

The Deccan and South India (Up to 1656)

We have mentioned in an earlier chapter that following the break up of the Bahmani kingdom, three powerful states, Ahmadnagar, Bijapur and Golconda emerged on the scene, and that they combined to crush Vijayanagara at the battle of Bannihatti, near Talikota, in 1565. After the victory, the Deccani states resumed their old ways. Both Ahmadnagar and Bijapur claimed Sholapur which was a rich and fertile tract. Neither wars nor marriage alliances between the two could resolve the issue. Both the states had the ambition of conquering Bidar. Ahmadnagar also wanted to annex Berar in the north. In fact, as the descendants of the old Bahmani rulers, the Nizam Shahis claimed a superior, if not a hegemonistic position in the Deccan. Their territorial claims were contested not only by Bijapur, but also by the rulers of Gujarat who had their eyes on the rich Konkan area, in addition to Berar. The Gujarat rulers actively aided Berar against Ahmadnagar, and even engaged in war against Ahmadnagar in order that the existing balance of power in the Deccan was not upset. Bijapur and Golconda clashed over the possession of Naldurg.

The Mughal conquest of Gujarat in 1572 created a new situation. The conquest of Gujarat could have been a prelude to the Mughal conquest of the Deccan. But Akbar was busy elsewhere and did not want, at that stage, to interfere in the Deccan affairs. Ahmadnagar took advantage of the situation to annex Berar. In fact, Ahmadnagar and Bijapur came to an agreement whereby Bijapur was left free to expand its dominions in the south at the expense of Vijayanagara, while Ahmadnagar overran Berar. Golconda, too, was interested in extending its territories at the cost of Vijayanagara which was divided into small nayakhoods. All the Deccani states were, thus, expansionists.

Another feature of the situation was the growing importance of the Marathas in the affairs of the Deccan. As we have seen, the

Maratha troops had always been employed as loose auxiliaries or *bargirs* (usually called *bargis*) in the Bahmani kingdom. The revenue affairs at the local level were in the hands of the Deccani Brahmans. Some of the old Maratha families which rose in the service of the Bahmani rulers and held *mansabs* and *jagirs* from them were the More, Nimbalkar, Ghatge, etc. Most of them were powerful zamindars, or *deshmukhs* as they were called in the Deccan. However, unlike the Rajputs, none of them was an independent ruler, or ruled over a large kingdom. Secondly, they were not the leaders of clans on whose backing and support they could depend. Hence, many of the Maratha sardars appear to be military adventurers who were prepared to shift their loyalty according to the prevailing wind. Nevertheless, the Marathas formed the backbone of the landed aristocracy of the Deccan and had a position similar to the one held by the Rajputs in large parts of north India. During the middle of the sixteenth century, the rulers of the Deccan states embarked upon a definite policy of winning over the Marathas to their side. The Maratha chiefs were accorded service and positions in all the three leading states of the Deccan. Ibrahim Adil Shah of Bijapur who ascended the throne in 1535 was the leading advocate of this policy. It is said that he entertained 30,000 Maratha auxiliaries (*bargis*) in his army, and showed great favour to the Marathas in the revenue system. He is supposed to have introduced Marathi in revenue accounts at all levels. Apart from increasing his favours to old families, a few other families such as the Bhonsales who had the family name of Ghorpade, the Dafles (or Chavans), etc., also rose to prominence in Bijapur as a result of this policy. Maharashtrian Brahmans were regularly used for diplomatic negotiations as well. Thus the title of Peshwa was accorded to a Brahman, Kankoji Narai, by the rulers of Ahmadnagar. Marathas played an important role in the states of Ahmadnagar and Golconda as well.

It will thus be seen that the policy of allying with local landed classes which were military-minded had been initiated by the Deccani rulers even before such a policy was implemented by the Mughals under Akbar.

