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Paper : **Art and Architecture of India**

Module : **Adil Shahi Sultanate-Art and Architecture**


ज्ञानं विद्याम विमुक्तये

 **पाठशाला**

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E-text (Quadrant-I) :

1. Introduction

bhakanyarinyari bhava ekkahaturukkahabarahaman

Whether a Turk (Muslim) or a Brahmin with different language—emotion is the same.

nourassoor juga jotianisaroguniyusatsarasutimata Ibrahim parasadabhayidooni

Oh mother Saraswati! Since you have blessed Ibrahim, his work Navras will last for long.

Kitab - e - Navras

Bijapur, a city in North Karnataka, is well-known for its historical monuments built during the Adil Shahi dynasty.

The monuments of Adil Shahis with their bulbous domes emerging from lotus petal bases, slim decorative minarets and intricately carved stone brackets are part of Deccan's splendid medieval heritage (15th -17th centuries CE).

The dynasty's founder Yusuf Adil Shah (r. 1489 – 1509 CE) had emigrated from Iran to Deccan where he served as the Governor of Bijapur under the Bahmani rulers at Bidar. When that dynasty declined, Yusuf declared his independence and founded the Adil Shahi dynasty. Most of its rulers believed in the Shia faith.

The dynasty reached its zenith under Ibrahim Adil Shah II (1579 –1627 CE). Ibrahim was a great patron of art, a writer and a man of religious tolerance. Under his patronage the art of court miniature paintings had reached to a high standard.

2. Historical Setting

The Adil Shahis ruled in an era that was critical in Deccani history. On the one hand there were mighty Mughals who were Sunni Muslims and were in a mission to rule the whole of Indian Subcontinent.

On the other hand were the rising Marathas who were eventually responsible to weaken the power of their rival Mughals and Adil Shahis. The Hindu kingdom of Vijayanagar and the rise of Portuguese rule in neighbouring Goa were equally significant.

Against all these rivalries conflicts and struggle for power dominions it was Sufis who played a major role in Deccan for the religious synthesis.

3. Deccan before Adil Shahis

Islamic adventure in India had begun with the adventure of Muhammad of Ghor in North India in the end of the 12th century. Muhammad of Ghor after defeating the Hindu Rajput King Prithviraj Chauhan at the Battle of Tarain in 1192 CE had established the Islamic rule in Northwest India.

Ghor was succeeded by his noble Turkish slave Qutbuddin Aibak and then Iltutmish, who were the founder rulers of Delhi Sultanate.

However, in this era, Deccan was a strong hold of Hindu rule and was known for its fabled wealth. Islamic presence was insignificant in Deccan.

The immense wealth of Deccan inspired the Muslim rulers of Delhi to conquer the region in a long series of campaigns. Sultan Alauddin, the supreme Khalji Emperor led a successful expedition against the famous Yadav fortress of Devagiri – the hill of the Gods in 1296 AD, a century after the battle of Tarain. Alauddin after the victory forced Ramachandra, the King of Devagiri to surrender along with his possession of vast quantities of gold, silver and jewels.

The conquest of Devagiri brought the Muslims into the very heart of Deccan by the early 14th century CE. But it was however a slow movement till the reign of Muhammad bin Tughluk, who had taken a controversial decision of transforming the capital from Delhi to Devagiri (Daulatabad) in 1327 CE.

From then on, Muslims migrated in large numbers from North to Deccan. Some of them were forced, because Tughluk wanted to develop Daulatabad as a prominent Islamic city. Eventually the migrants were culturally cut off from the land of their origin in North India and adopted to Deccani lifestyle.

Muhammad bin Tughluk's administrative decision for shifting the capital was a political disaster, but had far-reaching cultural effects. The spread of the Urdu language in Deccan was an outcome of the extensive influx of Muslims. Daulatabad became a large Muslim urban centre. Among the Muslim settlers a sizeable population was made of Turks, Afghans and Arabs. They were of different professions, such as nobles, warriors, traders, artisans and poets. They were an essential part of the population.

