CHAPTER III

POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF DECCAN (C17TH-18TH AD)

In historical and physiographical setting of Deccan plateau and at the heart of peninsular of Deccan, the Golconda and Hyderabad regions are of enduring value and remained as golden episodes of Medieval Deccan's royalistic and artistic heritage. Historically, racially, religiously, culturally and ethnologically these provinces have registered a place for themselves in the general conceptual and spatial framework of medieval times.

An analytical, strategic framework and comprehensive reasoning is essential to visualize minefield of issues that remained as background of Deccani miniatures from 17th to 18th centuries. Because Miniature paintings have to be placed against geographical and historical situations and contexts in which they were produced and patronized, in order to have systematic and verifiable understanding. Moreover, miniature paintings serve as important medium of expression and representation of various cultural aspects and often illustrate contemporary politico-socio traditions of royal court and common society, indicating cultural and economic impulses behind them which gave them form and theme.

In this regard, an attempt has been made in the present chapter to discuss and analyze Golconda and Hyderabad history keeping intact political victories and turmoils, economic ups and downs, social contacts and strains, cultural progress and conflicts as background, in which positive aspects prove their contribution to the paintings, while negative aspects reveal the changes on the modes of paintings, while apart from the fact of continuation of miniatures inspite of these diverse fluctuations. A chronological framework has been adopted in this regard with contextual details.

Before the analysis of diverse historical processes that were at work in various spheres and examination of historical evolution of Qutb Shahi Dynasty of Golconda and Nizams' rule of Hyderabad, it is pertinent to
understand the term "Deccan" and to examine the evolution of the historic Deccan and the validity of its geo-political concept in order to place the history of medieval Deccan in its wider perspective and to locate Golconda and Hyderabad region innately.

In this regard a brief account of the historicity of the Deccan and Golconda and Hyderabad regions have been dealt tracing the origin of their name, royal lineage and their accomplishments.

**Etymology of the term "Deccan" and its meaning:**

The historicity of Deccan reveals that "Deccan" as a geographic, ethnic and political entity played a significant role in shaping history. A survey of its history during this era (C17th - 18th AD) is a seemingly unending sequence of political wars, economic progression, cultural contributions and artistic achievements.

The term "Deccan" "Dekkan" or "Dakhan" is apparently derived from the word Dakshina meaning, "right hand" or south.¹ The Deccan is referred to in the epics as the 'Dandakarayana'¹ and is associated with the life of Rama in the forest." The sacred literary works like puranas (Maitreya, Vayu) and other Sanskrit works refer to it as "Dakshinapada" or "Dakshinavadhya" meaning "The Southern Region."² That the name Deccan was in usage in ancient times is proved by the fact that the authors of the Periplus refers to a portion of peninsular India as 'Dachinabades'.³ This was on account of the fact that "Dachonos" was the language of the then natives.⁵ In the beginning of the 5th C AD Fahien, the Chinese traveler, remarked that towards south, there is a country called 'Ta-Thsin' which corresponds to the Sanskrit word 'Dakshina'.⁶

Modern scholars remark that a physical outline of the Deccan presents varied geographical regions of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra with historical and cultural peculiarities. According to them Deccan as the plateau is situated to the south of river Krishna and Tungubhadra rivers.⁷

In totality, the word Deccan indicates a distant region in Indian sub-continent mainly in south India possessing certain peculiar characteristics of its own and represents a geographic, socio and cultural unity. It covers a wide area and has a distinct personality of its own. Many capitals of Deccan
played a large role in the administrative evolution, religious movements, literary growth and development of art and architecture. It left an imprint on cultural history not only because of its geographical position but also on account of its continuous history.

Geographically, the land of Deccan is traversed by several rivers like Narmada, Tapti, Godavari, Krishna, Bhima, Indravathi and Tungabhadra. This expansive rocky plain is separated from north by Vindhya and Satpura mountain ranges. These luxuriant mountains and green beauty gave Deccan a pleasant look.

Three main distinct geographical areas of Deccan namely- the marchland Deccan or the area of political assimilation, the heartland Deccan or the area of political control and the peripheral Deccan or the area of political influence can be perceived.⁸

Mullah Washi a poet of the Qutb Shahi Court commented on the greatness of Deccan as:

"Dakhan hai nageena, angoothi haijag, Anghoothi kon hurmat, nageena hi lag."

The Deccan is the precious stone; the ring is the world,

the value of the ring lies only in the jewel[⁹]

An analysis of the historical significance of the Deccan and evolution of the Deccan as a region also reveals that, the Deccan wielded together the Aryan civilization of the north and the historic Dravidian civilization of the south. This land of Deccan with its abundant natural wealth offered vast potential to be tapped in the form of land resources and maritime trade. In geo-political terms its ability to control Konkan and Coromandal Coast placed Deccani kingdoms in a sound situation. This wealth, beauty and placement attracted numerous visitors, settlers and invaders of both indigenous and foreign origin.¹⁰ They penetrated into Deccan and colonized it at various times with new concepts and dimensions that ultimately resulted in the formation of different regional kingdoms.
These influences of north and south mingled on the Deccan and the collation of contrasting political and cultural forces gave medieval Deccan in particular a distinctive character on which evolved many royalistic kingdoms, the prominent being Golconda of Qutb Shahis and Hyderabad of Asaf Jahis.

Regarding the greatness of medieval Deccan, Allama Iqbal remarked:

"Noor ke Zarron se qudrat ne banayee ye zamin.
Ainah tapke Deccan ki khak agar paye fishar"

Which means nature has created this earth with the particles of divine light; the atmosphere of the Deccan radiates light and shines like a mirror.¹¹

**POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF GOLCONDA AND HYDERABAD:**

The medieval Deccani dynasties of Golconda and Hyderabad are noted for their rich and pervasive art traditions. In order to understand the total art activity of these regions, a wider synthesizing perspective is essential taking into consideration both art and the cultural matrix which affected its development and promotion. Hence an attempt has been made in the present study to analyze political, economic and social structure, which gave rise to the splendid tradition of miniature paintings in medieval Deccan during seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

In this regard, the broad contours of administrative setup with socio-economic trends of these dynasties have been discussed avoiding the overtones of factual details.

An appraisal of the political conditions of these dynasties give an account of central, provincial and judicial administration, military organization, inter-territorial relations in peace and war and their relations with non-Deccani powers. An inquiry into the economic picture provides insight about the revenue administration, taxation system, trading and industrial activities and the overall economic prosperity of the kingdoms. The study of the social structure reflects the conditions of the human society. Providing a record of caste structure, family, food and drinks, dress and ornaments, games and
sports, festivals, education, literature and the picture of religion and culture in medieval Deccan.

GOLCONDA [Qutb Shahis-C1518-1687 AD):

The political scenario of Golconda rise is intervened with the disintegration of Bahamani kingdom and the subsequent beginning of new era of historical development. Founded by Sultan Quli, this dynasty spanned 171 years in the history of Medieval Deccan from (C1518-1687 AD) where eight kings of royal line namely Sultan Quli, Jamshed Quli, Subhan Quli, Ibrahim Qutb Shah, Muhammed Quli Qutb Shah, Muhammed Qutb Shah, Abdullah Qutb Shah and Abdul Hasan Tana Shah have left a firm impression of their enduring strong personalities upon the Deccani land and people. They developed Deccan idiom and patronized new Deccani culture apart from promoting economic prosperity.

The fall of the Bahamanis opened an altogether new phase in the making of medieval Deccan, where the rise of Qutb Shahi Sultans turned Golconda into a new dynastic centre. In the great tableland of Deccan, the dominions of these rulers formed a significant part, where beginning as an enclave around the great fort of Golconda, they gradually spread in all directions.

Sultan-Quli, the founder of Golconda dynasty, traced his descent from a Turkish tribe 'Qara Quyunlu' - which had black sheep as its emblem. Initially, when disturbances broke out in and around Telangana area of Bahamani rule, Sultan Quli, a Turk who was a high ranking military officer under Mohammed Shah Bahamani, were sent to quell the trouble. Being an efficient military leader and a strategist and with his unique position as a war commander he was successful both in suppressing the revolt and in rescuing his overlord. The title of Qutb-ul-Mulk was conferred on him by Mohammed Shah. He was also appointed as subedar of Telangana which included Warangal, Golconda and Kodangal. Because of his martial and literary talents he was addressed as "Master of the Sword and the Pen". The Golconda fort was also given as a Jagir to Sultan. He gave it the name of Muhammed nagar and made it as his capital.
The historicity of this Golconda fort which played important role in 17th Century lies in the fact that it existed from early medieval Deccani era. Sultan Quli Strengthened the ramparts of famous Golconda fort and built several parts of it like fabrication, living quarters, Turkish baths, etc. Thevenot who visited Golconda in 1666 AD remarked that it was named as Golconda by Sultan Quli Qutb Shah himself. The legend says a shephred (golla) guided Sultan Quli to the fort and hence forth, it came to be known as Golla or Golconda meaning in Telugu 'the plateau of the shepherd'.

Within few years the feud among the Afaqis and the Deccanis ultimately led to the break - up of the Bahmani kingdom and with its disintegration, Sultan Quli assumed virtual independence and thus laid the foundation of the great Qutb Shah dynasty with Golconda region as his capital. This royal dynasty - founded in 1518 AD - lasted till its end in 1687, when Mughal suzerainty of Aurangzeb dominated.

Sultan Quli made all efforts to subjugate the perennial feuding smaller rulers and to extend the territories by a policy of annexation. With this expansion, the resources of Golconda also increased. It expanded along with its army, civilian population and habitations. Though he was virtually independent, it is remarkable to note that Sultan Quli never formally declared his kingship or assumed royal title. His full name Sultan Quli meant servant of the king and his dynasty took its name from the title Qutb-ul-Mulk given to Sultan by his Bahamani overlord.

Although he belonged to a noble family of Persia and was decedent of a line of kings, he was personally an entirely self-made man. It was by dint of great will power, perseverance, tact and determination he rose to the highest dignity in the Deccan and carved this independent principality, which gradually developed into a kingdom that united many parts of Deccan, under one scepter. Tarikh -i- Muhammed Qutb Shahi, which is virtually the official history of first six rulers of the dynasty, also remarks that Sultan - Quli never assumed kingship and ruled mainly as the senior most - nobleman of the Deccan.

On the whole, during the rule of Sultan Quli, Golconda became a strongly fortified citadel and was adorned with numerous civic and military
structures. Thereupon Golconda Kingdom was at its height under his successors.\textsuperscript{22} Here it is apt to point out that these details of Golconda’s historic origin with royal foundational lineage, gives insight of the beginning of a new era that promoted extensive artistic traditions of medieval Deccan resulting in a new brand of paintings in 17th Century.

Sultan Quli was succeeded by Jamshid Quli who took over the reign of rule with blood-strained hands as he murdered his father Sultan Quli at the ripe old age of ninety.\textsuperscript{23} There was political instability due to frequent wars and antagonist relations between the Deccan kingdoms. His rule was marked mainly by people’s resentment over his patricide. However, few cultural traits continued in spite of conflicting situations.

