

## **ADIL SHAHI MOSQUES IN KARNATAKA**

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### **-Abstract-**

This paper concentrates on the mosques (*masjids*) of the period of the Adil Shahis, one of the Muslim dynasties which had Turkish origin that ruled Karnataka along with the other parts of the Deccan. A Mosque is primarily a religious building for the performance of the daily prayers for five times, one of the five pillars of Islam. It is thus, the most important building for Muslims. Mosques in Karnataka have a long history and tradition. The Adil Shahis constructed mosques in Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and other parts of Karnataka State. Karnataka “the priceless gift of indulgent nature” is a unique blend of glorious past and rich present, situated on the lower West Coast of South India. It was ruled by the Muslim dynasties from the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century to 18<sup>th</sup> century. The Adil Shahis ruled Karnataka from 1489 A.D., to 1686 A.D., and wielded a great political power over many parts of Karnataka. The founder Yusuf Adil Shah was the son of Ottoman Sultan Murad II of Turkey. In their period many secular and religious monuments were constructed. The Adil Shahi mosques were not only places of worship but also places for education and social activities. The paper examines the construction of the mosques by the Adil Shahis, their patrons and also the construction pattern, architects, features and its role in the society. At present, seventy-five Adil Shahi mosques are found in different areas of Karnataka. Almost all the state buildings of the Adil Shahis are adorned by the crescent moon which was the emblem of the Sultans of Turkey. Their mosques inspired the future generation to construct more and more mosques in Karnataka State.

**Key Words:** Adil Shahi, Mosques, Karnataka.

**JEL Classification:** Z, Z0

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

This paper concentrates on the mosques (*masjids*) of the period of the Adil Shahis, one of the Muslim dynasties which had Turkish origin that ruled Karnataka along with the other parts of the Deccan. Mosques in Karnataka (one of the States of

South India) have a long history and tradition. Earliest mosques were constructed at Barkur, Mangalore and Kasargod of Coastal Karnataka by a Malik Dinar as early as 644 A.D. (Doddamane, 1993:5).

Karnataka “the priceless gift of indulgent nature” is a unique blend of glorious past and rich present, situated on the lower West Coast of South India. It was ruled by Muslim dynasties from the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century to 18<sup>th</sup> century. The Adil Shahis, the second independent Muslim dynasty, ruled Karnataka from 1489 A.D., to 1686 A.D., and wielded a great political power over many parts of Karnataka. The founder Yusuf Adil Shah was the son of Ottoman Sultan Murad II of Turkey. Nine Adil Shahi kings ruled Karnataka. In their period many religious and secular monuments were constructed not only in Karnataka but also in other parts of the Deccan. The paper focuses on the mosques constructed by the Adil Shahis at present found in various districts of North Karnataka namely Bijapur, Raichur, Dharwad, Gulbarga, Belgaum and Bidar; and their construction pattern, features, architects and patrons. The primary sources to study the mosques are the inscriptions, literature *Busatine-Salatin* and the secondary sources.

## 2. MOSQUES

### 2.1. Adil Shahi Mosques in Bijapur District

Bijapur, a famous town from early period was made as capital by the Adil Shahis which added to its glory by their zealous patronage. In their benevolent regime it developed into a large and splendid city with numerous picturesque Islamic monuments, especially the many mosques. Henry Cousens records that during the period of Ibrahim Adil Shah II Bijapur city had 1, 600 mosques. (Cousens, 1916:14). At present, from the inscriptional evidences, literary source and from monumental remains forty-five mosques are found in Bijapur district. These mosques on chronological grounds are assigned to the reign period of different Adil Shahi kings; as one to the period of Yusuf Adil Khan, two to the period of Ismail Adil Khan, three to Ibrahim Adil Shah I, seven to Ali Adil Shah I, sixteen to Ibrahim Adil Shah II, three to Mahammad Adil Shah; two to Ali Adil Shah II, and one to Sikandar Adil Shah. About nine mosques are assigned to the period of Adil Shahis on stylistic grounds.

