
New Paradigms on Aurangzeb and Golconda Connection

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Abstract: One of the most widely debated areas of medieval Indian History is the Deccan policy of the Mughals especially under Aurangzeb who annexed Golconda and Bijapur, prominent Deccani Kingdoms. There have been many questions and interpretations on the motive of Aurangzeb encompassing sectarian and imperial factors. The views on the issue are varied and diversified. Aurangzeb was a strong advocate for annexation of the Deccani kingdoms even during the time when he was the Deccan Governor during the reign of his father and Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan. However, Shah Jahan was not in favor of annexing the states but was content with extracting tribute from them and has allowed them to remain as independent states. However, when Aurangzeb became the emperor, he had finally annexed the states after crushing the Marathas. The present paper examines various possibilities that prompted the last powerful Mughal Emperor to invade and annex Golconda kingdom under the Qutub Shahis. It also analyses the outcome of the annexation with questions such as whether or not Aurangzeb was able to reap any benefits of the annexation of Golconda and on the process of economic and administrative integration of the Deccani State into the imperial networks and its fall out.

Keywords: Aurangzeb, Golconda, Kingdom, Mughals, Policy

1. Introduction

There has been a steady interest in the policy of annexation in the Deccan executed by Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb (1656-1707 AD) among scholars from the iconic J. N. Sarkar to present-day scholars. The present paper, 'Expansion Vs Contraction: New Paradigms on Aurangzeb and Golconda Connection' attempts at analysing the main arguments and puts forth fresh paradigms on the nature and outcome of Aurangzeb's policy towards Golconda.

If one looks at the broader canvas of imperial designs of the Mughal and Deccan in which Golconda Kingdom was a major part, it was Akbar who set the ball rolling by targeting Ahmadnagar by giving protection to Burhan, the brother of Murtaza Nizam Shah. Burhan tried to depose his brother in which failed. He then fled to the north and presented himself before Akbar, who had sanctioned him a rank of 500 Zat. The same Burhan became Burhan Nizam Shah II in 1591 A. D. Preceded by a prolonged diplomacy and a variety of developments at the Deccan, Akbar could wrest Berar from Ahmadnagar in 1595 A. D. and later inflicted a crushing defeat. However, Ahmadnagar did not suffer extinction of the

Nizam Shahi dynasty [1]. There were no substantial policy change in connection to the Deccan under the reign of Jahangir and no progress was made.

2. Research Issues

The significance of Shah Jahan's reign in relation to the state policy of the Deccan was that there was an increased inclination of the Mughal state to bother itself with the affairs of the Deccan as a part of its objectives to bring the entire Deccan under its control. This is the first important issue of the annexation of Ahmadnagar. This had become inevitable on account of the increased interaction between the most powerful and the last king maker of Ahmadnagar, Shahji. However, with the advent of Aurangzeb on the Mughal Throne, the perspective of the Mughal State towards the Deccan had changes. Golconda, one of the richest and power states of the Deccan did attract the attention of the Mughal Emperor and was annexed. The research issues in this context involve a whole range of questions such as what are the reasons of the decision of Aurangzeb to annex Golconda and were there any sectarian and strategic causes for this annexations. It's also equally important to see the economic

underpinnings of the Mughal – Golconda connection. The present papers attempt at analyzing these research issues.

3. Methodology

The methodology of the paper involves a keen scrutiny of primary sources like Sanads of Aurangzeb and other Persian accounts such as Alamgir Namah of Muhammad Hashim, better known as Kafi Khan. Mughal Dasturs pertaining to the post-annexation period of Golconda gives insights into the net impact of the annexation. A thorough examination of secondary sources has also been undertaken for the purpose of study.