He was succeeded by his son Subhan Quli who was ultimately overthrown by his paternal uncle Ibrahim Qutb Shah, who came out of his political asylum of seven years at Vijaynagar, a stay that left an indelible impression on Ibrahim and his son’s cultural policies. The political atmosphere during his reign was in turmoil. War, conflicts, vengefulness were the common features of the polity. Squabbles as well as alliances were common.\textsuperscript{24} Ibrahim had a tough time in averting dangers and keeping intact the so called glorious kingdom Golconda that was built assiduously and strategically. After ascending the golden throne, decorated with lion and elephant statues on either side signifying might and majesty of kingdom, Ibrahim adopted sky-blue as official colour of Golconda,\textsuperscript{25}

As an administrator, he got engaged himself in numerous royal and public works like enforcing systematic law, consolidating kingdom, establishing intelligence agencies, constructing lakes.\textsuperscript{26} He brought largest part of the Deccani region mainly Telugunadu under the control of Golconda mainly due to his foresight, political acumen and administrative ability and remained as just and benevolent ruler. The only irony of his rule was that he had to fight against the same Vijayanagar Empire which once gave him shelter of protection.\textsuperscript{27} However after this battle, Deccan Sultans had a glowing flow of success.

It was during the long, peaceful and prosperous reign of his successor Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah that Golconda dynasty reached its zenith.
Belonging to both cultures he believed in harmony and peaceful atmosphere for running the rule and in cultural integration and hence had no inhibitions against the local populace. Golconda was further strengthened due to his military powers and powerful army. He is the best remembered as a great planner and founder of the city of Hyderabad. He spent his entire energy and devoted his time to make Hyderabad a picturesque and memorable city.

According to popular legend, the king was enamoured of a dancer called Bhagmati belonging to a small village of Chinchelam near present Charminar. He founded Bhagnagar to perpetuate his love for her. Later when the title of Hydermahal was bestowed upon her, the name of the city was accordingly changed to Hyderabad. The new city was built with Charminar as its focal point. There are several versions of historians supporting as well as contradicting this naming of the region.

The new city was very dear to Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah. Hence, he prayed for the progress of the city as

"Mera Shahr Logan se mamar karya satni"

Meaning, "Oh God! Let my city be filled with people like fish in the sea".

This magnificent city was prepared on the plans of his Peshwa Mir Mumin.

The noted historian Ferishta remarked that, "There is no other city in the whole of India like the city of Hyderabad either in the east, west, north or south." This city was adorned in 17th century with magnificent royal building of fine architecture and superb gardens of greenery. Maulana Hali, a famous poet, remarked: "If anybody enters the garden for work, he will certainly return with the aroma and fragrance of flowers. Hyderabad is indeed a garden city; its doors of prosperity are open to all."

It is apt to point out two important points, first of all such descriptions are worthy in the sense that such scenes were represented in paintings of the time and secondly, it was this great city which in 18th century became the capital of Asaf Jahis, who ruled over Deccan region after the fall of Golconda and Mughal suzerainty.

During Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah's reign, Golconda kingdom reached highest pinnacle of glory and witnessed golden age of Qutb Shahi dynastic
rule, with his compassionate rule as a planner, patron and foster of medieval Deccani atmosphere.

Sultan Mohammad Qutb Shah succeeded his father-in-law.\textsuperscript{35} His reign was most peaceful period in the history of Golconda marked by neither internal problems nor external attacks. He administered the kingdom with loyal, trustworthy, sincere and honest officials, strewed ministers and a gallant army.\textsuperscript{36}

The reign of his successor Abdullah Qutb Shah saw the decline of Golconda.\textsuperscript{37} Abdullah lived his long reign under a constant threat and provocative circumstances and survived through political maneuvering taking advantage of the risk between the successors of Shah Jahan. But this very game cost him dearly when Aurangzeb came out to top in the war of succession and became the emperor himself. Finally, Golconda came under the Mughal pressure in 1636 AD and 1656 AD, when it was attacked and ultimately heavy indemnity had to be paid which reflects the decline of glowing independence of Golconda.

Abdullah Qutb Shah was succeeded by Abul Hasan Tana Shah, the last ruler of Qutb Shahis. He proved to be an able ruler and a staunch defender against the Mughal might for a long time. He is remembered as a benign and tolerant king, whose story is a tragic romance.\textsuperscript{38} He was popularly known as Tanashah because of his delicacy of temperament and patronage and not due to his despotic behaviour.

His reign was marked by misunderstandings, palace intrigues, plots, dissensions, rampages and ultimately the fall of Golconda. It was due to the able talents of Madanna and Akkanna, Hindu prime minister and commander-in-chief of Abul Hasan, a total collapse of administrative machinery was guarded to a great extent.\textsuperscript{39} They skillfully averted grave situations and maintained law and order in critical times. It was the elimination of these brothers who were beheaded by plotters that cleared the decks for Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb, who invaded Golconda in 1687 AD, which resulted in its end.

The fall of Golconda during his reign was marked by a series of tragic events. The eight-month long siege witnessed strong self-defense,
courageous confrontation with the enemy and unshattered loyalty of the people of the soil. The dignified stand of Abul Hasan and unshakable loyalty of a soldier Abdul Razak Lori stand out unparalleled.

Finally it was when a traitor named Abdullah Khan who opened the gates of Fateh Darwaza of Golconda fort in middle of dead-night, which allowed Mughal armies to enter the fort and capture Golconda. Abdul Hasan faced the confrontation with great fortitude and finally was taken as a prisoner to Bidar and later to Daulatabad (Aurangabad), where he died after long years of captivity. Jan Saper khan, one of the nobles of Aurangzeb accompanied him upto Daulatabad and later was made the Governor of the Deccan.\textsuperscript{40} Thus, with the capture of Abdul Hasan, the royal line of Qutb Shahi era ended, signaling the advent of Mughals and fall of Golconda era. Golconda became a part of the Deccan province of the Mughals with capital at Aurangabad. With its decline, the happy times of Hyderabad too disappeared leaving agony and pain. With the conquest of Deccan Aurangzeb expanded Mughal Empire to cover the entire sub-continent. However, after his death the empire rapidly declined.

Regarding Deccan during 17th Century, mainly after the end of Qutb Shahi Dynasty, Golconda was annexed and re-titled \textit{'Dar-al-Jihad Hyderabad'}.\textsuperscript{41} The lands of the south were detached to form a separate province. Aurangzeb transferred in 1688 AD, a cadre of experienced Mughal officers into new provinces. The Mughal governor Jan Sapar Khan and his son Rustan Dil Khan, Irani amirs of long, familiar services were appointed. Nine mansabdars and their contingents were stationed as faujdars or military intendments at Hyderabad.

Twelve mansabdars assumed independent command of the greatest fortresses in the former kingdom. A similar line of officers took charge of the newly constituted Hyderabad province. Other mid-level Muslim functionaries, artists and craftsmen and military officers, were offered services in the similar parts of the imperial administration as low-ranking mansabdars. Abul Hasan's male relatives and Muslim nobles largely of Turko-Persian descent became Mughal nobles. Hindu officials' mainly Telugu Nayaks recruited by Qutb Shahis from the Kamma, Velama, Kapu
and Raju warrior peasant castes, who served as military commanders, found themselves redundant after 1687 AD and many disappeared into obscurity.\(^{42}\)

Among the prominent officials during this time were Rohilla Khan, Yousuf Khan, Mubarak Khan and Mir Quamuruddin. Nearly for 37 years Hyderabad came under the direct rule of these subedars appointed by Mughal emperor. Large scale migrations in and out of Golconda took place during this period. It was during this time many artists from north, got settled down in Deccan, contributing to a new phase of Deccani painting.

It was when Farukh Siyar appointed Mir Quamuruddin as his representative of Deccan with the title "Nizam-ul-Mulk", that changes started taking place with a positive note. It was he, who later with the title "Nizam-ul-Mulk" Feroz Jung Asafgarh, established his supremacy in 1724 AD, independent of Mughal Emperor and laid the foundation of famous Asaf Jahi Dynasty that continued till post 18th Century.\(^{43}\)

It was during the reign of Asaf Jahis in 1763 AD that Hyderabad came to limelight and became glorious once again when it was made the capital of Nizams. Thus, begins another interesting chapter of Hyderabad in medieval Deccan.

This analysis of political system of Qutb Shahis makes it clear that political administration of Sultans was largely based on Islamic Principles, where sovereignty rested with God. The Qutb Shahis believed in the Divine right theory of Monarchy and considered themselves as the representative of Allah on earth. The selection of the king was limited to the royal family. The law of primogeniture was generally followed while there were also instances of patricides and fratricides to get on to the throne. Sometimes nobles and chiefs of action elected the Sultan. King being supreme, the entire administrative machinery derived its momentum from him, whose status had religious sanction behind it. They remained the supreme governor of the realm, the final court of appeal, the chief lawgiver and prime commander of forces. They enjoyed absolute executive, judicial and military powers.\(^{44}\)

*Basatinu's - Salatin* gives an insight into the ideals of administration. In the hierarchy Sultan was followed by *Majlis-i-kingash* (advisory council) *Majlis-i-Diwandari* (Privy Council), peshwa, *Jumlat-ul Mulk* or Mir Jumla,
Wazir, Dabir, Kotwal, Sarkhel and other noted officials. They lived in a dignified style fulfilling the loyal and royal responsibilities. Sultan always had a critical eye on their actions and deeds. A total outlook presents that the legal and administrative framework was provided by Sharia-Quran (the Holy Book of Muslims) and Hadith (Sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad), Sharia (Consensus) amongst the most learned of the Prophet's companions, and Urf (Local customs and practices.). The rulers issued decrees and orders in various residuary and secular matters known as firmans (Official Documents).

Regarding law, common, criminal and personal law of the community existed to which populace was subjected. However, Sultan's judgement in all matters remained absolute and ultimate. In modern sense, it was a politico-ecclesiastical tyranny where the degree of severity depended upon the personality of the Sultan.

In army in order to offset the strength of the enemy they had an almost excellent reserve of infantry and cavalry at their dispose to turn down the gaining scales and scores of enemies. Army consisted of feudal levies and mercenaries and included Hindus. In the battlefield opposing forces raged to certain extent and ended when both sides were equally fatigued and disseminated, sometimes when equally matched. The rulers used harsh methods, to subjugate anarchical conditions mainly towards perennially feuding smaller rulers and other allies. As a result, Golconda kingdom by the middle of 17th Century extended its boundaries and included places like Kondagal, Rajamahendravaram, Ahobilam, Vinukonda, Khammam, Penugonda, Gandikota, parts of Karnataka. Boundaries upto Srikakulam, Machlipatnam, Gopalalapalli, Viraghattam. Qasimkota, Chandra bazaar (Orissa), Gooty and Kurnool.

