CHAPTER-II

POLITICAL LIFE

The Deccan Plateau is the largest unit of the Peninsular India, covering an area of about five lakh sq.km. South of the Northern plain of India is the triangular Deccan plateau bordered on the West by the broad deep Arabian Sea. This triangular plateau which is bounded by the Satpura and the Vindhya to the north-west, the Mahadev and the Maikal to the north, the Western Ghats to the west and the Eastern Ghats to the east. With an average elevation of 600 m it rises to 1000 m in the south but dips to 500 m in the north. Its general shape is from west to east which is indicated by the flow of its major rivers such as the Mahanadi, the Godavari, the Krishna and the Cauvery. An ancient and much denuded plateau largely built by volcanic rocks, fills the southern part of the peninsula. This Deccan Plateau is loftiest on its western edge, where it sinks in abrupt terraces to the sea, presenting a mountainous wall known as the Western Ghats. The coast lines on both the sides are remarkable for their unbroken character and the gentle shelving of the beach.

The word Dakkhan is an Arabic appropriation of the Sanskrit word which roughly corresponds to the three linguistic regions which had fully formed by this time namely, Marathi, Telugu and Kannada. The word
Dakshina is normally used to designate the portion of the Indian Peninsula lying to the south of the Narmada. The name more usually found in Sanskrit works and elsewhere is Dakshinapatha or ‘the southern region’. The region of peninsular India lying to the south of the Vindhya Mountains was known as Dakshinapatha in ancient times. According to ‘Indian Antique,’ this name was in ordinary use in ancient times the author of the Periplus calling the portion of the country Dakhinabades. In the vernacular or Prakrit speech of the time, the Sanskrit Dakshinapatha must have become Dakkhinabadha or Dakkhinavadha.

The shorter form of the name also must have been in use since the beginning of the Fifth Century of the Christian era according to Fah-Hian. Dakshinapatha or South India was the name of the whole peninsula to the south of the Narmada which consisted of the kingdoms situated in two geographical regions – namely the Deccan plateau which lays between the river Narmada in the North and the Krishna and Tungabhadra rivers in the South. The Tamil country included the territory to the South of these rivers, the Krishna and Tungabhadra, extending to Cape Comorin. The kingdoms of the Pandya, the Chera and the Chola were situated in this region. In ancient times the whole region was inhabited by people of Dravidian origin. In modern times it was the name of the country between the Narmada on the north and a variable line along the course of
the Krishna to the south, exclusive of the provinces lying to the extreme east.

There is a narrower definition which excludes from this tract the valleys of the Narmada and the Tapi and to this extent we have seen that there is authority for it in the Vayupurana. Thus the word *Dekkan* expresses the country watered by the upper Godavari and that lying between the rivers and the Krishna. It is also called as *Konkan*. Hence to the context of this theses Dekhan means stretch for about 150 miles along the Sayhadri hills between the 7 and 9 degrees of latitude, and at one point pass as far as 160 miles inland. All the great Maratha capitals, Poona, Satara and Kolhapur, lie close to the Sayhadris under the shelter of some hill fort, while the Musalman Capitals, Ahmadnagar, Bijapur, Bedar and Gulbarga are walled cities in the Plain.

The invasion of South India began in AD 1308 when Malik Kafur was deputed by Ala-ud-din to conquer the Deccan and procure valuables which were available in the temples and palaces of the rulers of Deccan. The Kafur was able to conquer Devagiri, Warangal, Dwarasamudra and other places. The sweeping military successes of Kafur only show the unprepareness of the local rulers. In the south the result of the expedition was only of a temporary character according to Nilakanta Sastry. Muhammad-bin-Tughlak was the most striking figure of mediaeval
Indian history. He changed the capital from Delhi to Devagiri in order to control the southern provinces. The closing years of the sultan’s rule were full of revolts. Firuz recognized the independence of the Deccan, writes Nilakanta Sastry.³

The Delhi Sultan later named the Southern capital as *Quwwatul Islam* and then called it as *Daulatabad*. He constructed a highway to connect Delhi with Daulatabad which was first of its kind in the history of India in order to exercise better control between northern and southern areas. He also ordered leading Muslim families of Delhi to migrate to new capital Daulatabad⁴.

After the conquest of the Deccan, the Delhi Sultan had planted Muslim colonies in the south and remained in the Deccan for a long time. He had to give up the idea of proceeding farther south, on account of illness. The Bahmani dynasty was bounded by the Vindhayas included the whole of Berar and a part of modern Madhya Pradesh on south its frontier extended up to Krishna, the eastern kingdom was reached up to Rajah Munday on the western frontier, enlarged up to Konkan, according to Bilgrami (1927)⁵. Historians have noted that the movement for the liberation of the Deccan from the Muslims began immediately after the Sultan left for northern India in the 1329 A.D.
The process of disintegration of the Delhi Sultanate began in the reigns of Muhammad Bin Tughluq. A number of independent states like Jaunpur, Malwa, Gujarat, Mewar, Khandesh, Orissa, Bengal, Kashmir, Bahmani and Vijayanagar came into existence after the ruin of Delhi Sultanate. The Bahmani Sultanate was a Muslim state of the Deccan in southern India and was one of the great medieval Indian kingdoms. It was North Deccan region to the river Krishna. Ala-ud-din Hasan Bahman Shah is the founder of the Bahmani dynasty, writes Mehdi (1976). Historians have also stated that Sultan Hasan was enrolled among the troops of Sultan Tughlak Shah in the defence of the Deccan before taking over the reigns of Deccan as an independent ruler. The revolt of Malik Taghi compelled the Delhi Sultan to make a move to the north India.

**Sultan Alauddin Hasan Shah al-Wali al-Bahmani (1347-1358 A.D)**

Under the changed circumstances, Zafar Khan was chosen by the army and people as the Sultan of the Deccan and honored with the title of Sikandar-i Sani Abul Muzaffar Sultan Alauddin Hasan Shah al-Wali al-Bahmani and was crowned by Shaikh Sirajuddin Junaidi in the mosque built by Qutbuddin Mubarak Shah Khilji at Daulatabad. The sultanate was founded on August 3, 1347 as a mark of revolt against Delhi Sultanate and sovereignty of Deccan which included parts of present day Karnataka, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. The Sultan shared the
legacy of great mythical hero of Persia namely Bahman, the son of Isfandiyar. Historians have stated with pride that there is probably no other nation in the world than the Mahomedan which can furnish the example of a peasant raising himself to the throne of a monarch.

Ferishta stated that the King called himself Gangu Bahmani in honour of the Brahmin Gangu who was his master. This dynasty lasted for about 175 years and had 18 rulers. At the height of its glory, the Bahmani kingdom extended from north of Krishna river up to Narmada, and stretched east-west from the coasts of the Bay of Bengal to the Arabian Sea. Historian J.S.King (1899)\(^7\) has referred to the statement of the author of the *Aiyun-ul-Tawarikh* and other historians of Kings of India regarding the origin of Sultan Hasan who shared Bahman and Isfandyar legacy.

During the region of Muhammad-bin-Tughluq series of revolts between the periods 1343 - 1351 AD helped in formation of numerous independent provinces. Bahmani was one of the great medieval Indian kingdoms. Bahman shah conquered large part of the Deccan. The Bahmans were responsible for the destruction of Vijayanagar Empire. During the period of 191 years, Bahmanies considered the Gulbarga as their capital for 75 years and Bidar was their capital for 116 years.
Bahmani Dynasty has added an important dimension to the history of medieval India, notes Mehta (1987).  

Historian Ferishta (1914) has provided a different version with respect to the origin of the Bahmani Kingdom which is questioned by the historians of India. According to Ferista Hasan was an employee in the service of Gangu, a Brahman astrologer of Delhi who enjoyed the confidence of Muhammad Tughlaq. Hasan found a furrow copper vessel which had contained gold coins while ploughing the lands of Gangu and promptly returned it to his master and received the award from the Delhi Sultan who conferred upon Gangu the command of 100 horses. Gangu named his Kingdom after the name of his master. However, the view of Ferishta is contradicted by historians and also the evidence of inscriptions and coins.

Sinha (1964) refers to another version about the founder of Bahmani Kingdom given in Tazkirat-ul-Muluk. It reads: “While like Ferishta it concocts stories of the famous cobra and turban incidents, it narrates that Hasan owed his power and rise to Shaikh Siraj Junaidi who was reported to have shown Hasan a secret treasure by which he raised an army and conquered Mubarakabad. From thence, he proceeded to Gulbarga which instantly fell to him. And thus he proclaimed himself king in 1347 A.D”.

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The first act of the new king was to transfer his title of Zafar Khan to Prince Muhammad who adopted the title of Bahman. He sent Qutbul Mulk who conquered Kotgir, Maram, Mahendri and Akkal Kot. Qir Khan was sent to conquer Kalyan. After the news of this great victory of Kalyan, King renamed *Daulatabad* to *Fatahabad*. Sikandar was sent to Malkher which was held by the Hindu Zamindars who opposed first but subdued later. Krishna Nayak of Tilangana entered into treaty and became friend of Sikandar and loyal to the King. Quir Khan revolted and was beheaded by the King who renamed Gulbarga as Ahsanabad and made it the capital of Deccan.

The Sultan selected Gulbarga as his capital and gave it the name of Ahsanabad. He became more active after the death of Muhammad Tugluk and inactivity of his son Firuz Tugluk. He conquered Gon, Dabhol, Kolapur and Telingana and extended his Kingdom from the Wainganga river in the North to the Krishna River in the South and from Daultabad in the west to Bhongir in the East. He also created four provinces namely Gulbarga, Daulatabad, Berar and Bidar which were administered by different governors who were loyal to the King. This division was kept almost intact by his successors, says Bahaddur (1940).
Husaini (1960)\textsuperscript{12} records: “Hasan’s character must be considered good in the background of the age in which he lived. He was a butiful son, a good husband, a loving father and a considerate relative. As a soldier, he was courageous and skilled, loyal to his comrades and having many of the soldierly qualities of \textit{esprit de corps}, sportsmanship and team spirit. He was cautious, magnanimous, forgiving, generous and liberal. He desisted from excesses, strived to heal wounds and injuries, was extremely liberal with his purse and humane in his dealings with the nobles and the subjects. It is not surprising that he was generally loved and willingly obeyed. On the whole Hasan may be called a good ruler”.

Bakshi (2003)\textsuperscript{13} writes: “According to the author of \textit{Burban-i-Maasir}, Sultan Ala-ud-Din Hasan Shah was a just king who cherished his people and practiced piety. During his reign his subjects and army used to pass their time in perfect case and contentment and he did much towards propagating the true faith. He died in February 1358 A.D”. Ala-ud-din Bahman Shah was advised by a group of eight ministers who provided constructive suggestions and guidelines to the king. There was an agreement which ensured that Sultan Ala-ud-Din and all his descendents should adopt the surname of ‘Bahman Shah’, writes King (1899).\textsuperscript{14}

Briggs (1909)\textsuperscript{15} states: “The first Bahmani Alau-ud-din Hasan as well by wise policy as by force of arms subdued every part of the Deccan
previously subject to the throne of Dehly”. The new King appointed Malik Saifuddin Ghori as Prime Minister and other efficient officials with an ambition of conquering the whole of the Tughluq Empire. But he was advised by his well wishers to primarily concentrate on the consolidation of Deccan and win over the hearts of the people. He was able to conquer Kalyan and named it as \textit{Darul Aman} (City of Refuge). He also captured Malkher, Sagar, Mudhol and other parts of Deccan. Bahamani was in constant war with south, kingdom of Vijaynagar. The nobles in the Bahamani Kingdom were classified into two categories, Deccanis (old comers) and the Afaquis (new comers). They had difference of opinion because of cultural diversities and domestic complexities, according to Abd-Allah Cagatay (1941)\textsuperscript{16}.