Soon after Muhammad bin Tughluk left Daulatabad, the city was conquered by Zafar Khan, a Turkish officer. Independence from Delhi was immediately declared and Khan established a Sultanate of his own, the Bahmani Sultanate.

When the Bahmani Kingdom emerged, Sufis rose into prominence in Deccan. Most of them were of Chisti order and had a profound footing in North. These Sufis had played a significant role in transforming the medieval Deccani society.

In 1422 CE, Ahmad Shah Wali Bahmani assumed the throne of Bahmani kingdom. It was a turning point in the social history of Deccan. He encouraged a large number of immigrations from Iraq, Iran and Central Asia to settle in his kingdom. The capital was also shifted from Gulbarga to Bidar.

The immigrants were mostly believers in Shia faith. Among these immigrants, there were artists, calligraphers, architects, scholars and Sufis. As a result, the north Indian elements in different institutions faded out and were replaced with Persian. A new style of architecture, calligraphy, tile work, mostly Persian in style developed in Bidar.

4. The Adil Shahis

Yusuf Adil Shah, son of Murad II, the Sultan of Turkey had joined the Bidar Court in 1481 CE under Sultan Mohammad III. He had been purchased as a slave by Mahmud Gavan, the Prime Minister of the Kingdom. In 1481 CE, he was appointed as the Governor of Bijapur for his loyalty and bravery.

In 1489 CE, Yusuf took advantage of the decline of the Bahamani Power to establish as an independent Sultan of Bijapur. Upon his ascend as the Sultan of Bijapur, there was political unrest, threats from the mighty Vijayanagar Empire and the Muslim neighbours.

Later the Sultans combined their forces and defeated the Raja of Vijayanagar. Yusuf built the first citadel of Bijapur and its moat.

Yusuf died in 1511 CE, shortly after his loss to the Portuguese Governor Afonso de Albuquerque in 1510 CE.

Ismail Adil Shah succeeded Yusuf Adil Shah. His career was eventful. He extended the territory of the Sultanate and included Bidar. In 1534 CE Ismail died during his campaign against Golkonda.

The next influential ruler of the kingdom was Ibrahim Adil Shah I (1534-1558 CE). He was a follower of Sunni sect. During his reign he established a series of alliances and counter-alliances with and against the neighbouring kingdoms. Ali Adil Shah was his successor. Ali reinforced the Shia sect after his coronation.

Ali Adil Shah was a great patron of art. He had invited a number of artists and learned men to his capital. One of the first buildings undertaken by him was the Jami Mosque or the Friday Mosque.

The Jami Mosque was built to commemorate the Talikota victory against the Vijayanagar rulers. Later during the reign of Aurangzeb, many alternations were made and a gateway was erected on the eastern side.

The finely proportioned Jami Mosque has graceful arches, a fine dome and a vast inner courtyard with room for 2,250 worshippers. The mihrab of the mosque is covered with rich decoration. There are representations of tombs and minarets, consers and chains, vases with flowers, all interspersed with bands and medallions bearing inscriptions.

The other significant building he erected was the Gagan Mahal. Following an alliance policy Ali Adil Shah I had married to Chand Bibi, the daughter of Hussain Nizan Shah I of Ahmednagar. She knew many languages including Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Marathi and Kannada.

After the death of Ali Adil Shah I in 1580 CE, the Shia nobles of the kingdom appointed Ibrahim, nephew of Ali Adil Shah as the Emperor. Ibrahim was a 9 year old boy then. Chand Bibi became the regent of Ibrahim. She was also the de facto ruler of the Bijapur till Ibrahim became capable of ruling. Chand Bibi's life was very eventful of waging wars against their rival Ahmednagar and Golkonda Kings and the rising Marathas. She was a great diplomat too.

Ibrahim Adil Shah II was a great king and was referred to as the Akbar of Deccan for his initiatives to bring in cultural harmony between the Shias and Sunnis and between Hindus and Muslims through music.

Ibrahim played musical instruments, sang and composed praises of Hindu deities Saraswati and Ganapati. He was a devotee of Hazrat Banda Nawaj, the Sufi saint of Gulbarga.

