaram**

Tukaram lived between 1608 A.D. and 1649 A.D. His compositions reflect the social and religious conditions of the people of Maharashtra. He, too, has referred to the story of Damaji Pant in detail in his Abhangas.¹

5. **Bhakti Vijaya**

This is another useful source of information about many saints of Maharashtra and Karnataka. The author of this work is known to us as Sant Mahipati. He belonged to Taharabad in Ahmednagar district. He was born in 1715 A.D. and died in 1790 A.D.

This work contains traditional information. Mahipati was not a contemporary of the events and saints he has

described in his work. He visited many places of religious importance and collected details about the saints of whom he has written. Mahipati wrote this work purely from the religious and spiritual point of view, and not as historical biographies. Of the saints who form the subject-matter of Mahipati's work, Damaji Pant and Sahajananda Swami belong to the Bahmani period.

6. **Purnananda Charitra**

This work by one Hanumadatmaja of 1753 Saka is a biography of Purnananda of the Sadananda matha of Kalyana. Purnananda was a disciple of Sahajananda Swami of the same matha. Hence, this biography of Purnananda also contains an account of Sahajananda Swami, who lived in the Bahmani period and with whose activities alone we are concerned.

1 Hanumadatmaja, *Purnananda Charitra*, Ch. I. The author says that he has drawn upon Mahipati's *Shakti Vijaya*. 
This is based on Sita Chandrika, of Sivarara Swami, one of the heads of the Sadananda matha. The author, being a disciple of Sivarara Swami seems to have composed his account on the basis of the tradition current in the matha. S.G.Tulpule says that Puranamanda Charitra is reliable from a historical point of view.¹

Sanskrit

1. Anujayatirtha Vijaya

This is a contemporary work in Sanskrit by Vyasatirtha, who is believed to have been a disciple of Jayatirtha. It is said that Vyasatirtha lived between 1370 A.D. and 1400 A.D.² This work gives us full details about the life and work of Jayatirtha, the foremost Madhva saint of Bahmani times.

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1 Maharashatra Saraswat, Puravani, p. 776.
2 As mentioned by Krishnarao Kapatal in his Karnataka Sanskritiya Samsodhana, Mysore, 1970, (fn), p. 263.
1. *Velugotivari Vamsavali*

This is the chief source of information for the history of the Velama chiefs, who belonged to the Recerla clan in Telangana. It contains the genealogy of twenty-one generations of the Velugoti family. It is an anthology of verses sung by the family bards recording the heroic deeds of Velama chiefs. It gives valuable information about their wars and other activities. According to this work, the earlier chiefs of the Velugoti family rose to prominence under the Kakatiyas, who granted extensive jagirs to the Velamas. They asserted their independence after overthrowing the power of Kapaya Nayaka of Telangana. Later, as they felt insecure, they concluded a friendly alliance with the Bahmanis and assisted them in their military campaigns against Vijayanagara and the Reddis. It supplements the little epigraphical evidence now

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1 *Velugotivari Vamsavali* is based upon two manuscripts of the MacKenzie Collection preserved in the Government Oriental Manuscript Library in Madras. Dr. N. Venkataramanayya has edited it and the University of Madras has published it in 1939.
available about the Velama chiefs. Hence, this work is essential for the research worker for tracing the relations between the Velamas and the Bahmani Sultans.

Persian

1. **Futuh-Us-Salatin**

   Isami was a native of Delhi, who moved to Daulatabad in 1327 A.D., when Muhammad Tughlaq shifted his capital from Delhi. He was the contemporary of the first Sultan of the Bahmani kingdom. He has described the rule and character of Hasan Bahman Shah in his *Futuh-us-Salatin*, which he composed in 1349-50 A.D.¹

2. **Jawame-Ul-Kalam**

   Akbar Hussaini, the eldest son of Banda Nawaz wrote this work in 802 H. It is an authentic source of information with regard to the daily activities of

¹ A.H. Hussain edited it in 1938.
   In 1948, it was re-edited by M. Usha of Madras.
Banda Nawaz, a well known Sufi saint.¹

3. Sair-e-Mohammadi

Ali Samani's Sair-e-Mohammadi is a significant work because the author was a disciple and companion of Banda Nawaz. Sair-e-Mohammadi was composed by Ali Samani in 831 H.² It is an authentic source of information with regard to the life and activities of Banda Nawaz.

