

# A study on the rise and fall of Deccan region with special reference to Gulbarga

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**Abstract:** Gulbarga city which is also popularly known as Kalaburagi city, is the largest city in the Hyderabad-Karnataka region of North Karnataka. Gulbarga was a part of Hyderabad state initially, but through state reorganization act of 1956, it was included in the Karnataka state (erstwhile Mysore state). Etymologically Gulbarga name is derived from 'Kalburgi' which means a 'stony land' or 'stone roofing' or a 'heap of stones' in Kannada. Another version is that Gulbarga was so named to connote a leaf with flower, since 'Gul' means 'flower' and 'Burg' means 'leaf' in the Persian language. It is also said that Kalburgi, came to be pronounced as Gulbarga when it was under the Muslim rule. The history of the Gulbarga city dates back to 6<sup>th</sup> century. The entire district is situated in Deccan plateau. Several important ruling dynasties of the Deccan had their capital in this district. Starting from Rashtrakutas, who had Malkhed as their capital, is just twenty two miles away from Gulbarga City. Ala-ud-din Bahaman Shah selected Gulbarga city itself as his capital. In the early 14<sup>th</sup> century, the Deccan was occupied by Muhammad Bin Tughluq of the Delhi Sultanate, which included Gulbarga. The revolt of the Muslim officers appointed from Delhi resulted in founding of the Bahamani Sultanate in 1347 by Ala-ud-din Hassan, who choose Gulbarga (named as 'Ahsenabad' during this period) to be his capital. It remained the capital of the Bahamani Kingdom till 1424, where after the capital was shifted to Bidar, as Bidar had better climatic conditions. The Bahamani kings, during this period, ruled over the Deccan plateau from the Krishna River to the Tapti river and from the Western Ghats to the Telangana area. Infact, in few places of the city, pre-historical evidences are also found. These pre-historic remains consist of cromlechs, kistavaens and cairns. Therefore, understanding the background and importance of Gulbarga city is very important and this research paper attempts such initiative.

**Key words:** Pre-historic evidences, Dynasty ruling, Muslim rulers, Capital city, Cromlechs.

## INTRODUCTION

The history of the Gulbarga city dates back to 6<sup>th</sup> century. The entire district is situated in Deccan plateau. Several important ruling dynasties of the Deccan had their capital in this district. Starting from Rashtrakutas, who had Malkhed as their capital, is just twenty two miles away from Gulbarga City.

## THE CHALUKYA REGINE

Historical evidences records the growth and importance of Chalukyas of Badami in the region who undertook the political task of unifying and consolidating the disintegrated small provinces of the region, who started raising with the fall of the Satavahana Empire. Though Jayasimha and Ranaraga were the earliest monarchs of the Chalukyan dynasty, the name of Pulakeshi I, stands prominent, who sat on the throne. Kritiverman followed by Mangalesha succeeded Pulakeshi I successively. Pulakeshi II, who succeeded Mangalesha, was the most illustrious ruler of the dynasty and remained in power for 29 years. Immediately after ascending the throne, he put down all internal conflicts and then turned his attention towards his conquests. He subjugated the Kadambas, the Gangas, the Alupas, the Pallavas, the Cholas and many other ruling houses. The brilliance of his conquests, coupled with his extraordinary bravery, gave him the title of Supreme Lord. After him, Vikramaditya I, Vijayaditya and Vikramaditya II came to power in Chalukya dynasty. These rulers were not as powerful and efficient as Pulakeshi II or the earlier rulers. Taking advantage of this, many feudatory rulers became bold and resistive. Dantidurga, a feudatory rulers became bold and restive. Dantidurga, a feudatory, made the final assault on Kirtivarman II, the last king of the Chalukya dynasty and was overthrown by Rashtrakuta king Krishna.