MUGHAL ADVANCE TOWARDS THE DECCAN

It was logical to expect a Mughal advance towards the Deccan after the consolidation of the empire in north India. Although the Vindhya divided the north and the south, they were not an insurmountable barrier. Travellers, merchandise, pilgrims and wandering saints had always passed between the north and the south, making the two culturally one, though each had its own distinctive cultural features. The conquest of the Deccan by the Tughlaqs and the improved communications between the north and the south had led to a strengthening of the commercial and cultural relations between the two. After the decline of the Delhi Sultanat, many Sufi saints and persons in search of employment had migrated to the court of the Bahmani rulers. Politically also, the north and south were not isolated. As we have seen, the rulers of Gujarat and Malwa in the west, and Orissa in the east had been continually involved in the politics of south India. Hence, after the conquest of Malwa and Gujarat in the 1560s and early 1570s, the Mughals could hardly have kept themselves aloof from Deccan politics. In 1576, a Mughal army invaded Khandesh, and compelled the ruler to submit. However, urgent matters called Akbar elsewhere. For twelve years, between 1586 and 1598, Akbar lived at Lahore, watching the northwestern situation. In the interval, affairs in the Deccan deteriorated.

The Deccan was a seething cauldron of politics. War between the various Deccani states was a frequent occurrence. The death of a ruler often led to factional fights among the nobles, with each party trying to act as king-maker. In this, hostility between the Deccanis and the newcomers (*afsaqis* or *gharibs*) found free play. Among the Deccanis, too, the Habshis (Abyssinians or Africans) and Afghans formed separate groups. These groups and factions had little contact with the life and culture of the people of the region. The process of the assimilation of the Marathas into the military and political system of the Deccani states which had started earlier did not make much headway. The rulers and the nobles, therefore, commanded little loyalty from the people.

The situation was worsened by sectarian conflicts and controversies. Towards the beginning of the century, Shiism became

the state religion of Iran under a new dynasty called the Safavid dynasty. Shiism had been a suppressed sect for a long time, and in the first flush of enthusiasm, the votaries of the new sect indulged in a good deal of persecution of their erstwhile opponents. As a result, members of many eminent families fled to India and sought shelter at the court of Akbar who made no distinction between Shias and Sunnis. Some of the Deccani states, notably Golconda, adopted Shiism as a state creed. At the courts of Bijapur and Ahmadnagar, too, the Shiite party was strong, but was able to prevail only from time to time. This resulted in heightened party strife.

Mahdawi ideas had also spread widely in the Deccan. The Muslims believed that in every epoch a man from the family of the Prophet will make an appearance and will strengthen the religion, and make justice triumph. Such a person was called the Mahdi. Although many Mahdis had appeared in different countries at different times, the end of the first millennium of Islam, which was due towards the end of the sixteenth century, had raised expectations throughout the Islamic world. In India, one Saiyid Muhammad, who was born at Jaunpur in the first half of the fifteenth century, proclaimed himself to be the Mahdi. Saiyid Muhammad travelled widely all over India and in the Islamic world, and created great enthusiasm. He established his *dairas* (circles) in different parts of the country, including the Deccan where his ideas found a fertile soil. The orthodox elements were as bitterly opposed to Mahdawism as to Shiism, though there was no love lost between the two. It was in this context that Akbar had put forward the concept of *sulh-kul*. He was afraid that the bitter sectarian rivalries prevailing in the Deccani states would spill over into the Mughal empire.

Akbar was also apprehensive of the growing power of the Portuguese. The Portuguese had been interfering in pilgrim traffic to Mecca, not sparing even the royal ladies. In their territories, they carried out proselytizing activities which Akbar disliked. They were constantly trying to expand their positions on the mainland, and had even tried to lay their hand on Surat which was saved by the timely arrival of a Mughal commander. Akbar apparently felt that the coordination and pooling of the resources of the Deccani states under Mughal supervision would check, if not eliminate, the Portuguese danger.

These were some of the factors which impelled Akbar to involve himself in the Deccani affairs.

CONQUEST OF BERAR, AHMADNAGAR AND KHANDESH

Akbar claimed suzerainty over the entire country. He was, therefore, keen that like the Rajputs, the rulers of the Deccani states should acknowledge his suzerainty. Embassies sent by him earlier suggesting that the Deccani states recognise his over-lordship and be friends with him, did not, however, produce any positive results. It was obvious that the Deccani states would not accept Mughal suzerainty till the Mughals were in a position to exert military pressure on them.