Sherwani (1953)\textsuperscript{17} observes: “There is not a single campaign either against the partisans of the Tughluq faction or against the Hindu Rajas and Muqaddams in which he showed the slightest hint of cruelty and it invariably happened that after the campaig we over the King or his representatives made a gift of the territory back to the erstwhile enemy to be held as a Jagir”.

The Sultan created a new class of nobility by conferring on his nobles the titles of Khan and Malik. He also created a new cader of officers like Diwans, treasurers, superintendents of elephants, keeper of
the seals and Lord Chamberlain. The Sultan managed the army, amirs and civilians and founded the Bahmani dynasty. He was able to continue his march against the adversaries and consolidate the political power with courage and capacity. He annexed the important areas such as Kalburgi, Sagar, Kanbari, Mudhol, Kalliani, Kittur and so on.

Sinha (1964)\textsuperscript{18} refers to the Imperial Gazetteer of India which provides relevant details of the accomplishments of the founder of Bahmani Kingdom which reads: “Hasan Bahman Shah was a great military leader. He revealed his military genius in the war against Immad-ul-Mulkh which, in fact, alone brought to him a reputation, a scepter and a crown. In a very short period of ten years, he subdued every part of the Deccan previously subject to the throne of Delhi. He conquered Qandahar, Kavlas and many other petty states of the Carnatic. The kingdom of the Bahmanids reached its fullest extent almost at once in the eleven years of his reign. It stretched from sea to sea including the Deccan districts of the Bombay Presidency, the old Hyderabad State and those districts of the Madras Presidency which used to be called the Northern Circars”.

The first ruler administered the kingdom for about 13 years on the basis of noble traits such as justice and benevolence. He carried with him both Muslims and Hindus who shared meaningful communal harmony
and social togetherness. He died after a glorious innings of political sagacity and died in the year 1358 A.D. at the age of 67 years.

**Sultan Muhammad Shah Bahmani (1358-1375 A.D.)**

Muhammad Shah I (1358-1375 A.D.) succeeded his father Ala-ud-Din Hasan in 1358 A.D. The nobles, army and civiliance extended their loyalty and support to the new King. The Sultan utilized the pilgrimage of his mother to Mecca in order to get the formal sanction of the Abbasid Caliph of Egypt to coin money and to have his name mentioned in Friday prayers. He got a new political mileage in the country, improved the quality of administration and organized different branches of government in consultation with nobles. He firmly believed that it was a divine obligation to extend Islamic culture all over the Deccan. He gave up wine and prohibited consumption of liquor in Deccan strictly.

The Sultan fought against the rulers of Warangal and Vijayanagar. He was deeply annoyed by the invasion of Vijayanagar ruler and personally led the attack on Vijayanagar which witnessed a terrible carnage. Several thousand people including women and children lost their lives in the process. The Sultan achieved commendable victory against Vijayanagar Kings in 1366 A.D. by making use of advanced military power and ammunitions which included Turks and Franks in the army,
comments Ahmad (1987)\textsuperscript{19}. The Sultan had couple of serious encounters with the neighbours and successfully plundered most of the country of the infidels. The Sultan destroyed the Hindu temples, amassed lot of wealth and expanded the army.

Sherwani (1953)\textsuperscript{20} comments: “Muhammad Shah I was one of the greatest rulers of the Bahmani dynasty. His father had not time to put the institutions of the Kingdom on a sound basis and it was left to him to make the state perfect so far as administrative institutions were concerned. His strategical worth is to be seen in his campaign against Vijayanagar where he not only used the new fire-arms to his advantage but also routed an enemy for superior to him in numbers. He was always ready to listen to the superior direction of the divines. He treated his soldiers and the civilians, officers and subjects with kindness and concern. He always sought the company of the learned and made the Deccan the centre of the learned and the envy of all parts of India. When he died, he was at peace with Vijayanagar, with his subjects both Hindu and Muslim”.

Sinha (1964)\textsuperscript{21} refers to the observation made by Rafiuddin Shirazi who was closely associated with the Kingdom regarding the personality and performance of Muhammad Shah which reads: “Mohammad Shah can be easily called one of the best kings of the Bahmani Dynasty. He
was brave as a lion. His military talent manifested itself in every one of his exploits. His expeditions were made with a handful of soldiers. His military tactics and personal handling of wars speak for his military genius.

Alauddin Mujahid Shah Bahmani (1375-1378 A.D)

Muhammad Shah I was succeeded by his son Alauddin Mujahid Shah on April 21, 1375 A.D. when he was 19 years old. Mujahid Shah was also popularly known as Balwant Shah which meant strong bodied person. He was familiar with the arts of peace and war. He knew Turkish and Persian languages. He was well versed with the use of swords and archery for military purposes. He used to consult the elders and strengthened the army significantly he also pursued an aggressive policy against the adversaries.

Sinha (1964) quotes the observations of Ferishta and Briggs regarding the personality of Mujahid Shah which read: “He was a giant in strength and a prince in majesty. Tall in structure, dignified in looks, unrivalled in valour and fortitude, he was a personality that attracted the attention of one and all. The Hindus out of love and admiration called him ‘Balwant’.”
The Sultan also cherished the desire of annexing the Vijayanagar Kingdom. He waged battles against Vijayanagar Kings which became a futile exercise. He crossed the Krishna and started his journey towards his capital under adverse natural circumstances like pestilence and famine. Practically, he suffered a crushing defeat against the Vijayanagar Kings and returned to the capital with utmost demoralization and frustration, states King (1899)²³ ruled the Kingdom for about 3 years but could not achieve any substantial political success during this small span of time. He eventually became a victim of a conspiracy hatched by Daud Khan who usurped the throne. He was killed on April 15, 1378 by the foster sister of Mujahid while he was offering prayers in a mosque. Sinha (1964)²⁴ refers to the causes of assassination of Mujahid Shah thus: “Daud Khan was prompted by two motives in assassinating Mujahid. First, he wanted to take revenge for the reprimand Mujahid had given to him on the occasion of his leaving his military station. Secondly, he had secret designs to win the throne”.

Daud Shah Bahmani (April 14, 1378- May 19, 1378 A.D.)

Daud Shah proclaimed himself as the King of Deccan after this incident in 1378 A.D. According to Ferishtah²⁵, he was the son of Mahmud Khan, son of Sultan Ala-ud-Din Hasan Shah Bahmani. The nobles, officers and civilians were not prepared to accept him as the new
ruler because of the wrongful circumstances under which he took over the reigns of the kingdom. The veteran Saifuddin Ghori pledged his support to the new King, but he was stongly opposed by the widow of Mujahid Shah Ruh Parwar who took revenge of her brother's death. The Sultan was killed by the slave of the royal family while he was offering prayers in the masjid on May 19, 1378 A.D). Thus, Daud Shah’s reign lasted for only one month and five days according to Ferishta and Briggs. She also blinded Daud Shah’s son Sanjar and put Muhammad II brother of Daud I on throne.

Sultan Muhammad Shah Bahmani II (1378-1397 A.D.)

Muhammad Khan who witnessed the brutal murder of his brother killed the slave on the spot and occupied the royal seat in May 1378 with the help of Ruh Purwar Aga. He actually wanted to place Daud’s son, Mohammad Sanjar on the throne but Ruh Purwar Aga strongly insisted that Mohammad Shah should be appointed as the next king in order to prevent the son of a traitor from that of occupying the throne. The nobles, ministers, officers and citizens accepted him as their King under the changed circumstances. Saifuddin Ghori was appointed as the Prime Minister by the new Sultan.
Sultan Muhammad Shah II (1378-1397 A.D.) became the ruler and developed infrastructural facilities in a commendable way. He was indeed a learned man who cared for the welfare of the people. He created a congenial atmosphere for the peaceful co-existence of the people. He also prevented anti-social and unethical practices in the Bahmani Kingdom, writes Sherwani (1985). He established masjids, public schools and mostaries in order to herald an era of peace and progress. He commanded respect from one and all for his progressive approaches to governance and development of Deccan.

The Sultan did not wage any war against the adversaries but consciously followed the divine law and natural justice. He also respected women and pardoned the people who committed miscellaneous offences. Peace and prosperity prevailed throughout his kingdom because of his constructive administrative measures. He also promoted education by establishing schools with free boarding and lodging facilities at Gulbarga, Bidar, Qandahar, Elichpur, Daulathabad and other places, writes Day (2004).

The Sultan appointed Faizullah Anju, a learned divine as the chief justice and provided the benefit of fair judicial administration to his subjects. He was the first Sultan who prevented wasteful expenditure and
proved in letter and spirit that the King should be the trustee of the wealth of the kingdom.

Ferishta\textsuperscript{28} documents: “Mohammad Shah was a man of simple and abstemious habits. He wore plain white robes and ate the simplest food possible. He had an exalted conception of the kingly office and enunciated a doctrine which is thoroughly modern that kings were only trustees of the divine wealth and that careless and unnecessary expenditure amounted to a breach of trust”.

Sinha (1964)\textsuperscript{29} refers to the comments made by eminent historians like Ferishta and Gribbles about the unique personality of Mohammad Shah. It reads: “Mohammad Shah was of a humane disposition. He was virtuous and just. During his reign of 19 years, he paid more attention to consolidating his empire. He devoted more of his time to improving his administration. His reign marks gradual progress in education and the material conditions of the people.

Sewell (1970)\textsuperscript{30} comments: “The Sultan was a patron of art and literature. He had an elegant taste for poetry. He was a man of letters with great learning in Persian and Arabic. He was called ‘Aristotle’ by the Deccanis for his great wisdom. He evinced great interest in education. He established orphan schools in the cities of Gulbarga, Bidar, Khandar,
Elichpur, Daulatabad, Choul and Dabul and in some other great towns, with ample-foundations for their support”.

The Sultan promoted every kind of scheme that could remove the evils of the rural and urban life. He is reported to have prohibited drinking and selling of wine. He effected changes in the administrative machinery to improve the conditions of the masses. He took considerable interest in the welfare of his subjects.

Sherwani (1947)\textsuperscript{31} observes: “Muhammad Shah II was one of the most accomplished and peaceful monarchs of the Gulbarga period of Bahmani rule. He was essentially a man of culture and tried to make the Deccan a land of erudition and learning. He succeeded in getting Mir Fazlullah Inju to come to Gulbarga and made him Sadr-i Jehan, while he invited the great poet Hafiz of Shiraz to the Deccan. When the Deccan was visited by an intense famine Muhammad did all he could do alleviate the sufferings of his subjects. He established schools in a number of important towns of the Kingdom where education was imparted free. The Sultan died of typhoid fever on April 4, 1397 A.D”.

