

Fairs and Festivals during the Qutub Shahi Sultans in Golconda

M.Raju

M.A. (HISTORY)

Abstract:

The Golconda Kingdom came into existence after the disintegration of the Bahmani Kingdom in 1518 A.D. Qutb Shahi Sultans of Golconda ruled the Andhra Desha for nearly two centuries i.e., from 1518 to 1687 A.D. Golconda was a vast kingdom with fertile land and rich minerals resources, besides the agricultural land and forests. Golconda was blessed with lucrative mines and other minerals like pearls, diamonds, coal, agates, shabbier etc. Qutb Shahi Sultans cultivated many cultures in the Deccan region and they have respected all local traditions, customs, literature etc. .

Introduction:

The contribution of Qutb Shahi Sultans to the Socio-Economic and political development of the kingdom is a high land mark in the cultural evolution of the Deccan. The sultans of Golconda introduced rich and noble traditions of art and culture together with high ideals of life in the Society. These sultans did not lag behind any contemporary rulers in maintaining peace and security to life and territorial integrity of the kingdom.

Sultan Quli Qutb Shah (1518-1543 A. D.), the founder of the dynasty, although a foreign Muslim, when became the master of an independent Kingdom, adopted a policy of religious tolerance with his Hindu

subjects. He took keen interest in the diffusion of learning and patronised many Hindu scholars and poets, which also helped him in uniting people of the different castes and creeds. Out of affection for him, his Hindu subjects called him 'Malik Ibhiram', 'Vighuram' or 'Ibharamudu'.

The most outstanding personality among the Qutb Shahi rulers was that of Muhammed Quli Qutb Shah. (1580-1612 A. D), the fifth Qutb Shahi ruler of Golconda. He was the most enlightened King of the Qutb Shah house. He was a versatile genius a great architect, the founder of the well-planned city of Hyderabad, a great poet of the Dakhni and Persian, and the ruler of great tolerance for all religions The local language, Telugu received encouragement from him. The Telugu poets and prose writers were munificently encouraged and rewarded by him. The glory of his reign lies more in his Cultural contribution than in his military conquests. He was fond of local traditions and rituals, that is why, he not only participated in and sincerely celebrated the festivals of various communities, in a jubilant manner but also preserved them in his poetry. He was a romantic personality and believed in drinking the cup of life to the lees. There is a saying in Arabic, which means, the masses follow the cult of their Kings". This was true to a great extent in the case of the people of Hyderabad. Due to the active participation of the King in many a function, the nobles and the general

public also joyfully followed their King, which fostered communal harmony among the different Sections of the population of the state. In royal palaces and gardens, these functions were organised by him on a grand scale and people who gathered there in large numbers engrossed themselves play fully in music and mirth and all round gaiety.

The occasion of the Basant festival. In his Kulliyat or anthology of his poems, Muhammad Quli has given an account of the customs, traditions and festivals of both the Hindus and the Muslims. As Dr. Zore, Writes in his book entitled '*Sultan Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah*', the King used to celebrate fourteen functions in a year, in which not only the King and his nobles but also the Public took keen interest. Of these, four festivals were considered as state festivals, in which the Muslims and non-muslims, both took part with equal zeal.

Conceptual Framework

Even though it was an official function and there used to be colourful scenes of military parade and the durbar with the nobles paying 'nazar' (offerings), yet it was an occasion when the subjects expressed their love and fidelity towards the ruler in the form of public meeting, gatherings, music, dance, and sweets being distributed to all. On public buildings and bazaars, lighting arrangements made as a mark of respect and love for the king and as an act of jubilation on the part of the people.

The second festival which was celebrated officially as well as by the people was Mirag Sal. This was to mark the beginning of the rainy season. With the first

rain, the King as well as the people celebrated the change in the season. The scorching heat of summer was over and the monsoons brought not only a relief from the scorching torture, but also filled the hearts of the people with new hopes and aspirations for the new year. India and the Deccan as well, being an agricultural country, and cultivation being the mainstay of more than 80% of its population, the beginning of the rainy season is most important period of the year for the cultivator, the agriculturists and one engaged in agro-industries. As such, this occasion was enjoyed fully by the King, who was a lover of pleasure and all that is sweet and beautiful in life. He wrote poetry for the occasion, got it sung by men and women of melodious voice accompanied by dance and drinking bouts. The people followed the King led by their nobles, Amirs, Jagirdars and landlords.

Since the King and many of the nobles traced their origin from Persia and spoke Persian as their mother tongue and originally followed the Persian culture, they, in spite of their mixing up with the indigenous culture and loving the language of the land could not help celebrating Nauruz as a festival. Essentially Nauruz is the festival of the spring just like the Basant. In response to the toleration shown by the King and his Persian nobles towards the indigenous festivals the people of the Deccan also sincerely took part in this festival of the season in the same manner as they enjoyed the Basant. This festival of the season was marked with merriment and enjoyment, music and dance and social gatherings.