The founder **Yusuf Adil Khan** (1489 - 1510 A.D.) was an eminent learned and liberal person who invited to his court learned men, skilled and valiant persons, eminent artists, from Iran, Turkistan, Rum, etc. He constructed a mosque inside the Bijapur fort. (Kulkarni Kolhar, 1999:25). Of the two inscriptions of the period of **Ismail Adil Khan** (1510 - 1534 A.D.), one records that Yusuf’s Old Jami

Masjid or Asen Beg's Masjid was built by Asen Beg Naib Ghaibat Adil Khan (Ismail Adil Khan), the son of Yusuf Adil Shah in 1512 A.D. The mosque, an oldest dated monument in Bijapur, constructed of poor rubble, shows that early Adil Shahis employed few foreign masons. It does not have *minars*, but four plastered brick *chhatris* crowned by small domes on each corner. (Merklinger, 1981:116-117). The Ibrahimpur mosque located in Ibrahimpur, the township established by the King Ibrahim Adil Shah I is assigned to 1526 A.D. (Cousens, 1916:54). It has no dome and is the first Adil Shahi mosque to stand on a plinth. (Merklinger, 1981:118).

Among the three inscriptions of the period of **Ibrahim Adil Shah I** (1535 - 1558 A.D.), one inscription in Arabic and Persian languages says that the Dakhani Idgah (*Namazgah*) is a big, curious looking building was constructed by Malik Khwaja Raihan in 1538 A.D. (Quddusi and Jagirdar, 2001:79). It is situated upon high ground in the north-west quarter of Bijapur near Haidar Burj. *Idgah* is a Persian word for the *musalla* or 'praying place' used on the two chief Muslim festivals i.e., *Id-ul-fitar* and the *Baqar' Id*. (Brown, 1942:139). A second inscription (Quddusi and Jagirdar, 2001:80) in Arabic and Persian engraved near the ruined gateway of the Yusufs' Old Jami Mosque refers to the construction of a mosque and Malik Aminu'l-Mulk Ghazi (a religious fighter in the cause of Islam) who donated one house and thirty-six shops to meet the expenditure of the maintenance of the mosque, water storage and public water-place. Another reference is to Ibrahim I's Old Jami Masjid or Ali I's Old Jami Masjid in Bijapur constructed by Ibrahim Adil Shah I in the year 1551 A.D. (Kulkarni Kolhar, 1999:58). The most notable features of this *masjid* are tall *minars* over the central piers of the facade and absence of the dome. This was the first mosque constructed without a dome. (Nayeem, 2008:162).

Seven records of the period of **Ali Adil Shah I** (1558 - 1580 A.D.) refer to seven mosques. A Persian inscription (Quddusi and Jagirdar, 2001:84-85) records that on 11<sup>th</sup> December 1559 A.D., Khani-Azam Jannat Khan, an officer (the *Naib-i-Ghaibat*) under the king, made an endowment of five shops to meet the expenditure for the up-keep of the mosque of Aminul Mulk. Another Persian inscription (Quddusi and Jagirdar, 2001:87) found in Satun Sayyid mosque says that the foundation of the mosque was laid by Sayyid Abdul Qadir Kirmani in 1565 A.D.

The Great Jami Masjid (the *Jumah* or *Friday* public mosque of assembly), where the *Khutbah* (Friday sermon) was delivered is assigned to 1576 A.D. Most of the parts of this mosque were constructed during the period of Ali Adil Shah I.

(Cousens, 1916:57). It is the most magnificent mosque in the Deccan with a great courtyard enclosed by the two wings which occupies the greatest area about 91, 000 square feet. Its great dome being perfectly hemispherical is the best proportioned dome in Bijapur. A feature introduced by the local architects in the Muhammadan domes was the idea of 'bud' emphasized by the row of petals around the base or near the neck of the dome. (Sathyan, 1966:498). The *mihrab* was decorated with paintings and completed by the architect Malik Yaqut Dabuli by the orders of Adil Shah in 1636 A.D. (Quddusi and Jagirdar, 2001:125-127). By the King's order free food was provided to Fakirs, Sufi saints and poor muslims in Jami Mosque. A school attached to the mosque taught Arabic and *Quran* to students. (Kulkarni Kolhar, 1999: 317).