Under their control were famous forts of Warangal, Bhongir, Khammam, Bellamkonda, Kondapalli, Kodaveedu and Rajahmundry. Methwold in his relations written in (Cl613-22 AD) stated that there were 66 forts and castles in Golconda, each commanded by a Naik, whose enormity and impregnability were rare in character. The garrisons consisted numerous soldiers of talent. Tavernier, Bernier gave account of weapons used like
broad swords, muskets, bows and arrows, battle-axes, helmets, iron-jackets, fire arms, armlets, etc, which proves that army was well-equipped.

Within empire, criminals, traitors and errant people were often beheaded. Though hemmed in by a number of enemies, rulers tried to recover lost territories and regained the pristine glory of the kingdom. Being perceptive rulers, they realized that the support of Hindu subjects who were in majority was essential for a stable and peaceful atmosphere. They diagnosed properly that other Deccani rulers who did not trust local people had to face internal problems. With this insight they remained benevolent and to prove their secular credentials appointed non-local and non-Muslims to the post of prominence like Ramaraju, Jagadeva Rao, Murahari Rao, Akkanna, Madanna and others.

The Sultans were generally against the policy of aggrandizement and deceitment of one Sultanate at the cost of another. Sometimes they had to face diplomatic defeat and military setback. But generally as warriors of great caliber and the commanding power, they kept vigilant eye on every aspect of political endeavors and oppositions.

It was observed that two main centers acted as thrust-areas of administrative machinery. Golconda at early stage and later Hyderabad during Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah's reign. In state of affairs a number of accredited representatives, ambassadors of note and responsibility from various places were appointed and received. Among the categories of envoys, the permanent army posted in imperial Golconda was known as Hajji-i-Mugami. Iranian representatives as Hajib-i-Azimush, and envoys as Shai-bhandar.\textsuperscript{46} Envoys with special mission were known as Hajib-i-Maslihah and representatives of Dutch and English Companies were known as Agents.\textsuperscript{47} These diplomatic corps hailed from Iran, Mughal Empire, Bijapur, Ahmednagar and even mighty Vijayanagar Empire.

These agents of diplomacy carried with them the commands and authorities of Qutb Shahis. They played prominent role in war and peace. Here it is apt to remark that among the tradition followed by Qutb Shahis, the most important rule was that before war action, an ultimatum had to be sent to possible opponent through these envoys and agents. Another war
tradition being fighting against a foreign enemy in Deccan united with other Deccani powers in case of emergency, not withstanding the dimensions and quarrels they had earlier.

The rulers conducted durbars at intervals, which were marked by great pomp and show. The nobles and subordinate attended the ministerial councils which held regularly. Persons of honesty and loyalty were appointed in this council by Sultan, who discussed the problems of the public. Nobility also equally participated in state matters and because of their support cool Sultans could hold-up and were successful in crushing enemies owing to near selection of advisors of worth and merit.\(^{48}\)

Another interesting feature of their polity was that Qutb Shah's had intimate contacts with great Shia state Iran especially with Safawids, ever since the establishment of the dynasty.\(^{49}\) They recognized Persian emperor as their overlord. Ties of Shiaism existed between them. However, Persia could not provide any military support to Golconda against Mughals as a counterpoise, due to geographical location and distance, which limited its role in balance of power and the calculation of friendly assistance to Golconda.

It was only after the Deed of 1636 AD signed between Shahjahan and Abdullah Qutb Shah, the relations were strained in Qutb Shahi policy. Golconda became a vassal of the emperor, where Sultan gave up his royal title and called himself the hereditary disciple of the emperor. This resulted in a change of status to mere protectorate of the empire and accepted the position of subservience and humility to the throne. After this treaty Shah Jahan left Aurangzeb as viceroy of the Deccan. This status was even more deteriorated during Abul Hasan's reign with the Deed of Agreement in 1674 AD where Abul Hasan addressed the Mughal emperor with astounding titles like Khalifa of God, Shadow of Soloman, etc.\(^{50}\) With the fall of Golconda with extra ordinary courage, dareness and capacity, the glorious reign of Qutb Shahis, political history of achievements, enterprises, passions, ambitions and pride also ended.

In culmination, the political history reflects royal lineage and a parallel line of nobility who, in their unique style, sought glory in fulfilling larger
destiny and struggled to impart a meaning to the mysteries of life by promoting a unique combination of medieval Deccani land of Golconda.

In economic terms, the Qutb Shahi kingdom was the wealthiest of the Deccani kingdoms by the end of sixteenth century, whose prosperity had become proverbial in the contemporary writings of the foreign travelers. The economic property of the kingdom can be gleaned from the fact that agriculture was in a flourishing condition. The Sultans took special interest in improving irrigation works, as a result of which the entire coastal area under their control was full of fertile lands and rice-crops in plenty. This agricultural surplus gave tremendous impetus for the development of industry, trade and commerce and contributed to the prosperity of Golconda.

Apart from this Qutb Shahis possessed with such a geographical area with lot of opportunities available for the growth of trade and handicraft Industry.\textsuperscript{51} They encouraged trade by offering lot of concessions like granting farmers and tax exemptions to traders of various communities.\textsuperscript{52} For instance the biggest industry of Golconda was that of diamond mines and the miners and merchants supplied diamonds to merchants at Surat, Goa, Golconda, Bijapur, Agra and Delhi.\textsuperscript{53} Diamond fairs were held at Elichpur, where the Gujarati traders purchased the Diamonds brought From the Deccan and re-exported them to Goa and other parts of India.\textsuperscript{54}

The French traveler Tavernier also gave an account of diamond mines in the kingdom of Golconda. He remarked that the most important and biggest of the mines in the kingdom was in the capital Golconda mainly at Kolluru, where the famous Kohinoor diamond was found, which is said to have been presented by Mr. Jumla to Shahjahan.\textsuperscript{55} Here Golconda diamonds in hard sense are not from the fort of Golconda, but from the famous mines stretched in the kingdom up to river Krishna and down below which carried so much name in the world.\textsuperscript{56} Other travellers like Thevenot and Careri also referred to the flourishing Golconda diamond mines industry.\textsuperscript{57} Mining was also at Gollapalli, Ravulakonda, Rajipenta, Pantala, Kolar, Kodavatikallu, where other famous diamonds like Jacob and Regent were found.

The textiles, steel, carpet, ship building industry also flourished in a good state. Golconda rulers maintained good commercial relations with the
neighboring rulers and foreign countries in west, Asia, Europe, South-East Asia. This in turn led to regular units of trading communities and mutual exchange in terms of various technologies.\(^{58}\)

The fine quality of muslin cloth, Kalamkaris and diamonds attracted the European merchants. The painted cotton produced at Palcol was a great favorite in Persia and were exported from Masulipatnam. The metals like copper, Zinc, lead and quick silver ivory, coral and other products required for textile handicrafts were also imported. Precious stones and metals were largest item of imports at that time.\(^{59}\) Metals, corals, pearls and lead were mainly imported from Holland.\(^{60}\) Dutch were involved with articles like lead, tin, sulphur, acum and camphor.\(^{61}\) Among spices, imported were cloves, cardamom and limamonum from Sumatra, Malaca and Ceylon, perfumes like saffron and rose work and musk were also imported.

Thus, the Portuguese, Dutch, English and the French established their trading centers in Golconda kingdom. This resulted in hectic commercial activity, where textiles were exported in large quantities to Europe. It had inland trade also with Mughal dominion. There was import of various commodities from abroad like horses from Arabia and Persia, lead from England, broad cloth from France, dried fruits from Bukhara and Persia, Porcleain from China and cloves from Ceylon. Saltpeter used in the manufacture of gunpowder was another important item of import.

Among all these there were extensive commercial and trade relations especially with Persia. Textiles, tobacco, gunpowder, rubies, wooden furniture, constituted the main exports and carpets, ceramics, glass, silver, pearls, fruits and horses were main imports from Persia. Slaves also constituted important item of trade. Masulipatanam, Nizampatnam and Srikakulam were the principal ports of the kingdom.\(^{62}\) Narsapur on the banks of river Godavari was known for flourishing ship building activity. It is interesting here to note that the Persian word for port was Bandar, which is used for a town's name even now at Machilipatnam. Bullockcarts, horses were used for travel.

The royalty and nobility participated actively in the trade.\(^{63}\) Due to this extensive trade and commercial contacts, kingdom got filled with rich
merchants, bankers, jewelers and artisans of skill. Among them included Persians, Mughals, Tartars, Armentans, Portuguese, Franks, English and Dutch. Abbecarrc in 1672 AD observed that: "This large town Bagnagar is full of strangers and merchants. That trade is carried on by foreigners and others without restriction as to their nationality or particular business. There is such a concourse of every kind of people merchandise and riches that the place seems to be the centre of all trade in the East".  

During Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah's reign, the glory of Golconda Empire was at its peak. Business and economic activity was flourishing with traders from far and near reaching Golconda. Many Persian families got settled in Golconda. This increasing economic activities and growing population was one of the reasons, which made the Sultan to construct the famous Hyderabad city with four Kamans, 14,000 shops and 12,000 mohallasin 1591 AD.

During Abdullah time several trunk roads were laid such as Hyderabad to Machilipatnam and Hyderabad to Madras. Golconda kingdom had their own mint, where gold, silver, copper, tin coins were minted, while hons (gold coins) remained of high value, cowries were of lowest value. Coinage exhibited a great variety consisting of the Persian, Mughal, Vijaynagar, Dutch, French, English, Portuguese, Venetian, Spanish and other coins. Yet, unit of gold coinage was the Vijaynagar and that of silver coinage the Mughal rupee.

Keeping in view the pressing economic exigencies, the Qutb Shahi
tenure (cowl in early English documents), which was a lease at will for a short period. They being hereditary landlords looked after matters of village called as gotsabha, which was essentially a feudal assembly consisting of watandars, mirasidars qauldars or other feudal lords of the locality. They generally belonged to the locally reddi, karnam and Nayudu castes and were given rent free land to support them in order that they might be able to serve all classes of people.

European travelers Tavernier, Bernier and Thevenot who visited Golconda gave a clear picture of economic activities and the encouragement given by Qutb Shahis rulers, which in turn resulted in revenue progress. Particularly the system of peshkash or presents to the royal court for the work done, on behalf of the European companies started in the beginning of 17th century. For instance the Dutch paid 40% customs duty. Other sources of revenue were octroi was levied on tobacco, salt, excise duty on toddy and export duties. There was also a tax on diamonds. Tavernier who visited mines of Kollur recorded that 30,000 men worked in them and diamonds up to 900 carats were mined. There was also a system of jagirs, which were generally granted to poets, litterateurs to promote literary activity. They also used to reward those who were engaged in gardening and horticulture.