Muhammad Shah II is better known as able organizer of Bahmani Kingdom and founder of its institutions. His Silver throne from his father was replaced by the magnificent \textit{Takht-e-Firoza} (Turquoise Throne) on
March 23, 1363 which was presented to him by the Raya of Tilangana. He constructed *Jama Masjid* in Gulbarga Fort and *Shah Bazaar Masjid* in Gulbarga town. In 676 AH Sultan invaded Tilangana, Kanya Nayak offered Huns, elephants and horses along with Golkunda Town.

Sherwani (1953) lauds: “The Sultan built public schools, mosques, cultural centres and other institutions of learning. He attracted a good number of scholars who visited his court from different parts of Asia and Middle East. He was appreciated by Sir Wolseley Haig as a diligent and methodical administrator. But he was all the time occupied with war, wine and slaughter of the Hindus. He was able to achieve success as a ruler because of the worthy guidance of Saif-ud-Din. He also handled the famine on humanitarian approaches and provided food, shelter, education and other facilities to the affected people”. He breathed his last on April 20, 1397 A.D. in a peaceful atmosphere. Historians have commended that Muhammad Shah II’s 19 year reign was one of the most peaceful period in the whole Bahmani history.

**Ghiasuddin Shah Bahmani (1397-1397)**

Muhammad Shah II adopted two sons Firoz Shah and Ahmad I of his uncle Ahmad Khan since he had no children. After the birth of Tahmatan Shah, Muhammad on his death bed wished that Ghiyasuddin
Tahmatan Shah should succeed him and Firoz and Ahmad should pay homage to him. Muhammad Shah II was succeeded by his eldest son Ghiyas-ud-Din who ascended the throne in his seventeenth year. He followed the foot prints of his father and behaved graciously with the nobles, officers and subjects. He also brought about certain changes in the administration which irked Tagalchin, a Turkish slave who wanted to become the Prime Minister.

Sherwani (1958)\textsuperscript{33} recalls: “Tagalchin had an extremely beautiful daughter who was attracted by the new Sultan. Tagalchin also arranged an entertainment party and invited the new Sultan with a false assurance that his daughter would be presented to him. The Sultan attended the party with the eagerness to possess the slave’s beautiful daughter. The bodyguards were also withdrawn at the behest of Tagalchin and one eunuch entered the room of the Sultan and killed him with a dagger when he was in an intoxicated state of mind and body. About 24 royal attendents who enjoyed high rank and importance were killed one after the other under miserable circumstances”. Thus, Ghiasuddin was killed on June 9, 1397 A.D. after the shortest tenure of a month and 20 days under worst kind of conspiracy.
Shamsuddin Bahmani (1397-

Shams ud-Din ascended the throne in his fifteenth year under the challenging circumstances. He was literally demoralized by the strange circumstances which led to the miserable death of his brother at the behest of Tagalchin. He was content with the title of Sultan of Bahmani Kingdom and enabled Tagalchin to declare himself as *Malik Naib*, a position with the fullest power equivalent to regent or protector of the kingdom. The Queen mother also yielded before Tagalchin in order to safeguard the interest of the new Sultan. Tagalchin also used all possible means to win over the confidence and support of Queen mother.

Sherwani and Joshi (1973)\textsuperscript{34} write: “Daud Shah had left two sons namely Firoz and Ahmad who were well educated and guided by Mohammad Shah II and Ustad, Mir Faizullah Anju. They were instigated by their wives to punish Tagalchin who had hatched the conspiracy of killing his father. They were forced to leave Gulbarga and take shelter in Sagur by Tagalchin who convinced the new Sultan and Queen mother. Subsequently, the two brothers fought against Shamsuddin Shah and accepted defeat. They came over to Gulbarga and apologized to the Queen mother and Tagalchin who pardoned them and allowed them to live in Gulbarga. These two brothers managed to enter the palace along with a sizeable number of close associates and imprisoned the King
Shamsuddin Shah and Tagalchin”. The nobles and others accepted Firoz Khan as the new Sultan and extended their full support. Thus the reign of Shamsuddin lasted for about five months and seven days.

**Firoz Shah Bahmani (1397-1422 A.D.)**

Firoz Khan became the Sultan of Deccan on November 16, 1397 under the changed circumstances. He became the ruler of Bahmani Kingdom after 20 years of its establishment. The Bahmani rule witnessed several progressive changes and developments. A synthesis of the Hindu and Muslim cultures was developed during this period. Initially, the Sultan faced opposition from the royal family and their associates. But he managed the adversities within the Kingdom in a diplomatic way and behaved in a judicious, liberal and friendly way with the royal family members, nobles, officers, military personnel and people.

Siddiqi (2001)\(^{35}\) writes: “The new Sultan successfully managed to silence the Vijayanagar King and received financial resources from them. The Sultan entered into a contract of marriage and married the daughter of Deva Raya. Besides this, the Sultan also arranged the marriage between his eldest son Hasan Khan and Parthal, beautiful daughter of a goldsmith of Mudgal. These events heralded an innings of communal harmony and friendship between Bahmani Kingdom and Vijayanagar
Kingdom. He annexed Kherla and made it fief of Bahmani Kingdom. He also listened to the nobles and spiritual leaders and inculcated human values. Historians have regarded Firoz Shah Bahmani as one of the best Sultans of the Bahmani Dynasty since it attained its greatest splendor”.

Sufi saint Saiyid Muhammad Gisu-daraz came over to Deccan along with his followers and heralded a new era of spiritual progress in Deccan. The people had held the Sufi saint on par with Prophet Muhammad for his spiritual excellence and social service, according to Aquil (1996)\textsuperscript{36}. The Sultan learned several languages and interacted with his subjects regularly. He also spent the evenings with meaningful dialogue with scholars, saints, statesmen, nobles and other knowledgable persons.

The Sultan respected Islam and Hinduisms and created monuments which were known for meaningful combination of Hindu and Muslim architectural excellence. Mahmud Khalji made a futile attempt to destabilize Bahmani dynasty which was effectively foiled by Mahammad Gawan, writes Upendra Nath Day (1965)\textsuperscript{37}. But the treaty between Malwa and Deccan remained effective till the end of the Bahmani state, says Sherwani (1985).\textsuperscript{38}
Sherwani (1947) quotes a pertinent observation made by Munn in his work which reads: “The main feature is the combined use of the dome and the pyramid roof. In spite of the ravages of time, we have enough of what remains to picture the glory that it must have been. The four great gates of the fort, the Dewan-i-Khas, the Kanchini Mahal, the Musafir Khana, the arched room in the Zanana, the baths, all give rare ideas of Firoz’s originality in engineering”.

Firoz Shah ruled the Bahmani Kingdom during 1397-1422 A.D. and took up the title of Taj-ud-Din Firuz Shah. Eminent historian Mohammad Qasem Firesta (1865) describes Firoz thus: “Sultan Firoz was an impetuous and a mighty monarch and expended all his ability in eradicating and destroying tyranny and heresy. He took much pleasure in the society of Sheikhs, learned men and hermits”.

Another eminent Persian historian Rafi-al-Din Ebrahim Sirazi comments: “Firoz Shah was a good, just, generous and pious king; he supported himself by copying the Quran and the ladies of his harem by embroidering garments and selling them. As a ruler he was without an equal and many records of his justice still remain on the page of time”.

Ahmad (1921) writes: “Firuz Shah was an impetuous and a mighty monarch and expended all his ability and energy in eradicating
and in destroying tyranny and hearsay and he took much pleasure in the society of the Shikhs, learned men and hermits”. Firuz Shah was an enlightened and broadminded ruler whose reign demonstrated one of expansion and of consolidation which consolidated the foundation of Bahmani dynasty.

Saki (1998) has stated that Firuz Shah later on became a pleasure seeker. He became passionately fond of wine and music. He also maintained a large harem which included women of several nationalities and earned a very bad name as the ruler. There was another war between Bahmani rulers and Vijayanagar Kings which saw the defeat of the ruler of Vijayanagar who agreed to give his own daughter in marriage to Firuz Shah and huge war indemnity. However, Firuz Shah was defeated by the Vijayanagar rulers in 1420 A.D. which witnessed the annexation of southern and eastern districts of the Bahmani Kingdom by the Vijayanagar troops.

Sinha (1964) writes: “The Sultan demonstrated the heroic sense of methodical planning, intelligent tactics, generosity and other values of a great ruler. He did not punish the adversaries who were defeated by him. He considered war as an effective instrument of conserving his political stature rather than promoting hatred. He employed the technique of surprise attack with admirable dexterity and precision. Yet, he was not
a war-monger. Wars and battles were detestable to him. He repulsed his enemies when they attacked him. Otherwise, he preferred to remain essentially a man of peace, an architect, a builder and a man of letters. He was highly tolerant towards other religions. This is very clearly borne out by the treatment he gave to his Hindu subjects. Even to enemies he showed tolerance”.

Chandra (2007)\(^45\) commends the governance of Bahmani Kingdom by Firuz Shah thus: “The most remarkable figure in the Bahmani Kingdom during the period was Firuz Shah Bahmani. He was well acquainted with the religious sciences, that is, a commentary on the Quran, jurisprudence etc., and was particularly fond of the natural sciences such as botany, geometry, logic etc. He was determined to make the Deccan the cultural centre of India. The decline of the Delhi Sultanate helped him, for many learned people migrated from Delhi to the Deccan. The King also encouraged learned men from Iran and Iraq. He used say that kings should draw around them the learned and meritorious persons of all nations, so that from their society they might obtain information and thus acquire some of the advantages acquired by travelling into different regions of the globe. He generally spent his time till midnight in the company of divines, poets, reciters of history, and the most learned and witty among his courtiers. He had read the Old and New Testaments
and respected the tenets of all religions. The most remarkable step taken by Firuz Shah Bahmani was the induction of Hindus in the administration on a large scale. It is said that from his time the Deccani Brahmans became dominant in the administration, particularly in the revenue administration”.

According to Ferishta (1914)\textsuperscript{46}, he was well versed not only in Persian, Arabic and Turkis, but also in Telugu, Kannada and Marathi. He had a large number of wives in his *haram* from various countries and regions, including many Hindu wives, and we have told that he used to converse with each of them in their own language. Ferishta calls him an orthodox Muslim, his only weakness being his fondness for drinking wine and listening to music.

The Sultan was strong enough to command respect from all quarters and ruled the Kingdom until he was 70 years old. Even at the fag end of his rule, the Sultan was able to exercise better authority over the affairs of the state. It was known that some troops had revolted against Firuz Shah at the behest of Sultan Ahmad Shah. They were later on pardoned and used against Firuz Shah. The Sultan was considerably demoralized by his defeat in the hands of Vijaynagar kings. He faced several ups and downs as the foremost ruler of Bahmani dynasty.
Ahmad (1973) writes: “The Sultan spent all his time and energy on the achievement of the multi-faceted progress of Bahmani kingdom. He nominated his son, Hasan Khan, as his successor after a considerable innings as the builder of the kingdom. This development irked his brother Ahmad Shah who took the support of Hazrat Banda Nawaz and Habshi slaves for the deposition of Firoz Shah. The Sultan had to relinquish his throne under helpless condition and died in 1422 A.D.” Historians have stated that he was killed by Habshi who was a supporter of Sultan Ahmad Shah on September 28, 1422 A.D. Firuz Shah Bahmani ruled the Kingdom for about 25 years and made 23 expeditions against the infidels and plundered lot of wealth which was utilized for the welfare and progress of Bahmani Kingdom.

