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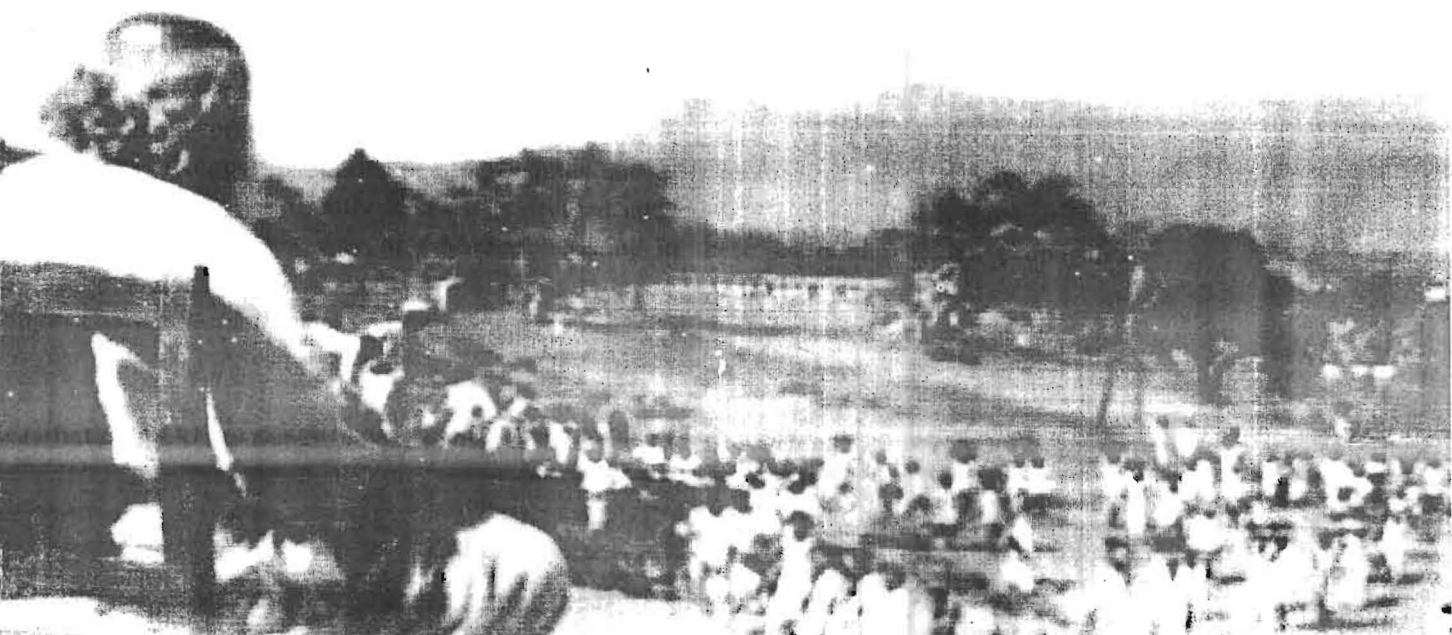
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## SANSHODHAN

संशोधन



# 4. Art and Architecture of Bahamani Period

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**Introduction:** Bidar is one of the 27 districts of Karnataka State. Geographically, it resembles the crown of the State occupying its northeastern tip. The district had a glorious past. It was ruled by the Mauryas, Satavahanas, Rashtrakutas, Chalukyas, Kakatiyas, Khiljis, Bahamanis, Baridshahis, Mughals and the Hyderabad Nizam. The treasure of culture, fine arts and architecture nurtured by successive rulers has contributed to its richness. The great revolution by Shivasharanas in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, encompassing social, literacy and religious fields emerged on this land. The district was a renowned place of education. The Mohammad Gawan Madrasa is an evidence of it. The social structure in the district is shaped by various cultures and races. The district was a part of the Hyderabad state before it was liberated in 1948. It was merged with Karnataka State in 1956.