In 1591, Akbar launched a diplomatic offensive. He sent embassies to all the Deccani states 'inviting' them to accept Mughal suzerainty. As might have been expected, none of the states accepted this demand, the only exception being Khandesh which was too near and exposed to the Mughals to resist. Burhan Nizam Shah, the ruler of Ahmadnagar, was rude to the Mughal envoy; the others only made promises of friendship. It seemed that Akbar was on the verge of making a definite move in the Deccan. The necessary opportunity was provided to him when factional fighting broke out among the Nizam Shahi nobles following the death of Burhan in 1595. There were four candidates for the throne, backed by different parties. The strongest claim was that of Bahadur, son of the deceased ruler. Ibrahim Adil Shah II, the ruler of Bijapur, was inclined to support Bahadur's claim. Chand Bibi was the sister of Burhan, and the widow of the former ruler of Bijapur who was Ibrahim Adil Shah's uncle. She was a remarkable woman and had virtually ruled Bijapur for almost ten years when Ibrahim Adil Shah was a minor. She had gone to Ahmadnagar to condole the death of her brother Burhan, but she stayed on to take up with vigour the cause of her nephew, Bahadur, who was a minor. It was against this background that the leaders of the rival party, the Deccanis, invited the Mughals to intervene. The struggle which now began was really a struggle between Bijapur and the Mughals for the domination of Ahmadnagar state.

The Mughal invasion was led by prince Murad, who was the governor of Gujarat, and by Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan. The ruler

of Khandesh was asked to cooperate. Due to factional fights among the Ahmadnagar nobles, the Mughals encountered little opposition till they reached the capital, Ahmadnagar. Chand Bibi shut herself up in the fort with the boy king, Bahadur. After a close siege of four months in which Chand Bibi played a valiant role, the two sides came to an agreement. They agreed to cede Berar to the Mughals in return for their recognition of the claim of Bahadur. Mughal suzerainty was also recognised. This was in 1596.

The Mughal annexation of Berar alarmed the Deccani states. They felt, not without reason, that Berar would give the Mughals a permanent foothold in the Deccan which could be enlarged upon at any time. Hence, they sided with Ahmadnagar and created obstacles in the Mughals taking possession of Berar. Soon, a combined force of Bijapur, Golconda and Ahmadnagar led by a Bijapur commander invaded Berar in strength. In a hard-fought battle in 1597, the Mughals defeated a Deccani force three times their number. The Bijapuri and Golconda forces now withdrew, leaving Chand Bibi alone to face the situation. Although Chand Bibi was in favour of observing the treaty of 1596, she could not stop the harassing attacks on the Mughals in Berar by her nobles. This resulted in a second Mughal siege of Ahmadnagar. In the absence of any help from any quarter, Chand Bibi opened negotiations with the Mughals. She was, however, accused of treachery by a hostile faction and murdered. Thus ended the life of one of the most romantic figures in Deccani politics. The Mughals now assaulted and captured Ahmadnagar. The boy-king, Bahadur, was sent to the fortress of Gwalior. Balaghat, too, was added to the empire and a Mughal garrison was stationed at Ahmadnagar. This was in 1600.

The fall of Ahmadnagar fort and city, and the capture of Bahadur Nizam Shah did not solve Akbar's problems in the Deccan. There was now no Nizam Shahi prince or noble with sufficient standing to negotiate with. At the same time, the Mughals were not inclined to advance beyond Ahmadnagar, or try to seize all the remaining territories of the state. The situation became further confused due to constant wrangling among the Mughal commanders.

To study the situation on the spot, Akbar advanced into Malwa and then into Khandesh. There he was told that the new ruler of

Khandesh had not shown due respect to prince Daniyal when he had passed through his territory on his way to Ahmadnagar. Akbar was also keen to secure the fort of Asirgarh in Khandesh which was reputed to be the strongest fort in the Deccan. After a tight siege, and when a pestilence had broken out in the fort, the ruler came out and surrendered (1601). Khandesh was incorporated to the Mughal empire.

Meanwhile, prince Daniyal, the youngest son of Akbar, who had been placed in command of Mughal armies in the Deccan, concluded a peace with Murtaza Nizam Shah II who after the fall of Ahmadnagar had been proclaimed ruler, by a group of Nizam Shahi nobles. According to the agreement, Ahmadnagar, Balaghat and parts of Telengana were surrendered to the Mughals, and the remaining portions of the kingdom confirmed to Murtaza Nizam Shah on condition of loyalty, and the promise that he would never rebel. This was in 1601. After the capture of Asirgarh, Akbar returned to the north to deal with the rebellion of his son, Salim.