**Sultan Ahmad Shah Wali Bahmani (1422-1436 A.D.)**

Sultan Ahmad Shah succeeded his brother Firoz Shah in 1422 A.D. by effectively managing the nobles, army and the subjects. He was kind enough to make Firoz’s son a liberal *Jagir* in Firozabad as a mark of respect for his brother. The Sultan made Khalaf Hasan Basri as his Wakil-e-Saltanate (Prime Minister). He also constructed the Tomb of Gesu Daraz at Gulbarga and many other public utility buildings at Bidar.
He was associated with the spiritual leaders like Shah Ni’mat-u-Llah, who was held in high esteem. He shifted the capital to Bidar which was known for its cultural legacy and natural resources.

Historians have provided different reasons for the transfer of the capital of Bahmani kingdom from Gulbarga to Bidar. Ferishta (1865)\(^48\) observes: “The real reasons for the choice of Bidar were its central position in the kingdom, its natural defences and its invigorating climate. The three principal divisions of the Deccan-Telingana, the Carnatic, and Maharashtra-converge towards Bidar; and the situation of the city on the brink of a plateau about two hundred feet above the adjoining plains would have made it difficult to attack in those days. The perennial springs and the abundance of verdure and fruit trees, which are still the attractive features of Bidar, must have further influenced the king the preferring it to Gulbarga for the seat of his government”.

Ahmad Shah waged about four wars against Vijaynagar and Telengana rulers which included one against Vijaynagar kings and three against Telengana rulers. He concentrated on the extension of Bahmani kingdom. The Sultan also marched towards Telingana and captured the fortresses of Mandal and Warangal which were prominent forts of yester years. The rulers of Devarkonda and Rajkonda surrendered before the Sultan who was known for adventurism. The Sultan also captured the
Mahur, Kalam, Konkan and other surrounding Kingdoms. He also invaded the state of Vijaynagar and amassed enormous amount of booty, prisoners of war, horses and elephants, writes King (1899).\textsuperscript{49} He entered into a peaceful agreement with Devaraya who agreed to pay all arrears of tribute along with money, jewels and other articles of great value.

The Sultan shifted his capital from Gulbarga to Bidar. Sinha (1964)\textsuperscript{50} identifies the regions for shifting of capital from Gulbarga to Bidar. They include – The climate and the general conditions of Bidar appealed to the King, Bidar was central as far as the Bahmani dominions were concerned, the political climate in Gulbarga was famously suited for intrigues and Gulbarga was climatically hot and was stony with less rainfall and fertility of soil. The historian also stated that Ahmed Shah was a man of mediocre talents. There was nothing remarkable in him when compared with Firoz Shah. But, he avowedly signified a marked religious tolerance. In spite of his own religious inhibitions, he tolerated other religions and even went as far as to encourage them.

Ferishtah\textsuperscript{51} observes: “The new capital was situated in the centre of the Deccan Kingdom and was favoured with a climate which had made it one of the best parts of India. He says that although he had travelled throughout the length and breadth of the land he had not found any portion of India which was so rich in crops so that ‘most of the fruits of
the earth are grown there’. Bahaddur (1940) adds: “The citadel of Bidar, which is still one of the strongest redoubts in the Deccan, was completed within three years of the removal of the capital and was built on the site of an ancient fortress connected with the romantic story of Nala and Damayanti”.

Ahmad (1947) records: “The Sultan earned bad name because of his aggressive wars and anti-Hindu sentiments. He also under took the construction of an Observatory on the chain of hills near Daulatabad called it Balaghat which could not be completed due to his death. The Sultan also proceeded towards Kherla which was ruled by another Muslim King. But he realized that he should not disturb another Muslim ruler and protected the people who belonged to Alp Khan’s Kingdom and exhibited his generosity and manliness. The Sultan had also intended to capture Maha,im (Bombay) which was under the territory of Sultan Ahmad of Gujarat. He was considerate towards his subjects and stood by them in times of famine and distress”. Many scholars and saints settled down in Deccan under his stewardship.

The Sultan of Bahmani consciously became a party to the compromise formula worked out by the saints and nobles since the Bahmani Kingdom and Gujarat Kingdom were ruled by Muslim Sultans. The Sultan was distressed by the sad demise of Shah Ni’mat Ullah who
was a great spiritual torch bearer. The Sultan further proceeded and captured several forts and towns and established his supremacy in an amazing way, according to Chaurasia (2002)\textsuperscript{54}.

The Sultan had to face revolt from the local chief under the new circumstances. But he expanded the Bahmani Kingdom and enhanced its status economically, politically and culturally during his rule which lasted for about 12 years. In the last year of his reign he appointed his eldest son Ala-ud-din Zafar Khan to be his heir, giving him the full charge of Kingdom and died on April 17, 1436.

Sherwani (1953)\textsuperscript{55} observes: “Sultan Ahmad Shah was a pious and Godfearing Sultan and is even now regarded a saint by a large majority of the people of the Deccan. In his reign, Muhammadabad Bidar became the rendezvous of the learned and the pious from all parts of Iran, Iraq and Arabia. He was himself a man of some erudition, having imbibed knowledge at the feet of Mir Fazl’llah Inju and was also an adept in music and singing. He was very kind and considerate to his subjects as when he opened his purse strings for the purchase and free distribution of grains at the time of a great drought which occurred in the Deccan. He had an inclination towards the Sufi principles and perhaps also to the Shi’ah doctrine and he encouraged the influx of learned men, poets, statesman, soldiers and others from over the seas, which, to a certain
extent, led to a greater cleavage between these new-comers and the older colonists. There was also a direct Hindu influence on arts, architecture and social life of the people partly owing to the policy of inter-marriage which was being pursued by the rulers and no doubt by the ruled as well since the last reign”.

**Ala-ud-Din Shah Bahmani II (1436 – 1457 A.D.)**

Ala-ud-Din Zafar Khan II succeeded his father Sultan Ahmad Shah in 1436 A.D. after suppressing a rebellion headed by his brother Muhammad. He married the daughter of the Raja of Sangameshwar which was not approved by the royal family. Devaraya enriched the Vijayanagar army in terms of trained manpower and sophisticated arms and ammunitions and attacked the Bahmani Kingdom. But Ala-ud-Din II was able to resist the attack and championed the cause of Muslims. He also established public schools, hospitals, charitable institutions and religious centres. He also built his capital in Bidar.

Marshall (1987)\(^5\) writes: “The Sultan made sweeping changes in the administration by removing the amirs and ministers who were not loyal to the Kingdom. He brought in new faces on the basis of proper assessment of their loyalty and capability. He constructed a garden and palace named Ni’matabad on the bank of the river which became a
prominent centre. He demonstrated leadership qualities and concern for the well being of his subjects through implementation of progressive measures. He was adorned with high vision and missionary zeal which earned him good name in the Kingdom”.

The Sultan encouraged the old comers (Dakhnis) and new comers equally and brought about social harmony which made the people to consider him as a ruler cum saint. He was able to succeed the absolute sovereignty of the Dakhan by hereditary rights. He also managed the rebellion of his brother Muhammad Khan efficiently and the army of the adversary was routed. He graciously pardoned his brother and made him the ruler of the district of Rayachal in Telengana. The Sultan also ensured that the ruler of Vijaynagar professed obedience and submission. The enmity occurred between Sultan Ala-ud-Din and Sultan Mahmud Khilji but the Bahmani ruler was well equipped with nearly 1,80,000 cavalry, arms and ammunitions which saw the monopoly of Bahmani ruler.

The Sultan was respected by one and all for his noble administration. There was serious conflict of interest between the Afaquis and Dakhanis. He also encountered the rebellion of his brother-in-law Jalal Khan. But Mahmud Gawan successfully interceded with the Sultan to pardon both father and son. Ishwariprasad (1973)\textsuperscript{57} writes: “The Sultan did not neglect the interest of his subjects. He built mosques, established
publis schools and other charitable institutions, the most important of which was a hospital in Bidar where skilful physicians were employed to cure the ailments of the poor. The use of liquor was forbidden in his dominions and if anyone acted contrary to his injunction, molten lead was poured down his throat. Robbers and vagabonds were put down mercilessly and men were made to appreciate the value of earning their livelihood by means of some useful employment”.

The Sultan could not maintain a balance between Afaqis and locals. The conflict of interest between these two groups increased and weakened the foundation of Bahmani kingdom. But, he achieved commendable success in organizing an efficient judicial system by appointing learned men as judges. He also evinced great interest in architecture. He built a memorable garden palace called Nimatabad near Bidar and two hospitals at Bidar and Chandminar new Daulatabad, according to Sherwani (1974) 58.

Major King 59 refers to the observation made by an Italian traveler, Nicolo Conti who visited the Deccan during Alauddin’s reign in 1444 A.D. It reads: “The Deccan could boast of having built the biggest ships. They were larger than those built in the shipyards of Italy. The army used javelins, swords, round shields, bows and arrows and armpieces. They also used ballistic, bombarding and siege machines. Pestilence was
unknown. People were not exposed to the diseases which carry off the population in Europe.

King (1899)\textsuperscript{60} writes: “The Sultan himself used to attend evening prayer on Fridays and festival days and read a \textit{khutbah} with much eloquence and laud himself by the titles- The Sultan, the learned, the just, the clement, the benign, the merciful to the servants of God, the independent ‘Ala-ud-Din wa-ad-Dunya Ahmad Shah al Wali al Bahmani”. These words of appreciation bear testimony to the high stature of Sultan in Bahmani Kingdom.

Sherwani (1953)\textsuperscript{61} notes: Ala-ud-Din Ahmad II had some fine traits in his character. His humane qualities are evident from his treatment of his brothers to all of whom he was kind and considerate. He began his rule well and in the beginning of his reign took an active interest in the affairs of the Kingdom. He left no stone unturned to enforce the letter of the law and eradicated gambling, drinking, debauchery and crime by the appointment of learned men as police officers and judges. In spite of his loose life, he remained energetic right up to the end and his fortitude is shown by the fact that when he undertook the Nalgonda and Mahur campaigns, he had malignant wound and it was partly his non–chalance that precipitated his death a few months later. He succumbed to the worsened the malignant wound on April 3, 1458. During 23 years of rule,
the Sultan demonstrated scholarship, statesmanship, generosity and other
noble qualities of the ruler of a high order. Three silver coins were
released in the name of Ahmad Shah II in 838 AH according to Md.
Abdul Wali Khan. He was succeeded by his eldest son Humayun in
1458 A.D.

Ala-Ud-Din Humayun Shah (1458-1461 A.D.)