**Bahmani Kingdom:** In 1345 the centurions of the Tughlaq's army raised the standard of revolt first in Gujarat and then in Deccan. While Kanhaya Naik declared himself independent in Warangal in 1346. Muhammad Tughlaq generals were unable to quell the rebellion in Daulatabad despite the changing fortunes of warfare and ultimately Hasan entitled Zafar Khan, marched upon Daulatabad after reducing Bidar and set himself Abul Muzzafar Alauddin Bahman Shah Hasan Gangu.<sup>1</sup> Thus was launched into history the famous Bahmani dynasty, which lasted from 1347-1527. The Bahmani dynasty replaced the old Chalukya and Rashtrakuta dynasties in the Deccan. The Bahmani ruled the Deccan for nearly 200 years. They were as great predecessors and firmly laid the foundations of a mixed Hindu-Muslim Deccanee culture, which grew during the period of Qutub Shahis and Asif Jahis, Bahmani dynasty produced eighteen sultans whose rule lasted 180 years from 1347 to 1527; some of them were capable rulers.<sup>2</sup> They initially chose Daulatabad as their capital and subsequently moved to Gulbarga, where they remained till 1429 A.D. The first three Bahmani Kings consolidated their dynasty. While during Firoz Shah's reign, the Bahmani Empire grew to its full stature and blossomed out in all directions, more in educational and cultural fields.<sup>3</sup> Northern India during the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries witnessed upheavals; one dynasty was succeeded by the other. There was no continuity of rule. The Turks were ousted by the Slaves, the Slaves by the Khiljis and the Khiljis by the Tughlaqs. While in the Deccan, the Bahmani dynasty provided a continuous rule which besides giving security to the people and stability to administration, helped all-round growth of the people in the Deccan. Unlike the Muslim Kings in the Northern India the Bahmanis adopted the Hindu system of succession which was neither challenged by the nobles nor the people any time.<sup>4</sup>

## The Barid Shahis of Bidar ( 1487-1619 A.D):

In the fifteenth century A.D., the Bahmani kingdom disintegrated into five smaller Sultanates. Later, the successor states of Bijapur, Berar, Ahmednagar and Golkonda were created. The Barid Shahis, one among the five kingdoms that came into existence after fall of the Bahmanis, ruled from Bidar in Karnataka for about one hundred and twenty years from 1487-1619 A.D. In 1619 A.D. Bidar was annexed by Bijapur. Upto 1656 A.D. Bidar was part of the Adil Shahi Kingdom. On the conquest of Deccan by Aurangzeb in the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century, Bidar became part of Mughal Empire.<sup>6</sup> Asaf Jah, a Mughal general was appointed as the subedar of the Deccan in 1713 A.D. He had the title of "Nizam-ul-Mulk" and he founded the house of the Nizam of Hyderabad in 1724. The Hyderabad state ruled by this dynasty included Bidar area also and its rule continued up to 1948. The history of Bidar with lots of ups and downs and stories of treachery and bloodbath is also marked by good administration and development of art, architecture and literature.

**Bidar Monuments:** In describing the monuments of Bidar the fort is dealt with first, as it contains some buildings which were the earliest to be erected when Ahmad Shah Wali Bahmani transferred the seat of government from Gulbarga to Bidar in 1424 A.D. The next group of monuments comprises the buildings of the town including the fortifications, a large number of which are coeval with the buildings of the fort. The third group embraces the tombs and shrines at Ashtoor which were erected by the Bahmani Kings from A.D. 1436-1535. The Baridi tombs and the mausoleum in their vicinity constitute the fourth group, while the fifth, or last, group includes all monuments of historical, religious or architectural significance situated within a distance of six miles from Bidar.<sup>7</sup>

