

## **An Overview on Persian language and Literature during the Bahmanid period in Deccan**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This is a brief study of the rise and development of Persian language, literature and culture in Bahmanid rulers in Deccan that how the Bahmanid sultans have made a rich and priceless contribution to Persian literature under their own official sponsorship and made it their court and state language. Bahmanid kingdom had been the fountain head of gladsome literary activities in the Persian language for about three hundred years and produced valuable literary masterpieces in every fields either it is historiography, poetry, prose or mystic teachings in the form of poetry and prose.

**Key Words :** Persian language literature, culture in Bahmanid era

### **INTRODUCTION**

We already know that the land of Deccan has always been the great center of education and learning especially during the reign of Bahmanid Sultans. The Persian language was not only the language of Bahman's court and state but the lingua franca as well. Alauddin Hasan Shah Bahman (1347-1358) founder of Bahmanid Kingdom was fond of education, science and literature<sup>1</sup>.

With the establishment of Bahmanid sultanate in 1347 Alauddin Hasan Shah Bahmanid established the educational institutions at Elichpur, Gulbarga, Daulatabad and many another places and tireless effort of Fazlullah Inju in the spread out of learning, An amicable environment for the promotion the learning and study of Persian language and literature and A door was opened in the regime of the same sultan, A direct ties with scholars and Persian speaking masters played pivotal role to create a high opportunities to the youths of that time<sup>2</sup>.

As Dr. T.N. Devare states in his book A short History of Persian literature At the Bahmanid, The Adilshahi, The Qutubshahi court- Deccan the wise and far-sighted policy of closer association and assimilation

of the intelligent class of Brahmins in state service and entrusting them with the office of responsibility proved beneficial to the spread of Persian in the higher class of Indians. Its natural consequence was that the influence of Persian soon began to permeate into the regional language through its influence on the intellectual classes of the Hindu society<sup>3</sup>.

In the political history of Bahmanid age, the influence of Persian was started by the way of Arabic on the state language and linguistic influence emerged very fast in public domain at that time and prevailed on other languages like Marathi and Gujarati. Deccan became the great center of Persian scholars, poets, writers, historians, and spiritual men and established strong literary ties with Iran. *Bidar and Gulbarga* were the great centers of literature activities during the same.

**The Iran-Deccan relation has played key role in the promotion of Persian language literature and culture:**

The Iran-Deccan ties had a historic phenomenon, spread over the pages of the history since ancient past. The Bahmanid Sultans maintained strong relation with

Iran which encircled almost every sphere of activities. Bahmanid Sultans gave respect and patronized all kinds of scholars, artisans, poets and historians. Iranians were welcomed in large number, including ulama, poets, writers, architect, artisans, builders, calligraphers, and tradesmen during that period. These immigrants were instrumental in promotion and development of Persian language literature and culture in Deccan. The Bahmanid royal had a deep interest in both Persian culture and the Persian mysticism. This dynasty preserved the Persian culture and used to celebrate with full enjoyment the Iranian festival like Eid-e-Naurooz and the prince were taught the most famous Persian books Gulistan and Bostan of Sheikh Saadi. Some of Bahmanid Sultans were so much rooted in Persian and they composed Persian poetry which includes Firoz Shah Bahmanid and Muhammad Shah Bahmanid. All Historians have acknowledged unanimously that Bahmanid Kingdom have played a key role in promoting Persian language and literature in their respective ages<sup>4</sup>. Azari Asfarayini has imitated the Firdosi and followed the pattern of Iskendar Nama-E Nizami and composed his Bahman Nama in the Poetic form which shows the mastery skill of Azari in that period.

Deccan has always been the center of scholars, mystic, Sufis. The major contribution given by Sufis in the promotion of Persian language and literature which has influenced greatly were Sufis like Hazrat Ainuddin Ganjulilm, Hazrat Khawaja Burhanuddin Gharib, the famous and great Sufi figure Hazrat Syed Banda Nawaz Gisudaraz who has paved down many books on Sufism in Persian<sup>5</sup>.