4. Riyazu'l-Insā"a

The Riyazu'l-Insā"a,³ styled as the 'Gardens of Diction' is a collection of letters written by Mohmud Gawan, 1453-1481 A.D., Prime Minister of the Bahmani kingdom, either in his own name or in the name of his master, the Bahmani Sultan. There are 148 letters in the collection, out of which 84 letters directly deal with the historical events and the atmosphere in which they are

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¹ Syed Rahimuddin Hussain has rendered it into Urdu and it was published in Hyderabad in 1972.

² Sair-e-Mohammadi has been rendered into Urdu by Moulana Syed Shah. It was published in Hyderabad in 1969.

³ S.C. Husain has edited it, and it was printed at the Government Central Press, Hyderabad, in 1953.
written. These letters contain a vast amount of most interesting and useful material, which throws a flood of light on the cultural relations of the Bahmanis with Islamic countries, and gives an insight into the contemporary Bahmani history. The material contained in the letters also throws light on the private life of Mahmud Gawan, and on party conflicts between the two groups.

5. **Burhan-I-Maathir**

Syed Ali Tabataba, a native of Samnan, came to the Deccan in 1580 A.D. and started his career under Ibrahim Qutub Shah. He was patronised by the Nizam Shahi rulers of Ahmednagar and, at the instance of Burhan Nizamshah, II, wrote this work between 1591 A.D. and 1596 A.D., it was completed by his son Abu Talib in 1628 A.D.¹

The central theme of this work is the history of the Nizam Shahi rulers of Ahmednagar. It also deals in two

¹ *Burhan-i-Maathir* was published in 1936 in Hyderabad. J.S. King and Haig translated it in the *Indian Antiquary*, XXVIII.
chapters with the Bahmanis of Gulbarga and Bidar. Syed Ali Tabataba says that he has drawn his evidence from several authors, whose names he has not mentioned. Wolseley Haig is of the opinion that this work is a reliable historical document.

6. **Gulshan-I-Ibrahim**

Muhammad Qasim Ferishta, who wrote this work, was born in 1570 A.D. at Astrabad. He came to India along with his father and reached Ahmednagar during the rule of Murtaza Nizam Shah. He left Ahmednagar in 1589 and reached Bijapur, where he lived between 1591 and 1623 A.D. He enjoyed the patronage of Ibrahim Adil Shah II.

Ferishta wrote his work at the instance of Ibrahim Adil Shah II. He says that he has consulted not less than 35 works. He completed his work about 1620 A.D. His work is known for the mass of facts he gives.

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1 John Briggs translated it into English and the Government of Bombay published it in 1831-32. Jonathan Scott also rendered it into English in 1914.
We shall next discuss the accounts of foreign travellers: Ibn Batuta, Nicolo Conti, Mahaun, Nikitin, Duarte Barbosa and Varthema, whose works are well known, have left behind them their observations about the social, religious and economic conditions prevailing during the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries in India. Among these, Nikitin is the best source for our purpose. For this reason and also because in recent years Russian scholars have helped us to understand him better, some account of this new information is given in what follows. I have nothing to add to what is already well known about the remaining foreign travellers mentioned above.

Nikitin is mainly known in India through an English translation made for the Hakluyt Society in 1857. The edition shows lack of specialised knowledge of medieval Russian and of familiarity with India. The translator and the editor regarded Bikitin as uneducated, and they have not tried to understand the text as a whole.

1 The accounts of foreign travellers like Nicolo Conti, Nikitin etc., have been translated by R.H. Major in India in the 15th Century, and the Hakluyt Society of London published it in 1857. It was reprinted in Delhi in 1974.