Ala-Ud-Din Humayun Shah succeeded his father Ahmad Shah II
on May 7, 1458 A.D. The nobles, ministers and people were unwilling to
accept him as King because of his unhealthy mannerisms and behaviors.
He put to death all the nobles who revolted against him. He did not have
any sympathy for the people who were not loyal to the Kingdom. He also
appointed Khwaja Mahmud Gawan, *Malik-ut-tujjar* of Bijapur and
*Wakil-e-Sultanate*. He also gave him full control of military matters
centering the Bahmani Kingdom.

Sherwani (1974) comments: “During the first 2 years of his reign,
he was all for conciliation and did not like any wanton bloodshed. He
concentrated on the consolidation of Bahmani dynasty but earned the
wrath of the insiders. The Sultan was a very short tempered and cruel
man. He made his own cousin Sikandar Khan as *Sipahsalar*. Sikandar
became rebellion and was crushed to death with the help of Mahmud
Gawan. He cultivated unhealthy lifestyles which cost his reputation and credibility of Bahmani Kingdom. He was a sadist who derived pleasure by humiliating and torturing the people for the most trivial faults.”

The Sultan also effectively snubbed the rebellion of Sikandar Khan who was an intimate friend of Humayun Khan before he took over the reigns of Bahmani Kingdom. He also killed the adversary and displayed his military capacity. He proceeded confidently against his political adversaries and won over them on the basis of his military supremacy and leadership qualities.

Ferishta (1914) had provided a detailed account of his inhuman tendencies and anti-people actions which earned the wrath of people. Ishwariprasad (1973) says: “The principal interest of Humayun’s reign does not lie in his foreign wars or administrative reforms but in the hideous form of cruelty which he practiced with savage brutality”.

Sinha (1964) observes: “Humayun was a ferocious tyrant, a ‘monster of cruelty, the very prototype of Nero and Caligula. His reign is a stream of blood, on the banks of which orphans and widows groan and cry for being forced into destitution. Mahmud Gawan’s personality is the only redeeming feature of his reign”.

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Sherwani (1953)\textsuperscript{67} comments: “Humayun’s character is one of the enigmas of the history of the Deccan. He threw of all restraint and seized at will, the children of his subjects tearing them from their parents. He would frequently stop nuptial processions in the streets, seizing the bride to enjoy her and then send her to the bridge room’s house. He was in the habit of putting the females of his own house to death for the most trivial offence and when any of the mobility was obliged to attend him so great was their dread they took leave of their families, as if preparing for death”.

Sinha (1964)\textsuperscript{68} refers to the reaction of the poet Nazir who composed the following lines expressing the feeling of the people thus: “Humayun Shah has passed away from the world. What a blessing was his death, Oh! God. The world was full of delight to hear of his death. Delight of the world’s gives the date of his death. Four coins were also released in the name of Humayun Shah.

**Nizam–ud-din Ahmad Shah III (1461-1463 A.D.)**

Nizam–ud-din Ahmad Shah III succeeded his notorious father Humayun in 1461 A.D. eventhough he was a minor under adverse circumstances. He was unanimously chosen by the amirs, ministers and other well wishers as the successor to his father on the basis of the
reflection of the tokens of sovereignty which were manifest in his appearance. “The Queen mother appointed Mahmud Gawan as the Prime Minister and Khwaja Jahan Turk Controller of the State. The new Sultan was properly guided by the Queen mother Makhdumah Jahan and nobles like Khwaja Jahan and Mahmud Gawan. He released the innocent persons who were tortured and imprisoned by his father. The regency was conducted very well and it did not take a long time for the Queen-mother to restore peace and confidence”, writes Loch (1989)⁶⁹.

The rulers of Orissa and Telingana were upset with the disorder created by the former ruler and rebelled against the new Sultan who successfully managed the adversaries under the able guidance of the Council of Regency. Mahmud Shah Khalji of Malwa attacked the Bahmani Kingdom and besieged Bidar. The ruler of Malwa also made another attempt in 1462 A.D. but failed in his mission. “Nizam Shah could not make any notable contributions for the progress of Bahmani Kingdom during his short span of administration which ended in couple of political failures. He also inspired the subjects with manliness and bravery”, writes King (1899)⁷⁰.

The Sultan had to manage Sultan Mahmud Khilji who was a formidable adversary by obtaining moral support from Sultan Mahmud Gujarati. Sherwani (1947) writes: “It is remarkable that the policy of
conciliation so recently initiated mainly at the instance of Mahmud Gawan was already bearing fruit and a *modus vivendi* was being established between the two great sections of the population of the Deccan. In 1463 A.D, the rulers of Gujarat and Deccan jointly contended Mahmud. The Sultan died at the age of thirteen and he was succeeded by his brother who took up the title of Muhammad Shah III when he was eleven years old. But the circumstances did not favour the minor ruler who was surrounded by the corrupt Wazir Khwaja Jahan.

The Prime Ministership of Mahmud Gawan enabled the Bahmani rulers to achieve commendable political success which was unequalled in the history of Deccan. Gawan also tried to strike a meaningful balance between the new comers and their rivals. The Sultan was murdered by one of the nobles of the court after two years of rule. After the death of Sultan Nizam Shah, the associates of the royal family chose his brother Sultan Muhammad Shah II as the successor of Bahmani Kingdom. At that critical stage, Mahmud Gawan took over the position of Wazir.

**Sultan Mohammad Shah III (1463 -1482 A.D)**

Sultan Mohammad Shah took over the rule of Bahmani kingdom after the death of Nizam Shah in 1463. The Sultan trusted Gawan to the fullest extent and gave him unlimited authority over all the affairs of
State. He received meaningful education from Sadr-i-Jahan Shustari, a celebrated scholar and emerged as the most learned person over a period of time next only to Firoz Shah in the history of Bahmani kingdom. The Sultan also captured fortresses of Hubli and Bagalkot successfully. Historians have stated that in the reign of Mohammad Shah III, the Bahmani territories became very extensive mainly because of the commendable leadership qualities of Mahmud Gawan.

Ahmad (1942)\textsuperscript{71} observes: “Gawan provided absolute loyalty and support to the King and captured many adversaries including the rulers of Kanara and Vijayanagara with utmost courage. Gawan was a seasoned administrator who extended the territory of the Bahmani Kingdom to an extent never reached before by any ruler in the past. Gawan brought about remarkable administrative reforms by dividing Bahmani kingdom into 8 Tarafs. Each fortress was brought under the control of a Governor but all officials were directly controlled by the Sultan. The finance management, revenue management, administration of justice and allied activities were subjected to reformation by him. He successfully increased the Bahmani dominions to an extent never achieved by former sovereigns”. The Sultan also marched towards Kanchipuram, Malur and other places successfully and established his supremacy over other rulers.
Historians have also documented that Muhammad was a weak ruler who was supported by a great administrator like Mahmud Gawan. The King became weak and vulnerable after the death of his mother. The nobles conspired against Gawan and prepared a false paper on behalf of Khwaja saying he wants Deccan to be partitioned between him and Purushottum of Orissa. Sultan did not understand the historical contributions made by Gawan for the enrichment of Bahmani Kingdom. He was misled by the adversaries of Gawan who cultivated hatred without any lawful justification.

Sultan called Gawan to his private apartment and asked him: “If a slave of mine is disloyal to his benefactor, and his crime is proved, what should be his punishment?” Gawan without any hesitation replied: “The abandoned wretch who practices treachery against his lord should meet with nothing but the sword”. The Sultan then showed the forged letter to Gawan. He stated that although the letter is sealed with his seal, he had no knowledge of its contents.

The last words of Mahmud Gawan were: “The death of an old man like me is of little moment to himself, but to you (Muhammad Shah III) it will prove the ruin of an empire and of your own glory”. The whole of the life of Mahmud Gawan can be summed up in the word ‘devotion’. He was devoted to the interests of the Bahmani Kingdom. The Sultan ordered
for the massacre of Gawan eventhough he was not proved guilty of forgery beyond reasonable doubts. The murder of Gawan at the age of 78 was a calamity which accelerated the downfall of the Bahmani Kingdom. This event remains as the worst kind of blunder committed by the Sultan of Bahmani which remains as the darkest spot in the history of Bahmani dynasty.

Meadows Taylor observed that the murder of Gawan was the beginning of the end and ‘with him departed all the cohesion and power of the Bahmani Kingdom’. Gawan was succeeded by Nizam-ul-Mulk. There was an alliance of new-comers and old-comers who were set against the Vijayanagar King. The Sultan marched against the rulers of Vijayanagar and Konkan but succumbed to the severe illness. The Sultan declared his son Sultan Mahamud as his successor in his will. Muhammad Shah died on March 26, 1482 A.D. “crying out with his last breath that Mahmud Gawan was slaying him”. The Sultan paid the heaviest price for his misdeed.

Chandra (2007)\textsuperscript{72} recalls the historical role played by Mahmud Gawan in the Bahmani Kingdom thus: “The loss of Warrangal to the Bahmani Kingdom changed the balance of power in South India. The Bahmani Kingdom gradually expanded and reached its height of power and territorial limits during the prime ministership of Mahmud Gawan.
For almost 20 years, Mahmud Gawan dominated the affairs of the State. He extended the Bahmani Kingdom by making further annexations in the east. A deep raid in the Vijayanagara territories up to Kanchi demonstrated the strength of the Bahmani army. Mahmud Gawan’s major military contribution, however, was the over-running of the western coastal areas, including Dabhol and Goa”.

Gawan remains in the history of Bahmani Kingdom as the foremost builder who captured many forts, towns and valuable goods which belonged to the rivals of Bahmani Kingdom. The boundaries of Bahmani Kingdom touched the Bay of Bengal in the East and the Arabian Sea in the West. He was the first Prime Minister who enabled the Bahmani Kingdom to attain unequalled status in the history of medieval India. He also ordered a systematic measurement of land, fixed the boundaries of the villages and towns and made a thorough enquiry into the assessment of revenue.

In 1470, a Russian merchant visited Bidar and appreciated the ruler who was strongly supported by a visionary called Gawan. It reads: “The Sultan is a little man, twenty years old, in the power of the nobles. The Sultan goes out with 300,000 men of is own troops. The land is overstocked with people but those in the country are very miserable, whilst the nobles are extremely opulent and delight in luxury. The Sultan
goes out hunting with his mother and his lady and a train of 10,000 men on horse-back, 50,000 on foot, 200 elephants adorned in gilded armour, and in front 100 hornmen, 100 dancers and 300 common horses in golden clothing, 100 monkeys and 100 concubines, all foreign. The Sultan’s palace has seven gates and in each gate are seated 100 guards and 100 Muhammadan scribes who enter the names of all persons going in and out. Foreigners are not admitted into the town. This palace is very wonderful, everything in it is carved or gilded and even to the smallest stone, is cut and ornamented with gold most wonderfully”.

Bakshi (2003)\textsuperscript{74} recalls the historical role played by Mahmud Gawan in the enrichment of Bahmani Kingdom through committed and competent leadership. He observes: “Mahmud Gawan was, by common consent, the greatest of the Mohammadan administrators of the Deccan. His ancestors were the Wazir of Shah Gilan. At the age of 45, Mahmud Gawan went to the Deccan for trade. Ala-ud-Din II made him an Amir of his court. His son Humayun conferred upon him the title of Malik-ul-Tujjar. After the murder of Khwaja Jahan, Muhammad Shah III made Mahmud Gawan the chief authority in the State. Although the new minister was given unlimited powers, he behaved with moderation. With a singleness of aim which was unparallelled in the history of the Bahmani Empire, he devoted himself to the service of the State. He fought wars,
subdued countries and increased the Bahmani dominions to an extent never reached before. He organized the military department of the State and gave the entire control into the hands of the Sultan in order to weaken the position of the nobles”.

