

SUFIS OF GULBARGA DURING THE PERIOD OF BAHAMANI

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Abstract: Sufism, the mystical dimension of Islam, played a vital role in shaping the religious, social, and cultural life of the Deccan during the medieval period. This paper examines the emergence, growth, and influence of Sufi saints in **Gulbarga during the Bahamani period (1347–1538 A.D.)**, when the region became a prominent center of Islamic mysticism. Facilitated initially by Arab trade contacts and later by royal patronage, Sufism found a congenial environment in Karnataka. The Bahamani rulers extended support to Sufi saints, who in turn exerted moral and spiritual influence on society and politics. Eminent Sufis such as **Shaikh Siraj-ud-Din Junaidi, Khwaja Bande Nawaz (Gesu Daraz)**, and others contributed significantly through their teachings of love, tolerance, equality, and social responsibility. Their khanqahs and dargahs became centers of spiritual learning, social reform, art, architecture, and literature. The study highlights how Sufi ideals helped promote communal harmony and cultural synthesis in Gulbarga, leaving behind a lasting legacy that enriched the region's pluralistic traditions.

Keywords: Sufism; Islamic Mysticism; Sufi Saints; Karnataka; Gulbarga; Bahamani Dynasty; Adil Shahi Dynasty; Deccan; Khwaja Bande Nawaz (Gesu Daraz); Chishti Order; Sufi Orders (Silsilas); Dargahs; Khanqah System; Social Harmony; Hindu–Muslim Relations; Cultural Synthesis; Medieval Deccan; Sufi Teachings; Art and Architecture; Sufi Literature.

Introduction: Sufism is nothing other than Islamic mysticism.¹ The saints who preached the principles of Sufism are called Sufi saints. Karnataka is one of the most important southern states of India. At present in Karnataka there are thirty districts and in these districts, four hundred and twenty five references to Sufi saints' *darghas* are found.. The present research concentrates on the Sufi saints of the Bahamani and Adil Shahi periods as Sufism spread and flourished during their reign in South India. The advent of Sufi saints in South India might have been from the very inception of Islam in the beginning of the 7th century A.D. Trade and commerce carried out by the Arabs paved out a way for Islam and later for Sufism to enter Karnataka. Sufism first entered the Western Coast along with the Arab merchants who have been mentioned in inscriptions as *Tajjikas*. The earliest reference to a Sufi saint in Karnataka can be traced back to 1301 A.D. **Hazrat Sayyid Shah Hisamud-din-Teighbarana** was the first Sufi saint to come to Gulbarga. At present his tomb is located in the fort near Jagath talab in Gulbarga. Karnataka was ruled by many Muslim dynasties. In North Karnataka, fourteenth century, happens to be a period that gave space for the first Muslim dynasty to thrive i.e., The Bahamanis (1347 A.D. to 1538 A.D.), and later the Adil Shahis (1489-1686 A.D.) After them, North Karnataka was under the rule of Nawabs of Savanur, the Mughals, the Barid Shahis of Bidar and the Nizams of Hyderabad. The southern part of Karnataka was under the reign of Haider Ali and his son Tippu Sultan the Sufis had found an

amicable geographical and cultural abode in Karnataka for Sufi flourishing and popularity. The kings and queens of Karnataka like the common people promoted Sufism. The Sufi saints who came from North India as well as from Persia, Arabia and Baghdad settled here because of its amicability and great concern of the people²

Political history of Bahamani Sultans: Here mentioned their names and periods over ruled Gulbarga Period (75 years).

1. Alauddin Hassan Bahman Shah (3 August 1347-11 February 1358 AD).
2. Muhammed Shah-I (11 February 1358 - 21 April 1375 AD) the son of Hassan Bahman Shah. He is better known as the organizer of Bahmani Kingdom and founder of its institutions.
3. Aladdin Mujahid Shah (21 April 1375-16 April 1378 AD) Son of Muhammad Shah.
4. Da'ud Shah (16 April 1378- 21 May 1378 AD)- Brother of Mohammed Shah.
5. Muhammad Shah II (21 May 1378-20 April 1397 AD) Son of Muhammad Shah- I.
6. Ghiyath ud-Din Shah (20 April 1397-14 June 1397 AD)-Also known as Ghiyas-Ud-Din-Tahmatan Shah, son of Muhammad Shah-II.
7. Shams-ud-Din Shah (14 June 1397-15 November 1397 AD) Also known as Shams-ud-Din Da'ud Shah, son of Muhammad Shah II.
8. Taj ud-Din Firuz Shah (Firoz Shah Bahmani) (24 November 1397- October 1, 1422) Son of Ahmad Khan, grandson of Bahman Shah.³

Bidar Period (116 years).