Mustafa Khan, the Prime Minister in the court of Ali Adil Shah I constructed a mosque named after him in 1581 A.D. (Merklinger, 1981:122). During the latter half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century a saint much venerated by the king, named Hazrat Sayyid Ali built the mosque Ali Shahid Pir. (Merklinger, 1981:120). It has a ceiling which is wagon-vaulted in style and is the only known example of its kind. A mosque named Nede Ghalib Mosque is found between two moats in the Bijapur fort. (Kulkarni Kolhar, 1999:130). A mosque located in between the Mihtar Mahall and Jami Masjid in Bijapur is named Batul Khan's mosque after the land owner on which the mosque stands. (Cousens, 1916:81).

The highest number of references to mosques i.e., sixteen is found during the period of **Ibrahim Adil Shah II** (1580 -1627 A.D.). An inscription over the entrance doorway of the Haidariyyah Mosque records its construction by Haidar Khan Ibn Jamil, one of the generals of King in 1583 A.D. This mosque does not have the dome. (Cousens, 1916:67). A Persian inscription (Quddusi and Jagirdar, 2001:90-91) engraved on Roshan Darwaza of Asar Mahal records that Polad Khan (probably an officer) donated five shops for the benefit of a mosque which was constructed by him in between 1584-1585 A.D. Par Khan's Mosque located inside the Allapur gate in Bijapur was named after Par Khan, a Pathan who owned the ground upon which the mosque was constructed. The style of work in this mosque is similar to Jahan Begam's mosque. (Cousens, 1916:81). The Mulla Masjid, also called Malik Raihan's Masjid, in Shahpur was probably constructed by the King in 1586 A.D. (Cousens, 1916:117). Malika Jahan's Mosque was constructed by the King Ibrahim Adil Shah II in 1586 A.D., in honour of his wife Malika Jahan, daughter of Sultan Quli Qutub Shah of Golconda. This mosque is like a gem amongst the mosques of Bijapur city as it had several new features introduced for the first time in the Bijapur architecture i.e., the stone carving of elaborate nature. It is also called Zanjiri Masjid because once stone chains were

hung from the eaves (*chajja*). (Kulkarni, 1935:45). Ainapur Mosque, named after a village located five kilometers away from Bijapur near Jahan Begum's tomb, is situated on a high platform. (Machakanur and Daddi, 2007:74-75). A Persian inscription (Quddusi and Jagirdar, 2001:74) from Babladi of Sindgi taluk records that Abdar Khan (probably an officer) constructed a mosque in 1592 A.D. Another Persian inscription (Quddusi and Jagirdar, 2001:137) dated 1594 A.D., records that Shaikh Alauddin, son of Shams, the tailor (*khayyat*) constructed a mosque in the village Baithal (present Bhutnal) and donated some land. An inscription (Cousens, 1916:77-79) around the entrance doorway of the Anda Masjid (Andu Mosque) near Landa Qassab bastion in Bijapur records its construction in 1608 A.D., by Itibar Khan, one of the ministers of Ibrahim II. It is a two-storeyed building, the upper floor a mosque and the ground floor a rest-house (*sarai*). The mosque gets the name Anda Masjid as the main dome and the smaller bulbs of the *minarets* are egg-shaped.

The Nau Gumbaz Mosque in Bijapur assigned to the first quarter of the 17<sup>th</sup> century has nine domes as its name implies, over nine bays; the four corners and central ones segmental in shape, the four remaining conical or pyramidal. There are no minarets at the sides of the façade, but instead low domed *chhatris*. Over the central piers arise more elongated *chhatris*. (Merklinger, 1981:124). Malik Sandal's Mosque near Bukhar Masjid in Bijapur, was probably constructed by Malik Sandal, the famous architect of Bijapur during the period of Ibrahim Adil Shah II. (Kulkarni, 1935: 57). Ikhlas Khan's Mosque located near Fathe Gate in Bijapur is probably named after Ikhlas Khan, the general of Ibrahim II. He was an Abyssinian (a slave from South Africa), and was known as Ikhlas Khan Habshi alias Bade Khan. (Cousens, 1916: 47 - 49).