Muharrum, if at all it can be called a festival, is a festival of sorrow and grief. It is celebrated from the first of Muharrum to the tenth day of the month to commemorate the sacrifice made by Imam-Husain and members of his family. They were put to all sorts of trouble, denied food and water, and seventy two of them were killed in battle by thousands from the army of Yazid. All Muslims, particularly, the Shiites, celebrate Muharrum all over India, Just as in Lucknow, in Golconda also, in the past, Muharram was celebrated officially as well as publicly. The first month of the Muslim year begins with sorrow and in Golconda under the Qutb Shahis. As the King distributed to all of his servants black dress and money to perform several rites in Ashur Khanas, they, as well as the others, erected Alums (standards) in Ashur Khanas, performed Majlis and Matam and distributed food and sherbet to the common people. Even the non-muslims took interest in the religious rites, as it is clear from the phrase 'Peerla Panduga' in Telugu and 'Ashanna' and 'Ushanna', popular names for Hazrat Imam, Hasan and Hazrat Imam Husain.

Even though there are a number of other festivals which were celebrated by the Qutb Shahs, particularly Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah, yet since there are only two of them which were very popular both in the palaces as well as streets, and both among the Hindus and the Muslims of the period, we, therefore, think it would serve our purpose if we mention only two of them, they were Basant and Batkamma.

The other worth-mentioning festival is Bathkamma, the local name for the goddess Anasuya, or Parvathi or Sita. This festival in fact, is like Basant. It starts in August-September, just after the Ganesh Chaturthi, and ends in Oct-Nov on the occasion of Dasera. This festival is celebrated to commemorate the harvest of the crops. People, in particular, women in Telangana clad themselves in the best, wearing marigold flowers in their hair, carrying platters decorated with flowers, go to some place of water, singing '*Bathkamma Bathkamma Uyalo*' and dance to the tune of the song in excitement. This is a reflection of satisfaction at home when their granaries are full with paddy and their hearts with mirth of today and hope of tomorrow. This special feature of Telangana was enjoyed by other inhabitants of Telangana, even though they believed in different faiths and spoke different languages. The Kings and nobles of Golconda must have taken the same keen interest in this public function as they took in other public functions and so this festival was celebrated year after year on a grand scale. Vazir Hasan, the author of '*Chand Bibi Sultan*', a beautiful drama on the period of the Qutb Shahs, while describing this festival, mentions how it was celebrated enthusiastically stically by the pretty wheat complexioned damsels of Telangana near the Langar Houz of Golconda, while the members of the royal family and nobles looked at them from roofs and balconies of their palaces.

SCOPE OF THE TOPIC:

The Qutb Shahis of Golconda ruled the Telangana, Andhra area during 16th and 17th centuries, covering the entire Telugu speaking area and some parts of Karnataka and Maharashtra forms the area of study.

OBJECTIVES:

The objective of the proposed study are:

1. To establish the Qutbshahis relations with the neighbouring state in general and Marathas in particular.
2. It also aimed to investigate into the details of the policies adopted by the Qutbshahi rulers in safeguarding the Qutbshahi Kingdom from the attacks of the mighty Mughals.
3. Lastly it is also aimed to find out whether the established relations with the Marathas, during the last days of the Qutbshahi kingdom proved beneficial to the Golconda kingdom or not.

METHODOLOGY:

It is purely a historical study, a historical method will be followed in dealing with the subject. The primary sources such as factory records contemporary chronicles, were taken into consideration and also the secondary sources will be taken in to considered for the present study. This study is primarily limited to the Qutbshahi period from 1672-87. In this study the researcher analysis the relations of Golconda with Maratha in detail. A simple methodology to narrate and present the real picture about the

relations existed between Qutb Shahis and the Marathas from 1672 – 1687.

SOURCES:

PRIMARY SOURCES:

The sources for this study is available in various forms and available abundantly. The primary sources taken into consideration this study are inscriptions, *Kaifiats*, *Formans*, *Tavelogues*, and *Telugu literary sources* were taken into consideration for this study etc., This foreign travelogues viz., travels in *mughal empire by Bernier*, *Story – De – Mogar by manucci*, Indian the 17th century by *Ovington*, *Thevonot & carrerri* etc., besides these works descriptions, formans and *Kaifiats* and Telugu literary sources are considered for the present studies.

SECONDARY SOURCES:

The works published on the history of Deccan with special reference to Qutb Shahi relations with Marathas. Proceedings of historical journals and also taped for the study. These sources are available in various places like state Archives Government of Andhra Pradesh, Tarnaka, Hyderabad, Osmania University Library, Salarjung Museum, Hyderabad. Kakatiya University Library, Warangal, Potti Sri Ramulu and Telugu University Library, Srisailam. Most of these sources are in good condition and excellent stage of preservation. Basing on these sources the researcher would like to work on present topic.

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