### THE RASHTRAKUTAS' REGIME

Krishna I came to the throne after Dantidurga. He was an uncle of Dantidurga. He soon turned his attention towards the Chalukyas. It was Krishna's might that brought the mighty Chalukyas Empire to a close. After achieving this great military victory, he proceeded against the Gangas of Mysore. He was not only a conqueror but was also a builder. The famous rock-cut temples of Ellora bear eloquent testimony to his devotion to art and religion. After Krishna I, his son Govinda II and his brother Druva ruled the kingdom for some time. Govinda III, the third son of Druva, succeeded his father. The new king was drawn into a number of conflicts. Marching to the south, he annexed some territory and overran Nolambavadi. In A.D. 809, there was a combined onslaught on the Rashtrakutas by the Gangas, Pallavas, Pandyas and Kerals. Govinda III defeated all of them. Amoghvarsha I (814-878) succeeded his father, Govinda III. He had a long rule of 64 years. During his reign, he had to contend with the Gangas, but barring these encounters, his reign was on the whole peaceful. It is said that he wrote the great work in Kannada called 'Kavirajamarga'. This is a work of prosody and even today is in constant between the Godavari and the Cauvery and of the culture of the people who inhabited this region. Amoghavarsha professed the Jaina religion. He also wrote a Sanskrit work called 'Prashnottara Ratnamala'. This king was also known as Nrupatunga. After Amoghavarsha Nrupatunga, Krishna II, Jagatunga, Indra III ruled the region. After the death of Indra III, Amoghavarsha II came to the throne. This king did not survive long and fell a prey to the foul play of his younger brother Govinda was a lover of pleasure and could not maintain himself on the throne for long. Chalukya Bhima II of Vengi inflicted a number of defeats on the Rashtrakuta army and there were rebellions throughout the land, Ultimately Govinda was deposed. Amoghavarsha III, Krishna III, Khottiga, Karkka II, became kings successively. During his reign, a feudatory belonging to the Chalukya family, Taila II, declared his independence and occupied the Rashtrakuta kingdom in 973 A.D. The Rashtrakutas befriended the Muslims and gave them all facilities for settling in their territory. They allowed them to build mosques and to be ruled by their own governors. Whatever one might think of the political wisdom of

the Rashtrakutas, their attitude was undoubtedly a manifestation of that spirit of religious tolerance which characterized India, but was rare in that age elsewhere in the world. It may be safely said that the Rashtrakutas of Manyakheta were the heirs of the Chalukyas of Vatapi in the imperial sovereignty of the Deccan.

### THE REGIME OF KALYANI CHALUKYA

Taila II, established himself at Manyakheta in the beginning and later shifted his seat of government to Kalyana. From here another illustrious dynasty played its role in shaping the wonderful history of Deccan region. The most illustrious king among the later Chalukyas of Kalyana was Vikramaditya VI. Vikramaditya, immediately after he had firmly established himself on the throne, began a new Era bearing his own name in the year 1076 A.D. This Era called "Chalukya Vikrama Varsha" is cited in all his records instead of the Saka Varsha which was (and is) in vogue in the Karnataka country. Vikramaditya VI had a long and brilliant reign of over 50 years. None of his successors was as powerful as he. Consequently, about 1155 A.D., one of the feudatories of the Chalukyas, Kalachurya Bijjala, usurped the Chalukya throne and he and his descendants continued to hold it till about 1184 A.D. Subsequently, two subordinates of the Chalukyas, the Yadavas of Devagiri and the Hoysalas of Dwarasamudra, gradually grew powerful and occupied the Chalukya territories. Though Bijjala's ruling period was very short, is an eventful one and is of interest from having seen the great propagation of the 'Veerashiva faith' which has become prominent throughout the Kannada speaking territories. The Veerashaiva renaissance under Basaveshwara ushered in a new era in the religious and philosophic literature of Karnataka. The 'Vachana' style of composition, the throwing open of the portals of the treasures of spiritual wisdom to the masses irrespective of caste and creed and the introduction of the Shivabhakti element in Kannada literary works were some of the important features of the renaissance in the religious and social life of Karnataka. Bijjala had four sons, Sovideva, Sankama Deva, Ahavamalla and Singhana. All these four succeeded to the throne, one after the other. Singhana was the last king of the dynasty. As a result the

Chalukya dynasty was finally overcome by the other rising chiefs, the Hoysalas, the Yadavas and the Kakatiyas.

There were severe struggles between the Hoysalas and the Sevunas (also called Yadavas of Devagiri) for the possession of the Chalukya-Kalachurya dominions. In a final struggle, the Sevunas forced the Hoysalas to retire to the south of the Tungabhadra. The Sevunas, in course of time, became masters of all the western Deccan (including the district of Gulbarga and its neighbourhood) having their capital at Devagiri or modern Daulatabad, the struggle between the Hoysalas and Yadavas on the one hand and with the Kakatiyas of Warangal on the other hand weakened the power of the Hindu kings of the Deccan and offered an opportunity to the Muhammadan invader to conquer the whole expanse of South India.