Ibrahim Rauza, the *magnum opus* of the Adil Shahis, consists of two buildings, the tomb and the mosque. The mosque, located on the west side of the tomb, constructed in 1626 A.D by the king, is a remarkable piece of architecture with deep rich cornices, graceful minarets, perforated parapets and miniature minars, round the bases of the corner minarets and heavy stone chains with pendants hanging under the cornice. An inscription near the south door says that, Malik Sandal the architect expended 1,50,000 *huns* (gold coins) on this building. (Kaujalg, 1954:42 - 44). Sonahri Masjid located in Shahpur, Bijapur, probably constructed between 1582 - 1626 A.D is almost a replica, on a smaller scale, of the Ibrahim Rauza mosque. (Cousens, 1916: 87). Among the many mosques in Shahpur, two mosques near Amin Dargah both constructed in 1586 A.D., are important. (Cousens, 1916: 87).

Of the three records of the period of **Muhammad Adil Shah** (1627-1656 A.D.), a Persian inscription (Quddusi and Jagirdar, 2001:102) dated 1630-31 A.D., records the construction of Yaqut Dabuli's Mosque by Malik Yaqut, probably Yaqut Dabuli, the famous architect. Another inscription (Quddusi and Jagirdar, 2001:96) records the construction of the mosque by Malik Sandal in 1644 -1645 A.D. This mosque was his own private chapel constructed for himself and his household. Afzal Khan's Mosque in Afzalpur (Takki) constructed in 1653 A.D., by the *Wazir* and General Afzal Khan (Cousens, 1916:97) is a two-storeyed mosque. It is probable that the upper floor was intended for the exclusive use of Afzal Khan's wives. (Kulkarni, 1935: 64). Mecca Masjid located near Anand Mahal in Bijapur on stylistic evidence is assigned to **Ali Adil Shah II** (1656 -1672 A.D.). The plan of this mosque is said to be on the same plan as the mosque at Mecca. (Cousens, 1916:111). The absence of a pulpit (*minbar*) in the mosque shows that it was built for royal ladies only. (Kaujalgı, 1954:48). Ali Adil Shah II constructed one more mosque in Bijapur in 1657 -1658 A.D. (Kulkarni Kolhar, 1999:398). An inscription (Quddusi and Jagirdar, 2001:114) records that a mosque was constructed between 1672-1673 A.D., in Bijapur by the King **Sikandar Adil Shah** (1672 -1686 A.D.).

The **Rangin Masjid** or **Coloured Masjid** in Shahpeth, **Mosque No.231**, The **Dhaiwadi Masjid**, **Allah Babu's Mosque**, The **Zumurrud or Emerald Mosque** (Cousens, 1916: 49,82,117,116,88), **The Chota Asar** (Kulkarni, 1935:58), **The Chinch Diddi Masjid** (Kulkarni, 1935:57-58), **The Elephant-Slayer's Mosque** (Cousens, 1916:49) and **Mosque in Badami** (Pattar, 2002:13) are nine mosques in Bijapur that lack inscriptional evidences.

## 2.2. Adil Shahi Mosques in Raichur District

Nine inscriptions found in Raichur record nine mosques. Three mosques belong to the period of **Ismail Adil Khan**. An Arabic inscription (Quddusi and Jagirdar, 2001:238-239) records the construction of a mosque by Khwaja Sambul which is assigned to 1511-1512 A.D on stylistic grounds. (Merklinger, 1981:116). A Persian inscription (Quddusi and Jagirdar, 2001:243-244) engraved above the main entrance of the Ek-Minar-Ki-Masjid records that Malik Ambar (probably a noble) constructed the mosque in 1513-1514 A.D. It has only one *minar* built in Persian style and is about sixty-five feet high and thirteen feet in diameter at base at the ground level. (Abhishankar, 1970:714). Another Arabic inscription (Merklinger, 1981:117) records that a mosque was constructed in Raichur in 1515 A.D. Among the two inscriptions belonging to the period of **Ali Adil Shah I**, one mentions that the Jami mosque in Raichur fort was constructed in between 1577-