Although the conquest of Khandesh, Berar and Balaghat, and Mughal control over the fort of Ahmadnagar were substantial achievements, the Mughals had yet to consolidate their position in the Deccan. Akbar was conscious that no lasting solution to the Deccan problem could be arrived at without an agreement with Bijapur. He had, therefore, sent messages of assurances to Ibrahim Adil Shah II who offered to marry his daughter to prince Daniyal. But soon after the marriage (1602), the prince died of excessive drinking. Thus the situation in the Deccan remained nebulous, and had to be tackled afresh by Akbar's successor, Jahangir.

RISE OF MALIK AMBAR AND FRUSTRATION OF MUGHAL ATTEMPT AT CONSOLIDATION

After the fall of Ahmadnagar and capture of Bahadur Nizam Shah by the Mughals, the state of Ahmadnagar would have disintegrated and different parts of it would have, in all probability, been swallowed up by the neighbouring states but for the rise of a remarkable man, Malik Ambar. Malik Ambar was an Abyssinian, born in Ethiopia. We do not know much about his early life and career. It seems that

his poor parents sold him at the slave market of Baghdad. In course of time, he was purchased by a merchant who treated him well and brought him to the Deccan which was a land of promise. Malik Ambar rose in the service of Changez Khan, a famous and influential Habshi noble of Murtaza Nizam Shah. When the Mughals invaded Ahmadnagar, Ambar at first went to Bijapur to try his luck there. But he soon came back and enrolled himself in the powerful Habshi (Abyssinian) party which was opposed to Chand Bibi. After the fall of Ahmadnagar, Malik Ambar found a Nizam Shahi prince and with the tacit support of the ruler of Bijapur, set him up as Murtaza Nizam Shah II, with himself as the Peshwa—a title which had been common in Ahmadnagar much earlier. Malik Ambar gathered around him a large band of Maratha troopers or *burgis*. The Marathas were adept in rapid movements, and in plundering and cutting off the supplies of the enemy troops. Although this guerilla mode of warfare was traditional with the Marathas in the Deccan, the Mughals were not used to it. With the help of the Marathas, Ambar made it difficult for the Mughals to consolidate their position in Berar, Ahmadnagar and Balaghat.

The Mughal commander in the Deccan at the time was Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan, a shrewd and wily politician and an able soldier. He inflicted a crushing defeat on Ambar in 1601 in Telengana at a place called Nander. However, he decided to make friends with Ambar since he considered it desirable that there should be some stability in the remaining Nizam Shahi kingdom. In his turn, Ambar also found it useful to cultivate the friendship of the Khan-i-Khanan since it enabled him to deal with his internal rivals. However, after the death of Akbar, when the position of the Mughals in the Deccan became weak due to differences among the Mughal commanders, Ambar unleashed a fierce campaign to expel the Mughals from Berar, Balaghat and Ahmadnagar. In this enterprise he was helped by Ibrahim Adil Shah, the ruler of Bijapur, who considered it necessary that the Nizam Shah state should continue as a buffer between Bijapur and the Mughals. He gave Ambar the powerful fort of Qandahar in Telengana for the residence of his family, and for storing treasures, provisions, etc. He also lent him 10,000 horsemen for whose support a definite tract of territory was to be set apart. The treaty was

cemented by a marriage alliance between the daughter of one of the leading Ethiopian nobles of Bijapur with Malik Ambar's son. The marriage was celebrated in 1609 with great rejoicing, with Adil Shah giving a handsome dowry to the bride, and spending about Rs 80,000 on fireworks alone.

Fortified with the support of Bijapur, and with the active aid of the Marathas, Ambar soon forced Khan-i-Khanan to retreat to Burhanpur. Thus, by 1610, all the gains in the Deccan made by Akbar were lost. Although Jahangir sent prince Parvez to the Deccan with a large army, he could not meet the challenge posed by Malik Ambar. Even Ahmadnagar was lost, and Parvez had to conclude a disgraceful peace with Ambar.