During the period when the Bahamanis ruled from Bidar as their capital the following were the Sultans.

1. Ahmad Shah-I Wali (1 October 1422-17 April 1436). Also known as Ahmed Shah Al Wali Bahamani and Shihab-Ud-Din Ahmad- I, he was the son of Ahmad Khan and grandson of Bahman Shah.
2. Ahmad Shah-II (17 Apr 1436-6 May 1458). Son of Ahmad Shah-I Wali.
3. Humayun Zalim Shah (7 May 1458- 4 September 1461) Son of Ahmad Shah- II.
4. Nizam-Ud-Din Ahmad (4 September 1461-30 July 1463). Also known as Nizam Shah, son of Humayun Shah.
5. Muhammad Shah-III (30 July 1463-26 March 1482)-Also known as Shams-Ud-Din Muhammad Shah-III, son of Humayun Shah, younger brother of Ahmad-III.
6. Muhammad Shah-IV (26 March 1482-27 December 1518 AD). Also known as Mahmud Shah and Shihab-Ud-Din Mahmud, son of Muhammad Shah-III.
7. Ahmad Shah-III (27 December 1518-15 December 1520 AD). Son of Mahmud Shah.
8. Aladdin Shah (28 December 1520-5 March 1523 AD) Son of Ahmad Shah-III.
9. Wali-Allah Shah (5 March 1523 – 1526 AD) Also known as Wali-UI-Lah Shah, son of Mahmud Shah.
10. Kalim-Allah Shah (1526 - 1527 AD) Also known as Kalim-UI-Lah Shah, son of Mahmud Shah⁴

Emergence of Sufism.: The rise of Sufism could be associated with the disillusionment among some Muslim *Ulama* (scholars) and disintegration of the Caliphate after the death of Hazrat Ali, the fourth Caliph. This period witnessed intense power struggle, bloodshed and empowerment of the ruling class. Humankind. In the beginning, Sufism did not exist in a properly organized form, but, at the same, one cannot underestimate or overlook the contributions made by the early Sufis (8th, 9th and 10th Centuries) to the development of Sufi thought. Of the many Sufi orders (Silsilas) that have arisen in the world of mystic Islam. India became the hospitable home for a large number of Sufis.⁵ The arrival of Shaikh Mu' in-ud-Din in India just before the Sultanate period heralded the beginning of a new era in the religious ethos of the country. During the Sultanate period of three hundred years, Sufism had spread every nook and corner of the country.⁶

Early Sufis and their orders.

Khwaja Muinud-din, the founder of Chishtiyya order in India was considered as an early Sufi - Saint of North India. The Saintly figures and mythical stories had made inspiration on Hindu Communities. The medieval North Indian Society was highly influenced by the Cosmopolitan Culture of Bahadad and Persia. Among the religious elite of Medieval India, Ulamas and the Sufi Mystics or Fakirs had tolerated with non-Islamic traditions.. Sufi Saint Shaikh Nizam-ud-din-Awliya (1238-1325 A.D) had stressed love as a means of realizing God. It implied the love of humanity. He founded the Chisti Nizami order. He saw the reign of seven rulers of Delhi Sultanate. The famous Suhrawardi order Sufi Saints were Shaikh Sadrudin Arif, Amir Husayan and Ruknuddin. Saint Ruknuddin was highly respected by the Delhi Sultans, from Alauddin Khilji to Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq. This order got spread to Tiruchirappalli and Andhra Pradesh in South India. Another order Naqshbandiyya, became an influential factor in Indo – Muslim life and for two centuries it was the Principal spiritual order in India. Khwaja Baqi Billa was an influential Sufi personality and protested the state policies of Mughal emperor Akbar. "The establishment of Sufi orders in India coincided with the rising political power of Muslims

Sufis Saits of Gulbarga: The Bahmanis ruled Gulbarga from 1347 to 1424 A.D. and Bidar from 1424 to 1538 A.D. During their period many Sufi saints lived at Gulbarga and Bidar. Among them, Shiak Sirajud-din-Junaidi, Gesu Daraz (Bande Nawaz) in Gulbarga and Syed Tajuddin in Bidar were the most important Sufi saints. The Bahmani rulers from the very beginning of their rule in Karnataka gained the goodwill and co-operation of the Sufi saints. In many movements of crisis connected with accessions, campaigns, and factious conflicts in the history of the Bahmanis, the Sufi saints exerted their influence in favour of one or other claimant. King Alaud-din Hasan Bahman Shah (1347- 1358 A.D.) had great respect for Sufi saints named Shaikh Burhanuddin Gharib, Shaikh Ainud-din Bijapuri and Shaikh Sirajud-din Junaidi. Among the Sufis of Gulbarga were;