2 P.M. Kemp, Bharat Rus, (ISCUS), Delhi, 1958, p. 15. This work summarises in English the information available about cultural contacts between India and Russia in Russian sources. Its second chapter called Afanasiy Nikitin is evidently based on his Voyage Beyond the Three Seas edited by B.D. Grgkov and V.P. Adrianova-Perets for the Russian Academy of Sciences in 1948.
In Russia, the narrative was understood correctly. Strongly attached to his Russian homeland, Nikitin has apparently rid himself of most prejudices with reference to foreign customs. He was an exceptionally practical businessman and a rationalist. Very rarely does he depart from a commonsense attitude. His intention appears to be to inform the higher authorities of the practical possibilities of eastern trade; it is also a personal diary.¹

Russian writers have compared Nikitin's account of the Deccan with Ferishta's and other sources and confirmed the general accuracy of his information.

What struck Nikitin particularly in every town was the powerful bureaucracy, military organisation and splendour of the rulers, the sharp distinction between them and the native Indian masses with their totally different religion, habits, dress and status. He contrasts the great wealth of the nobility with the wretchedness of the peasantry and the frugality of Hindus.

¹ Kemp, Bharat Ras, p.16.
He seems to have been the only one of the early European travellers to have mixed with the common people. Other European travellers, later on, travelled as guests of the government. Unlike these, Nikitin was not entertained at Court. His account of India has the unique value of giving impressions gained from something like the point of view of the common man. What he saw came through mixing with the common people, from watching public shows and royal processions, visiting temples and fairs as one of the crowd, entering into internal trade in the company of Hindu merchants and visiting their houses.2

(iii) Inscriptions

Persian and Arabic: inscriptions specially of Bahmani times, which are published in the volumes of the Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica, do not throw much light on the conditions of the people. The majority of them refer either to the

1 Kemp, Bharat R us, pp. 18-19.
construction of a mosque or a step-well. An inscription of the times of Piruz Shah Bahmani, 1417 A.D., refers to the construction of a tank and establishment of charities for the poor, the downtrodden, the destitute, etc. It also refers to the construction of a flight of steps on the Krishna river for the merit of the Sultan. The inscriptions of the period of Humayun Shah, 1458-1460 A.D., reflect on his character. Another epigraph of the period of Mahmud Shah IV, 1513 A.D., which is a Qualanama, refers to the regulation of payment of taxes, etc. Yet another inscription, of 1524-25 A.D., found in the Telugu country, speaks of the benevolences of the Sultan.

Telugu inscriptions of the Warangal district, edited by N.Venkataramanayya, though few in number, throw light on the political and military activities of the Velama chiefs in Telangana.

Marathi inscriptions do not throw light on the conditions of the people of medieval times. However, in

one of the inscriptions, of the year 1397 A.D., found in
the temple of Bhavani of Tulajapur, the name of Firuz Shah
Bahmani is mentioned.

(iv) Coins

Almost all the Bahmani Sultans issued coins right
throughout the two centuries. And these coins help us a good
deal in fixing the correct chronology and names of the Bahmani
Sultans and in rejecting the variant dates given by the chroni-
clers like Ferishta. The coins of the period of Hasan
Bahman Shah and Muhammad Shah have disproved Ferishta's
statements. Except for fixing the genealogy and chronology
of the dynasty, the coins do not help us in any other respect.

(v) Excavations

The archaeological excavations conducted by H.D. Sankalia,
at Nevasa, Ahmadnagar district, throw a considerable light on
several aspects of the life of the people during this period
(Muslim-Maratha). It is worth noting here that several
cottage industries were in a flourishing condition in the
Deccan and these industries were pottery, bangles, stone-
work and the making of beads.

3. Nature of the Bahmani Rule

Before considering the condition of the people under
the Bahmani rule, an attempt is made here to know the nature
of that rule based on the opinions of earlier writers on the
subject, with some new information from sources which were
not available to them.