Mujahid Shah Bahmanid successor of Muhammad Shah Bahmanid promoted the Persian language and literature and he himself had good command over Turkish, Arabic and Persian. He built many libraries which are considered to be a great source of learning, education and wisdom. Few worth mentioning among them are the Library of Bahmanid Sultans and Library of Bijapur<sup>6</sup>. According to a rare manuscript available in the Salar Jang Museum and library the book of history *Oyunut-tawarikh* mentions that Alauddin Hasan Shah Bahman was a descendant of Bahman Asfandyar (a ruler of Persia) and hence due to this linkages Alauddin Shah strongly promoted the Persian language, literature and culture in Bahmanid Sultanate, and the same was followed by his other successors. Therefore Persian language and literature has flourished well under the Bahmanid Sultan<sup>7</sup>. Two great personalities who have played a key role in

the promotion and development of Persian literature and culture were Mir Fazlullah Inju who was a disciple of Saduddin Taftazani from Shiraz. He has served as a scholar during Bahmanid period. Many scholars came to Deccan especially from Iran in the presence of Mir Fazlullah Inju and took a remarkable interest in the promotion of Education. The second notable figure Khawaja Mahmud Gawan Gilani was a great scholar and administrator in the Bahmanid period. *Madrassa of Mahmud Gawan* was world famous in Bidar. Apart from Madrasa of Mahmud Gawan, there were several Mosques and Madrasas which greatly promoted Persian language and literature and spiritual teachings under the supervision of Sufis, Maulvis and religious teachers<sup>8</sup>.

Mahmud Gawan(1411-1481) was a prime minister in the Bahmanid Sultanate of Deccan and his great literary works include *Riyazul-Insha* the collection of 148 letters and *Manazirul-Insha* which defines Art of essay writing and beautification of language. During his Prime Minister ship, he invited the great and famous poet of Iran Abdur Rahman Jami to establish a strong cultural relation between Iran and the Bahmanid Kingdom<sup>9</sup>.

*Muhammad Shah II* Sultan of this dynasty was a great lover of Persian literature and had produced a "Diwaan" in the Persian language.

Firoz Shah (1397-1422) ruler of Bahmanid dynasty was a scholar and was trained under the guidance of Fazlullah Inju. He was fond of commentary, Fiqa and philosophy and has also composed poetry in the Persian language. He invited scholars, writers, poets, from Iran and Transoxiana to Deccan. His pen name was Aruji or Firozi. Dr. T.N. Devare has mentioned his one Ghazal<sup>10</sup>.

دماغ تاب عروجی چه دلکشا چمنیست  
چمن مگو که این آسمان فراهنگیست

Sufis literature played an important role in the development and promotion of Persian literature and culture in Indian subcontinent including Deccan. Sufis were the source of communal harmony and they strengthen the multiculturalism in Indian society and Hindus and Muslims both had been inspired by the Sufis and mystic personalities<sup>11</sup>.

#### **Sufis scholars who promoted the Persian language and culture during this age:**

There were several Sufis during the same time as Shaikh Zainuddin Daud, Hazrat Abulain Ainuddin Junaindi Dehlavi Bijapuri, and Many more. One of these Sufis is

Syed Muhammad Banda Nawaz Gesudraz who played significantly and distinguish role for the promotion of Persian Literature in in Bahmanid's reign. Syed Muhammad was descendant of Hazrat Ali and known amongst the people by different names and titles such as Qutbul Auliya, Natjul Asfiya, Zibdatul Arifeen, Shahbaz Makhdoom Syed Muhammad Gesudarz. He was named as Muhammad only by parents, later on, he added Syed Husaini as a prefix and suffix respectively. He was called often by common people Khawaja Banda Nawaz. His spiritual teacher Shaikh Nasiruddin Chiragh Dehlavi used to call him Gesudraz just because of having long hair<sup>12</sup>. He was a big mind and prolific writer and has both rose and poetry in Persian and Arabic. His mind goes towards mystic and deep analytical approach in Sufism. "He is reported to have contributed one hundred twenty-five books out of which more than forty five are still available in prose and verses. His writing and speeches are endowed with extraordinary precision"<sup>13</sup>.