All these trends indicates the wealth of the kingdom and the affluence of the state treasury can be seen in the fact that in spite of incessant wars, wealth flowed into the kingdom, which was spent lavishly for the constructional works, architectural structures, furniture and decorators, procession scenes and promotion of arts. For instance during Ibrahim coronation ceremony, a procession of seven hundred Arab horses and two hundred war elephants all fully caparisoned in the cloth of gold were led. This indicates majestic outlook and proverbial wealth of the Qutb Shahs. It is interesting to note that such procession scenes reflecting wealth of kingdoms were also painted in miniatures of Golconda. This wealth was visible apparently in the gold jewelry worn by both women and men, especially by the dancers and courtesans for whom Golconda was renowned.
These economic conditions indicate that Sultans always tried and aimed at strengthening of the realm and replenishment of the treasury with enduring progress on all fronts. This economic finance acted as a pillar of support to the system of administration not necessarily denying the importance and existence of other spheres.

The social picture of Golconda presents a combination of various ethnic, religious, linguistic and caste identities, where Sultans tried to foster a sense of harmony and maintain social solidarity not only to have peaceful atmosphere but also to maintain themselves as rulers who are in real sense are aliens to local population. There was continuous flow of people from Turkistan, Khurasan, Arabia and the adjacent lands into Golconda which resulted in the formation of different cultures with different sects, castes, and tribes such as Shias, Sunnies, Brahmans, Komtis, Bundelas, Pindaries, etc. Two main points are to be observed at societal level. Muslim conquerors were accommodated into a different culture and religion of Deccani Society at one level and at another level, the local population had to face the impact of foreign social customs and traditions. But both the divisions mainly Hindus and Muslims inspite of influences, maintained their identity and individuality. However dynastic changes had only a marginal impact on social life of people. Sultans took upon themselves the cultural synthesis rather than indulging in sectarian castes and creeds. They created amiable atmosphere in which all sections gave great importance to human values, feelings and sentiments.

Most importantly a remarkable contribution of Mohammed Quli Qutb Shah's reign was that 'Deccani Culture' came into being which is a judicious blend of Hindu- Muslim cultural traditions. He popularized this culture by participating in the local customs and traditions. This exchange of cultural aspects penetrated into the literature, where literary compositions of Telugu contained Urdu words at many instances.

Qutb Shahi Sultans extended their patronage to Telugu, Urdu, Persian, and Arabic and to the learned men and scholars settled in their dominion. This interaction of culture and intimate relationship let to the birth of a new tradition of language known as Dakhni Urdu.
Cultural penetration can also been seen in the celebration of festivals. For instance *kulliyat* of Mohammed Quli Qutb Shah describes various festivals and ceremonies and celebrations like Muharrum, Shab-i-barat, Naoruz, Julwa, Basant, etc. This involvement of both Muslims and non-Muslims resulted in the formation of a composite culture known as Dakhni culture. Sultan Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah composed many verses exposing the similarities that are noticed at the time of ceremonies performed by the Muslims and Hindus.

Rulers gave equal importance to Urdu and Telugu languages and patronized several Telugu poets. Ibrahim a connoisseur of Telugu literature composed Telugu poetry and patronized poets like Addanki Gangadhara kavi, Kandakuri Rudrakavi, Ponnikanti Teleganarya kavi, Sarigonda Dharmanna, Mannganti Singana and others.⁷⁶

Similarly Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah patronized Telugu poets like Damakonda Malla Reddy, Raja Malla Reddy, Sarangu Tammaiah and others. He used to organize weekly literary discussions in Telugu and Urdu languages. This patronage to local language proves the fact that rulers needed the support of native people and hence to have command over them, knowledge of their language and goodwill of their attitude is essential. Moreover it was the personal interest and personality of the rulers, which also led to this cultural harmony. Literature developed in a congenial atmosphere under Qutb shahis and the literature produced during this period gives a vivid picture of life of the people and the emerging cultural fusion of diverse people.

Another special characteristic of Qutb Shahi culture was that all architectural constructions generally reflected a blend of Indian and Persian styles. Hindu motifs like *Puma kumbha, Padma, Hamsa* and *Gajaraja* are found in decorative embellishments of Sultan's architectural structures. Even fabulous palaces, mosques and secular buildings were constructed in these styles.

Sultans also encouraged local dances of importance. For instance Abul Hasan helped the glorious kuchipudi tradition of dance to flourish. He even
donated a village kuchipudi for the sustenance of this dance tradition at Bandar (Machilipatnam).  

The population in general consisted three main classes, the natives of Deccan, converts from Hinduism and foreign immigrants. The caste-system was an integral part of Hindu social structure. People of different classes dressed in various styles according to their status. While poor lived in a patched huts, the houses of rich were built with teak wood. Fares and melas provided entertainment. Games like chaugan or polo, kabaddi, pokhari phu (a game peculiar to the girls of Deccan) were popular in the kingdom.

Both Hindus and Muslims were taught in their own system of learning and according to the capacity of the classes. Regarding women, while Muslim women followed purdah system the conditions of widows among Hindus was deplorable due to the prevalence of Sati system. Devadasi system existed, where females were dedicated to temples. Courtesans enjoyed considerable amount of importance and significance in the society as they were a potential source of income and a perpetual source of enjoyment for kingdom and royalty. Licenses were issued to those who practiced this profession.

Tavernier stated that there were twenty thousand courtesans in the Golconda Kingdom, who were wealthy, talented and crafty. They paid tax to the state, maintained shops and danced in the court. It is apt to point out here that an analysis of miniature paintings of medieval Deccan furnishes more information regarding various accomplishments and endeavors of women, which will not restrict women to just social sphere, but to the analytic perspective of total history including political sphere.

The impact of Vijayanagar and Mughals led to the adoption of Kulan and Qaba dress patterns by both the communities, Hindus and Muslims in the Golconda Kingdom. Saris, dupattas and kamiz were worn by women. Both men and women wore ornaments. Here social structure was intertwined and influenced by prevailing cultural customary trends of Golconda consisting numerous traditional sects of indigenous and foreign.

Religious history reveals that the Qutb Shahis after entrenching themselves in power, pursued a policy of religious toleration which sprang
from their desire to strengthen the socio-economic structure that was feudal in nature and also to stabilize their alien rule in new land of Deccan.

Though Qutb Shahi rulers were Shias, they gave importance to religion of Hindus, their customs and traditions and beliefs and even participated in their religious ceremonies to the fullest extent. For instance there are as many as nine poems on vasant or basant in the collection of Mohammed Quli Qutb Shah's poems, which indicate Sultan's involvement in the festival Muslims and Hindu celebrated festivals of both religions with equal fervour and enthusiasm. The rulers and their subordinates made a number of land grants to temples and Brahmans Abul Hasan gave munificent grants for the maintenance of Rama temple at Bhadrachalam. He donated Palvancha and Sankaragiri to Bhadrachalam temple. Bhogapuram, Cherukuru, Veerannapatnam were donated to Malleswara Swamy Temple on the Banks of river Krishna. A number of Hindu temples were erected and old ones were renovated. A saivite temple was constructed near Maisaram, a suburb of Hyderabad and temples of Bala Hissar and Ananthagiri were renovated.

But the fact to be observed is that though Qutb Shahis were benevolent and tolerant to other religions, it was mainly restricted to their territorial subjects. During invasions of south India, there were instances of Hindu Temples being destroyed and looted. However in general Sultans believed that stability of a administrative rule and peace can be ensured only with the support and integration of the two religions and peaceful co-existence of Hindus and Muslims in the Kingdom.

This religious toleration can be gleaned even in the appointment of non-Muslims to various ranks of administrative machinery. Hindus enjoyed complete religious freedom and attained highest offices in the kingdoms. For instance Sultans keeping in view the knowledge and skill of Brahmins, who were competent astronomers, writers and advisors, employed them in administration. The Sultans even believed in Hindu concepts like astrology, eclipses of sun and moon, auspicious time and the impact of planets on the life of human beings. The subjects reciprocated to this policy by being humble and dedicative to the rulers as they were no instances of
major revolts against authority, except few mainly from territorial boundaries like revolt of nayakwaris during Ibrahim Qutb Shah. Sufi saints of the time also strove hard for the abolition of all discriminations and inequalities from contemporary society. Altogether the religious toleration between the Muslims and Hindus was attained and this was reflected in paintings, architecture and contemporary costumes (89).

This social and religions atmosphere of Qutb Shahi Deccan symbolises and reveals co-existence, harmony and respect to each other sentiments and human values.

However the negative aspect of medieval Deccani Golconda reveals that political atmosphere was always crowded with expansionism, vengefulness and treachery. Economic aspect of communication was limited only to administrative spheres and trade, which served to give the authorities an advantage over the populace. Societal side people often looked at ideal past, where religions like Hinduism and Islam encouraged apathy, fatalism, complacemency and submission to authority. It remained regressive and orthodox and served to strengthen political despotism. Though Sultans were interested in the welfare of all religions, Islam received additional attention and more patronage than local religions. Education got deeply rooted in religion leading to pedantry and not scholarship. At the same time art and literature depended on patronage for survival and hence fostered flattery and glorification of patrons, which means artistic instinct to large extent, had to be adjusted to expediency of reality.

However the positive prevailing conditions in polity, economy and society of Golconda mainly from 17th to 18th centuries reveals that on political front new dynastic centre at Golconda got stabilised with economic progression and cultural interaction. The rulers laid the nucleus and paved the way for the development and progress, where the poets, the artists and musicians perfected the process of cultural and linguistic reapprochement.

This synthesizing blend of patronage system was instrumental to a great extent in the development of miniature paintings in the Deccan because it is this royal patronage, of Qutb Shahis, their interest in artistic pursuits, abundant economic wealth and the theme of Deccani culture, which
remained the prime factors for the growth, progress and existence of miniature paintings.

**HYDERABAD (ASAF JAHIS OR NIZAMS 1724-1950 AD):**

The political history of kingdom and city of Hyderabad, a city glamour, beauty, eternity and history actually begins with 17th century and reaches its peak in 18th century of medieval Deccan. As mentioned earlier Hyderabad as a city was founded in 1591 AD by Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah during Qutb Shahi rule at Golconda and was made glorious capital by Nizam AH Khan Asaf Jah - II in 1763 AD during Asaf Jahis rule at Deccan. In the transitional period from 17th to 18th century, Hyderabad witnessed up and downs of glory and obstacles of progression, but ultimately withstood the fluctuations of time and destiny and remained as major centre of medieval Deccani culture and history.

The poet king of Golconda Sultan Muhammad Quli while laying the foundation of historic city prayed to almighty to bestow the city with peace and prosperity and fill it with millions of men and women of all castes, creeds and religion like fishes in the ocean. This prayer was fulfilled as time passed and Hyderabad gradually added to its culture mainly in 17th and 18th centuries, with a distinct flavor of its own and attained prime importance during the reign of Nizams.

