

UPSC Civil Services Examination

UPSC Notes GS-I [History of India]

Topic: Deccan Sultanates- Ahmednagar, Bijapur, Berar, Golconda & Bidar

The Deccan Sultanates were the five different Muslim-ruled dynasties of the medieval period that ruled in Golconda, Bijapur, Bidar, Ahmednagar and Berar of South-Central India.

These 5 kingdoms were situated between the Vindhya Ranges and the Krishna River in the Deccan Plateau which later became independent states during the disintegration of the Bahmani Sultanates.

Evolution of Deccan Sultanates

During the 14th century, the northern part of the Deccan plateau was ruled by the Muslim Bahmani Sultanate and the Sultanate of Khandesh while the southern part was ruled by the Hindu Vijayanagar Empire. It was during the 15th century when the disintegration of the Bahmani Sultanate led to the evolution of five different Sultanates: Ahmadnagar (Nizam Shahi dynasty), Berar, Bidar, Bijapur (the Adil Shahi Dynasty) and Golconda (the Qutb Shahi Dynasty).

Ahmednagar declared its independence in the year 1490. Bijapur and Berar followed suit the same year. In 1518, Golconda declared its independence. Bidar was the last to become independent in 1528. The five Sultanates were mostly rivals but they did unite against the mighty Vijayanagara Empire in 1565, lastingly weakening the latter at the Battle of Talikota.

Ahmadnagar Sultanate

Also known as the Nizam Shahi dynasty, the Ahmadnagar Sultanate was established by Malik Ahmed Shah Bahri after defeating the Bahmani Army led by Jahangir Khan on May 28, 1490. The territory of the Ahmadnagar Sultanate was situated between the sultanates of Gujarat and Bijapur in the north-western part of Deccan plateau. Initially, Junnar was the capital of the Nizam Shahi dynasty but later in the year 1494, Bahri laid the foundation for the new capital Ahmadnagar.

Berar was annexed in the year 1574 by Murtaza Shah. Later in the year 1596, Chand Bibi defended the Nizam Shahi dynasty against the Mughal invasion but was later again defeated in the year 1599 after the death of Chand Bibi. In the year 1600, Murtaza Shah II was declared as the sultan and later Khadki

became the new capital of the dynasty. The Ahmadnagar sultanate was finally conquered by Aurangzeb in 1636 AD, who was then the Mughal viceroy of Deccan.

Bijapur Sultanate

Bijapur Sultanate known as the Adil Shahi dynasty was founded by Ismail Adil Shah in 1490 A.D. and was ruled by the Adil Shahi Dynasty from 1490 A.D. to 1686 A.D. Bijapur Sultanate was situated in the south-western part of India with its capital located in Bijapur and later conquered Bidar in 1619 A.D. Later in 1686 A.D., Aurangzeb finally annexed the Bijapur Sultanate.

Berar Sultanate

The Berar Sultanate was founded by Fath-Ullah Imad- ul-Mulk in the year 1490 and was ruled by the Imad Shahi dynasty. Fath-Ullah Imad- ul-Mulk established the capital of the Berar Sultanate at Achalpur and also fortified Gavilgad and Narnala. Later in 1574, the Sultanate was annexed by Ahmadnagar kingdom.

Golconda Sultanate

The Qutb Shahi dynasty or the Golkonda Sultanate was known as the ruling family of the sultanate of Golkonda. Situated in South India, the Qutb Shahi dynasty was ruled by the Shia Muslims who belonged to the Turkmen tribe from the Turkmenistan-Armenia region. This dynasty was founded by Sultan Quli Qutub-ul-Mulk in 1518. The dynasty ruled for 171 years until the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb's army conquered Golkonda in 1687.

Bidar Sultanate

Bidar Sultanate was the smallest of all the five Deccan sultanates and was founded by Qasim Barid after its independence in 1528. The dynasty was ruled by Barid Shahi dynasty and was annexed by the Bijapur sultanate in 1619 AD.

Contributions of the Deccan Sultanates

The Deccan Sultanates contributed greatly in the fields of art, music, literature and architecture.

One such cultural contribution includes the development of the Dakhani language which was originated under the Bahmani rulers. The language was drawn from Arabic, Persian, Marathi, Kannada and Telugu and later developed into an independent literary and spoken language known as Dakhani Urdu.

The contributions of Deccan Sultanate in construction of some of the iconic monuments in Gulbarga, Bidar, Bijapur and Hyderabad emerged as a new architectural style of the Deccan Sultanate Period.

Flourishment of the Deccani miniature paintings in the courts of Ahmadnagar, Bijapur and Golconda along with the construction of the architectural splendours like the Char Minar and the Gol Gumbaz are another major cultural contributions of the Deccan Sultanates.

Some of the famous monuments and forts constructed by the Deccan Sultanates are mentioned in the table below:

Monuments and Forts of Deccan Sultanates	Location
Ibrahim Rouza	Bijapur, Karnataka
Gol Gumbaz	
Barid Shahi tombs	Bidar, Karnataka
Bahamani tombs of Ashtur	
Bidar Fort	
Mahmud Gawan Madrasa	
Golconda Fort	Hyderabad, Telangana
Char Minar	
Gulbarga Fort	Gulbarga, Karnataka

Fall of the Deccan Sultanates

The Deccan Sultanates were conquered by the Mughal Empire by stripping Berar from Ahmadnagar in 1596. Ahmadnagar was completely conquered between 1616 and 1636. Later, during 1686-1687, Golconda and Bijapur were conquered by Aurangzeb.

Fall of Bijapur Sultanate

Muhammad Azam Shah, son of Aurangzeb captured the Bijapur Fort with a force of nearly 50,000 men and defeated the then ruler of Bijapur, Sikandar Adil Shah. The siege which began in March 1685 and ended in September 1686 lasted for more than 15 months and is considered as the longest military engagements by the Mughals.

Later, the Mughals lost their control of the region after the death of Bahadur Shah I in 1712 and after 1753, the Marathas occupied much of Bijapur.

Fall of Golconda dynasty

In January 1687, Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb led his forces to besiege the Qutb Shahi dynasty at Golconda Fort which lasted for 8 months. Aurangzeb and his army managed to penetrate the walls of Golconda Fort prompting Abul Hasan Qutb Shah to surrender the Nur-UI-Ain Diamond, Great Stone Diamond, Kara Diamond, Darya-e-Nur, the Hope Diamond, the Wittelsbach Diamond and the Regent Diamond to the Mughals which led to the downfall of the Golconda dynasty.

Fall of Bidar Sultanate

Siege of Bidar, was a twenty-seven-day siege led by Aurangzeb and his army against Adil Shahi dynasty and later besieging Bidar. The Mughals conquered the Bidar Fort completely which led to the downfall of the Bidar Sultanate.