Shaikh Sirajud-din Junaidi came to Gulbarga in 1347 A.D. His tomb called Shaikh Roza dargah is located in Shah Bazar at Gulbarga. Hazrat Shaikh Saad Zanjani Rahimatullah Aulia came to Gulbarga in 1351 A.D. His dargah is located near the Chor Gumbad at Gulbarga. **Hazrat Shaikh Minajjuddin Tamim-ul-Ansari** came to Gulbarga from Daulatabad in 1352 A.D. At present his dargah is located in Kirana Bazar near fort road at Gulbarga. **Hazrat Shah Ruknud-**

din Tola of Qadiri order is said to have come to Gulbarga before Gesu Daraz during the period of King Firuz Shah Bahman. His dargah at present is located near Chor Gumbad in Gulbarga.⁷ **Syed Muhammad Gesu Daraz** (Hazarat Khwaja Bande Nawaz; 1321-1422 A.D.)⁸ of the Chishti order he was one of the most prominent figures in the early history of Islamic mysticism in Gulbarga. He died at the age of more than a hundred years on 1st November, 1422 A.D. He was much revered and respected by all. His *dargah* is even now regarded with great esteem and veneration by the people of Karnataka. **Khalifat-al- Rahman** played an important role in the spiritual life both of Firuzabad and Sultan Firuz. His *dargah* is located in Firuzabad and it is unique in its architecture. Other than these famous Sufi saints, there are some more references for Sufi saints who lived in Gulbarga during the 15th century A.D. They are, **Hazrat Shah Bahaud-din Langot Band Rehamathullah Aulia** (*dargah* is located near Shah Bazar, Gulbarga), **Hazrat Moulana Hafeez** (*dargah* is located near the tomb of Shaikh Ziyauddin Qatal at Gulbarga), **Moulana Qadar** (*dargah* is located in Sultanpur, Gulbarga), **Moulana Iftiqaruddin** (*dargah* is located in Moulana Shahbazar), **Moulana Kamal Girayan** (*dargah* is located in Sultanpur, Gulbarga), **Hazrat Peer Bangdhi** (*dargah* is located near fort road, Gulbarga), and **Bahaman Shah Sahib** (*dargah* is located near Ganjiriyan Mazhar, Gulbarga)⁹

Teaching and contribution of Sufis:

Teachings of Sufis.

1. God only Exists. He is in all things and all things are in Him.
2. All visible and invisible beings are an emanation from him and are not really distinct from him.
3. Religions are matters of indifference they however serve as leading to realities, one such religion is Islam of which Sufism is the true philosophy.
4. There is not much difference between the good (God) evil as god is the real author of the acts of mankind.
5. Man is only an instrument of God and is not free in his action.
6. The soul existed before the body and is confined within the latter as in a cage, death which frees the soul from the cage is therefore welcome to a Sufi as he wishes to return to the bosom of divinity.
7. This knowledge alone purifies the soul before it attains union with god.
8. It is only with the grace of god that union with him is granted but for this a fervent effort is needed.

Views of Sufis about Society. According to Sufism, man should incorporate pure qualities within himself for leading a successful life and Sufi should live with a firm belief that Allah is the creator of the entire Universe. Every person should perform his/her social responsibilities and obligations.⁹

Views of Sufism on Relations with Parents. Sufism believes in monotheism and propounds that a Sufi should not worship anyone else than Allah. It also lays down that parents should be treated with respect. Prophet propounded that one should give highest respect to his/her mother. After the mother, it is the father who should command highest respect.

Sufism and Children.Sufism does not differentiate between a son and a daughter. A Sufi family treats all its children leniently. The parents should look after the nurture and learning of all its children equally and teach them the dictum of good behavior

Sufism on Neighborhood.Social life is not complete without neighbors. Sufism decrees that one should behave courteously with his neighbors both near the house, near the shop. According to Sufism, neighbors also include servants, tenants, friends and followers.They hold that a needy neighbor should be helped out with money or solace

Sufism on Widowhood and Orphans.In general Sufism follows Quranic commands. The command regarding the treatment of orphans is particularly important one. Feeding orphans is considered a noble act. Restoring an orphan to his estate and guarding it until he attains maturity is another noble act. In Sufism widows are permitted for remarriage. The Prophet had ordained that the prior consent of both a virgin and a widow should be obtained before settling their marriage. It also stipulates that the widow should be viewed leniently.