#### **Syed Mohammad Husaini the great mystic Persian poet:**

He is commonly known as *Khawaja Gisu Daraz Banda Nawaz* came from Delhi to Gulbarga at age of 84 and stayed there for 20 years in Deccan. He has produced many books to his credit on Sufism in Persian language, commentary of the holy Quran called "*Ummul Mani*", Notes on "*Kashafze Makhshari*" by Makhshari which is a Commentary of Holy Quran in Persian, commentary text like "*Fususul Hikam*" on the book of Ibne Arabi on philosophy and wisdom, commentaries on "*Risal-e Qashria*" by Abul Qasim Qashiri which deals with 200 mystic personalities, "*Awariful Marif* by Shahabuddin Saharwardi remarkable study on Sufism, "*Alkhatima*" "*Jawamiul Kalim*" based on Mlafuzat, "*Fiqa al Akbar* in Arabic by Mohammad bin Idris Ash shafi on Shafi school of thought " "*Tamhidat*" by Ainulqazaat Humdani on Sufism. His own treatise on "*Maktubaat*" edited and published by Syed Ata Hussain in 1983, "*Jawahirul Ushshaq*" on Sufism and also known as "*Ghausia*" "*Anisul Ushshsaq*" a collection on Naat, Manqabat and Ghazal. His treatise, "*Majmua Yazda Resael*" "*Risala fi Ruet-e Bari Tala*" another part of Majmua Yazda Rasael also focuses on different aspects of Sufism<sup>14</sup>.

#### **Futuhussalatin is the masterpiece of Persian poetry:**

Which is one of the most important epics in

Bahmanid period written by a prominent poet of the age Khawaja Abdul Malik Isami who is considered as a Firdausi of India. His family came from Samarqand and he was born in 711 Hijri in Multan. His father passed away when he was a child. Thus he spent his childhood and completed education under the supervision of his grandfather. He came to Daulatabad (Deccan) with his grandfather at the age of sixteen or seventeen. Where he spent his life at Daulatabad till the age of forty. During this epoch, King Muhammad Tughlaq invaded on Deccan. Therefore, he was an eyewitness of brutal and oppressive actions of the king<sup>15</sup>. He felt restlessness and decided to leave India. Before going from India he wanted to present valuable gift for Indians. That is why he started composing Masnavi and joined the court of Allauddin Hassan Shah Bahaman with the help of Qazi Bahauddin. Allauddin Bahaman was an art and education loving king. Isami followed the way of Firdausi in composing Masnavi *Futuhussalatin* (The victories of the kings<sup>16</sup>. First he wrote hymn and panegyric and presented before the king. The king became very glad and told Isami to compose Indian history in the poetic form. That is known as a *Futuhussalatin* (The victories of the kings) and *Shahnama-e Hind* this is last and available work of Isami. After completing the work he set out to Makka where he passed away. *Isami followed the Firdausi in style, pattern, rhythm and meter of Shahnama. Although Futuhussalatin could not reach the rank of Shahnama of Firdausi on the basis of the way of expression, fluidity, sweetness of language and style of writing. Futuhussalatin has a historical significance and literary excellence. Futuhussalatin is started by a hymn and first two stanzas are*<sup>17</sup>.

کند ابتدا نامه کار آگهان بنام خداوند هر دو جهان  
در انجام کارش سر انجام شد هر آن نامه کاغذ از آن نام شد

*Isami has discussed* the history from the beginning of the universe till Mahmud Ghaznavi in brief and described the history from the Mahmud Ghaznavi's invasion on India by his age in detail. He mentioned the history of slave dynasty that is Qutbuddin Aybak Shamsuddin Iltumish and Ghayasuddin Balban and his descendants<sup>18</sup>.

#### **History writing in the Persian language during the Bahmanid Sultans and its importance:**

*Historiography* has greatly emerged in South India especially under Bahmanid Sultans because scholars and

historians had worked under the patronage of kings. The very first example of this patronization is the masterpiece works of Abdul Malik Isami named “*Futuhussalateen*” which was written in the times of Allauddin Hasan Shah Bahman and is also known as *Shahnameh Deccan* or *Shahnameh Hind*. The content of this book has often been regarded as great historical source material particularly for the contemporary history of Deccan. Several historians like Farishta referred to this while writing the history. He rectified the historical drawback wherever he found during his research and all events brought into the light. In Isami’s *Masnavi* seems not only to be an epic poet but also to be a poet with the silver tongue and good preacher. His story is mingled with love and preaching. Accepting the literary importance, Abdul Ghani the celebrated author of “*Persian Literature at Mughal Court*” appreciated this work and said it *Shahnama of India*<sup>19</sup>. In terms of historiography, the important history books in the Persian language like “*Oyunut-tawarikh*” of Abi Talib Baghdadi is the oldest history book of Bahaman’s era. “*Tohfatur-tawarikh va Qazay-e Firozshahi*” of Mulla Daud Bidari. “*Sirajut-tawarikh*” of Mulla Lari which is mentioned in *Tarikh-e Farishta* of Muhammad Qasim Hindu Shah, *Tarikh-e Haji Jan Muhammad Qandhari and Burhaan-e Mathir* are the other historical books of Bahmanid Sultans<sup>20</sup>.

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