Mahmud Gawan completely enjoyed the confidence of the Sultan that he was able to carry out his reforms with success without joining one party or the other. He organized the finances. He improved the administration of justice. He encouraged public education. Corrupt practices were put down. Those who were guilty were punished. The army was reformed and better discipline was enforced. Prospects of the soldiers were improved. However, his success aroused the jealousy of the Deccanis and a conspiracy was made to take his life.

Gawan was very popular in India and Middle East for his scholarship, administrative capability, military organization, revenue administration, cultural promotion and other accomplishments. By virtue of his noble qualities and commendable accomplishments he carved a niche for himself amongst the statesmen in India and abroad. He had entered into the good books of the king of Constantinople, Ottaman Sultan and many other leaders. The Ottaman Sultan had appreciated Gawan in a letter which is preserved in the archives of Andhra Pradesh Government.
There are about 145 letters in the collection out of which 84 have a direct bearing on the historical atmosphere in which they were written, while the letters to foreign potentates and ministers of foreign states are also of great significance, writes Sherwani (1942).

A Russian traveller called Athanasius Nikitin visited the Deccan from 1469 to 1474 under the assumed name of Khvaja Yusuf Khurasani during the rule of Gawan. He recalled that Bahamani capital of Bidar was the chief town of the whole of Muhammedan Hindustan which had unique cultural legacy. The Kingdom was a rendezvous not only for the Deccanis but for the whole of India. It had a place (meaning Gulburga) where people from all parts of India assembled and traded for ten days and as many as 20,000 horses were brought there from the capital. He mentions Mustafabad Dabhol as the Bahmani seaport of trade and commerce where many horses were brought from Misser, Arabia, Khurasan, Turkistan and other places and a profitable trade was carried on by sea with Indian as well as African coast towns.

Nikitin further says that the country people were poor but the nobles were extremely opulent. They were wont to be carried on their silver beds (meaning palanquins) preceded by twenty chargers caparisoned in gold and followed by three hundred men on horseback and five hundred on foot along with ten torch bearers and ten musicians. The
palace where the king stayed was most wonderful to behold, for every thing there was carved or gilded or otherwise ornamented. Nikitin had the privilege of seeing the Sultan himself on the Id day and describes him as riding on a golden saddle, in an embroidered dress studded with sapphires and with a large diamond glittering on his pointed headdress. About Mahmud Gavan, Nikitin says that five hundred sat down to dine with him every day and most of them did not belong to the class of the high and the mighty. In his stables stood two thousand horses half of which were always saddled and kept in readiness night and day. His mansion was guarded every night by a hundred armed men and ten torch bearers.

Sinha (1964) writes: “Mahmud Gawan’s death was fatal to both the king and the kingdom. Conscious of his unfair and merciless act, the king was a prey to brooding melancholia. His health began to decline gradually. Therefore, he declared his son Prince Mahmud his successor. He died on March 24, 1482 A.D. The date of his death is comprised in the following verses:

“Sultan Mohammad Shah, ruler of kings,

When suddenly summoned to yield up his breath,

Abandoned the Deccan, all worldly things,

And the ruin of Deccan recorded his death”.

A writer had made a sarcastic remark over the death of Sultan thus: “The ruin of the Dakhan was the date of his death”. Sultan Mohammad Shah III goes down in the history of Bahmani dynasty as the foremost destroyed of the kingdom which earned the nation wide attention for its name and fame.

**Mahmud Shah Bahmani (1482-1518 A.D.)**

Muhammad Shah III was succeeded by his son Mahmud Shah Bahmani in 1482 A.D. when he was a minor. He also spent most of his time in the company of unworthy people. The Sultan spent his time on unrewarding exercises which multiplied the pernicious effects on Bahmani Kingdom. The process of disintegration of Bahmani kingdom virtually began with the murder of Mahmud Gawan.

Sinha (1964) documents: “Disintegration had already set in with the murder of Mahmud Gawan who combined in himself all the centrifugal forces of the state. Security and cohesion which he had so assiduously built, fear of law and respect for the Bahmani throne so ardently and methodically inculcated among the people, soon crumbled like a pack of cards. The very foundation of the Bahmani throne was threatened with dire consequences and complete annihilation. As long as
Gawan was alive, he could maintain the tempo of increasing patronization of the foreigners at the expense of the locals and mulkis”.

The disputes between the Deccanis and foreigners continued. The provincial governors took the advantage of the prevailing circumstances and declared themselves as independent rulers. Sherwani (1947)\textsuperscript{78} states: “The debauchery of Muhammad III was followed by the spineless of virtually the last Sultan of the time, Mahmud Shah and soon there was no principle left but that of selfishness and centrifugalism. Perhaps Nizamul Mulk was the only chief left at Bidar with any following and with his murder all the capable nobles of the State left the capital to carve out principalities for themselves, leaving the Sultan in the grip of an unscrupulous Turk, Qasim Barid. It is strange that just as a Telingana campaign brought about the murder of Mahmud Gawan, so now a Telingana campaign was the cause of Nizamul Mulk’s end”.

Dil Pussand Khan hatched a conspiracy against Mahmud Shah in association with the rebels which made the Sultan politically weak and vulnerable. He was preoccupied with wine, drinking and debauchery under such circumstances. The governors of various provinces were waiting for appropriate opportunities to proclaim their independence.
Yusuf Adil Shah of Bijapur was the first provincial governor who declared independence. Later on Malik Ahmad founded the Nizam Shahi dynasty of Ahmadnagar. Qutub–ul-Malik also declared his independence at Golkonda. The Bahmani Kingdom was practically restricted to Bidar and the provinces near the capital. Amir Barid practically controlled the province and took the Sultan for granted. The last ruler of the Bahmani Kingdom was Kalim Ullah Shah who ruled the state during 1524 – 1527 A.D. in the midst of chaos and confusions. He could not muster any political support to recover the lost fortunes of Bahmani Kingdom. He fled to Bijapur in 1527 where he received cold treatment. He went to Ahmadnagar where he died soon under pathetic circumstances in 1527 A.D. His body was sent to Bidar for funeral. The forces of disintegration became very active after the death of the last Sultan which signaled the end of the Bahmani Kingdom.

The Kingdom was broken up into five independent principalities which include – The Imad Shahi dynasty of Berar, The Nizam Shahi dynasty of Ahmadnagar, The Adil Shahi dynasty of Bijapur, The Qutub Shahi dynasty of Golkonda and The Barid Shahi dynasty of Bidar. With the break up of the Bahmani Kingdom, Maharashtra found itself once again under various Kingdoms. About seven districts of Maharashtra including Ratnagiri, Kolhapur, Sangli, Satara, Pune and Solapur and a
part of Osmanabad were under the Adilsahi Kingdom of Bijapur. The Barid Sahis of Bidar controlled the districts of Nanded and a part of the district of Osmanabad. The Imad Sahi dynasty of Berar extended over the present western districts of Vidarbha, the district of Parbhani and a part of the district of Nanded. The eastern districts of Vidarbha continued under the local Gond rulers. Khandes was ruled by the Faruqi dynasty but a portion of western Khandes continued to be held by the Sultans of Gujarat. The Sultans of Gujarat also held a major portion of the present districts of Bombay and Thana, till they were replaced by the Portuguese in the year 1534 A.D, according to Nikitin (1857) 79.

The Portuguese continued to hold a small enclave in Caul and the small territory including Goa. The rest of Maharastra including the districts of Ahmadnagar, Nasik, Aurangabad, Bid, Junnar in Pune district, Kalyan in Thana district, the district of Kolaba and a part of Osmanabad district fell to the share of the Nizamsahi dynasty of Ahmadnagar. The hilly regions of Baglana in the district of Nasik continued to be ruled by the Hindu Kings who owed nominal allegiance sometimes to the Sultans of Gujarat and sometimes to the Nizams of Ahmadnagar. Thus Maharastra found itself to be under as many as nine rulers. There was no question of integration of these areas.
The Administration of the Bahmani Sultans

The Bahmani Sultans in the Deccan established a homogenous state based on the Shariat laws and methods of governance which facilitated centralization of administration and reorganization of feudalism. The Sultans in general and Muhammad Gawan in particular initiated various administrative reforms which were directed at curbing the power of the feudal lords. The Sultans also resolved the disputes publicly and awarded punishment to the offenders in the public places, writes Sinha (1964).\textsuperscript{80} The Bahmani power structure was created on the strength of feudal ruling class which consisted of landlords, traders, businessmen and other privileged sections of the Deccan society.

The Bahmani dynasty is known for series of military campaigns and the kingdom was subjected to martial law. The state was divided into several provinces which were managed by the governors who were loyal to the king. In particular, the province of Gulbarga was the most important one which was managed by the governor who commanded the utmost confidence of the king. He was designated as \textit{Malik Na’ib} or Viceroy. The Prime Minister played a major role in the administration of Bahmani kingdom. The rulers had put the administration on a semi-civil basis, writes Haroon Khan Sherwani (1985)\textsuperscript{81}. 
The Sultan was the head of the state and centre of the government. The Sultan sat on the royal throne and held discussions with the nobles and civilians. The throne of the founder of the dynasty was made of silver and was placed on a rich carpet with a magnifician canopy and had in front of it an awning of the finest velvet brocade. This throne was replaced by the famous Takht-i Firozah or Turquoise throne which was presented to Muhammad Shah I by ambassadors sent on a special occasion, according to Ferishtah.

The Wakil-i Sultanate or Prime Minister was next only to the Sultan in terms of administrative hierarchy in Bahmani Kingdom. The Council of Ministers composed of Vakil–us-Sultanat (Prime Minister), Amir-i-Jumla (Finance Minister), Mustaufi-al-Mulk (Revenue Minister), Nazir (Finance Secretary), Kotwal (Home Minister), Vazir-i-Kaul (Auditor General) and Sadr-Jehon (Member of Judiciary). There were many other officers namely Sahib-i Arz (reviewer of the army), Qur Begi Maisarsh (Commander of Left Wing), Qur Begi Maimanat (Commander of the Right Wing), Hajib-i Khas Dabir (Secretary), Diwan (Finance Minister), Saiyad-ul-Hujab (Lord Chamerlain), Hajjib-ul-Qasbah (Commissioner of the City) and so on writes Sinha (1964).

The appointments to different ministerial posts were made purely on the basis of merit, experience and expertise. Usually, members of the
royal family were not considered for higher administrative positions in order to maintain better security, administrative quality and development of the state. The Sultan conducted the regular affairs of the state through *Durbar* (general assembly of ministers, nobles, officials and saints) and *Devan* (daily meeting of council of ministers), writes Sherwani et.al. (1975)\(^84\).

The Sultans took major decisions in consultation with ministers and nobles. The pattern of administration set up by Bahman Shah, the founder of Bahmani dynasty remained till the end of the dynasty. The provincial management system laid down by Bahman Shah also continued for a long time. The Sultan used to give surprise visits to the provinces in order to ensure better governance in the dynasty.