**Bidar Fort:** It is considered one of the most formidable forts of the country, and is an interesting bulwark. It is said that Sultan Ahmad Shah Bahamani constructed a large and strong fort at Bidar between 1426 and 1432 A.D. on the site of an ancient fort which is even now known as the Purana Qila. It is situated in the eastern part of the town and has within

it ruins palaces, mosques and other buildings which had been built of trap rock. Stone and mortar were used to build the fort-walls.<sup>8</sup> The fort has a triple moat on the Southern side, a double on the north-western and a single on the other sides. It has seven gates. Notable palaces and pavilions are Rangin Mahal, Chini Mahal, Turkash Mahal, Gagan Mahal, Takhat Mahal and the Hall of Audience while the thousand cells is a subterranean structure. The Solah Khambh Mosque and the Virasangayya temple are also conspicuous. A beautiful cistern marks the site of Lal Bagh or Ruby Garden.

**Takhat Mahal (Throne Palace):** It had two side pavilions with lofty arches. It had a spacious hall, at the back of which was the Sultan's room. The building had stately dimensions and exquisite surface decorations. The building had stately dimensions and exquisite surface decorations. The coronations of several Bahmani and Barid Shahi Sultans were held here.

**Tarkash Mahal :** It is said to have been built for a Turkish wife of the Sultan. From the remains of the decorative work found in the ornamentation of the walls, it can be said that the Mahal was built or extended by the Barid Shahi Sultans who had kept large harems of ladies of different nationalities.

**Rangeen Mahal:** Literally means the coloured palace. Its walls were originally decorated with tiles of different colours. The walls of this Mahal are very thick and are of black stone. It is noted for its artistic quality.

**Shahi Matbakh ( Royal Kitchen):** Adjoins the Rangeen Mahal towards the west. Originally, it appears to have been the residence of a prince or some dignitary. The Shahi Hamam ( royal bath) is situated very near the royal kitchen. Quite close to the royal bath there was a Lal Bagh ( red garden) so named on account of its beautiful layout or due to the red flowers grown there.

**Gagan Mahal (heavenly palace):** It was originally built by the Bahmani Kings, and some alternations and additions were made by the Baridi Shahi rulers. It has two courts. The outer court was used by the male staff and guards. In the inner court also, there are rooms on either side of the covered passage for the accommodation of the guards. The main building of the palace was of the use of the Sultan and his harem.<sup>9</sup>

**Diwan -i-Am (Public Audience Hall):** This monument was also called Jali Mahal. It is situated to the west of the Zanana enclosure. The building has two entrances, one through the east and the other through the west. At the backside of the main hall, there are three rooms. The central room was probably the Sultan's chamber where he sat before coming into the audience hall. The spacious halls adorned with tile work were perhaps meant for ministers and other top officers of the court. The Bahmani Kings used to give audience to invited dignitaries here. The hall was fully decorated with coloured tiles.

**Solah Khambh Mosque:** It is said to have been built in 1423-24 A.D. by Qubli Sultani when Prince Mohammad was viceroy. The mosque is known so, as it has 16 pillars in the front. It is also called Zanana Masjid as it is situated near the Zanana enclosure. It was an important mosque as the Friday prayers and State functions of a religious character were held here. It is about 90 metres long and 24 metres wide. There is a well beyond the Southern wall of the mosque. Its interior is beautiful with provision for fresh air and light inside. The massive columns, arches and domes are attractive. It is considered as one of the largest mosque in India. Jami Masjid and Kali Masjid are the other two important monuments from the architectural point of view. Hazar Kothari and Naubat Kahana also in existing in the fort.

**Chaubara:** Chaubara means a building facing in four directions. This is an old cylindrical tower. It is a cylindrical tower of 22mtrs. Height is situated in the centre of Bidar town. It was used as a watchtower, commanding a fine view of the entire plateau from the top. A winding staircase of eighty steps leads to the top of tower.

