

' S T A T E M E N T '  
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The eminence of the two Sultāns, Maḥmūd Shāh I and Muzaḥḥar Shāh II, in Gujarat and other parts of Western India draws the attention of a student and prompts him to attempt a close study of these two rulers. It is with this view that this thesis has been written.

Aḥmad Shāh, the founder of the independent Sultanate of Gujarat, laid the foundations on which the later edifice was to rise. The main architect of this edifice was his grandson Maḥmūd Shāh, popularly known as "Begado".

Maḥmūd Shāh ruled over Gujarat for more than fifty three years. Most of the years of his reign are marked by military engagements. It would be proper to say that the task which Aḥmad Shāh began by subduing the Rajput chieftains was completed by Maḥmūd Shāh.

Three powerful states, namely Idar, Champaner and Junagadh seriously challenged the stability of the Sultanate. Aḥmad Shāh could not bring these states under his effective control and even during his life they

defied him and resumed independence after his death.

Mahmud Shāh reduced and annexed these Rajput states, Junagadh, Champaner, Dwarka and Ranpur. These states were politically and strategically important, without which a stable government in Gujarat was practically impossible. The reduction of Junagadh and Champaner was not an easy task; therefore in this thesis the military campaigns of Sultan Mahmūd Shāh, in the above context have been studied with care.

Persian chroniclers speak of Sultān Mahmūd's government as stable and well-organised one. In this thesis an attempt has been made to study the reasons for this stability and the conclusion reached that the Sultan established his unchallenged hold over the land by forcing Rajput chieftains to accept his overlordship. This was the most important success of the Sultan.

A careful attempt has also been <sup>made</sup> here to study the "inter-state" relations of the age. The relations of Gujarat with a neighbouring states changed from time to time and depended on the geographical factors and their relative strength as expressed in the "balance of power". The relations of Malwa with Gujarat rulers from its beginning, were strained and they continued to

be so during the period of this study.

Khandesh served as a buffer zone between Gujarat, Malwa and the Bahamani Kingdom. It sided often with one against the other. With Rajasthan states, particularly Mewar and Marwar, Malwa and Gujarat had shifting alliance also, based on the consideration that the powerful party should not be allowed to become dominant.

The controversial legends about Sultān Mahmūd have been interpreted with the help of the fresh material namely, "Dhamimāh-i-Mahmūd Shāhi". Also the traditional beliefs of the followers of Imām Shāh of Pirana, as found in their literature, have been sketched and interpreted.

The assessment of the reign of Sultān Mahmūd has been studied with the care it needs. The Sultān is given due credit for creating a political order which gave a suitable place to the Rajputs and rewarded ability wherever it was found. Among his nobles were Rajputs, Persians, Turks, Abyssians, Egyptians and probably a Russian too. One of his nobles, Malik Gopi, acted as an intermediary when the Portuguese embassy sent by Affonso de Albuquerque, the viceroy at Goa, arrived in Gujarat. The Sultan followed a religious policy, which on the whole, was balanced. His dealings with Rajputs

were the result mainly of political necessity and are not to be seen in the context of religion.

Sultān Mahmūd founded<sup>a</sup> new capital at Champaner and called it Mahmudābād. This capital was seen in its glory by the Portuguese traveller, Barbosa, who gives a glowing description of it. He founded the new villages and populated old ones. He helped in reconstructing and repairing of old and falling house. He laid out gardens and encouraged cultivation. This aspect of the reign of the Sultan has been brought out in this thesis.

Sultān Mahmūd was succeeded by his son Khalīl Khān, entitled Muzaffar Shāh, known to historians as the "Halim" or "Pious" or "Clement".

His reign of fifteen years has been studied in three aspects viz. "Relations with Rajputs", "Relations with Malwa" and "Relations with the Portuguese". While analysing the events and the policies that he adopted, it is felt that he was a mild natured and in certain respects, a weak ruler. He failed to consolidate the kingdom which his father has bequeathed to him and therefore could not contribute to it substantially.

In the succession dispute in Idar, he did not act with judgment and initiative and depended on the advice

of his nobles. His nobility had by this time become affected by rival factions.

He invaded Malwa, apparently, to save Sultān Mahmūd Khaljī from becoming a pawn in the hands of Medini Rai and his Rajput army, but again he did not show any acumen in dealing with this problem. The point at issue, if the Persian chroniclers are to be believed, was viewed mainly in its religious aspects. The Sultan did not take sufficient note of the political power of the Rajputs, both in Rajasthan and Malwa. The army which he sent to Chitor against Rana Sanga, returned without any material gain.