Sinha (1968)\(^85\) writes: “Politically speaking, the Deccan Muslim State differed in several aspects from other kingdoms. The rulers were greatly influenced by Persian culture, Islamic principles and healthy norms of administration borrowed from other cultures. There was an admixture of Hindu and Muslim culture in the governance of Bahmani rulers. There was considerable Hindu influence in the government and large numbers of Hindu were associated with administration, revenue management and military organization”.

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The judicial administration was managed by the *Ulemas* in accordance with the guidelines of *Quran*. There were judicial authorities called as *Qazis* at provincial, district and taluk levels. The *Qazis* had both criminal and civil powers. In times of difference of opinion among the judicial authorities, the Sultan used to interfere in order to give final decision. There was also a special authority called *Daftari Shahi* who examined important cases. At the grassroots level, *Amanna* and *Thanaidars* were the judicial authorities who were incharge of conduction of investigations. They submitted the concerned files to the *Qazi* for final decision in the matters concerned. During special occasions the Sultan used to hear the cases and deliver judgment.

Yazdani (1983)\(^8^6\) states: “The Sultans also organized a strong police system which was headed by a *Kotwal* who held the rank of a police commissioner. He was assisted by subordinate officers and hundreds of constables and policemen. The Kotwal held lot of responsibilities regarding the maintenance of law and order in the kingdom and wielded commendable influence both in the council of ministers and judicial organizations. He also managed the jails and functioned as a special magistrate in certain criminal cases. The Bahmani rulers had also developed a well organized ‘Secret Service’ which facilitated efficient administration and security services in the kingdom”.

The Bahmani kingdom had a well organized military system which was headed by the *Amir-ul-Umara* who was the Commander-in-Chief of the army. He also had several subordinate officers who looked after separate contingents. The central army consisted of about 1 lakh cavalry and infantry during the reign of Mohammad Shah and other Sultans according to the writings of Ferishta and other historians. “The Bahmani military system comprised up both Hindus and Muslims. It had powerful arms and ammunitions which gained an upper hand over other rulers of the neighbouring kingdoms. Prominent among the ammunitions include – gun powder, fire-arms, cannon, muskets and so on. The adversaries could not match the military power of the Bahmani rulers who had the benefit of access to powerful arms and ammunitions which they received from Turks and Franks”, according to Habib (1985)\(^87\).

Gawan played a crucial role in the development of military administration as the Prime Minister of Bahmani kingdom. He brought each fortress under the direct command of the *Tarafidar* in the whole province. The *Quiladas* or commandants of all the other forts were appointed by the central government with clear cut accountability. He passed the rule and created provisions for the maintenance of military personnel under the *Mansabdar* or *Jagirdar*. Gawan also brought about a balance of power administratively. He also excelled in the field of war
and carried out series of successful campaigns against the adversaries at Malwa, Konkan, Goa, and Vijayanagar and so on.

Alau-d-din divided the kingdom into four atraf or divisions namely – i) Ahsanabad-Gulbarga comprising the territory right up to Dabol and including Krishna-Tungabadra doab; ii) Daulatabad, including Junair, Chaul and Paithan inhabited mostly by the Mahrattas; iii) Berar, including Mahur and iv) Bidar, including Qandhar, Indur, Kaulas and the occupied parts of Tilangana, according to Ferishta (1914).  

Gawan was a firm believer in a fair foreign policy which stated that true peace was possible only under a two-fold condition. He advocated that mere stoppage of a state of war would not lead to a union of hearts unless it is accompanied by the eradication of all desire to checkmate the other party by deceitful means. Sherwani (1942) writes about the administrative reforms brought about by Gawan. It reads: “Khwaja initiated great administrative and military reforms which have made his name rightly famous in the history of the Deccan and which, at the same time, proved to be one of the chief causes of his end”.

The Sultans also had a distinct system of revenue administration. Gawan carried out a systematic survey of the revenue land, classified land according to irrigation facilities, fertility and marketability of the products
and fixed land revenue on the basis of systematic assessment. The farmers had to pay land revenue in respect of *arable* land which had necessary amenities for better cultivation. The lands which were assigned to the temples and mosques were exempted from land revenue.

The principal sources of income generation to the rulers were the *Kharaj* or land tax obtained from the landlords, revenue from *Khalsa* or crown lands and *iqta's* or lands granted to officers, *Khams*, religious tax, house tax, grazing tax, water tax and income from trade duties. The taxes were collected both in cash and kind. The financial policy of the state was mainly determined by the personality of the ruler who could make it as comprehensive as Alauddin Khilji or as worse as Muhammad-bin-Tughluq, comments Sastri (1975). The Bahmani rulers were the great patrons of education. Literature in Persian, Arabic and Urdu languages flourished under their patronage. Education was imparted in the schools, masjids and temples. Most of the schools were residential in nature and received grants from the government.

Sinha (1964) refers to the educational administration of Bahmani sultans thus: “The Bahmanids had established a big *Darul-ulum* in Ellichpur with a boarding house attached to it. This school received 3000 dinars yearly. Besides this, there were schools in Daulatabad, Gulbarga and in fact in all other provinces. In the non-residential schools, the
students were given monthly stipends and scholarships. The teachers were paid handsomely. In regard to the education of the Hindus, it appears that the Bahmanids neither interfered with the old systems of running village schools in the local language nor did they actively patronage them by giving grants and subsidies. The Bahmanids had a big library of their own. Firoz Shah Bahmani made several contributions to it and increased the number of books to several thousands. The Bahmani library contained rare books bought from foreign countries”.

The Sultans of Bahmani accorded a red carpet welcome to foreign scholars, statemen, technocrats, saints and other learned and skilled persons. They were primarily interested in the enrichment of Bahmani Kingdom by making use of talented persons regardless of regional affinities. There was enormous growth and development of Bahmani Kingdom in all respect under the rulers. “There was serious conflict of interest between the newcomers and native people who shared different perceptions and ambitions. This serious division between these two groups ultimately brought about the down fall of Bahmani dynasty consequent on the merciless killing of Muhammad Gawan who was a victim of conspiracy. Gawan goes down in the history of Bahmani Kingdom as the foremost builder of political institutions with great vision, commitment and capacity”, states Ahmad (1943)\textsuperscript{92}. 

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Venkataramanappa (1976)\textsuperscript{93} observes: “As the Prime Minister of the state for fifteen years Muhammad Gawan strived unsparingly for the progress of the Bahmani Kingdom. During this period he made the Kingdom to reach the zenith of its glory. He undertook certain military campaigns, won victories and enhanced the boundaries of the Bahmani Kingdom by adding dignity and scholarship. He rose to this exalted position of Prime Minister by sheer dint of merit and abilities”.

Ishwariprasad (1973)\textsuperscript{94} writes: No department escaped his attention; he organized the finances, improved the administration of justice, encouraged public education, and instituted a survey of village lands to make the state demand of revenue just and equitable. Corrupt practices were put down, and those who were guilty of peculation were called to account. The army was reformed; better discipline was enforced, and the prospects of the soldiers were improved”.

Chopra, Ravindran and Subrahmanian (2003)\textsuperscript{95} highlighted Gawan’s reforms which made a difference with respect to the governance of Bahmani rulers. It reads: “Mahmud Gawan took several measures to curb the powers of governors, the chieftains and jagirdars. With this purpose in view, he divided his vast kingdom into eight provinces. Unlike the earlier times, the tarafdar or the governor was no longer in charge of all the fortresses in the province. Only one fortress was left under the
direct charge of the governor while the others were entrusted to officer’s *qiladars* and *jagirdars* who were directly responsible to the centre. The Sultan kept an eye over their activities and defaulters were severely punished. The land was measured and classified according to the fertility of the soil, irrigation facilities and availability of marketing facilities and a complete record of the transactions were kept. Gawan made revolutionary changes in the system of military administration. His aim was to strengthen the authority of the Sultan and to curb the centrifugal tendencies of the provincial governors or *tarafidars* who enjoyed unlimited powers in earlier times”.

The armies of the *Sultan* consisted of the royal bodyguards and the levies procured in times of emergency from the provincial governors and the contingents of Hindu troops. The main components of the army were infantry, cavalry, elephants and archers. Artillery came to be used at a later period due to Persian influence. Historians have also referred to mechanical devices such as *manjanigs, mangonel's, mangons* which were used to discharge fire balls, fire arrows, pieces of rock, stones, earthen or iron balls etc., at the enemy. These mechanical devices were specially used during the siege craft of forts, writes Hardy (1960)⁹⁶.

The state was divided into provinces under the charge of a *Naib* in order to facilitate administrative convenience of the rulers. The provinces
were further subdivided into small units equivalent approximately to a
district and placed in charge of *Muqtas* or of *Amils*. The charge of the
*Amils* was further divided into smaller units and put in charge of
*Shiqdars*. The lowest administrative unit was called *sadi* and its head was
called *Amir-i-Sadah* who had many subordinate officers under him. Most
of the top positions were held by Muslims while the Hindus were given
ordinary positions such as the *Chaudhari*, the *Muta Sarif*, the *Khut*, the
*Muqaddam* and others. The provincial governors were in full control of
the executive, judicial and military administration of the territory in their
charge.

The official and private correspondence and allied writings of
Hindu as well as Muslim mystics and historians reveal the social and
economic conditions which then prevailed in the Delhi Sultanate and
Bahmani dynasty. “The main reason which attracted the foreign invaders
to attack the Deccan was its enormous wealth. It may not be an
exaggeration to say that the new government was more intent on
exploiting the immense resources of the country rather than sustaining
and maintaining it by a conscious effort”, observe Habibullah (1976)⁹⁷.

The division of the society into nobility and commenors created a
great divergence in the standard of living of the people of Deccan. Amir
Khusrav has noted this difference which makes a very sad reading. He
points out that every heart in the royal crown is but the crystallised drop of blood fallen from the tearful eyes of the poor peasant and artisan. The capital of the Bahmani dynasty was originally at Daulatabad. Subsequently it was transferred to Gulburga and Bidar which emerged as the principal cities of Bahmani dynasty. The advance of the Bahmanis in the coastal region of the Andhra districts was mainly in the nature of periodical raids. Even in Telangana, their hold was precarious. Muslim rule in Telangana was finally consolidated only under Sultan Qutb Sah in the middle of the 16th century.

The Sultan showed great liberality in his grants of revenue, and excited the cupidity of a host of expectants. To some he gave 10,000 tankas, to other, 5,000 and to others 2,000, according to the respective ranks and claims of the different office bearers. This method of payment was introduced by Sultan Firoz Shah who played a major role in the economic transformation of Deccan under the Bahmani dynasty. Sultan Alaud-din also provided certain socially and economically beneficial incentives to the people of Deccan. He also granted pensions to the poor and needy on humanitarian grounds. Sultan Alau-d-din also refused to make grants of villages, and paid his followers every year with money from the treasury. Sultan Firoz also demonstrated generosity by providing
land to the people who were not economically self reliant during his regime.