Tarih-i-Qutb Shahi praised Hyderabad as, the city is verily a paradise and there is nothing that is not to be found here. If an old man hurries to the city he would recover his youth everything that is good is found in Hyderabad in plenty, we find in the city all that is fortunate and nothing that causes pain or sorrow. Another historian Mohammed Saqi, the court chancellor of Aurangzeb who accompanied the emperor during the siege of Golconda in 1687 AD wrote, "It is a resort of heavenly peace and worldly comfort, and it gives solace to human body, its population larger than the human mind can think of the building loftier than human———rubies".

William Methold, a European traveler exclaimed that the city of Hyderabad by virtue of its health-giving climate and abundant water supply is the best city in India. Such great city in Medieval Deccan played
prominent role as capital of Asaf Jahis in 18th Century and remained as a main seat of Political and artistic imprints.

The establishment of the Asaf Jahi rule at Hyderabad in the 18th century is a great landmark in the history of Medieval Deccan. After the fall of Golconda in 1687 AD, Hyderabad became the provincial head quarters of the subedars or subordinate officers to the Viceroyalty of the Deccan i.e.the Mughal Emperor at Aurangazeb. Later with the establishment of Asaf Jahi dynasty at Hyderabad, the region took over the erst while glory of Aurangabad (which remained as capital of Asaf Jahi for Certain time) as the capital city of the Deccan. From then the rule of Nizams saw the growth of Hyderabad culturally and economically. In totality seven Nizams ruled over medieval Deccan.

The founder of the Asaf Jahi dynasty was Mir Qamuruddin Khan, Chin Qilich Khan Nizam-ul-Mulk. His predecessors Khwaja Abid and Ghaziuddin Khan Firoz Jung acquired great honors during the reign of Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb. Nizam-ul-Mulk was the scion of a respectable family of Turkistan. He was the son of Ghaziuddin Firoz Jung, who played an important rule in capturing Golconda fort.

This indicates that the relationship existed between Nizams and Mughals from the middle of the medieval era and hence Nizam too inherited these honors and commanded great respect. Endowed with high perception and sagacity, he always stood aloof from the scramble for personal gain and power at historical Mughal court. However there were instances when he left his official post in order to grasp the substance of power in the Deccan rather than its shadow in the imperial kingdom.

At the age of 20, he received the title Chin Qilich Khan (Boy Swordsman) from the emperor. The successors of Aurangzeb gave him the governorship of Burhanpur and Oudh. Later emperor Farukh Siyar bestowed on him the title Nizam-ul-Mulk Fateh Jung in 1713 AD and appointed him as Subedar of six provinces of the Deccan including Golconda and parts of Maharastra, Karnataka and Tamil regions.

In that capacity well acquainted with the rules of governance he took the reigns of the Deccan. He performed the most eminent services in his new
and exalted post and fought against plundering Marathras and alarming Sayyid brothers in order to stabilize his position as well as to restore the empire of the old flourishing state. But unfortunately his undisputed power and rapid rise eventually incurred the wrath of the Mughal emperor Muhammad Shah, who gave order for his fall. The task of carrying out this plot was entitled to Mubariz Khan, the local governor of Hyderabad.

At this juncture, Mubariz Khan invaded Aurangabad. As a result of which Nizam met the challenge at the battlefield of Shakar Kheda near Aurangabad on 11th October 1724 AD against Mubariz Khan. The battle instigated by Mubariz khan was suppressed and he was slain. This decisive battle is of great significance in the history of medieval Deccan. For all practical purposes, the foundation of new independent Asaf Jahi dynasty was laid in 1724 AD. It marked the establishment of Nizam-ul-Mulk's hereditary rule in medieval Deccan soil. After this victory, Nizam left for Hyderabad and made it as his head quarters of administration guided by two factors, as it was far away from Marathas attack and near to other southern regions on which he wants to tighten his grip.

He reorganized administrative structure, systematized finances and alleviated Marathas. He appointed trustworthy jagirdars and punished recalcitrant people. He merged all the subas into one. When this news reached the emperor Muhammad Shah, who felt conciliation is the best policy issued a farman conferring on the Nizam the title of 'Asaf Jah' and the Subedat of Deccan. From then Nizams were known as Asaf Jahis and their flag bore the sign of kulchas.

Although Nizam obtained a hereditary viceroyalty almost entirely by his own efforts, he never ceased to acknowledge the overlordship of the Mughal emperor. He never deviated from his loyalty and expressed himself as emperor's 'Fidwi' or servant. He neither displayed royal affluence nor assumed royal title nor enforced new currency. He continued with his administration in his capacity as a Subedar but like an independent ruler.

The seven Asaf Jahi rulers who succeeded him followed this tradition calling themselves as Subedars of Mughals till the end of Mughal Empire. But the fact is that practically from 1724 AD Nizam carried his political rule
without any permission or reference from Delhi. He conducted wars, concluded treaties and conferred titles according to his discretion.

At the same time his loyalty to the emperor remained unshaken, which in one sense prove that the great glory of Golconda political rule, which was independent in nature of Mughal control in 17th century, was somewhat absent during Asaf-Jahi rule.

With his military talents Nizam extended the Deccan territories from the river Tapti to Mysore and from Karnataka to Trichinopally. He fought 87 battles during his lifetime. He was a poet and fluent in Persian and Turkish. He gave patronage to scholars of Urdu as a result Urdu literature was sufficiently enriched. Muhammad Husaini alias Khwaja Bandel Nawaz was a prominent and first known Urdu prose writer during his reign.93

Nizam believed in simple life and tolerance towards other religions. In rivalry for power between British and French, he followed a policy of non-involvement for he believed that aim of foreign powers was to take advantage of internal dissensions to gain power. His successors failed to realize this fact because of their diplomatic weakness and low military skills.

Nizam-ul-Mulk played a key role as a mediator during Nadar Shah's invasion of India in 1738 AD and was responsible for establishment of peace in Deccan. He controlled a number of subordinate rulers including those of Arcot, Kurnool, Rajamundry and Chicacole (Srikakulam).94 He also exercised a kind of shadowy suzerainty over the kingdom of Mysore and Travancore. Here it is apt to point out that Deccani painting patronised by Asaf Jahis penetrated even into some of these provinces like Kurnool, Cuddapah, etc. Thus Nizam-ul-Mulk being a good warrior, administrator and a diplomat laid the foundation of Hyderabad state and were responsible for its consolidation and organization.

After the death of Nizam-ul-Mulk in 1748 AD, large territories were lost due to disputed succession and turmoil's. It saw the penetration of English and French into Deccani politics of Hyderabad during the rule of Nizam's successors mainly Nasir Jung, Muzaffar Jung and Salabat Jung, who held Subedari of Deccan for a short period of 14 years and who were weak diplomatically and militarily.95 Hence they were forced to depend on
external assistance for the protection of their territory as well as for dealing with internal matters.

Hence after the death of Asaf Jah-I, Deccan became one of the centres of Anglo-French rivalry for power. Wars, treaties and treacheries marked their reign. These rulers though were confirmed as the Subedars by the Mughal Emperor were not given title of Asaf Jah or Nizam and hence were not historically recognized as reigning sovereigns. However they patronized arts and letters. For instance Nasir Jung was proficient in Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit. He was well versed in music, painting and calligraphy. He himself was a poet in Persian and Urdu.

It was during the reign of Salabat Jung, Mughal emperor Shah Alam-II issued a farman appointing Nizam AH khan's (fourth son of Nizam-ul-Mulk) as a subedar of the Deccan and bestowed on him the title of Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah-II. Salabat Jung was deposed by Nizam AH Khan and was imprisoned at Bidar in 1762 AD after which Nizam AH Khan shifted his capital from Aurangabad to Hyderabad.

From then onwards Hyderabad became the main seat of attraction, glory and dignity of Asaf Jahis. Being centrally located, it was away from attacks and helped in economic growth and expansion and in its rising importance and prosperity.

Nizam Ali khan's reign was one of the important episodes of Deccan history of Asaf Jahis being longest as well as most eventful and challenging. He ruled Hyderabad at a more critical period by saving the dynasty from complete fall. His reign was marked by British dominance and treaties and alliances with them, signaling the decline of Nizam's power and sovereignty.

Nizam Ali Khan was succeeded by his son Sikander Jah Asaf Jah III. It was during his rule a new township of Secunderabad was constructed mainly as a military camp for British. Though independent ruler but due to lack of courage, talent and will power made to remain at a subordinate position to growing British power. An important military aspect during his reign was anti-British sentiments in Hyderabad which made Britishers to re-organize Nizam's army. Britishers even interfered in the administrative matters mainly in the appointment of ministers that brought chaos in the kingdom.
Nasir-ud-daula succeeded his father as Asaf Jah-IV. During his period several reforms were carried out and a system of revenue administration was evolved. Middlemen were eliminated. Kingdom was divided into 16 districts, each in charge of a Talukdar, who was responsible for civil and judicial administration. One significant aspect during his reign was that in consultation with his nawab Siraj-ul-Mulk, Nizam introduced in the kingdom a law prohibiting sati.\textsuperscript{97} It was indeed a great social reform of the medieval times.

It was during the rule of Asaf Jah-IV that the famous minister Salar-Jung was appointed who by way of reforms reorganized political machinery and increased the prestige of Hyderabad. He played an important role in shaping contours of history of Hyderabad in field of education, justice and finance. His successors were great connoisseur of arts and left a priceless bequest for posterity. Apart from collecting antiquitis, art objects and rare manuscripts, they also patronized poets, writers, and artists and encouraged literary and cultural activities.

Nasir-ud-daula was succeeded by his son Afzal-ud-duala, Asaf Jah-V, an piety and an excellent scholar. He honored learned and virtuous people of talent. He extended his patronage to literary men, scholars and artists. He with liberal outlook was very generous towards needy. His reign is significant on two aspects. Mutiny of 1857 convulsed the kingdom in which 'he remained aloof and many regions were returned to Hyderabad state. In recognition to his loyalty Queen Victoria of Britain conferred on him the title of G.C.S.I which he ultimately accepted in 1861 AD.\textsuperscript{98} His Prime Minister Salar-Jung streamlined the functioning of the government. One important factor to be observed is that British earlier gave a picture to the rulers of their incapacity and dependency on them for survival. But after the revolt, they realized the fact that without Nizam's support British rule would have come to an end at other side of the Indian continent.

Mir Mahboob Ali Khan, Asah Jah-VI succeeded his father Afzal-ud-duala." During his reign the royal durbars of Nizam and Hyderabad became the focal points in the country. He followed old customs and traditions of the Asaf Jah dynasty and maintained royal etiquette and dignity. Royal
processions became order of the day like sounding of kettledrums, musical pipes, loud trumpets, procession of elephants decorated and studded with gold and silver brocades. Such scenes of celebrity and music were also represented in miniature paintings. He was a remarkable man with extraordinary talent for administration combined with a capacity for hard work. His rule was an example of royal munificence, grandeur, hospitality and patronage. He was tolerant, humble and a man of integrity. Shooting, hunting and riding were his favorite past times. He gave importance to concepts like knowledge, intelligence, enlighten cultivation of sciences and arts. It was said that he had a mystic power of curing snakebite and power of physical endurance and ruled more with heart than head. He established Asafiya state library for preserving valuable manuscripts and works of literary value.