The affairs of Malik Ambar continued to prosper and the Mughals were not able to re-assert themselves as long as he had the solid support of the Marathas and other elements in the Deccan. But in course of time, Malik Ambar became arrogant and alienated his allies. The Khan-i-Khanan, who had again been posted as the Mughal viceroy of the Deccan, took advantage of the situation and won over to his side a number of Habshi and Maratha nobles, such as Jagdev Rai, Babaji Kate, Udaji Ram, etc. Jahangir himself was well aware of the value of the Marathas, for he observed in his *Memoirs* that the Marathas 'are a hardy lot and are the centre of resistance in that country.' With the help of the Maratha sardars, Khan-i-Khanan inflicted a crushing defeat on the combined forces of Ahmadnagar, Bijapur and Golconda in 1616. The Mughals occupied the new Nizam Shahi capital, Khirki, and burnt all its buildings before they left. This defeat shook the Deccani alliance against the Mughals. However, Ambar continued his resistance.

To carry forward Khan-i-Khanan's victory, Jahangir sent a grand army under his son, prince Khurram (later Shah Jahan), and himself moved to Mandu to support the prince (1618). Faced with this threat, Ambar had no option but to submit. It is significant, however, that in the treaty Jahangir did not try to enlarge the conquests made by Akbar in the Deccan. This was not due to any military weakness on the part of Jahangir, as has been sometimes imagined, but due to deliberate policy. Apparently, Jahangir did not want to extend Mughal commitments in the Deccan, or become too deeply embroiled in its

affairs. Moreover, he was still hopeful that his moderation would enable the Deccani states to settle down, and live in peace with the Mughals. As a part of this policy, Jahangir tried to win over Bijapur to his side, and sent a gracious *farman* to Adil Shah, calling him 'son'.

Despite these reverses, Ambar continued to lead the Deccani struggle against the Mughals and there was no peace in the Deccan. However, two years later, the combined Deccani forces again suffered a severe defeat at the hands of the Mughals. Ambar had to restore all the Mughal territories, and another 14 kos of adjoining territory. The Deccani states had to pay an indemnity of Rs 5,00,000. The credit for these victories was given to prince Khurram.

This second defeat, coming so soon after the first, finally shattered the united front of the Deccani states against the Mughals. The old rivalries among the Deccani states now came to the surface. Ambar conducted a series of campaigns against Bijapur for the recovery of Sholapur which was a bone of contention between the two states. By a rapid movement Ambar reached the Bijapur capital, burnt the new capital of Naurasapur built by Ibrahim Adil Shah, and forced him to flee for shelter to the fort. This might be regarded the climax of Ambar's power.

Although Ambar showed remarkable military skill, energy and determination, his achievements were short-lived due to his inability or unwillingness to come to terms with the Mughals. The chief significance of the rise of Ambar, however, is that it represented a clear recognition of the importance of the Marathas in Deccani affairs. The success of the Marathas under the leadership of Malik Ambar gave them confidence which enabled them to play an independent role later on.

Malik Ambar tried to improve the administration of the Nizam Shahi state by introducing Todar Mal's system of land revenue. He abolished the old system of giving land on contract (*ijara*) which was ruinous for the peasants, and adopted the *zabti* system.

After 1622, when the Deccan was in turmoil due to the rebellion of prince Khurram against Jahangir, Malik Ambar was able to recover once again many of the old territories which had been ceded to the Mughals. Jahangir's attempt at consolidating the Mughal position

in the Deccan was, thus, frustrated. However, the long-range benefits to Ahmadnagar for reopening the dispute with the Mughals may be considered doubtful. It led to the situation in which Shah Jahan decided that he had no alternative but to extinguish Ahmadnagar as an independent state. Malik Ambar breathed his last in 1626 at the ripe age of 80. But the bitter fruits of his legacy had to be reaped by his successors.

EXTINCTION OF AHMADNAGAR, AND ACCEPTANCE OF MUGHAL SUZERAINTY BY BIJAPUR AND GOLCONDA

Shah Jahan ascended the throne in 1628. Having commanded two expeditions to the Deccan as a prince and spent a considerable period in the Deccan during his rebellion against his father, Shah Jahan had a great deal of experience and personal knowledge of the Deccan and its politics.