While assessing the character of the Bahmani rule,
modern writers like Vincent Smith and Nilakanta Sastri,
have remarked that the Bahmani Sultans were fanatics and
did not evince any interest in the general welfare of
But an impartial study of the Bahmani rule enables us to say that the views of these historians about the Bahmani Sultans betray the fallacy of generalisation and are unjustifiably harsh. A dynasty which produced rulers like Hasan Bahman Shah, Firuz Shah and others, who evinced keen interest in the general well-being of their subjects, deserves better treatment at the hands of historians.

Hasan Bahman Shah, the founder, capable administrator and warrior, established the dynasty on solid foundations, which enabled his successors to continue to rule for

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Bahmani rule was "by no means an attractive chapter in the history of the country. Some of the kings were bigots, and none of them had genuine sympathy for their subjects, who were Hindus."


"There is no positive evidence to enable us to form an accurate picture of the condition of the people during the whole of the Bahmani period. The accounts of the Muslim chroniclers are full of details regarding military campaigns and were against infidels without any reference to the history of the people."
almost two centuries. In the words of Isami, "Ala-ud-Din had all the three qualities of a good sovereign: he always gave relief to the oppressed, he was always kind to the poor; and he took pains to obey the Divine Commandments."¹

With regard to the character and nature of the rule of Hasan Bahman Shah, the author of Burhan-i-Maathir writes as follows:

"Sultan Ala-ud-Din Hasan Bahman Shah was a just king, who cherished his people and practised piety. During his reign, his subjects and army used to pass their time in perfect ease and contentment and he did much towards propagating the true faith."²

H.K. Sherwani pays a well-deserved tribute to the character of the founder: "There is not a single campaign, either against the partisans of the Gughlaq faction or against the Hindu Rajas and Mughaddams, in which he showed the slightest hint of cruelty, and it invariably

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¹ Isami, p. 546.
² Burhan-i-Maathir, pp. 25-27.
happened that, after the campaign was over, the king or his representatives made a gift of the territory back to the erstwhile enemy to be held as a Jagir. This was the reason why such powerful rulers as the Raya of Warangal accepted the king's hegemony without any blood being shed and began to be regarded as honoured friends and allies of the new state.¹

This opinion of Sherwani is supported by Habib and Nizami, who write that Hasan Bahman Shah, after having been enthroned as the Sultan of the Bahmani kingdom, offered full security and guarantee to the local zamindars, who had opposed him in his formative period.²

Muhammad Shah I, son and successor of Hasan Bahman Shah, followed the policy laid down by his father, and put down lawlessness with an iron hand. With reference to his policy, Sherwani writes as follows:

"He put the institutions of the kingdom on a sound basis. He treated his soldiers and the civilians, officers and subjects with kindness and concern." He was a methodical administrator and his system of administration was efficient. He enjoyed great pomp and he sat on the throne 'Takht-i-Firoze'. He was strict in his administration of justice and meted out severe punishments. His period was marked by rebellious activities. Robbers looted the people, and the anti-social elements marred peace and order. He properly dealt with such situations and maintained law and order. It is said that, in his day, 20,000 brigands were killed.

Muhammad Shah II, the successor of Muhammad Shah I, was essentially a man of culture. It is said that he was

1 Sherwani, Bahmanis, pp. 100-101.
2 Nilakanta Sastri, A History of South India, p. 242.
3 Briggs, Ferishta, II, pp. 298-299.
6 Nilakanta Sastri, A History of South India, p. 243.
the pioneer of the medieval culture of the Deccan. He evinced great interest in education and learning and established public schools and monasteries. He made arrangements for promoting the educational activities in the State. He founded free schools for Muslim orphans at Gulbarga, Bidar, Qandhar, Elichpur, Daulatabad, Chaul, Dabhol and other cities and towns, in which children were not only taught but were also housed and fed at public expense. The Sultan further awarded special allowances to the reciters of the Quran and the traditions. He also established a military school, with perhaps one restriction, that admissions were confined to children of the royal families. He possessed enlightened views regarding public welfare.

