

## PREFACE

The culture of present day India represents a blend of a variety of human stocks and this assertion is particularly true in the case of southern Indian culture. The anthropologists have studied the human groups of various varieties living in south India and have come to the conclusion that various cultural groups that can be identified with racial groups have contributed to making of culture of south India. One astonishes to know that in free India, south Indian block, barring the exception of northern Maharashtra, is a block that stands antithetical at times to northern India in politico-cultural fields. Why this cultural individuality is preserved in spite of many attempts in mutual contact and cooperation, is difficult to ascertain though the language group of southern India can reveal something worth grasping in this connection.

Islamic culture as a force introduced itself to south India only in the 13th century and after. But the pasific method through which the Islam made inroads into south India goes back to the 7th century A.D. The most effective religion after Buddhism and Jainism that ever entered the soil of south India is the Mohomedan religion. In central Asia Islam rose up and its founder wielded the variety of ethnic tribes there into an Islamic homogeneous community of brotherhood.

The Arab traders that were a link between Asia and Europe

for a long time had their close contacts with Arabian sea coast of western India even in pre-Islamic period. It is they who colonised the various parts of west coast of India creating Muslim settlements in these coastal parts after they embraced Islam. From 8th century onwards the political situation in north India changed and Arabs established their state in Sindh and Northwestern region. Invasions continued in 10th and 11th centuries in north India and in the beginning of 13th century Delhi became the capital of Islamic state but in this south India rarely noticed the Islamic holocaust. The slow and peaceful inroads of Islam into the South continued even before invasion of Allaudin Khilaji was there without much notice.

Sufis who believed in philanthropic activities as a means of spreading religion like Christian missionaries did percolate south Indian region but for the lack of political power their activities did not make sufficient progress. In the 14th century Malik Kafur, the generalissimo of Allaudin Khilaji reduced the whole of south India and subjugated it to establish Islamic state over it and this did contribute to the spread of Islam. The Vijayanagar empire, torch-bearer of Hinduism, came into being in 1336 and Bahamani Muslim state came into being in 1347. North India did not succeed in controlling southern states but Vijayanagar, Bahamani contradiction of religious conflict continued for a long time. Muslim State by force and patronage

contributed to the spread of Islam. Many among the founders of Bahamani offshoots were Hindus. One can surprisingly notice that sufi saints who loved peace as means to propogate their religion took swords when occasions demanded against the Hindus for religious cause. What exactly contributed to the spread of Islam in various places in south is a matter of great conjecture. Sometimes the administrative centres helped its spread. The Hindu society which believed in social hierarchy seems to be equally responsible for the spread of Islam in certain places in south. This was particularly so in case of conversion of low caste people. The methods used for the spread of Islam were manifold. Darga which substituted as an alternative to Hindu temple by sufi saints was definitely a better institution of humanitarian activities. This must have influenced to a great extent the spread of Islam among low classes. Landed property of Dargas indicate that states liberally patronised them and this was possible because powerful ulema class which existed in north India occupying positions in court of Muslim rulers did not have their effective role to play in southern Islamic states.

The study of this deep and serious topic would not have been made possible without the writings by contemporary court writers, travellers and other accounts like inscriptions etc. The work would not have been possible without the following contemporary accounts:

(1) Ibn-i-Battuta: He visited south India in the early part of 14th century. He visited the coastal parts of east and west of India and has left behind a brilliant account of his observation of manners, customs and religious conditions of the Muslim people in south India. This account is of great use for understanding the spread of Islam in south India.

(2) Muhammad Kasim Ferishta: Ferishta's Gulshan-i-Ibrahimi throws light on the attempts made by various Muslim rulers in spreading Islam in south India. He was a keen observer not only of the political upheavals in the south but also of the social conditions, beliefs, traditions and religious conditions of south India of his times. Ferishta wrote his account in Persian and later on it was translated into English by John Briggs under the title 'The Rise of Mohammedan Power in India'.

(3) Futuh-us-Salatin: Isami's Futuh-us-Salatin gives us good information about the attempts made by Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq in spreading Islam in south India. It throws light on sufi saints who came to Devagiri from Delhi and worked in south for the spread of Islam.

#### Travellers' Accounts

(1) Nuniz: He visited Vijayanagar during the reign of Achyuta Raya (A.D. 1530-42) and wrote his chronicle probably

between 1535 and 1537. His account informs us about the Muslims in the army of Krishnadevaraya and conflicts between the Adilshahi kingdom and the Vijayanagar empire.

(2) Nikitin: He was a Russian traveller. He visited Vijayanagar Kingdom during the reign of Narasimha I (1468-1474). His account throws light on Muslim soldiers in the Vijayanagar forces and the policy of the Vijayanagar rulers towards the Muslim population.

Besides these sources, translations of numerous Persian accounts in English made by Elliot and Dowson, Major R.H. and Nainar, M.H. have been made use of for preparing this dissertation.

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Kolhapur

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