Shah Jahan's first concern as a ruler was to recover the territories in the Deccan which had been lost to the Nizam Shahi ruler. For the purpose, he deputed an old and experienced noble, Khan-i-Jahan Lodi. However, Khan-i-Jahan Lodi failed in the enterprise, and was recalled to the court. Shortly afterwards, he rebelled and joined the Nizam Shah who deputed him to expel the Mughals from the remaining portions of Berar and Balaghat. Giving asylum to a leading Mughal noble in this manner was a challenge which Shah Jahan could not ignore. It was clear that even after Malik Ambar's death, his policy of refusing to recognise the Mughal position in Berar and Balaghat was being continued by the Nizam Shahi ruler. Shah Jahan, therefore, came to the conclusion that there could be no peace for the Mughals in the Deccan as long as Ahmadnagar continued as an independent state. This was a major departure from the policy which had been followed by Akbar and Jahangir. However, Shah Jahan was not keen to extend Mughal territories in the Deccan beyond what was absolutely necessary. He, therefore, wrote to the Bijapur ruler offering to cede to him roughly one-third of the Ahmadnagar state if he would cooperate with the Mughals in the projected campaign against Ahmadnagar. This was a shrewd move on the part of Shah

Jahan to isolate Ahmadnagar diplomatically and militarily. He also sent feelers to the various Maratha sardars to join Mughal service.

At first, Shah Jahan was successful in his overtures. Malik Ambar had defeated and killed some prominent Bijapuri nobles during his campaigns. The Adil Shah also was smarting at the humiliation of the burning of Nauraspur and the annexation of Sholapur by Malik Ambar. He, therefore, accepted Shah Jahan's proposal, and posted an army at the Nizam Shahi border to cooperate with the Mughals. Around this time, Jadhav Rao, a prominent Maratha noble who had defected to the side of the Mughals during the reign of Jahangir but had gone back to the service of the Nizam Shah, was treacherously murdered on a charge of conspiring with the Mughals. As a result Shahji Bhonsale, who was his son-in-law (and the father of Shivaji), defected to the Mughal side along with his relations. Shah Jahan accorded him a *mansab* of 5000, and gave him *jagirs* in the Poona region. A number of other prominent Maratha sardars also joined Shah Jahan.

In 1629, Shah Jahan deputed large armies against Ahmadnagar, one of them to operate in the west in the Balaghat region, and other in the east in the Telengana region. The emperor himself moved to Burhanpur to coordinate their movements. Under relentless pressure, large parts of the Ahmadnagar state were brought under Mughal occupation. Parenda, one of the last outposts of the kingdom, was besieged. The Nizam Shah now sent a piteous appeal to the Adil Shah, stating that most of the kingdom was under Mughal occupation, and if Parenda fell it would mean the end of the Nizam Shahi dynasty, after which, he warned, would come the turn of Bijapur. A strong group at the Bijapur court had been uneasy at the steady Mughal advance in Ahmadnagar. In fact, the Bijapuri forces at the border had merely watched the situation, taking no active part in the Mughal operations. The Mughals, on their part, had refused to hand over to the Adil Shah the areas allotted to him under the agreement. As a result, the Adil Shah made a somersault and decided to help the Nizam Shah who agreed to return Sholapur to him. This turn in the political situation compelled the Mughals to raise the siege of Parenda, and to retreat. However, the internal situation in Ahmadnagar now turned in favour of the Mughals. Fath Khan, the

son of Malik Ambar, had recently been appointed Peshwa by the Nizam Shah in the hope that he would be able to induce Shah Jahan to make peace. Instead, Fath Khan opened secret negotiations with Shah Jahan and, at his instance, murdered the Nizam Shah and put a puppet on the throne. He also read the *khutba*, and struck the *sikka* in the name of the Mughal emperor. As a reward, Fath Khan was taken in Mughal service, and the *jagir* around Poona previously allotted to Shahji was transferred to him. As a result, Shahji defected from the Mughal side. These events took place in 1632.

After the surrender of Fath Khan, Shah Jahan appointed Mahabat Khan as Mughal viceroy of the Deccan and returned to Agra. Mahabat Khan, faced with the combined opposition of Bijapur and the local Nizam Shahi nobles including Shahji, found himself in a very difficult situation. Parenda surrendered to Bijapur. Bijapur made a strong bid for the fort of Daulatabad as well, offering a large sum of money to Fath Khan for surrendering the fort. Elsewhere also, the Mughals found it difficult to hold on to their positions.