#### THE REGIME OF VIJAYANAGARA EMPIRE

At this time, Ala-ud-din Khilji had seized the throne of Delhi his general Malik Kafur expanded their march to Deccan region. Many Hindu kings revolted against the accepting Muslim leadership and two sons of Sangama, namely Hukka (Harihara I) and Bukka I, who had been officers under Kampili headed this movement and proclaimed themselves kings in the ancestral territory of Kampiliraya. Their kingdom was first confined to the limits of the Hoysala country and in course of time included the whole expanse of land between the three seas after the break-up of the Bahamani kingdom. The empire of Vijayanagara had a career of about 300 years. Being ruled by three families, one succeeding the other – (1) Sangama dynasty followed by the Saluva 'usurpation', (2) The Tuluva family and (3) The Aravidu dynasty. The empire rose to great eminence under Devaraya II of the first dynasty, whose conquests in the Tamil and Telugu countries established and extended the influence of the empire over a wide area. This continued with rising success, until the invincible power of Krishnadevaraya was acknowledged as supreme in the whole of South India and the Deccan. The might of the Hindu power under Aliya Ramaraya was soon to be laid low by the combined forces of the four Muhammadan kingdoms of the Deccan and the power of Vijayanagara was

shattered on the battle-field of Rakkasa-Tangadgi in A.D. 1565.

#### THE REGIME OF MUSLIM RULE

In the early 14<sup>th</sup> century, the Deccan was occupied by Muhammad Bin Tughluq of the Delhi Sultanate, which included Gulbarga. The revolt of the Muslim officers appointed from Delhi resulted in founding of the Bahamani Sultanate in 1347 by Ala-ud-din Hassan, who chose Gulbarga (named as 'Ahsenabad' during this period) to be his capital. It remained the capital of the Bahamani Kingdom till 1424, where after the capital was shifted to Bidar, as Bidar had better climatic conditions. The Bahamani kings, during this period, ruled over the Deccan plateau from the Krishna River to the Tapti river and from the Western Ghats to the Telangana area. These Muslim rulers were instrumental in many radical changes. They carried out their administration using Urdu and Persian Language. Many of their inscriptions are in these twin languages only. They built many mosques and to promote their religion, destroyed many Hindu temples. Taking advantage of the continued dissensions and struggle between different sections of the nobility of the Bahamani kingdom, the Bijapur forces captured Gulbarga and drove away its Governor. The forces of disintegration were now in full swing. Mahmud Shah was succeeded by four kings, who were kings only in name. The last king was Kalimullah and after him, the Bahamani dynasty came to an end, making way for the independent Sultanates of the Deccan. The Bahamani administrative system was modeled on the Islamic pattern. The king was the supreme power. In theory, his authority was unlimited, but in practice he depended on the advice of his ministers in deciding questions of state policy. The chief minister was called 'Vakil-ul-Sultanat'. All orders issued by the king passed through him and bore his seal. The minister for finance was called 'Amir-Jumla'. The external affairs minister was called 'Wazir-e-Ashaf'. Ala-ud-din Bahaman Shah divided his kingdom into four divisions called Tarafs and each division was under a Tarafdardar. During the early days of the Bahamani rule, these Tarafdars were held in check by the strong personality of the king who spent a major portion of his time in touring the various divisions and in supervising the administration of his

officers. This channelized the decentralized method of governance. When the capital of the Bahamani kingdom was shifted to Bidar, Gulbarga lost its importance and remained only a provincial centre. When Yusuf Adil Shah became the ruler of Bijapur, Gulbarga came into his possession and remained with the Adil Shahi kings until the Mughal conquest of the Deccan.

#### THE REGIME OF MUGHALS

The Mughal emperors from the time of Jahangir and Shah Jahan had an eye on the Deccan States. With a view to subjugating the hole of the Deccan, the Mughal armies advancing south wards first absorbed Berar and the Ahmadnagar. The kingdoms of Golconda and Bijapur were then outside their clutches. When Aurangzeeb was appointed Governor of the Deccan he marched as far as Gulbarga and laid siege in Bijapur taking advantage of the death of its ruler Muhammad Adil Shah and the consequent crowning of Ali Adil Shah II, a youth of 18 years and the only son of the late ruler. After capturing Bidar, Aurangzeb sent a large force under Mahabat Khan to ravage the Bijapur territory upto Kalyana and Gulbarga. Though the Bijapur army put up a very obstinate fight, the heavily armed Mughal army was successful in plundering Bijapur and laying its villages waste upto Gulbarga and also capturing the fort of Kalyana. With the death of Adil shah II and the consequent crowing of his son, Sikandar, a boy of four, the glory of Bijapur started declining. The incapacity of the selfish regents of the infant ruler threw the monarchy into confusion and disturbances broke out on all sides. This was taken advantage of by Bahadur Khan, the Mughal Emperor's Viceroy in the Deccan, who marched with a huge force and conquered some districts of Bijapur including Gulbarga. As soon as Aurangzeb assumed the reins of administration after a fratricidal war, he settled all matters concerning North India and turned his mind towards the Deccan. During the latter half of his rule, he himself came to the Deccan and spent more than twenty years here. At this time, the supremacy of Bijapur kingdom had already declined owing to the risings of Shivaji and other factors.