4. Review of Literature

The Mughal interaction of the Deccan has been widely debated by generation of scholars with overtones of traditional approach and the Aligarh approach. The writings of J. N Sarkar presents a view that the Deccan Policy of Aurangzeb was like a 'Spanish' ulcer for Napoleon in History of Europe. He also identifies it as one of the reasons for the fall of the Empire. Noted medieval historians like M Athar Ali, Satish Chandra also examines the matter with a main focus on the issues of integration of Golconda's resources, both in terms of men and economic resources. Foreign Historian, J F Richards and Peter Hardy also deliberate on the matter. While Peter Hardy links Aurangzeb's invasion on the Deccan in terms of challenge and response theory for the imperial Mughal State, J F Richards, in his celebrated work on Mughal Administration in Golconda dwells on the intricate dynamics of the relationship.

5. Analysis

The political condition at the court of Ahmadnagar was most confusing with Fatekhan having murdered Nizam Shah II, proclaimed his son Hussain Shah as king and declared himself as the regent. Shahji, who was Bijapur Service, besieged Daulatabad and forced Fatekhan to make a common course with Bijapur against the Mughals. After a prolonged confusion, ultimately, Shahji discovered an infant descendant of the Nizam Shahi dynasty and proclaimed him king with himself as the regent. He then inflicted a defeat on the Mughal forces in alliance with Bijapur at Parenda and drove them out of Ahmadnagar to Khandesh [2]. He ravaged and plundered the Mughal territories with the assistance of Adil Shah [3].

It was this kind of situation that warranted ShahJahan to arrive at Daulatabad for the second time in 1636, with the objective of subjugating the Ahmadnagar kingdom and containing Shahji and obtaining the allegiance of the Sultanates of Bijapur and Golconda. It seems he had understood the interplay of the rise of Shahji. Bijapur Golconda and realised that "these three were the only factors in the Deccan" and upon the safety of each depended the safety of all and vice versa. With a division of his armies into

the segments to coerce the Sultans of Bijapur and Golconda to submission and to occupy the Nizamshahi forts, which proved to be a grand success [4].

Thus, the accord of 1636 reconciled Bijapur and Golconda with the presence of the Mughals in the Deccan what followed after 1636 was the strengthening of diplomatic relations between the Mughal State and the Deccani States. Another major intervention of the Mughal State in the Deccan was the events of 1656-57. This had occurred in the second viceroyalty of Aurangzeb which began in 1653. Aurangzeb had asked the emperor to give definite instructions in relation to his policy towards Bijapur and Golconda [5].

As far as Golconda is concerned, the decisive factor was the deeds and role of Muhammad. Sayid popularly known as Mir Jumla. His growth can be attributed to his highly successful Karnatik campaign. The Karnatak had become a playground for both the Bijapur and Golconda after the treaty of 1636 with the Mughals. Infact, this treaty had given conducive atmosphere for both the Deccani Sultanates to forget about the danger from the north and concentrate on the Southern expansion. The Adilshah of Bijapur had taken the possession of Bendur, and Mysore and then, the Madras plains up to Vellore, Jinji and Valikandapuram near Tanjore, while Qutubshah of Golconda seized the Hindu principalities South and Southeast of his capital i. e. the region beyond the Krishna, to the north east of the new Bijapuri acquisitions. Mir Jumla led first in various to Karnatik in 1642 and with his grand success gained fame and wealth. Soon, he had started secret negotiations with Aurangzeb and the latter had made the necessary recommendations to ShahJahan. However, the vital event was arrest of Mir Jumla's son Muhammad Amin by Qutubshah and this had given a shape to the rupture between Delhi and Golconda. After some force, Aurangzeb had received orders from ShahJahan to proceed with preparations to Golconda in case. Qutub-ul-Mulk disobeyed the orders of the emperor in which he was directed to act according the will of Aurangzeb and release the family of Mir Jumla. However, Qutub-ul-Mulk did not need and initiated discussions with Bijapur for help against the Mughals and at the same time repeatedly asked for peace. Aurangzeb had personally supervised the seize from 6th February 1557 to 30th March and the Qutubshah implored Dara to use his influence for the settlement of peace. Ultimately, due to the efforts of Dara, Shahjahan sent a firman to Aurangzeb had delayed the announcement of the firman, he ultimate concluded peace with Golconda on the payment of an indemnity of one crore of rupees apart from collecting the arrears of tribute and the marriage of Muhammad Sultan with Qutubshah's daughter.