1578 A.D., by Ali Adil Shah I (Quddusi and Jagirdar, 2001:249) and the other records of Chawk Masjid. (Merklinger, 1981:120). Of the four inscriptions belonging to the period of **Ibrahim Adil Shah II**, two inscriptions (Merklinger, 1981:122) found at Mudgal dated 1583 A.D. and 1585 A.D., respectively mention two mosques at Mudgal. A third inscription (Quddusi and Jagirdar, 2001:254) in Persian engraved on the left side of the *mihrab* of Jami Mosque in Raichur fort mentions that the mosque was built by Malik Abdul Muhammad the servant of Ibrahim II between 1622-1623 A.D. And the fourth inscription (Quddusi and Jagirdar, 2001:256) also in Persian records that Abdul Muhammad began the construction of the Jami Mosque in Raichur in the period of Ibrahim Adil Shah II and completed it in the period of Muhammad Adil Shah between 1628-1629 A.D. It is a large mosque having eleven arches supported on piers.

### 2.3. Adil Shahi Mosques in Dharwad District

Of the seven inscriptions referring to seven mosques, a Persian inscription (Merklinger, 1981:118) belonging to the period of **Ibrahim Adil Shah I** dated 1538-1539 A.D., records that Khan Malik, an official constructed a mosque in the Bankapur fort. Among the four records of the period of **Ibrahim Adil Shah II**, an Arabic inscription (Quddusi and Jagirdar, 2001:145) from the Jami Mosque at Misrikoti near Hubli records the construction of the mosque by Amir Masnad-i-Ali-Malik Ainul-Mulk Kinani in 1585-1586 A.D. A Persian inscription (Quddusi and Jagirdar, 2001:144) from Jami Mosque at Bankapur records that the deputy of the King *Naib-i-ghaibat* named Khan Khursid Khan build the mosque in 1602 A.D. A third inscription (Merklinger, 1981:123) in Persian found in the Kali Masjid at Lakshmeshwar explains that Ankus Khan, Governor of Bijapur constructed the Kali Masjid at Lakshmeshwar in 1617 A.D. The mosque is renowned for the magnificent stone chains from the *chajja* and *minarets*. The fourth inscription (Merklinger, 1981:124) in Persian from Hangal mentions the construction of Jami Masjid in the later period of Ibrahim Adil Shah II. Of the two inscriptions of the period of **Sikandar Adil Shah**, a Persian inscription (Quddusi and Jagirdar, 2001:146) from the central *mihrab* of the Jami mosque of Ranebennur states that the Jami mosque was built first in 1678-1679 A.D., by Sayyid Akram in the period of Ankus Khan. And another (Merklinger, 1981:128) records the construction of Jami Masjid at Dharwad in 1686 A.D.

### 2.4. Adil Shahi Mosques in Gulbarga District

Out of the six references to mosques, four belong to the period of **Ali Adil Shah I**. An Arabic inscription (Quddusi and Jagirdar, 2001:185) on the small mosque in North-West area of the fort of Gulbarga records its construction by Arab Khan

(probably an officer). Another record refers (Merklinger, 1981:120) to a mosque at Dornahalli in Shahpur taluk which is assigned to 1570 A.D. A third inscription (Merklinger, 1981:120) from the façade of Maqbara Mosque in Hirapur, belongs to the period 1572-1573 A.D. A fourth inscription (Quddusi and Jagirdar, 2001:169) engraved on the wall of Bijapur Bakhshi Sahib Mosque in Hirapur is dated 1572-1575 A.D. Darwaza Mosque located in Yadgir taluk on stylistic evidence is assigned to the period of **Muhammad Adil Shah** (1627-1656 A.D.). (Merklinger, 1981:125). An inscription (Merklinger, 1981:127) of the period of **Ali Adil Shah II** mentions that the mosque located in Shahpur was constructed by Shaykh Abul Hasan in 1667-1668 A.D.