Mir Osman AH Khan, Asaf Jah VII, was the last of Nizams known as fabulous ruler, richest man in the world. However he disliked the gaudy, pageantry wise, regal, look and the desperate socializing between the British rulers and the Nizams. Another exciting sphere of his personality was Nizam's parsimony. Nizam smoked cheapest of cigarettes, wore same cap for thirty years and carried the same walking stick for forty years. However he was pious, able administrator and an autocrat. Beautiful gardens were raised all over the city during his rule. The city of Hyderabad retained its old world charm, keeping in pace with developments till its integration into the Indian union.

Thus, the seven Asaf Jahi Nizams continued to preserve traditions and culture of medieval Muslim Deccan started by the Qutb shahis rule and brought peace to Hyderabad region during times of turmoil's. Throughout 18th century power struggles among Nizams, English, French and Marathas continued, resulting in political unrest. Culturally they gave encouragement to outburst of literature and artistic activities. Under their rule Hyderabad emerged as a versatile paradise with powerful trends in architecture, language and art culture.

Thus an analyses of political conditions reveals that taking advantage of fluctuating political ethos in 18th century, Asaf Jahis carved out an
independent kingdom and gradually became a dominant force in the entire Deccan. After the liquidation of imperial rule, they emerged as powerful rulers. Nizams were endured with lofty ideals, political sagacity, administrative capacity and statesmanship of high order. They brought peace and security to the region at the critical climax of decline. They adopted successful war strategies as commanders of army. Basic divisions of administration like diwani, sarf-e-khas and Paigah owed their origin mainly to Nizams.

Their rule often came under the influence of Mughals, British and French. Nizams never ruled as sovereigns in the real sense but maintained their stature and structure dignifiedly till the end. Being learned scholars most of them patronized poets and learners and other talented groups. They displayed great statesmanship and foresight in bringing the polity close to the people.

Nizams aspired to make their kingdom an independent polity and their passion remained to have a strong self-supporting and autonomous kingdom. Their sense of royalty and dignity made them unique and away from subordination and subservience to a large extent. Though they did not declared their independence from Mughal Empire, yet did not tolerate any interference of it in internal matters and political affairs. They administered Hyderabadi Deccan in their style and sometimes even resented the autocratic attitude of the emperors. Nizam-ul-Mulk successors preserved their sovereign identity which can also been seen in their independent coinage, anthem and flag systems which are symbols of freedom and authority.

Among the sound principles of rule formulated by Nizam contained concepts like avoiding bloodshed, scheduled work, strive for peace, wars to be fought to exhibit rank and dignity, appointment of right persons to right posts and reviewing of treasury. They with courage, military prowess attained highest position and strode the 18th century Deccan due to their commanding personalities and outstanding talents. Many-a-times they averted downfall and revived past Deccanis glory and strength.

They maintained standing army not only to safeguard their integrity but also to check the growing power of Europeans and raids of Marathas,
Afghans, Sardars, Mysore Maharajas and local Zamindars. Army consisted of one-lakh soldiers, 1000 canons, 3000 elephants, several horses- mules and camels. It is interesting to note that Nizam Ali khan established two battalions of female soldiers of 1000 each with mounted guards. Army included Mughals, French corps, sarf-e-khas force, Paigah army and others. Making offensive and defensive alliances they safeguarded dynastic rule in Deccan from time to time. Sometimes they had to depend on British, due to internal problems, court intrigues and weak finances. However they retained individual outlook and judgement.

Nizams had high-sounding titles like H.E.H, Rustum-i-Dowral Asaf Jah, Muzzafar-ul-Mulk, Mir Osman Ali khan Bahadur, Fateh Jung Nizam-ud-daula, Nizam-ul-Mulk, Sipah Salar, Arasru-i-Zaman. In the hierarchy next to rulers were Paigah nobles, who were very influential and faithful to Nizams. They promoted art, literature, sports and enjoyed great respect in society. The ministers namely Salar Jung and his successors and Maharaja Sir Kishen Pershad also played a prominent role in the kingdom. They too gave encouragement to art, literature and patronized men of learning. They were symbols of nobility.

Many paintings of the period depict these personages and masters of nobility. The Rajas of Samsthanas also enjoyed a high position under Nizams. They were included in the nobility and were given titles like Maharaja, Rajas, etc. These samsthanas exercised various functions and had control over their subjects independent of Nizams rule. But at the same time they acknowledged the sovereignty of the Nizam. Some of the prominent samsthanas were Wanaparthi, Gadwal, Jetprol, Amarchinta, Gurugunta, Shorapur, Palunch, Sarvapalle and others. It is interesting to know that painting patronized by Nizams even penetrated into these samsthanas where we find few paintings depicting royal and related aspects.

In external matters, Nizams had political relations with the British East India Company and Mughals. In the 17th Century British and French traders began to involve themselves in Indian politics. As a result successive Nizams of Hyderabad seeking to consolidate their kingdom against rivals obtained first French and later British support. In exchange for their help
the British acquired from the ruling Nizam the coastal Andhra districts lying to the North of Madras and later the hinterland districts. Though the major part of Andhra country came under British rule, parts of the Telugu speaking areas, known as the Telangana region remained under Nizams dominion.

These are culmination of political scenario under Nizams royalty. Royal buildings constructed during their time remained as museums of art treasures and palaces possessing priceless collection of paintings, statues and furniture of multitude from different places.

On economic front of Nizams rule, the wealth can be seen in the piled up stacks of gold bricks, chests of diamonds and pearls and mountains of silver rupees. Wealth is spent in organizing social gatherings, in designing the architectural styles and in aesthetic and moral resurgence by way of patronizing poets and artists. Wealth kept on increasing with Nazaras or offerings from nobles clustered around Hyderabad royal courts and men of faith from different parts of world.

There were instances of financial crisis also, where rulers had to mortgage their jewels to meet the expenses. They had to give away northern circars to British and few towns to French not only to consolidate their kingdom against rivals but also to meet the expenses incurred on them.

The rulers had penchant for autonomy and economic progress. They took special care of economy and settlement of land revenue, which remained as main source of revenual income. Hyderabad during their rule remained as most lightly taxed kingdoms. Rigorous economy was maintained in every branch. Nizams appointed separate revenue collectors, tahsildars and Jagirdars for collection of revenue. They were subject to the control and direction of the provincial Diwan, who in turn was guided in his transactions by the orders of the rulers.

This new economic arrangement was devised to ensure regular flow of revenues and to maintain the financial stability of the kingdom. Apart from rulers, nobility too played a good role to extricate kingdom from financial crisis and maladministration with remarkable assiduity, governance, and observation. Cement, paper and sugar factories gained momentum. Locally made articles were given importance and paper was manufactured at
Kaghaziguda. Ellora, Gurud, Koralla, Warangal, Medak and Hyderabad were the places where paper industry flourished. The Nima and Jama cloth was manufactured at Nanded.

Nizam's minted coins of variety. They appointed news reporters and postal runners for the delivery of messages. They established *Dak Chaukis* (postal offices) for communication. Money lending became the most paying and attracting occupation. *Vetti* system (forced labour) resulted due to feudal aristocracy. Cobblers, engaged in tanning of leather, for drawing water, were forced to supply these to landlords free of cost, while the rest of peasantry paid a fixed quantum of grain. Boyalu, Bestalu, Chakali, were forced to carry palanquins of landlords. Similarly toddy-tappers, weavers, washer men, potters, shepherds, barbers were exploited to maximum extent possible.

Paigahs, samsthanas, jagirdars, banjardars, maktears, inamdars or agraharams were the various kinds of feudal oppressors. Some of them used to have their own revenue officers to collect the taxes of which they paid small quarter to the kingdom. Here *paigas* were estates granted to Muslim feudals, especially to Nizams relatives for maintaining armed persons to help Nizam during emergencies. Deshmukhs and Deshpandes were other officers who as tax collectors grabbed thousands of acres of best fertile cultivated land oppressing peasantry. In particular Nizams appointed revenue collectors called Tahsildars for the realization of additional sum.

In totality 18th century Asaf Jahi economy is a culmination of positive and negative aspects. Firstly the royal court reflected numerous wealth, symbolized grandeur and sophisticated way of living and on other side financial crisis and an oppressed peasantry existed in the economic society. But in spite of these fluctuating tendencies, like incessant wars, economic regression, rulers contributed their part in economic uplift and promoted other aspects of history also like encouraging aesthetic and artistic tractions, which enabled to have literary and artistic progress in the kingdom.

The social scenario of Hyderabad under Nizams as earlier presents a picture of composite culture consisting numerous castes, creeds and communities. Nizams left legacy of a pluralistic secular society based on great ideals of tolerance, justice, adjustment and equality.
As a result of coexistence of diverse cultures, languages, and traditions a delightful blend of culture with named aspects enriched Hyderabadi society, which came to be known as Hyderabadi culture. In this new culture different sections of population not only coexisted peacefully but interacted with each other for mutual enrichment. For instance Hindu subjects used to affix their names with name Mahbub (beloved), Badshah (king), etc. Within Hindu society numerous castes existed. Nizams never tried to disturb the existing caste system from the point of view of their stability.

Purdah system continued among higher Muslim classes. However Nizam's unmarried daughters were exempted from this. Widow remarriages were prohibited by higher sections among Hindus and gradually lower sections too followed in order to enhance their dignity and prestige. It is worth mentioning here that Nizam's rule prohibited sati-system. In the Zenana palace, female guards and servants looked after begum's wardrobe, dresses, jewels, food and drinking.

Regarding food styles and dress-patterns, jawar, bajra, rice, wheat, maize, pulses and vegetables formed the common food. Dhoti and Sherwani were common dresses among Hindus and Muslims respectively. While Christians had short coats and trousers, Parsis had long caps and turbans. In later years of 18th century nima, jama and anqurbha replaced sherwani. The custom of wearing pagdi, dastar, Turkish caps and saleem Shahi shoes prevailed without any distinction of caste or creed. Sari was common among Hindu women. Hindu aristocracy followed Muslim nobility in dress patterns. Public of high profile used gold and silver ornaments.

In construction of houses, western culture mainly due to the impact of Europeans was introduced. As a result there was a blend of western motifs with Deccani culture and ethos. Lavish hospitality was another special feature of social culture of Hyderabad people under Nizams. Among performing arts, music, Qawwali, painting, calligraphy became popular. All these indicate that Hyderabad remained as a city in which many cultural strains were intermingled. Persian and Northern Islamic with the Hindu culture of the South itself, a blend of Maratha, Telugu and Tamil influences and last of all a little of the Western world.
Thus society with refinement of sensibility, dignity of individual, irrespective of diverse aspects and amalgamation of values that permeated every aspect of life and living marked the culture of Asaf Jahis Hyderabad society.