Firuz Shah, grandson of the founder, was the last monarch of the Gulbarga period. He was a great patron of culture. He invited and encouraged the Afakis (foreigners). According to P.M. Joshi, Firuz was an

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1 A.M. Siddiqi, "Muhammad Shah II, the pioneer of medieval culture of the Deccan", STHQ, Hyderabad, 1941, p. 582.
3 HMD, I, p. 165.
enlightened ruler, but not a rigid Muslim. He was fond of wine and music, and he delighted in the company of philosophers, poets, historians and other learned men. It is said that he encouraged the study of astronomy and constructed an observatory near Daulatabad. But it was not completed owing to Ghiyathuddin's death, the chief architect. He built the new city of Piruzabad on the Bhima and occasionally used it as his capital. He took keen interest in developing the ports of his kingdom. Chaul and Dabhol attracted trading ships from the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea. A variety of articles of necessity and luxury poured into the kingdom from Persia, Arabia and the African coast. He knew many languages. It is said that he was an accomplished linguist as well as a good calligrapher. It is also said that he used to copy sixteen pages of the Quran every four days. In brief, "He was one of the most renowned potentates of the Gulbarga period of the Bahmani kingdom, and his reign saw the synthesis of what was to develop into the Deccan culture in time to come."2

He was a good, generous and just king. This is confirmed by epigraphical evidence. Inscriptions of Vedadri show that the Muslim governors of Firuz Shah established feeding-houses and water-houses for the benefit of the public, dug many tanks and performed many marriages. His name is also mentioned in a Marathi inscription, dated 1397 A.D., found in the temple of Bhavani of Tuljapur.

Ahmad Shah succeeded his brother, Firuz Shah, in 1422 A.D., and moved his capital from Gulbarga to Bidar. He was the ninth ruler of the dynasty and ruled between 1422 and 1435 A.D. He showed an inclination towards the Sufi cult and spent much of his time in the company of celebrated Sufi saints. His political policy was essentially based on religious zeal. Ahmad Shah evinced considerable interest in the educational activities of the State. A marked feature of his reign was that the afakis rose to political prominence.

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1 Epigraphical Collections, 1924, No. 305-307.
2 S.G. Tulpule, Marathi Prachina Korivalekha, p.300.
Sherwani describes the rule of Ahmad Shah in the following words:

"He was himself a man of some erudition, having imbibed knowledge at the feet of Mir Fazlullah Inju, and was also an adept in music and singing. He was very kind and considerate to his subjects, as when he opened his purse-strings for the purchase and free distribution of gains at the time of a great drought which occurred in the Deccan."¹

Ahmad Shah's benevolent character is reflected in his views. On the eve of his death, he is believed to have told his sons to adhere to the following:

1. To be good to the learned, knowledge and the spiritual.
2. To be good to the servants of the State.
3. To be good to the councillors of the State.
4. To be good to the farmers and cultivators of the kingdom.²

¹ Sherwani, Bahmani, pp. 211-212.
² Sherwani, "Cultural influences under Ahmad Shah Wall Bahmani", RG, 1944, pp. 375-76.
On the contrary, Ferishta mentions that Ahmad Shah demolished temples at Kullum, near Mahur, and built mosques.\(^1\) Ferishta also mentions that Ahmad Shah killed 20,000 Hindus and celebrated a festival. He destroyed the temples and colleges of the Brahmins.\(^2\)

Ferishta is further supported by Guru Charitra, which mentions Ahmed Shah Bahmani's atrocities.\(^3\) From the accounts of Ferishta and Guru Charitra it appears that Ahmed Shah was a fanatic.

Ala-ud-Din II, Ahmad Shah's son and successor, came to the throne in 1435 A.D. He followed a stern policy against his enemies as was engulfed by a number of political difficulties, chief among these being suppression of a rebellion headed by his own brother Mahammad Khan.

