AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

The present study is an attempt to study the Socio-Economic life in the Upper Deccan under the Bahmanis. Muslims' invasions to southern India began at the time of Sultan Ala-ud-din-Khilji (Rule: 1296-1315 AD) and they conquered all these lands at the time of Mohammad Bin Tughlaq (Rule: 1325-1351 AD). Oppressions and severity of Mohammad Tughlaq against Hindus in this land, changing the capital city from Delhi to Daulatabad in Deccan, transmigrating people forcefully to this city and weak government in the final years of his rule all prepared the grounds for independence of Deccan by amirs and officials. Hassan Gangu, one of his Amirs in Deccan claimed relation with Bahman Esfandiyar, the legendary Iranian king, and got the best use of this opportunity. He was supported by other Amirs and this helped him mobilize his forces and prepare for several battles with Mohammad Tughlaq. Finally, he took Daulatabad in and founded the first independent Islamic government in Deccan. Seventeen of his descendents ruled in Deccan after him for about 170 years. Eight of these were in Gulbarga. Ahmad I (Rule: 1422-1436 AD), the ninth Bahmani king, moved his capital from Gulbarga to Bidar and all his successors based their governments there as well. Changing the capital had many social, political and religious effects and increased the Iranian scholars and ministers role in the Bahmani courts.

The Bahmani kings in both Gulbarga and Bidar cared a lot about scholars, Sufis, literary people, craftsmen and other social elites especially among
Iranians, and this drew many scientists and Sufis from Iran and other Muslim lands to Deccan and some reached to high political and official positions. In this regard, the role of Sufis and other Sufi cults in supporting the Bahmani dynasty is of great importance. The king’s efforts to bring these Sufis close to the government and gain popularity among people was one of the most interesting examples of this King and Sufi collaboration.

The newly formed government of the Bahmanis could not trust the scientists and Faqihs like the Tugluqies did, for they had mostly worked in their justice and official departments and received salaries for that, then they could not make the new kings trust them. Accordingly, the Bahmanis turned to Sufis who were stronger than Faqihs in Deccan. This was a golden opportunity for the Sufis to propagate their beliefs and make money. Then, from the early years of the Bahmani dynasty, there was a close connection between them and Sufis. In fact, this group was the connecting link between the government and the people. They also played very important roles in all social and political affairs and the Bahmani kings admired them for more legitimacy and public support.

Overall, the Sufis were considered as a base for religion and politics both in Gulbarga and Bidar. In spite of the Sufis influence at the time of the Bahmani dynasty, their roles differ in Gulbarga and Bidar. In the time of Gulbarga some outstanding Sufis emerged affecting all other Sufis and Khaniqah by their scientific and spiritual positions. These Sufis did not interfere in any official or governmental affairs and also they did not accept any sums from the kings, and
in case they accepted they did it with detest. Some of them resisted kings breaking religious laws and some even made the kings change their decisions and step back from their positions. In general, they kept their independence in religious matters and because of their influence among people the Bahmani kings had to accept their views and ideas. Shaikh Sirajuddin Junaidi, Sheikh Zein-uddin Daulatabadi, Ein-uddin Ganj-ul-Elm and Syed Muhammad Gaisu Daraz were some of the most famous Sufis of that era.