**Gawan Madarasa:** The Madarasa at Bidar founded by Gawan functioned like a residential university. It was built and maintained on the lines of the Madarasa of Khurasan. The imposing and spacious building of this institution is considered as an architectural gem, and an important land mark of Bidar. The structure is rectangular in shape and is built in an area of 4624 sq.mtrs. The building is attractively decorated with blue coloured tiles, the fragments of which can be seen even today. Of the two towers only one in intact. The height of the tower is 131ft. On the front façade Quranic Verses are written. The library that existed on the other wing is now destroyed. The Madarasa was a three-storied building housing a mosque, a library, lecture halls, professors, quarters, students cubicles facing open courtyard. The students were taught Arabic, Persian languages, theology, philosophy, astronomy, mathematics etc., They were given free boarding and lodging facilities besides free education. In this university Bidriware artisans getting training and through it continue.<sup>10</sup> The teaching staff also lived with students. The building suffered much damage due to explosion of gun powder in 1695, it still retains much of the original architectural features. The Madarasa of Mahmud Gawan is the only one of its kind in India.

**Bahamani Tombs :** The Bahamani Sultans were fond of constructing huge sepulchers. Several majestic Mauseoleums of their period are at Ashtoor, 4 kms. East of Bidar. <sup>11</sup> In all there are 12 tombs at a place in row which together give a very impressive look. They are huge structures with beautiful arches, niches and lofty domes. The tombs of Ahmad Shah-

al-Wali is known for its walls on which verses are written in gold colour with a dark background. The interior is decorated with the fine paintings.

**Chaukhandi**; It is the tomb of Khali-Ullah who was the preceptor of Ahmad Shah. It is erected on elevated place. The building is octagonal in plan. There are traces of fine decoration on the walls of the building. This prominent building is altogether one of the excellent building constructed by the Bahmani's. it is on the way to Astoor.

**The Baridi Tombs:** The Baridi tombs lie about two kms West of Bidar town. There were formerly gardens around them. The tombs are of Qasim Barid and Qasim Barid II, Amir Barid, Ali Barid, Ibrahim Barid and others.<sup>12</sup>

**Conclusion:** The historical monuments and sites in and around the Bidar city belong to different periods of history, Pre-Kakatiya, Tughlaq, Bahmani, Barid Shahi, Adil Shahi, Mughal and Nizam. As far as the architecture is concerned there is an intermixture of Hindu, Turkish and Persian artisanship. Some of the designs and decorative patterns seen in the monuments of Bidar are unique in India.

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#### (Footnotes)

- 1 See for detail Dr. S.A.Q.Husaini, Bahman Shah the founder of the Bahmani Kingdom, Firman K.L.Mukhopadhyay, Calcutta, 1960, pp.16-46.
- 2 Hasoon Khan Sherwani, The Bahmanis of the Deccan, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Ltd, New Delhi, 1985, pp.34-52.
- 3 S.K.Sinha, Medieval History of the Deccan Vol. I ( Bahmanids), The Government of Andhara Pradesh, Hyderabad, 1964, p.42.
- 4 Ibid, p.43.
- 5 H.Shashidhar and N.Sreenivasa Murthy, A Historical Atlas of Karnataka, Director of Census of Operations Karnataka, Bangalore, 2004, pp.64-65.
- 6 G.Yazdani, The Antiquities of Bidar, Asian Educational Services, Madras, 1992, p.12.
- 7 See for detail  
Yazdani G, Bidar, Its History and Monuments, Motilal Banarasidas, Delhi, 1995. pp.28-62.
- 8 Ibid, p.564-567.
- 9 Venkatesh ( ed), Heritage series, Bidar, District Administration Bidar and Department of Archaeology, Museums and Heritage, Bangalore, 2007, p.34.
- 10 For detail  
G.Yazdani, The Antiquities of Bidar, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1992, pp.20-21.
- 11 See for detail  
Yazdani G, Bidar, Its History and Monuments, Motilal Banarasidas, Delhi, 1995. pp.114-140.
- 12 Bidar District Gazette, Government of Karnataka, op.cit, p.570.