The Asaf Jahi dynasty was founded by Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah, a distinguished general of Aurangzeb. After a long service in the Delhi Empire, distinguished

alike in war and in political sagacity, he was appointed Subedar or Viceroy of the Deccan in 1713 A.D. In 1719 A.D., he was sent to Malwa as its Subedar. But the Sayyid brothers who were influential at the court in Delhi, appointed Sayyid dilawar as Subedar of Malwa. At the same time, the Subedar of the Deccan was instructed to move northwards in order to attack Nizam-ul-Mulk. The Nizam first defeated the Deccan Subedar at Bijapur. By this time the Sayyid brothers had fallen from grace. Nizam-ul-Mulk was appointed Wazir at Delhi. Growing weary of the intrigues at court, he resigned his post and returned to the Deccan, reaching Aurangabad in July 1724 A.D. The Emperor now appointed Mubariz Khan as the Viceroy of all the areas of the Mughal Deccan. The Nizam had to defeat this new rival in October 1724 A.D., before he could take possession of Hyderabad and settle down as the master of the Deccan. He began to function virtually as an independent ruler from now on. He was given the title of 'Asaf Jah'. After Asaf Jah's death in 1748 A.D., there was contest for succession between his second son, Nasir Jung and his sister's son, Muzaffar Jung. This dispute between the uncle and the nephew brought the English and French on to scene. Though initially Frenchmen helped Muzaffar Jung to gain the power, slowly they started taking part in the day today administration. War broke out between France and England in Europe and their representatives in India also started hostilities. Meanwhile, Nizam Ali, another brother of Nasir Jung, rebelled and the Nizam who could not do anything without external help, concluded an important treaty with the English in May 1759 A.D. This treaty marked the end of French influence in Hyderabad and the beginning of English influence. The Nizam was obliged to make Nizam Ali his Prime Minister and the latter ultimately deposed him and became the Nizam. During the rule of this Nizam, the English gained more and more power in Hyderabad State. In 1766 A.D., the Northern Circars were ceded to the British on condition that the Nizam was to be furnished with a subsidiary force in times of war and should received six lakhs of rupees annually when no troops were required. The NizamSW also promised to assist the British with his troops. During the rule of this Nizam, the English became masters of large tracts of territory in the Deccan and Hyderabad State was completely

surrounded by the territories of the company. Like this the British who initially came to India for the purpose of trade, slowly starting taking control over the administration and ruled the entire country for almost two centuries. British took immense interest in subsiding the local rebellion and revolt and upheld their power till 1947, when India became independent.

### CONCLUSION

With the enactment of the State's Reorganization Act in 1956, the long-cherished and ardent desire of the people of the Hyderabad-Karnataka region was fulfilled and the three Kannada-speaking districts of Gulbarga, Raichur and Bidar formed part of the new Mysore State with effect from 1st November 1956. It is interesting to note that there has been, through the ages, a kind of inter-play of Muslim and Hindu cultures in Gulbarga, each influencing the other and enriching it. The Muslim rule over the centuries had its influence on the habits and customs of the people who were mostly Hindus. Quite a number of Muslims themselves were descendants of Hindu converts. Even the Muslim who claimed descent from foreign immigrants lived in closeness with the Hindus for generations. It was inevitable therefore that there was a reciprocal influence. Many social practices of the Muslims such as marriages were closely influenced by the Hindu society. Even the caste distinctions characterizing Hindu society spread to the Muslim aristocracy. In matters of dress, food, language, music, art and architecture, there was considerable mutual influence. Even in religious matters, there was this mutual influence perceptible, as is indicated by Sufism on the one hand and the doctrines of the medieval Hindu saints on the other. The Muslim saints were revered by the Hindus and the Hindu saints and ascetics were held in high respect by the Muslims. In the field of scholarship and literature, Muslim scholars studied Hindu philosophy and sciences such as Yoga, Vedanta, medicine, astrology, arithmetic and chemistry. Some Muslim rulers were great patrons of Hindu scholars and a few Muslim scholars wrote in the Indian language. Gulbarga played a notable role in the development of what is known as Deccani Hindi. A few Hindus wrote in the Persian language. This would lead us to conclude that, in so far as scholarship in the sciences and humanities was

concerned, there was great inter-play between the two systems. However, it should be noted that this mutual influence touched mainly the external elements of life. The Hindus continued to retain their habits of social exclusiveness and the Muslims their religious zeal.

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