He founded a new township at Nauraspur, 8 km away from Bijapur to give concrete shape to his musical ideas of a musical city. The Sangeet – Nari Mahal at Navraspur stands today as a mute testimony to Ibrahim's architectural ideas based on music.

Muhammad Adil Shah was the next ruler of Bijapur, who ascended the throne in 1627 CE. Muhammad's reign was eventful. He allied with Shah Jahan, the Mughal Emperor to defeat his rival, the Ahmednagar Sultanate. The treaty of 1636 CE with the Mughals sealed the expansion of Bijapur in the north. So Muhammad Adil Shah extended his domination westwards into Konkan, Pune and southward into Mysore. Besides territorial expansion, Bijapur also attained peace and prosperity.

Muhammad's reign witnessed revolt of Shahji and then the rise of Shivaji to eminence and his founding of an imperial Hindu State, which was initially carved out from the Bijapur Kingdom. Muhammad died in 1656 CE. He was buried in Gol Gumbaz, the pride of Bijapur. It was constructed by him.

4.1 The fall of Adil Shahis

After Muhammad Adil Shah, the Adil Shah rule was weakened. Ali Adil Shah II who succeeded Muhammad faced internal struggle within the royal family. After the murder of Afzal Khan, the military commander and the defeat of 10,000 soldiers of Bijapur force by the Maratha ruler Shivaji, the kingdom was subjugated to the Maratha.

But after the death of Shivaji, the Mughal led by Aurangzeb finally annexed the kingdom in 1686 CE. With this defeat the 200 year rule of Adil Shahi Dynasty ended.

Adil Shahi at a Glance

Adil Shahi Sultanate (1490–1686 CE)	
Capital: Bijapur	
Languages: Persian (official), Deccani Urdu, Kannada (since 1535)	
Religion : Shia Islam (1490-1534,1558–1579), Sunni Islam (1534–1558,1580–1686)	
• 1490–1510	Yusuf Adil Shah
• 1510–1534	Ismail Adil Shah
• 1534	Mallu Adil Shah
• 1534–1558	Ibrahim Adil Shah I
• 1558–1579[5]	Ali Adil Shah I
• 1580–1627	Ibrahim Adil Shah II
• 1627–1657	Mohammed Adil Shah
• 1657–1672	Ali Adil Shah II
• 1672–1686	Sikandar Adil Shah

5. Forts and Palaces

The first sight of Bijapur is its rings of fort walls. The construction of fort wall began at the time of Yusuf Adil Khan and was completed by Ali I in 1665 CE. There are two concentric zones, the citadel in the middle and the city. The citadel is of 400 m circumference where were built most of the palatial structures. The greater east-west axis of the city wall stretches to over 3 kms. The preference for circular wall was also maintained in the plan of Naurasapur, the city for art and culture at a site 3 km west of Bijapur. However, the city wall of Naurasapur was never completed. Fortifications of both the cities display sloping walls reaching to a height of 10 m with 96 round bastions. Gates with lofty arched entrances are set between massive bastions and approached across bridges, spanning ditches, now mostly filled in.

Adil Shahis also built forts at Panhala in the Sahyadri some 200 km west of Bijapur and at Naldurga, 45 km east of Sholapur.

Prominent Buildings within the Citadel

Gagan Mahal

Gagan Mahal or Heavenly Palace was built by Adil Shah in 1561 CE as a royal palace with a darbar hall. It has three impressive arches and the central arch is the widest (20 m long and 17 m high). The darbar hall was located in the ground floor while the first floor was built as the private residence of the royal family. The ruined structure at Naurasapur is a copy of the plan of Gagan Mahal.

Sat Manzil

Sat Manzil was originally a seven storied palace but now only five floors exist. It was a pleasure pavilion as suggested by water basins and traces of murals.

Jal Mandir

To the immediate north of Sat Manzil is the Jal Mandir, a small but exquisitely detailed pavilion standing in the middle of a small pond. Its ornate brackets, eaves, parapet, finials and dome are influenced by the more elaborate religious structures of the era.