It will thus be seen that the Mughals and Bijapur were, in reality, engaged in a contest for dividing between themselves the prostrate body of Ahmadnagar. The Adil Shah sent a large army under Randaula Khan and Murari Pandit for the surrender of Daulatabad and for provisioning its garrison. Shahji also was enrolled in Bijapur's service to harass the Mughals and cut off their supplies. But the combined operations of the Bijapuri forces and Shahji were of no avail. Mahabat Khan closely invested Daulatabad, and forced the garrison to surrender (1633). The Nizam Shah was sent to prison in Gwalior. This marked the end of the Nizam Shahi dynasty.

However, even this did not solve the problems facing the Mughals. Following the example of Malik Ambar, Shahji found a Nizam Shahi prince, and raised him as a ruler. The Adil Shah sent a force of seven to eight thousand horsemen to aid Shahji, and induced many of the Nizam Shahi nobles to surrender their forts to Shahji. Many disbanded Nizam Shahi soldiers joined Shahji whose force swelled to 20,000 horses. With these he harassed the Mughals and took control of large portions of the Ahmadnagar state.

Shah Jahan now decided to give personal attention to the problems of the Deccan. He realised that the crux of the situation was the

attitude of Bijapur. He, therefore, deputed a large army to invade Bijapur, and also sent feelers to the Adil Shah, offering to revive the earlier accord of dividing the territory of Ahmadnagar between Bijapur and the Mughals.

The policy of the stick and the carrot, and the advance of Shah Jahan to the Deccan brought about another change in Bijapur politics. The leaders of the anti-Mughal group including Murari Pandit were displaced and killed, and a new treaty or *ahdnama* was entered into with Shah Jahan. According to this treaty, the Adil Shah agreed to recognise Mughal suzerainty, to pay an indemnity of twenty lakhs of rupees, and not to interfere in the affairs of Golconda which was brought under Mughal protection. Any quarrel between Bijapur and Golconda was, in the future, to be referred to the Mughal emperor for his arbitration. The Adil Shah agreed to cooperate with the Mughals in reducing Shahji to submission and, if he agreed to join Bijapuri service, to depute him in the south, away from the Mughal frontier. In return for these, territory worth about 20 lakh *huns* (about eighty lakh rupees) annually belonging to Ahmadnagar was ceded to Bijapur. Shah Jahan also sent to Adil Shah a solemn *farman* impressed with the mark of the emperor's palm that the terms of this treaty would never be violated.

Shah Jahan completed the settlement of the Deccan by entering into a treaty with Golconda as well. The ruler agreed to include the name of Shah Jahan in the *khutba* and to exclude the name of the Iranian emperor from it. The Qutb Shah was to be loyal to the emperor. The annual tribute of four lakh *huns* which Golconda was previously paying to Bijapur was remitted. Instead, it was required to pay two lakh *huns* annually to the Mughal emperor in return for his protection.

The treaties of 1636 with Bijapur and Golconda were statesmanlike. In effect, they enabled Shah Jahan to realise the ultimate objectives of Akbar. The suzerainty of the Mughal emperor was now accepted over the length and breadth of the country. Peace with the Mughals enabled the Deccani states to expand their territories towards the south.

In the decade following the treaties of 1636, Bijapur and Golconda overran the rich and fertile Karnataka area from the river Krishna to

Tanjore and beyond. This area was ruled over by a number of petty principalities. Many of them, such as the Nayaks of Tanjore, Jinji and Madurai, owed nominal allegiance to the Rayal, the former ruler of Vijayanagara. A series of campaigns were conducted by Bijapur and Golconda against these states. With the help of Shah Jahan, they agreed to divide the territories and the spoils gained by their armies in the proportion of $\frac{2}{3}$ to Bijapur and $\frac{1}{3}$ to Golconda. Despite frequent quarrels between the two, the task of conquest went ahead. Thus, in a short span of time, the territories of these two states were more than doubled and they reached the climax of their power and prosperity. If the rulers had been able to consolidate their hold over the areas they had conquered, the Deccan would have seen a long era of peace. However, rapid expansion weakened whatever internal cohesion these states had. Ambitious nobles such as Shahji, and his son Shivaji, in Bijapur, and Mir Jumla the leading noble in Golconda, started carving out spheres of influence for themselves. The Mughals, too, found that the balance of power in the Deccan had been upset and demanded a price for their benevolent neutrality during the expansionist phase of these states. These developments came to a head in 1656 following the death of Muhammad Adil Shah, and the arrival of Aurangzeb as the Mughal viceroy of the Deccan. These developments would be dealt with in a subsequent chapter.