\(^1\) Briggs, Ferishta, II, p. 407.
\(^2\) Ibid, p. 402.
\(^3\) CC, Ch. 25.
Ala-ud-Din II later pardoned him and gave him the charge of the Raichur Doab. In the words of Sherwani, "Ala-Ud-Din had some fine traits in his character. He began his rule well and took active interest in the affairs of the kingdom." Guru Charitra also refers to his benevolent rule. Humayun Shah, who succeeded Ala-ud-Din II, ruled only for three years and some months and earned an inglorious name among the Sultans of the Bahmani kingdom. Ferishta has called him 'Zalim' - the cruel tyrant. The author of Burhan-i-Maathir agrees with Ferishta.

1 Sherwani, Bahmania, pp. 246-248.
2 GQ. Ch. 50.
4 Burhan-i-Maathir, p. 95.
However, Sherwani has taken an altogether different view with regard to the character of Humayun Shah and tried to portray him in noble colours.1 This opinion of Sherwani's appears to derive support from two inscriptions belonging to Humayun Shah's period. In one of the inscriptions, the character of Humayun Shah is described in words contrary to those of Perishta and other writers. The inscription found at Fargli in the Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh, of the year 1460 A.D., records that Humayun Shah was the "master of justice and kindness reliant on the support of Independent King Allah."2 Another epigraph of the year 1458 A.D., records that Humayun Shah ordered a step-well to be constructed at Gulbarga.3

The last great Sultan of the Bidar period and the Bahmani dynasty was Muhammad Shah III. His military record was brilliant. From 1461 A.D. onwards up to 1482 A.D., the Bahmani kingdom expanded its territories very

1 Sherwani, Bahmanis, pp. 264-270.
2 T5IM, 1964, p. 42.
considerably. In his days, not only the physical limits of the Bahmani kingdom were expanded, but its administrative affairs were efficiently managed and even reoriented by his Prime Minister, Mahmud Gawan. The revenue system was reorganised. Agricultural lands were not only systematically measured, but also classified taking into consideration of fertility of the soil. Boundaries of villages and towns were marked. The revenue assessment was fixed. All departments of the State were reformed. The central authority was strengthened. However, as Ferishta writes, Muhammad Shah III also committed atrocities. He is said to have destroyed temples at Kondapalli and killed Brahmins with his own hands and constructed mosques.¹

The chief personality responsible for the glory of the period of Muhammad Shah III, was Mahmud Gawan, his Wazir. He was a celebrated warrior and a noted administrator and also a famous poet and writer. He had profound interest in education, and founded the Madarasa at Bidar in about 1472 A.D.² It is a unique monument of the

¹ Briggs, Ferishta, II, p. 497.
   Mr. Mate has wrongly mentioned the date of the construction of Gawan's Madarasa as 1481 A.D. It is well known that it was built in 1472 A.D., which is ascertained from the chronogram on the wall of the Madarasa at Bidar.
15th century Bahmani rule. This college was built on the model of the Muslim Universities of Khorasan, Iran and Rabat. Gawan invited teachers of distinguished merit, poets, men of science, theology, literature and other holy men. It was an international educational seat. A library of 3,000 volumes on a variety of subjects was attached to it. The personal library of Gawan contained about 10,000 manuscripts. This great and beautiful building stands to this day as a testimony to Gawan's profound educational interest. He was assassinated in 1481 A.D., and, with his death, the Bahmani kingdom was doomed. The later phase of the history of the Bahmanis is a sad story of how the last four Sultans lost their power to their provincial administrators.

One of the chief reasons for the downfall of the Bahmanis was the rivalry between two groups - the Deccanis and the Afakis. What Robert Sewell observes with regard to the consequences of this party warfare is quite appropriate: "The trouble had begun which ended only with the extinction of the Bahmani monarchy and the

establishment of five rival Mohammadan kingdoms in the place of one.\textsuperscript{1} Throughout its existence of nearly two centuries, the Bahmani Sultans carried on a continuous fight with the rulers of Vijayanagara, which also contributed to the decline and disappearance of this kingdom and its division into the five Shahi kingdoms.

\footnote{Robert Sewell, \textit{A Forgotten Empire}, Delhi, 1962, p. 96.}