Asher Mahal

It is the best preserved Adil Shahi palace in Bijapur. Located to the east of the citadel wall, the Asher Mahal is connected with the inner most zone by a bridge, only portion of which survive. It was originally used as the hall of justice. The building was converted in 1646 CE into a sacred reliquary to house two hairs of Prophet Muhammad. The palace consists of a double height portico with octagonal timber columns carrying a wooden paneled ceiling. There are two chambers in the first floor where a portion of murals are preserved. The palace faces an artificial pond.

Mehtar Mahal

Built in 1620 CE, Mehtar Mahal, a multistoried gateway to a small mosque, is one of the most elegant structures in the citadel. The façade has three arches, which depict exquisite cornice supported on carved corbels. The monument is remarkable for the projecting balconies of arched openings supported on carved angled struts.

Mosques and Tombs

It was till 1565 CE, the fall of Vijayanagar Empire, the Adil Shahi kings of Bijapur had built only a handful of humble shrines mainly for Sufi saints. Religious constructions at Bijapur were also limited. Ibrahim's old Jami Mosque and the mosque of Ikhlas Khan are the earliest religious structures at Bijapur.

Another early mosque and tomb complex of Pre-Vijayanagar fall era is the Tomb of Ain-ul-Mulk and its attached small decorated mosque (1556 CE). Ain-ul-Mulk was a noble man at the court of Ibrahim I. The structures are located at Ainapur, 2.5 km east of the city. The tomb has a double tier of triple arches on each side, with a miniature domed pavilions at the corners of the large hemispherical dome.

Jami Masjid

The Jami Masjid was the first grand religious project of Adil Shahis to commemorate the Talikota victory of Vijayanagar rulers. The façade of the prayer hall presents nine arches, but only the central arch has a lobed profile and medallion on bracket motifs in the spandrels. Overhanging eaves are carried as sculpted brackets but the parapet was never started. The inner courtyard could accommodate 2,250 worshippers at a time. The mihrab is the key attraction. Bearing an inscription of 1636 CE, it is one of the most grandly proportioned and sumptuously decorated in the Islamic world. It rivals the great mihrab in the 10th century mosque at Cordoba. There are representations of tombs and minarets, censers and chains, vases with flowers, all interspersed with bands and medallions bearing inscriptions.

Anda Mosque

Anda Mosque is a building of curious design built in 1608 CE. Its lower part is occupied by a walled sarai. The upper level which serves as a prayer hall has a fluted dome raised high on a 16 sided arcaded drum.

Ibrahim Rouza

Ibrahim Rouza (early 17th century) is the mausoleum of Ibrahim II, his wife Taj Sultana and other family members. The structure has been designed by E. Mullick Sandal of Iran. Located beside the walled city of Bijapur, the Ibrahim Rouza comprises of two identical structures, a tomb and a mosque set within a square walled garden. The complex is entered through a domed gateway from the north. Both are raised on an arcaded podium located almost precisely at the midpoint of the garden. The podium is accessed by flights of steps.

The Ibrahim Rouza complex displays a broad range of artistic themes reflecting a fusion of Persian and Deccani art tradition. Both the tomb and the mosque are crowned with bulbous domes, seemingly carried on outwardly pointed petals in the characteristic manner preferred by Adil Shahi architects.

The domes are framed by a profusion of roof top finials. The finials are topped with miniature domes disposed at successive levels so as to achieve an overall pyramidal profile. Its 24 m high minarets are said to have inspired those of the Taj Mahal.

The buildings are also noteworthy for their superb artistic elements comprising of perforated stonework, square lotus medallions, interlaced Arabic writing and deep rich and cornices. Columns, colonnades and arches of Ibrahim Rouza show the fusion of Deccani, North Indian and Persian art and architecture.

GolGumbaz

GolGumbaz or GolGumbadh meaning 'Rose Dome' (a reference to the flower petals that surrounds the dome at its base, making it appear as a budding rose) is the mausoleum of Muhammad Adil Shah. The tomb completed in 1656 CE by the architect Yaqut of Dabul is 'the structural triumph of Deccani architecture'.