Muzaffar Shāh by nature is said to have been a gentle person, religiously inclined and punctilious in his religious duties. Many stories are told about these qualities of the Sultān. Two important events may be cited here to illustrate his policies; viz. Restoration of Mahmūd and the tragic end of Malik Gopi's life.

The Persian historians have overlooked the fact that the hilly nature of Malwa tableland was an important factor which made Muzaffar Shāh restore Sultān Mahmūd Khaljī to his throne of Malwa. Thus the generosity of the Sultān was not the result of religious affinity alone but also due to other consideration.

Secondly, Malik Gopi was beheaded at the orders of the Sultān apparently on the excuse of religious differences. Here too, the wealth of Malik Gopi and his power were probably factor which led to his destruction. Nevertheless, in both these events, the religious factor has also to be taken into account.

These incidents necessarily lead us to doubt the generosity and kindness of Sultān Muzaffar Shāh. Was he generous or kind to all his subject or only to one section of the people, the Sunni Muslims ? The stories connected with his generosity and kindness reflect religious bias of his chroniclers, though it cannot be denied that within his limitations he attempted to be a beneficent ruler. His mild nature weakened the kingdom which his father (Sultān Mahmūd) had built. The "seeds of decline" were sown during his reign and after the assassination of Sikandar, the era of decline began in Gujarat.

The relations of these two Sultans with the Portuguese have been studied with care and a fresh source namely, "Dhamimāh-i-Mahmūd Shāhī" has been used for this purpose.

The sea-borne trade was one of the important sources of revenue for the Sultāns of Gujarat. During the last years of Sultān Mahmūd's reign, this trade was

threatened by the Portuguese, who were then rising as powerful force in the Arabian Sea. With the help of Malik Ayāz, Sultān Maḥmūd constructed a strong navy based at Div. This fleet was successful in keeping the Portuguese away from the sea-coast of Gujarat.

In 1508, the Egyptian fleet and the navy of Gujarat, together defeated the Portuguese fleet at Chaul. This was a signal victory and marked the climax of Sultān Maḥmūd's reign.

Inspite of the victory at Chaul, the Sultāns of Gujarat did not succeed in maintaining a navy which would continue to hold its own against the Portuguese. In this thesis it has been suggested that it was the personality of Malik Ayāz, which kept the Portuguese away from Gujarat coast. After him, the navy was not given the attention it needed. Sultān Maḥmūd though a powerful Sultān and his successors, thus failed to perceive that continued attention to the navy alone could defend Gujarat from the Portuguese.

During the reign of Sultān Muzaffar Shāh, the "diplomatic" relations between the two were established. Albuquerque, the Portuguese viceroy at Goa wanted to come to an understanding with Gujarat to fulfil his major aim,

viz. to establish Portuguese dominance over the Arabian sea. Hence envoys were exchanged between Gujarat and Goa. After the departure of Albuquerque (1515) from India, successive Portuguese Governors attempted to secure Div by assault but they failed so long as Muzaffar Shāh ruled. The successful resistance in Div was, however, not the result of the policy of the Sultān. It was strong resistance of Malik Ayāz, which foiled the Portuguese in their attempts.

Another chapter deals with the "Relations of the Sultāns with the Saiyyids of Batwa". The Bukhārī Saiyyids claimed to be the spritual mentors of the Sultāns. They also had a powerful hold on the Muslim mind. Thus they were also politically powerful and something of a balance between Ahmedabad and Batwa came into existence. Saiyyid Shāh 'Ālam, as a protector and guardian of Sultān Mahmūd was then most powerful personality.

The relations of Muzaffar Shāh with Shāh Shaikhjiū, Shāh 'Ālam's successor, were strained but the Sultān had to seek the support of the saint in the nomination of his successor. This shows the political influence of the Saiyyids of Batwa.

This thesis is mainly concerned with the political



and administrative aspects of the history of Sultanate of Gujarat, during this period (1458 to 1526). In preparing this thesis, I have consulted the contemporary Persian histories so far unused and also the other well known Persian and Arabic works. The Rajput and the Portuguese sources have also been utilised with care.

This thesis marks an advance on earlier studies on these aspects of the history of Gujarat in particular and the history of India in general. Careful attention has been given to the utilisation of fresh material and to the interpretation of the cumulative data thus secured. On the whole, therefore, it is believed that it is a worth while contribution to the existing state of knowledge on this subject.

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