Thus, Aurangzeb had been a leading advocate for the annexation of the Deccan but once he had enthroned himself, he had entertained different ideas and restrained himself from occupying Golconda and Bijapur.

The period from 1556 and 1680 can be characterized by the absence of any consistent policy on the part of Mughal

state in relation to the Sultanate of Golconda. The difficulties experienced by Aurangzeb in dealing with the Marathas, and the practical difficulties in organising a conquest of the Deccan might practically explain this situation. The Mughal – Golconda relations entered a final stage in 1680 with the arrival of Aurangzeb to the Deccan [6]. Aurangzeb, though initially attempted at curbing only the Marathas, later he decided to take into the possession the Bijapur and Golconda. Thus, in one sense, there was inseparable link between the Mughal-Maratha relations and the Mughal-Golconda relations. Apart from this, the prevailing situation at the Golconda court had some bearing on Aurangzeb's decision to annex Golconda court had some bearing on Aurangzeb's decision to annex Golconda. The Sultan of Golconda, Abul Hasan's open inclination towards the newly emerging Brahman faction led by his Chief Minister Madanna and his brother Akkana [7] causes a growing resentment among the Muslim nobility and was duly represented before the emperor Aurangzeb [7]. Apart from this the possible alliance of the Golconda state and the Marathas led by Shivaji also influenced Aurangzeb's decision in favour of annihilation of the Qutubshahi state [9]. Without going into the conglomeration of political narrations and repetitions of factual details, suffice it would be to say here that the above were the important factors which played a vital role in transforming the regional kingdom of Golconda into a province of the Mughal state. Immediately after the annexation the provincial and the imperial capital relationship was established by Aurangzeb. This was made feasible with the penetration of the imperial administrative apparatus into the newly conquered Golconda kingdom. The existing similarities between the Golconda state and the Mughal state should also be borne in mind in this context. To some extent, the structure of the Golconda state differ very less from that of the Mughal state except in the absence of a centralized, well organised bureaucracy. The king was assisted militarily and administratively by the nobility who were granted tracts of land in lieu of their service. These tracts of lands were called *musaqasa* from which the tax was collected by the nobles [10]. This practice was also similar to that of the Mughal state the difference, however, being the lesser degree of control the Qutubshahi state exercised over its *musaqadars* [11]. Apart from the Muslim nobility, the strength of the Golconda state also lay in the effective ties with the local aristocracy. The leading Muslim nobility of the state were immediately incorporated into the imperial network. In the capital there was a scramble for the imperial offices and most of the men availed the new opportunity of gaining imperial service basically due to knowledge in handling the local affairs of administration which indispensable for the Mughals in their initial stage of conquest. It obviously had to come to terms with the local administrative set up. The nature of the administrative machinery changed significantly due to the implantation of the imperial administrative system and the new set up certainly created an imperial aura in the provincial capital at least with the disciplined, rank holding imperial officers. The

Mughal state had also initiated attempts to build an effective chain of contact provincial capital and the interior regions of the kingdom, particularly the Telangana and the Andhra region [12].

In the organisation of the agrarian economy of Golconda a new Revenue Settlement was imposed with a clear promulgation of the details of the estimated income of the Twenty territorial districts and also the diamond mines [13]. This kind of systematization was the hall mark of the imperial administration though the very pattern of doing this and its successful working was subjected to many limitations which were beyond the capability of the Mughal administration in Golconda [14]. The burden of tax was not the same in all the regions. The North Indian practice of a strict division of lands as *Khalisa* and *Paibaqi* was also implemented in Golconda with this settlement. The concentration of "Khalisa" was mainly in Telangana due to its proximity to the provincial capital, Hyderabad. With the addition of the "Khalisa" lands of Hyderabad to the Mughal state, it could get at least an additional income of nearly seven million rupees [15]. The operation of the 'Jagirdar' system in Golconda heavily depended on the ability of the Jagirdar to maintain strong personal ties with the local official like *deshmukh*. On the one hand there was virtual scramble for the allocation of jagir lands with the large scale influx of the nobility and on the other, the increasing inability of the of the Mughal jagirdars of the Deccan to contain the disobedience of the local Zamindars and officials was the contradiction of the working of the Mughal Jagirdari system in Golconda. This situation was much more aggravated with *Paibaqi* lands worth nearly 8.8 million left unallocated [16]. Thus the new acquisition of the Golconda kingdom could not ultimately benefit the Mughal state in so far as the working and implementation of the jagir system is concerned.