### **2.5. Adil Shahi Mosques in Belgaum District**

Belgaum district has many mosques in different places like Hukkeri, Raibag, Sampgaon, Tigadi and Athani. (Kamath, 1987:119). Among them six mosques are worth mentioning. The three Persian inscriptions (Quddusi and Jagirdar, 2001:12-13) of the period of **Ismail Adil Khan** found in the Masjid-i-Safa in Belgaum record that Asad Khan the governor of Belgaum laid the foundation of the mosque in 1518 A.D., completed its construction and donated land to it in 1519 A.D. Two Persian inscriptions of the period of **Ibrahim Adil Shah II**, one above the entrance in the Kali Masjid in Hukkeri (Kamath, 1987:892) states that Mansur Khan, an officer under Ain-ul-Mulk laid the foundation of the mosque in 1582 A.D., and completed its construction in 1585 A.D., and the other inscription (Kamath, 1987:886) engraved on the Jami Masjid located in Belgaum fort records that it was constructed in 1585-1586 A.D., by Sher Khan, an officer of Ibrahim II. A Persian inscription (Quddusi and Jagirdar, 2001:20) of the period of **Muhammad Adil Shah** refers to the construction of the Jami Masjid in 1629 A.D., by Mustafa-Khan, the general of Muhammad Adil Shah in Raibag, which was a noted commercial centre in the period of Muhammad Adil Shah. The Jami Mosque at Athani, a fine monument was constructed during the period of **Ali Adil Shah II**. Athani was an important market place during the Adil Shahi period. (Kamath, 1987: 856). The Kadam Rasul Mosque at Hukkeri was constructed in 1680 A.D., by Rustam Zaman, an officer during the period of king **Sikandar Adil Shah**. (Kamath, 1987: 892).

### **2.6. Adil Shahi Mosques in Bidar District**

Three inscriptions from Bidar mention three mosques. A Persian inscription (Quddusi and Jagirdar, 2001:68) of the period of **Ibrahim Adil Shah II** from the mosque in Shahpur records its construction in between 1586-1587 A.D., by Amin Khan. Of the two Persian inscriptions of the period of **Ali Adil Shah II**, one

(Quddusi and Jagirdar, 2001:43) found in the *Khanqah* of Nur Samnani Mosque in Bidar states that the mosque named Masjid-i-Alawi was built by Miyan Yadgar in 1661-1662 A.D., and another (Quddusi and Jagirdar, 2001:43-44) from a mosque situated to the south-west of the Mausoleum of Kunj Nashin records the construction of the mosque by Fath Shah, son of Ruknud-Din and Aisha Sultan in the year 1669-1670 A.D.

### 3. SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE ADIL SHAHI MOSQUES

The early Adil Shahi architecture derived from the Bahamani style later developed and improved technical maturity because of their constant contact with other schools of architecture from Persia, Ottoman Turkey, etc. The mosques had gateways (portals), fountains, prayer hall, the eaves, *mihirab* (niche), wall cresting, domes, finials and *chhatris*. Few mosques were constructed inside the forts, cities and provincial headquarters. Some were constructed in rectangular plan, few small and few big, and many smaller ones were constructed without a court. Adil Shahis constructed many **Jami Masjids**. Most of the Mosques have a triple-arched façade, consisting of between three and six bays. Few Mosques were attached to the tombs, for example **Ibrahim Rouza** and **Ainapur Mosque**. Adil Shahis used bricks, stones and wood to construct mosques and stucco. **Stucco plaster** coating was very popular in their mosques. **Portals** continued to be important for the later mosques. **Arches**, the curved construction on the top of the pillars are seen in the openings and interiors of the mosques. Almost all the mosques have two *minars* or *minarets*. But Ek-Minar-Ki-Masjid is an example of a mosque with single *minar*. **Chhatris** were frequently used by the Adil Shahis to decorate the roofs of the mosques. **Finials** also called *Guldastas* decorated the four corners of the roofs of the mosques.

The mosque served not only as a place for *salah* (prayer) but also as a center for education (*madarasa*), information and dispute settlements. The tradition of the Adil Shahis was to invite men of learning from Turkey, Persia and Arabia to their capital and patronize them to teach in the mosques. The Jami mosques in Bijapur had resting houses for pilgrims attached to them.

### 4. CONCLUSION

Adil Shahi mosques in Karnataka are unique because of their architectural style as they encouraged architects from Persia, Turkey, Middle East and Bijapur to build them. **All their mosques were adorned with the crescent moon which was the emblem of the Sultans of Turkey, still found on the mosques in Karnataka.**

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