

THE KHALJI DYNASTY
(1290-1320)
PART-3

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ALAUDDIN'S MILITARY REFORMS

The Sultan could not realize his imperialistic ambitions without a well equipped and efficient standing army. According to *Ferishta* he recruited 4,75,000 men for his cavalry. His military reforms included

- ❖ introduction of '*dagh*' (branding of horses) and '*Chahra*' (descriptive roll of soldiers)
- ❖ insistence on a regular muster of the army.
- ❖ Paid decent salaries to the soldiers and never gave them land assignments like Iltutmish and Balban. It was with the intention of maintaining a large army and to make the soldiers lead a relatively comfortable life

ALAUDDIN'S MILITARY REFORMS

- ❖ Alauddin introduced his famous market regulations to provide the army essential items on reasonable price
- ❖ Alauddin established a militaristic regime. He based his kingship on military power and force. He did not claim sovereignty on the basis of hereditary or election by the nobles or by the sanction of *Khalifa*. He knew full well that he had usurped the power and the same could be maintained by force.

AGRARIAN POLICY

In the medieval India land became an invaluable economic commodity and also the main source of income to the rulers.

- ❖ Alauddin was *the first Sultan of the Delhi Sultanate who introduced the survey and measurement of land as the basis for the assessment of the State demand*. The '*Biswa*' was declared as the standard unit of measurement.
- ❖ He reorganized the revenue department and created the office of '*Mustakraj*'.

AGRARIAN POLICY

- ❖ He created a new set of revenue officials. A large number of accountants, collectors, and agents were hired to administer the system. Their main duty was to collect the land revenue from the peasants directly. These officials were well-paid but were subject to severe punishment if found to be taking bribes.
- ❖ The Sultan increased the salaries of the revenue officials to check corruption among them.
- ❖ Alauddin, though collected half of the produce as State's share, took adequate measures to safeguard the interests of the peasants from the exploitation of the corrupt revenue officials.
- ❖ *Alauddin was the first Sultan of Delhi who maintained direct contacts with the peasants.*

MARKET REFORMS

Alauddin was the first Muslim emperor of India to make bold experiments in the administration. One of the experiments was the market reforms introduced with an express desire of controlling the prices. The introduction of paying salaries in the cash to the soldiers led to price regulations. *There is no unanimity of opinion amongst historians regarding the motive of the Sultan on his economic reforms.*

Alauddin, after his return from Chittor campaign in the year 1311, sought to control the prices of all the commodities from food grains, sugar and cooking oil to a needle and from costly imported cloth to horses, cattle, slave boys and girls, concubines, and various kinds of articles of general merchandise including such articles as bread and vegetables.

MARKET REFORMS

As a further step, the State itself setup warehouses for food grains which were released whenever there was a famine or a threat of a short fall in supply. Alauddin kept himself constantly informed of everything and very harsh punishments were given if any shop keeper charged a higher price or tried to cheat by using false weights and measures, control of the prices of horses was important for the Sultan because without the supply of good horses at reasonable prices to the army, the efficiency of the army could not be maintained.

MARKET REFORMS

Alauddin with the help of the sagacious advisers evolved a salary system in conformity with comfortable standard of living of the various grades and categories of soldiers. Alauddin then created a government market called *Sarai Adal*, near the Badaun gate. For the sake of catering the needs of the consumers, the sultan set up three markets. The first market was reserved for food grains. The second market was reserved for the horses, slaves, cattle concubines etc. The third market was meant for costly articles such as foreign cloth, aromatics, furniture and the other articles of luxury.

MARKET REFORMS

The *Sarai Adal* and the subsidiary markets were kept under the control of an officer known as *Shahna-i-Mandi*. He was given a contingent of cavalry, infantry and a suitable jagir for his maintenance. He was assisted by subordinate officers known as '*Shahanas*'. But '*Shahna-i-Mandi*' and '*Shahanas*' were under the control of '*Diwan-i-risalat*', the minister of commerce. The supply of grain was ensured by holding stocks in government store houses. Regulations were issued to fix price for all commodities. Every merchant was registered under the market department.

MARKET REFORMS

There were secret agents called '*Munhiyans*' who sent reports to the Sultan regarding the functioning of these markets. The sultan also sent slave boys to buy various commodities to check prices. Violation of regulations was severely punished. Even during the famine the same price was maintained. He was ultimately responsible for the successful implementation of the market measures. There may be defects and merits in the market measures of Alauddin. But the merits over weigh the defects.

ESTIMATE OF ALAUDDIN

Alauddin, was undoubtedly, the greatest Sultan of the Delhi Sultanate.

- ❖ He protected the Sultanate as well as the people against the fury of the Mongols.
- ❖ He secularized politics. Established law and order, peace and tranquility.
- ❖ His economic reforms envisaged by him were far ahead of times.
- ❖ Although the Sultan was illiterate he patronized poets like *Amir Khusrau and Amir Hasan*.
- ❖ He also built a famous gate-way, known as *Alai Darwaza*. It is one of the most treasured gems of Islamic architecture.

DECLINE OF KHALJI DYNASTY

When Alauddin fell ill in 1315 A.D. Kafur as regent, seized the reins of government. Before his death, Kafur had nominated Shihab-ud-din, Alauddin's six year old son, as ruler and imprisoned Mubark Khan, another son of Alauddin . Finally Kafur was killed by Alauddin's loyal bodyguards in order to save their late king's family from annihilation.

Mubarak Shah (1316-1320) and Khusharu Shah (1320) were the successors of Allauddin Khilji. Gazi Malik, the governor of Dipalpur, killed the Sultan Kushrau Shah and ascended the throne of Delhi under the title of Ghiyasuddin Thughlaq in 1320.