Social Practices of the Sufis: The Sufis adopted a balanced attitude towards inner and exterior values. They believed that everyone should fulfill his/her social obligations and responsibilities. These ideal social values have enabled the spread of Sufism in the world.

Sufis and their Daily Routine. The main objective of Sufis in leading the mundane routine is to lead a respectful life both internally and externally. They honored decency and courtesy meticulously. After early arising from the bed at the daybreak they completed ablutions and donning clean clothes, they offered the day's first Namaz before the sunrise.

Tradition of Pir-Murid Relations. After the demise of the Prophet, his disciples and their conclave, evolved a code called '*Asmakar-Rizal*', which noted down his thoughts and enunciations on diverse subjects. Eventually, this compilation came to be known as 'Hadis' and sufism treats the 'Hadis' with great respect.

Sufism on Khanaqah System. During the time Prophet, discourses on religion and related issues were held and training was imparted to the would-be disciples on a raised platform outside a Masjid. In later times, Sufi saints built Khanaqahs (residential schools) at a far distance away from the hubbub of the human habitats, for the same purposes. Sama and Zikr were also taught here and after the death of the leading Pir of the Khanaqah, a Dargah was built in his memory. Gradually, the Khanagah and Dargah system evolved from these practices

Contributions of Sufism: The Sufi saints made contribution in their own way to the social, political, religious, and cultural life of Deccan.

Sufi Contributions to Society. One of the important ideals of the Sufi saints was to endeavor for the abolition of all discriminations, and inequalities from contemporary society. They accepted all men, rich and poor, Hindu and Muslim, free born and slaves in equal way. They worked as socio-religious reformers in the region.. The Sufis attracted large masses towards them in the Deccan by their simple life.

Influence of Sufi saints on Politics.Several Sufis exercised great amount of influence on rulers, nobles, administrators and well to do people. They advised these people of high status to help the weak, the destitute and the needy people.

Spread of Morality and Discipline. Sufis taught and encouraged people to cultivate the virtues of humanity, good character, tolerance, forgiveness and patience. They opposed all vices such as drinking, gambling, prostitution, slavery etc.

Promotion of Education, Common Language. The Sufis played a significant role in the educational development in the region. Their Khanqahs became the centers of spreading knowledge and wisdom. Their discourses helped in the intellectual and spiritual advancement of the listeners, in some khanqahs formal religious education was also imparted.

Art and Architecture, Literature and Music. Sufi saints contributed to the development art and architecture of the region by constructing the Khanqahs and mosques. Their patrons constructed the Dargahs and they became a living tradition of Islam in Deccan. The Dargah of Khawja Bande Nawaz at Gulbarga is a classic example to art and architecture.¹⁰ The influence of Sufism was not only confined to religious harmony but it had also affected the Kannada language and literature. Folk songs such as Chakki-nama (song sung by women to accompany their work at the grinding stone) and Charaka nama (song sung by women to accompany their work at the spinning wheel) were influenced by Sufi practices of Qawwali. Tazkirah and Malfuz are the most famous Sufi literature in India. The word '*Tazkirah*' in the Arabic language means "to remember, commemoration or memory". In Persian language, the word 'tazkirah' has been used in the sense 'memoire, remembrance'. The first Persian book that begins with '*Tazkirah*' is *Tazkiratul-Auliya of Shaikh Farid-ud-Din Attar*, written in the 17th century A.D. In India, *Siyar-ul-Auliya*, a Tazkirah literature, written by Mir Khurd Alwi Kirmani (1311 A.D.) during the reign of Firoz Shah Tughlaq (1351-1388 A.D.) about Chishti saints and nearly 160 Tazkirahs famous in Indian Sufi literature. Spiritual master Shaikh Nizam-ud-Din Auliya. The Malfuzat of Moulana Burhan-ud-Din Gharib (1337 A.D.) Malfuzats of Hazrat Sarvar Maqdoom were famous for his teaching and guidance¹¹ Hence the Sufi saints made Islam quite popular in the region. They tried to eradicate religious fanaticism between the Hindus and the Muslims and enhance the feelings of humanity, brotherhood, love, tolerance and equality. They condemned and discouraged the evil practices prevalent among the Hindus and Muslims and tried to purify the society. Sufi saints became a legacy of rich diverse culture of the region. ¹¹

Conclusion: Sufi saints played well role to build the healthy and good society in India. They had tried to create harmony between Hindu and Muslims. Sufism it's a part of Islam religion. The Bahamani kings gave opportunity to stay Sufis in Gulbarga. Therefore, number of Sufi saints had travel towards south and lastly settled down in Gulbarga made culture very rich.

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