The Bahmani rulers also introduced useful coinage system which strengthened the economic order and security. The old coin, from its great scarcity, rose four-fold and five-fold in value. When trade was interrupted on every side, and when the copper tankas had become more worth less than clods, and of no use, the Sultan repealed his edict, and in great wrath he proclaimed that whoever possessed copper coins should bring them to the treasury, and receive the old gold coins in exchange. Thousands of men from various quarters, who possessed thousands of these copper coins, and caring nothing for them, had flung them into corners along with their copper pots, now brought them to the treasury, and received in exchange gold tankas and silver tankas, Shash-ganis and du-ganis, which they carried to their homes.

Sherwani (1975)\textsuperscript{98} writes: “Many of these copper tankas were brought to the treasury that heaps of them rose up in Deccan like mountains. Great sums went out of the treasury in exchange for the copper, and a great deficiency was caused. When the Sultan found that his project had failed, and that great loss had been entailed upon the treasury through his copper coins he more than ever turned against his subjects”. The Sultans of Bahmani won some victories but also suffered
defeats more than once. In fact one of the reasons for shifting of the
capital from Gulurga to Bidar was the proximity of Gulurga to the
borders of Vijayanagar Kingdom. It must not be forgotten that there was a
change of dynasty in Vijayanagar more than once during this period.

Ahmad (1935)\textsuperscript{99} observes: “The Bahmanis had inherited the
traditional system of the army organization of the Delhi Sultanates. It had
continued for well over hundred years since the establishment of the
Bahmani kingdom. As a matter of fact no need was felt by the Bahmanis
to reform the composition of the armed forces. Perhaps the Bahmanis
allowed the growth of the army to take its natural course. The army grew
and adapted itself to the changing modes of the fighting technique. A new
element had, however, entered the field of battle and that was the use of
cannon as an effective weapon of offensive warfare”.

Barbosa\textsuperscript{100} says: “The Moorish (Muslim) nobleman in general,
take with them the tents with which they form encampments on the
halting ground, when they travel, or when they take the field to attack any
town. They ride on high-pommeled saddles, and make much use of
zojares and fight tied to their saddles, with long light lances which have
heads a cubit long, square and very strong. They wear short coats padded
with cotton, and many of them kilts of mail; their horses are well
caparisoned with steel head-pieces. They carry maces and battle-axes and
two swords (each with its dagger), two or three Turkish bows hanging from the saddle, with very long arrows, so that every man carries arms enough for two. When they go forth to fight, they take their wives with them and they employ pack bullocks on which they carry their baggage when they travel. The gentios of this Daquen (Deccan) kingdom are black and well-built, the more part of them fight on foot, but some on horse back. The foot-soldiers carry swords and daggers, bows and arrows. They are right good archers and their bows are long like those of England. They go bare from waist up but are clad below; they wear small turbans on their heads”.

Sherwani et.al. (1974)\textsuperscript{101} write: “The territorial possessions of the Bahmanis comprised, the west coast of the Deccan. The Bahmanis possessed a strong navy. Nicolo Conti says that the ships lying at anchor in the ports of the Deccan were much larger than those built in the shipyards of Italy. Each of them bore five sails and as many masts. The lower part of these vessels was built with triple planks in order to withstand the force of the storm to which they were exposed in monsoon climes. Coming to the arts of war, he says that the army used javelins, swords, arm pieces, round shields, bows and arrows. They made use of the ballistics and bombarding machine as well as siege pieces”.

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Sultan Muhammad I divided the Bahmani Kingdom into four atrafs or provinces viz., Daulatabad, Berar, Bidar and Gulburga. Of these Daulatabad, Berar and Gulburga covered the major territory of Deccan. The governors of these respective provinces were designated as Masnad-i-Ali, Majlis-i-Alt, Azam-i-Humayun and Malik Naib. The division of the Bahmani Kingdom into four provinces continued for well over a century.

Mahmud Gavan revolutionised the entire system of military administration. Under the new reforms, only one fort in the province was kept under the command of the Tarafdar where as the commandants of other forts were to be appointed by the central government in order to fix up the responsibility. In order to avoid the depletion of military levies by the provincial governors Mahmud Gavan made a rule that every Mansabdar should be paid at the rate of a lakh of hons annually for every 500 men kept under arms and if Jagirs were granted in lieu of cash payments, provision was made whereby the 370

Jagirdar was to be compensated to the extent of losses incurred in the collection of rent. On the other hand if a mansabdar or a Jagirdar failed to maintain the stipulated number of soldiers, he had to refund the proportionate amount to the royal treasury. The reforms, however, came too late. The restrictions on their powers roused the bitter enmity of the provincial governors and led to the assassination of Mahmud Gavan. As
anticipated, a few years after the death of Gavan, the central authority in the Bahmani Kingdom grew weak and the provincial governors declared their independence, according to Sherwani (1941)\textsuperscript{102}.

The Bahmani Sultans rarely assigned lands in \textit{Jagir} and when it was thus assigned it was situated far away from the territory which a \textit{Jagirdar} administered as a governor or an officer. The tenure of a \textit{Jagir} depended upon the will of the \textit{Sultan}. He could transfer or reassign the \textit{Jagir}. It was not hereditary but purely military in character and was bestowed for some exceptional service rendered to the state. The position of the \textit{Jagir} holder was thus a dual one. He was a member of the \textit{Sultan's} court as also the chief administrator of the local affairs. In his former capacity he was responsible to the state ministers, whereas in his latter capacity he had his own authority and had ample discretion.

Sherwani (1985)\textsuperscript{103} comments: “It is significant to note that the influx of foreigners into the Kingdom continued throughout the period of the Bahmani dynasty. Immigrants from Persia, Turkey and the Arab countries entered the Deccan, through the ports of Dabhol, Caul and Goa. They brought military and political strength and vigour to the Bahmani Kingdom. The names of Khalaf Hasan Basri, Khvaja Mahmud Gavan, Yusuf Adil, Sultan Quli and Amir Barid are a few among the hundreds of foreigners who came to the Deccan in search of career. Some divines who
migrated from Persia and the Arab countries soon obtained higher positions in Bahmani Kingdom.

Ahmad (1992)\textsuperscript{104} writes: “The Abyssinians too found service with the Bahmanis especially in the coastal areas. Very soon rivalry sprang up between the foreign elements and the indigenous Muslim elements in the Deccan. The ranks of the local Muslims had been increased by some of the converts who rose to high power after the dismemberment of the Bahmani Kingdom. The founders of the Kingdoms of Ahmadnagar and Berar were Brahmins converted to Islam. So great was the rivalry between foreigners and indigenous nobles that the Bahmani Kingdom was shaken to its foundation by bloody conflicts between these two elements”. The 15\textsuperscript{th} century in the Deccan is a continuous tale of the fights which these warring elements waged against each other. It is the single biggest cause which brought about the downfall of Bahmani Kingdom.

The stabilization of the Bahmani rule saw the influx of a great number of foreigners from Iran, Iraq and Arabia. These foreigners were not merely military adventurers and political self-seekers. Among them were poets, literatures, saints, artisans and merchants. These foreigners came to be termed as \textit{Garib-uddiyar} and \textit{Afaquis} whereas the original settlers from the north came to be called the \textit{Dakhanis}. The evolution of the political institutions and cultural development under the Bahmanis
could be said to represent the rivalry between these two factions into which the Bahmani Kingdom was divided. The influence of the foreigners on the Deccan culture was more intensely felt in the reign of Muhammad Shah Bahmani II when distinguished foreigners such as Mir Fazlullah Inju and Khwaja Shamsuddin Hafiz were invited by the Sultan to come over to India.

Muhammad Gawan also established series of academic, administrative, financial, educational and cultural organisations in Deccan. Prominent centres include Gulburga, Bidar, Qandhar, Ellichpur, Daulatabad, Junnar, Chaul, Dabhol and other large cities and towns. The first fifty years of the Bahmani rule saw a healthy rivalry between the foreigners and the Deccanis and no ill effects of this rivalry were felt on the cultural and political development of the Kingdom. Perhaps the personality that wielded together the diverse elements among the two factions was that of the Prime Minister Malik Saifuddin Ghori who served the Bahmani dynasty for well over 50 years and saw the reigns of five successive Sultans in that capacity.

Haig (1928) comments: “The death of Saifuddin Ghori in 1397 marked an end to the healthy rivalry between the Deccanis and Afaquis. The new monarch Tajuddin Firoz, appreciated the role of foreigners in shaping the policies of the Bahmani Kingdom. He however thought it
necessary to curb the growing influence of the foreigners. This he did by allowing the Hindu elements of the population to share greater responsibilities in the state administration”. Firuz Ahmad was an eminent scholar well versed in sciences and religious and political philosophies and a linguist of great talents. The great influx of the foreigners encouraged the introduction of the Shiah doctrine in the religious set up of the Deccan and Firoz though himself a Sunni allowed the growth of Shiaism more as a matter of convenience than of necessity.

The appointment of a foreigner Khalaf Hasan Basri to the high post of the Prime Minister of the Kingdom by Ahmad Shah, the successor of Firoz, heightened the tensions between the Deccanis and Afaquis and as some historians point out, the great heights attained by this statesman-merchant roused the enmity of all his opponents. It marked the beginning of the cleavage between the Deccanis and the Afaquis which finally sounded the death-knell of the Bahmani Kingdom itself, observes Appadorai (1936)\textsuperscript{106}.

A new edge to the enmity was given by the advent in the Deccan of Shah Nurullah, grandson of the saint Shah Nimatullah Kirmani and the marriage of the royal Princesses in the family of the saint. The controversy shifted from court politics to the field of battle leading to many disasters that befell the Bahmani army in Konkanand in their
confrontation with the Kingdom of Gujarat. The sorry episode of Chakan resulting in the massacre of thousands of foreigners in the reign of Alauddin Ahmad II was the culmination of these feuds. The appearance of Mahmud Gawan on the scene brought about a slight change.

Khan (1972) recalls: “The death of Mahmud Gawan brought about the downfall of the Bahmani Kingdom. The process of disintegration of the Kingdom now set in and it took only tw years for the Kingdom to fall apart. In the politics of the Kingdom the native Hindu population hardly played any part. Almost till the end of the dynasty we do not hear of any Hindu Officer holding a military or civil post. The high military and civil officers of the Kingdom were one and all Muslims either foreigners or drawn from local Muslim population”.

The Bahmanis made use of the hereditary Vatandars such as the Desmukh, Despande, Desai, Patil and Kulkarni for the collection of land revenue which was the principle source of income of the state. The Vatandar who collected revenue for the state received commission to see that villages were populated and lands were brought under cultivation. The attachment of the general population of Deccan to Vatans, large and small, is a striking feature of the mediaeval society in Deccan. The village watchman, the artisan, the trader, the accountant and the collector of
revenue, even the priest were all hereditary *vatandars*. They went to any length of co-operation with the rulers for the sake of their *vatan*.

The Bahmani rulers had realized that they could continue their rule by limiting their interference in the life of the village to the minimum and by making full use of the body of *vatandars* for the administration of the country at the lower level. The army, high civil posts, forts and strongholds continued to be held by the Muslims but there was little interference in the daily life of the people. This system ensured that the Hindu society was not subjected to any violent changes. This feudal society continued throughout the mediaeval period without any basic change in its pattern.
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