In religious sphere, Nizams from the beginning laid the foundation of a secular society. Lala Mansaram’s Risala-e-Darbare Asafia (1761) and Mash-e-Nizami (1785) gives the tolerant attitude of Nizam-ul-Mulk. During their rule Turks, Karris, Kayasthas, Marwars, Gujaratis, Marathas settled in Deccan. Few testaments recorded in these Persian books reveal Nizams views like, affairs of all subjects has been entrusted to the ruler through the grace of God, human creation is from eternity, so one should not think that the world belongs to oneself and deprive people of their rights and the ruler should consider himself as a trustee of the people, individuals as well of the community.

Nizams tried to strike a balance between Sunnis and Shias on one hand and Hindus and Muslims and between the ruling nobles and administrators on the other.

Irrespective of religion all religious groups participated equally in the administrative setup and enriched the common culture of Hyderabad. They remained proud of cultural heritage. Secular ideas of the kingdom also gave equal opportunities to the members of all these religions and castes in order to have a stable and peaceful atmosphere for their existence.

The secular credentials of the Nizams were in line with the great traditions established by the Qutb Shahis rulers. The kingdom did not adopt any Islamic policy or theocracy, evident in the absence of official religion. Muslims and non-Muslims lived in perfect amicable atmosphere with great enthusiasm in each other festivals like ramzan, moharram, dushera, deepavali, holi, nauroz, etc.

Nizams used religion to forge the bonds of unity of different faiths. Hence communal amity, tolerance and harmony were reflected in Hyderabad culture during Asaf Jah rule. Within their religion, rulers participated in the funeral prayers of religious saints or eminent scholars. They strictly adhered to religious fasts and prayers and dedicated their life for the well being of all
sections. This religious synthesis of Hindu and Iranian Islamic cultures can also be seen in art and architectural aspects like depiction of cultural themes in paintings and construction of blend of Indo-Islamic architectural styles making Hyderabad tradition rich and unique.

Thus to conclude, the political history of medieval Deccan mainly from 17th to 18th centuries reflects three phases:

- In the first phase of 17th century one can see the political advancement of Qutb Shahis despite political unrest and its ultimate fall to Mughal domination.

- In the second phase of 18th century one can witness the changing political scenario of domination of subebedars or nobility over Deccan.

- In the third phase one can perceive the ultimate rise of Asaf Jahl's to glory and power.

The entire peninsula of medieval Deccan often lay disunited involved in frequent wars and conflicts. The relations between Golconda and other Deccani powers were harsh due to frequent enmity for acquisition of power and territories and for religious supremacy mainly when related to non-Muslim kingdoms. But there were instances when Golconda formed alliances of goodwill and support with other Deccani powers mainly with Islam-oriented kingdoms against invading enemies. Similarly Nizams made defensive alliances with European powers to protect themselves from extinction. Their fights aroused patriotic feelings of the subjects against their rivals. In the administrative structure a multi-centered system of power with royalty, nobility and other officiality existed, who shared the authority of kingdom, according to hierarchical order. Kingdoms sustained mainly due to its extensive military strength and tactics and of course the willing support of the populace. Autocratic rule coupled with benevolence and aristocracy remained the hallmarks of kingship. In the influential spheres of polity non-Muslims mainly Hindus also shared equal responsibilities and were given posts of priority. For instance popular brothers Madanna and Akkanna of Golconda did their jobs perfectly as high-ranking officials. This mingling of inter-religions was even extended to military and cultural aspects.
Such synthesis can be perceived in miniature paintings which indicates that culture as a concept leads to a situation in which artistic patterns and multi-faceted improvement of human entity can be achieved.

The Qutb Shahis and the Asaf Jahis maintained official and personal relations with their ministerial staff belonging to both the higher and lower cadre of political structure. For instance Nizam Ali khan, who was very fond of Paigah nobles, gave his own daughter in marriage to Fakhruddin khan. The rulers in warfare, in command, in judgement and in administration exhibited great talents and strategies in establishing their authority as well as in rejuvenating their kingdom during critical junctures.

Both Qutb Shahis and Asaf Jahis were talented administrators, liberal monarchs, learned scholars, superb statesmen and passionate lovers of art, architecture and literature. Deccani courts under their control invited people of talent from different fields of artistic endeavors. "This constructive interest of rulers in artistic pursuits and their encouragement to artists and painters provided incentive to the development of miniature paintings in the Deccan".  

An evaluation of economic history presents both positive and negative aspects. Positively Deccan courts were in flourishing state and kingdoms prospered with progressing trends in agriculture, trade, commerce, industry and revenue resulting in organized economic life of subjects and interacting productive activities. In economic prominences, agriculture predominated with various land transactions and existence of private property in hands of few dominant people. Variety of lands like crown, waste, uncultivated was under the supreme control and local Zamindar's supervision. The special interest of the rulers in revenue spheres added to the state treasury, additional income and produced ional boost. For instance Nizams appointed offices like Tahsildars for the collection of taxes as their specific work.

Another striking feature of medieval Deccani economy is its industrial progress. Qutb Shahis took special care of development of diamond and textile industries. For instance diamond-mining industry progressed, increasing the wealth of the country. Nizams encouragement to paper industry also resulted in its flourishment. The encouragement given by rulers
to both inland and sea-borne trade let to hectic commercial activities with extensive imports and exports with numerous countries and islands of Indian Ocean, Burma, China, and Portugal etc. Kingdoms exhibited a great variety of Persian, Mughal Vijayanagar, Dutch, French, and English and Spanish coins signifying the commercial contacts. Wealth of their kingdoms was reflected in their extensive gold jewellery, silver rupee coins and gifts and utensils of variety.

The resultant prosperity and the generation of a large amount of surplus through agriculture or trade enabled the Sultans to generously promote varieties of art forms and this ultimately led to the cultural extravaganza of the kingdoms. This provided the necessary incentive for the promotion and development of the art of miniature painting. It can be noted that the lucrative textile trade with the middle east and south-east Asia, the rich crops, the discovery of the diamond mines in the Golconda and the ancestral wealth of the Nizams increased its revenue and economic prosperity and compelled the rulers to turn due attention towards the development of the kingdom and promotion of varieties of arts.

For instance one can perceive abundance of wealth in the lavish use of gold jewellery, gold brocades worn by both men and women and also in the utensils and furniture illustrated in the paintings. Apart from this encouragement, the contact with foreign countries also brought significance influence on the emerging character of the Deccani miniatures. For example in the medieval Deccan, paper and cotton used for paintings was largely imported from China, Turkey, Iran, East Asia and Persia.

Qutb Shahis and Nizams preferred more of the foreign artifacts in account of their appeal to curiosity and interest. Nizams in particular were interested in collection of rare manuscripts and art objects from different parts of the world and established specially for their preservation, Museums and Treasure houses. This interest of rulers and their foreign appeal made an impact on art history and in turn Sultan's artist looked in the same direction for pictorial inspiration, which resulted in variety of themes and paintings.

Telugu works like Sukasaptati of Palavekari Kadripati and Hamsavimsati of Naraya Matya reflects maritime trade of Andhradesa
during 17th and 18th centuries. They referred to the English and other European factories and their trading activities. They acted as middle men and gathered huge profits to the loss of natives.

Though certain negative trends like oppressed peasantry, during Qutb Shahis and financial crisis seen in loss of jewellery and circars to British during Nizams rule persisted, but in general wealth can be perceived at royal court, which was the main base for artistic trends and pursuits.

The social picture of Golconda and Hyderabad presents a combination of varieties of people with different ethnological and community backgrounds. Both Qutb Shahis and Nizams tried to foster sense of harmony and maintained social equality by protecting their populace irrespective of their origin. Each kingdom possessed particular social identity, though games, past-times, food and dress culture were mostly similar. However society was not averse to common societal problems like sati, rigid caste-system, and superstitious beliefs. There was diverse activity in the society due to constant inflow and outflow of humans like mendicants, philosophers, traders, soldiers, ambassadors, poets and artists. This led to intermingling and inter-synthesis of people at societal level. Their participation in each other cultural ceremonies and festivals of importance led to the emergence of a composite culture namely Deccani and Hyderabad cultures under Qutb Shahis and Nizams respectively. The atmosphere of equality, liberty and harmony provided by Sultans also led to cultural contribution to various aspects of art and literature and encouraged scholars and artists from distant lands to settle on Deccan soil.

This composite Deccani and Hyderabadi cultures representing customs, manners and traditions of Hindus-Muslims and its striking feature of synthesizing in nature became a theme for many artists of the time and was reflected in the splendid miniature paintings. But due to the royal patronage and rich gentry’s contribution, the themes on art mainly centered on the royal court, pursuits of hunting, nobility and other pleasures with which royalty got involved rather than the ordinary toiling masses that formed the bulk of the population. However though commoners were not directly involved in
this aesthetic aspect of painting, yet they were interested in the employment opportunities that the royalty created for them.  

For instance, the karkhan for the production of miniature with an elaborate work shop employed the energies of these commoners and artists who were proficient in the production of painting material and in preparing paper, brushes and colours.

In religious realm, it can be observed that Qutb Shahis and Asaf Jahis laid the foundation a secular kingdom. They tried to preserve their religion namely Islam and their institutions and at the same time respected the sentiments and feelings of other faiths mainly the local population and gave them full scope to follow their religious rules and beliefs. They gave importance to religio-cultural uniformity rather than indulging in communal clashes and conflicts. This peaceful religious atmosphere and social equanimity led to the development of human feelings and artistic patterns. The secular attitude of the rulers prevented the indigenous religions to determine the art forms exclusively and led to the incorporation of secular aspects and themes in the realm of art.

Thus the medieval Deccan or the political economic and social background of Golconda and Hyderabad School of paintings from 17th - 18th centuries with remarkable political patronage, economic splendor and socio-cultural religious atmosphere, made its valuable contribution to various aspects of historical entity and maintained an identity both in historical and artistic realms. It presents a variety of environment, fusion of races, new trends in literature and emergence of cultural and artistic traditions incredibly rich in historical heritage. They brought into existence the Deccani miniatures and endowed them with a multi-faceted character. Atmosphere during this period was such that it enabled Qutb Shahis and Nizams to have their influence on the cultural order of the times and to give impetus to the growth of art history particularly to the tradition of miniature paintings that reached a high degree of excellence representing an important epoch in the history of art of medieval Deccani era and served as a sophisticated medium through which the royal life and cultural trends of medieval times were profoundly illustrated.
On the whole the background of Golconda and Hyderabad Schools presents distinct talented royal personalities, their economic, social and religious endeavors that played a larger role in the enrichment of miniature painting of medieval Deccan from 17th- 18th centuries.
References:

1. Dipakkarjan Das, *Economic history of the Deccan (From the first to 6th Century AD)*, Delhi, 1969, p.1


5. Dipakkarjan Das, *Economic history of the Deccan (From the first to 6th Century AD)*, Delhi, 1969, p.1


10. Deccan was ruled by several kingdoms and rulers such as Andhra Satavahanas, Chalukyas, Rashtrakutas, Bahamanis, Vijayanagar rulers and rulers of Bidar, Berar, Bijapur, Golconda, Ahmadnagar and later by Nizams, British right from ancient times up to modern period. It is to be noted that there was also a greater interaction between the north and south from 15th C onwards mainly due to the various contacts between the Mughal state and the Deccani kingdoms.