CULTURAL CONTRIBUTION OF THE DECCAN STATES

The Deccani states had a number of cultural contributions to their credit. Ali Adil Shah (d. 1580) loved to hold discussions with Hindu and Muslim saints and was called a Sufi. He invited Catholic missionaries to his court, even before Akbar had done so. He had an excellent library to which he appointed the well-known Sanskrit scholar, Waman Pandit. Patronage of Sanskrit and Marathi was continued by his successors.

The successor of Ali Adil Shah, Ibrahim Adil Shah II (1580–1627), ascended the throne at the age of nine. He was very solicitous to the poor, and had the title of '*abla baba*', or 'Friend of the Poor'. He was deeply interested in music, and composed a book called *Kitab-i-Nauras* in which songs were set to various musical modes or *ragas*.

He built a new capital, Naurasapur, in which a large number of musicians were invited to settle. In his songs, he freely invoked the goddess of music and learning, Saraswati. Due to his broad approach he came to be called '*Jagat Guru*'. He accorded patronage to all, including Hindu saints and temples. This included grants to Pandharpur, the centre of the worship of Vithoba, which became the centre of the Bhakti movement in Maharashtra. The broad, tolerant policy followed by Ibrahim Adil Shah-II was continued under his successors.

The important role played by Maratha families in the service of the Ahmadnagar state has already been mentioned. The Qutb Shahs, too, utilised the services of both Hindus and Muslims for military, administrative and diplomatic purposes. Under Ibrahim Qutb Shah (d. 1580), Murahari Rao rose to the position of Peshwa in the kingdom, a position which was second only to that of Mir Jumla or wazir. The Nayakwaris, who formed the military-cum-landed elements, remained a power in the kingdom ever since the foundation of the dynasty. From 1672 till its absorption by the Mughals in 1687, the administrative and military affairs of the state were dominated by the brothers, Madanna and Akkanna.

Golconda was the intellectual resort of literary men. Sultan Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah, a contemporary of Akbar, was very fond of literature and architecture. The sultan was not only a great patron of art and literature but was a poet of no mean order. He wrote in Dakhini Urdu, Persian and Telugu and has left an extensive *diwan* or collection. He was the first to introduce a secular note in poetry. Apart from the praise of God and the Prophet, he wrote about nature, love, and the social life of his day. The growth of Urdu in its Dakhini form was a significant development during the period. The successors of Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah and many others poets and writers of the time adopted Urdu as a literary language. In addition to Persian, these writers drew on Hindi and Telugu for forms, idioms and themes as well as vocabulary. Urdu was patronized at the Bijapuri court also. The poet laureate Nusrati who flourished during the middle of the seventeenth century wrote a romantic tale about Prince Manohar, ruler of Kanak Nagar, and Madhu Malati. From the Deccan, Urdu came to north India in the eighteenth century.

In the field of architecture, Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah constructed many buildings, the most famous of which is the Char Minar. Completed in 1591-92, it stood at the centre of the new city of Hyderabad founded by Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah. It has four lofty arches, facing the four directions. Its chief beauty are the four minarets which are four-storeyed and are 48 metre high. The double screen of arches has fine carvings.

The rulers of Bijapur consistently maintained a high standard and an impeccable taste in architecture. The most famous Bijapuri buildings of the period are the Ibrahim Rauza and the Gol Gumbaz. The former was a mausoleum for Ibrahim Adil Shah and shows the style at its best. The Gol Gumbaz which was built in 1660 has the largest single dome ever constructed. All its proportions are harmonious, the large dome being balanced by tall, tapering minarets at the corner. It is said that a whisper at one side of the huge main room can be heard clearly at the other end. Painting also flourished in the Deccan, and reached a high state during the reign of Ibrahim Adil Shah (1580-1627).

It will thus be seen that the Deccani states were able to overcome the phase of sectarian violence during the sixteenth century, and maintain fine standards of communal harmony, and also contributed in the fields of music, literature, architecture and painting.