Actually, the Mughal state could have been in a position to reap the benefits of the rich trading potential of Golconda. In fact, by 1680s, there was a brisk trading activity in the kingdom of Golconda [16]. The state had its own share of investment in shipping right till the last days of the Sultanate. There was direct trade with the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea. The South East Asian trade was also at its peak with *Machilipatnam* having considerable shipping to *Acheh*, *Bantam*, *Mannila*, *Burma* and *Siam* [17]. Theoretically speaking, the Mughal state could have utilised this potential and infact, this could have been one of the reasons that can be ascribed to the Mughal forward policy into the Deccan. But at reality, what happened was a reversal of trade. The biggest problem was that the Mughal-Maratha conflict was fully focused in the South and the wealthy province of Golconda was repeatedly targeted by the Maratha depredations. The shifts in the power structure and power relations had a negative impact on the inter-regional trade also. The important trading centres in the province lost continuous trading connection with Hyderabad. Thus the Mughal state could not gain anything in this sphere of economic activity also.

6. Conclusion

The virtual faltering of Mughal state apparatus in the Golconda from the beginning of the Seventeenth century has something to do with the nature of popular response and resistance of the people of Golconda region. The Mughal state by the beginning of the Eighteenth century had virtually no strong ideology which could execute an effective assimilation of the newly-annexed kingdom of Golconda. Whatever may be the reasons of imposition, the imposition of Jizia on Golconda people had certainly a negative impact. Though it was abolished in 1704, “for the duration of war”, it did not have any positive impact. The sympathy of the Telugu society largely remained with the old Qutubshahi dynasty. Not only ideologically but administratively also, the Mughal state could not show the assimilating character. Despite their normally high ranks, none of the Telugu warriors were recruited into the imperial service. The emperor never succeeded in binding the Telugu warriors to him and the imperial service the way in which the Rajputs had been assimilated in the previous century by Akbar. He could never gain the active loyalties of these chiefs to the extent that he could trust them to perform discretionary missions of importance at long distances from the court. The Mughal state had to strive hard to prevent the rapid decline and could not contend successfully the various situational realities like the increasing presence of the European Companies.

From the view point of Golconda, the period from 1687 to 1707 was a period of transition in the sense that after the breakdown of the Qutubshahi dynasty. It took a long time to restore order and normally again. Secondly, it is true that there was more interaction between the north India and Golconda. But it is equally important that this interaction would date back to at least two to three centuries from the actual annexation. The consequences of this Mughal-Golconda relationship were, among others, the sudden set back to the active interaction between the Deccan and Persia; also, the administrative machinery had come a mixture of the northern influence and the erstwhile Qutubshahi state. These are clearly visible after 1724, when Nizam-ul-Mulk founded the state of Hyderabad the details of which would be out of place to the scope of the present topic [18].

On the basis of the above study some observations can be made. Culturally, economically and politically, a firm foundation had been laid for the interaction between the north and the Deccan. The movement of embassies, traders, soldiers and particularly the activities of the European trading companies – all contributed for this process of interaction. Secondly, the net outcome of the Mughal relationship with Golconda was practically not much use for the Mughal state. For Golconda, it was a major political change with deep repercussions on the economic, cultural and political spheres.

One positive aspect is that the regional economy of Golconda was integrated with the economy at large. Questions like what could be the impact of the penetration of the Mughal state into the Deccan at the popular level? What was the nature of response at the societal level? What kind of ideology could have helped the Mughal state to entrench itself more firmly in the Golconda region? – are still difficult to be answered.

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