16 Narendra Luther, *Prince, Poet, Lover, Builder (Muhammad Quli QutbShah-The Founder of Hyderabad)*, Publications division, New Delhi, January, 1991, p.5. Golconda fort was given as jagir in 1495-96.

17 It existed from the times of Kakatiyas where Ganapathi Deva built a mudfort. Its old name was Mankal. It was built on a hill, which was once the territory of the Kakatiya kings of Warangal in 1143 AD. Raja Krishnadev of Warangal handed over the fort in 1365 AD to Muhammad Shah Bahmani of Gulbarga under a pact.

18 S.N. Sen (ed.), *The Indian travels of Thevenot and Careri*, New Delhi, 1949, p.146

19 During the reign of Chalukyas the region was known as mangavaram. Sultan Quli after naming it as Golconda, choose it as his capital due to historical and pragmatic reasons like existence of fort earlier as old Kakatiya fort and his association with the place and regions around it for more than 20 years.

20 Sultan Quli was known as Bare-Malik or Bade-Malik (The great lord) that was even inscribed on his grave. He declared himself as Shia in 1501 AD and dropped the name of Bahmani king from the Khutba (read after the noon prayers in the mosque in the name of the reigning monarchs - in Islam it is one of the indications of sovereignty). He inserted the name of Shah Ismail Safawa of Persia on Khutba, which persisted till the reign of 6th Quli QutbShah when
in 1633 it was abolished under the deed of submission signed with the Mughals.

21 Tarikh -e- Sultan Muhammad Qutub Shah (anonymous author) MSS.no.367.

22 Sultan Quli, the great architect of Golconda, had to meet his end at the sacred site of a mosque after his evening prayers in 1543 where he was assassinated following the will of his son Jamshid. The foundations laid by him reveals his objective of reaching the natural limits of Deccan region had been partially achieved and the real task of unifying the whole of it under one entity left to his successors.


24 On political front, Deccani rulers of Ahmadnagar, Bidar, Bijapur and Golconda were rampant on one side and on other side stood Hindu Vijayanagar Empire that supported them at some instances to gain a political share and advantage.

25 H.K.Sherwani, History of the QutbShahi Dynasty, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers pvt ltd., New Delhi, 1974, p. 120. Sky blue colour was incorporated into a tri colour consisting of red, white and sky blue for these were the colours of the ensigns carried by the Golconda army which accompanied Ibrahim in 1564 AD towards Ahmadnagar and Bijapur.

26 He constructed famous Hussain Sagar Lake, which lies between the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad and also first bridge on the river Musi.

27 Ibrahim during his exile stayed at vijayanagar as an honored guest of its raja. After assuming power in the famous Tallikota or Rakshasa Tangadi battle of 1565, he joined hands with other Deccani powers and defeated and rooted out Sadashivaraya, the over -confident ruler of vijayanagar. However Ibrahim played only a marginal role in battle as the representative for supremacy and always remained popular among both Hindu and Muslim subjects equally. This battle had tremendous impact on medieval Deccan history where famous
Hindu empire received a crushing blow. In the battle Hussain Nizam Shah, Sultan of Ahmadnagar and Ramaraya king of Vijayanagar fought with each other. Suddenly an elephant Ahmadnagar forces came charging on Ramarayas mount, due to which raya fell down, got captured and was finally beheaded resulting in Deccan powers victory and petrification of Vijayanagar forces.

28 Muhammad Quli happened to be the son of Ibrahim and his Hindu wife Bagirathi.

29 Being a visionary ruler he could foresee the growing Golconda's needs and provided a pragmatic solution of building a new self-contained satellite city in 1591 AD.


31 Sai Prasad Alahari, *The Story of a great city*, Nagaraju Publications, Hyderabad, 1991, p.33. It took more than a year for its completion during which about two lakhs of gold hons were spent. The structure of it was artistically designed and is said to be designed by Muhammad Quli himself resembling Hazarath Imam Roza in Mecca. Today it stands as a symbol of Hyderabad's charm and connotes QutbShahi grandeur.

32 Historian Firishta writing in 1619-20 AD says that Sultan was greatly fascinated by a prostitute named Bhagmati and called new city after her as Bhagnagar, later changed the named to haiderabad. But public at large continued to call it Bhagnagar. Thevenot visiting Hyderabad in 1665-66 testified that the capital city of the kingdom is called Bagnagar, the Persians call it as Aidarabad. The old name persists amongst the common people.


Sultan Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah gave his daughter Hayath Bakshi Begum in marriage to his brother Muhammad Amin's son Sultan Muhammad.

The remarkable event of his life is that he laid the foundation of principle mosque Mecca Masjid in 1617.

Shahjahan, after conquering Bijapur, turned his attention towards Golconda. Abdullah in order to protect himself had to sign a humiliating ' Deed of Submission' with the Mughal's in 1636, which reduced Golconda to the status of a vassal of Mughal Empire. The same year Aurangazeb was appointed as viceroy of the Decean that included the kingdom of Golconda. In 1656, Aurangazeb's son Muhammad Sultan and later Aurangazeb marched to Golconda. Under such circumstances, the siege of Golconda was temporarily lifted when Abdullah gave his daughter in marriage to Muhammad Sultan and agreed him as his successor.

Abul Hasan was a trader's son who, by destiny, became a Sultan and his life ended as captive of mighty Mughals. Related to this life, when Mughals finally arrived at Golconda, to capture him, 1687, he received them courteously and remarked philosophically: "Events take place as per the will of the god almighty. I spent 14 years as fakir, later I became a Sultan, once again I am becoming a fakir."

They were first Telugu and non-Muslim ministers of high rank of QutbShahi dynasty.


Asaf Jahis' capital was Hyderabad, which was ultimately absorbed into Indian union, 1948.


48 Capable ministers like Rai Rao, Mir Munim Astrabadi, Mirza Muhammad Amin, Azra Rao, and others made kingdom to prosper internally and externally.

49 The Safawi dynasty ruled Persia from 1501-1721 and one of the illustrious ruler was Shah Abbas the Great (1586-1628) who was Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah's contemporary.


54 Travernier.J.B. *Travels in India*, translatd by V.Ball, Atlantic Publishers and distributers, New Delhi, 1989, pp. 331-346. The kohinoor diamond's weight is 500-756 carats. It was among the vast booty taken by Nadir Shah Persia after the sack of Delhi in 1739 and now adorns British crown in London museum.

S.N. Sen, *Indian travels of Thevenot and Careri*, New Delhi, 1949, pp. 251-53. The diamond were mainly collected by QutbShahi rulers as they indicated not only wealth and prosperity but the belief that by possessing quality diamonds they will have neither rivals nor equals.


Siddiqui A.M, *History of Golconda*, Hyderabad, June, 1956. The author discussed the economic conditions of the period and of the conditions of peasants.

K. Chandraiah, p. 54.


Sultan Quli granted a village Korkonda to Ellannu. Ibrahim gave a village Rentachintala to Kandukuri Rudrakavi. Lalkhan an official donated Uppnnuthala village to Brahmans.

Muhammad Quli QutbShah used to distribute 12 Thousand hons to the needy during Muharram and it was estimated that 70 lakhs hons and 2 lakhs of Gold hons were spent for the construction of Hyderabad city and Charminar respectively.

Douglas Barrett and Basil gray, Treasures of Asia, painting of India, world publishing company 1963, p.212

Sadiq Naqvi, Cultural Synthesis in QutbShahi Kingdom, APHC, 9th session, 1985, p.68.


The factors like Ibrahims stay of seven years at Telugu kingdom of Vijaynagar during his exile, his marriage with a Telugu woman Bhagirathi and his association with Telugu poets like Bhattumurthi at Vijaynagar from whom he learnt Telugu language had impact on Ibrahim's cultural patronage. Addanki Gangadhara kavi dedicated his work Tapatì samvarano pakyanamu to Ibrahim Quli QutbShah.


Sadiq Naqui, Cultural synthesis in QutbShahi kingdom, APHC, 9th session, 1985, p.69.

There are little evidences to prove that forced conversions and the destruction of temples took place on a large scale.


Abraham plundered temples of Vijaynagar Empire; his courtier Murahari Rao looted the temple at Ahobilam. Similarly, Mir Zumla Mohammad Sayed, the commander of Sultan Abdulla QutbShah plundered the idols of Gandikota and made cannons out of them.


Jagdish Mittal, painting, *History of Medieval Deccan* ed Bhewani H.K

Anonymous author; *Tarikh-i-Qutb Shahi*, A.P Stae Archives, Hyderabad


*Ibid*, P.84.

P.V.Kate, *Marathwada under the Nizam (1724-1948)*, Mittal Publications, Delhi, 1987, p.137.

Mark Zebrowski, *Deccani Painting*, Roli books international, New Delhi, 1985, p.VII.

These two great European powers started commencement of their career of contention for supremacy in the East.

Britishers named the army as subsidiary force and took it under their control which later came to be known as Hyderabad army.


G.C.S.I means Grand Commander Star of India. From his times Britishers influence increased on Nizam political aspect as well as his reign witnessed the fall of mighty Mughal Empire.
Mir Mahboob Ali Khan, was two years and seven months old when his father died. He was installed on the throne by Salar Jung the Great and Nawab Rasheeruddin Khan Shams-ul-UmaralII and the resident who functioned as his regents.

During Musi floods, the doors of royal palaces were opened by Mir Mahboob Ali Khan for the flood stricken people.

For instance, Nizam-ul-Mulk disliked Emperor Mohammad Shah Rangeela (Mughal Emperor) for his frivolous ways.


Paigah is the term used for Nizam's household troops or guards. Some famous paigah nobles were Nawab-Moin-ud-Daula, Bahadur Nawab Zaheer Yar Jung and others.

Mark Zebrowski, *Deccani Painting*, Roli books international, New Delhi, 1985, p.IX.


P.V.Kate, *Marathwada under the Nizam (1724-1948)*, Mittal Publications, Delhi, 1987,


Annamarie Schimmel, *Master pieces of the Deccan Sultanates*, Marg, Vol.37 No.3, p.5. The author remarked that the Golconda rulers were particularly fortunate in attracting painters from Iran.


N. Venkataramanaiah, *Vangmanyvyasa Manjari*, 1967, Kadiripati Sukasptati, p 209,

George Michell, Marg, *Master pieces of the Deccan Sultanates* Vol.37, No.3, p.5. In the introductory essay Schimmel.A remarked that poets from Arabia, Yemen composed epics and allegorical stories in Dakhni Urdu and there was inflow of painters.