The tomb is a massive cube, 47.5 on each side, capped by a dome 44 m in external dimension. Eight intersecting arches created by two roated squares that create interlocking pendentives support the dome. At each of the four corner of the cube is a dome shaped octagonal tower seven stories high with a staircase inside.

The top floor of each tower opens into a round gallery which surrounds the dome. With an area of 1,700 square meters, the mausoleum is one of the biggest in the world. In the middle of the podium, a cenotaph slab on the ground marks the actual grave below.

6. Art

One of the prominent features of Adil Shahi monuments is the rich plaster work on the exterior walls. The decorative repertoire includes simple geometric patterns, lotus medallions, branches of trees, leafs, crown and wing, chained motifs, pettaled fringes, scroll work and creeper motifs. The plaster work is magnificently portrayed at the mosque associated with Ain-al-Mulk's Tomb at Ainnapur, a suburb of Bijapur and also at the exterior walls of GolGumbad.

Another prominent feature of Bijapur monuments is the stone carving. The sculptural treatment of brackets, eaves, parapets and finials are amongst the rich artistic heritage of Bijapur. The carvings of Ibrahim Rouza are amongst the best examples of Adil Shahi aesthetics. Lotus medallions, foliate patterns, bands of flowers connected by curving stalks, arabesque patterns and calligraphic work on the outer walls and the ceiling of the surrounding veranda, are a visual treat to the eyes.

Paintings also flourished under the Adil Shahis. The mihareb of Jami Masjid has preserved some of the finest murals of Bijapur. The spandrels above the arch are filled with leafy tendrils bursting into fanciful blue and purple flowers on a rich golden background. Another attraction of the mihareb is the treatment of faceted part dome, where calligraphic alms, some on chains are surrounded by elegant leafy tendrils.

Murals are also profusely preserved in the upper floor chamber of Asher Mahal. In one of the chambers have their recesses painted with vases of plenty in shimmering gold and lapis lazuli. These vases are composed of energetic arabesque patterns similar to 15th century Timurid design.

Paintings on the walls and vaults of the pavilions at the pleasure resort at Kummatgi include depictions of courtly pastimes, such as a polo match.

7. Hydraulic Work of Adil Shahis

Bijapur is located in a semi-arid plateau with limited water resources. In order to meet the demand the arrangements made by the Adil Shahis to supply water to Bijapur were remarkable.

While laying out the city of Bijapur, the planners had taken care to provide for efficient system of water distribution in the form of tanks, wells, towers, baths, fountains and earthen conduits.

Kummtagi, a village 20 km away from Bijapur located in a picturesque valley and surrounded by semi-arid plains is well-known for its hydraulic work. The village was a pleasure resort for the Adil Shahis. There is a large square tank in front of the pavilion, which was connected through a series of water channels to a high tower, similar to a modern day water tank. Water was raised manually to a cistern on the top of the tower, and from it was distributed through pipes to the various points below.

Among the bawodis (reservoirs), the Taj Bawodi is noteworthy. It was built to commemorate Taj Sultana, Ibrahim II's first wife. The other important bowody is Chand Bawodi located near Shapur Gate.

8. Defense

Adil Shahis were masters in canon making, a war innovation introduced to India by the Mughals. The Malik-I-Maidan (Master of the Battleeld) has one of the largest canons of Medieval India (about 4.5 m long and 1.5 m wide) weighing 55 tons. The unusual feature of the gun is that its muzzle is shaped in the form of a lion head with carved open jaws as if devouring an elephant. It was used at the battle of Talikota against the Vijayanagar King in 1565 AD.

9. Summary

The Adil Shahi rulers who ruled from Bijapur for two hundred years had expanded their utmost authority, almost exclusively on art and architecture; each ruler endeavored to excel his predecessor in the number, size or beauty of his building projects. Truly Bijapur is a gem of Islamic Deccan.

