

The Tughlaq Dynasty (1320-1414) Part-3

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FIROZ TUGHLAQ(1351 – 1388)

Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq was succeeded by his cousin Firoz Tughlaq, since he had no heirs. He was considered to be the last great ruler of the Tughlaq dynasty. At his young age, *Firoz was appointed deputy to the lord Chamberlain with the title of Naib Barbak.* Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq treated him with affection and usually kept him in his royal company.

The *death of Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq at Thatta threw his leaderless army into great confusion and disorder.* For two days it was harassed and plundered by rebels of Sindh and the Mongol mercenaries. During this critical period, *the nobles urged Firoz to ascend the throne and save the dispirited army from destruction.* Firoz was not usurper, nor was his accession irregular he was duly elected by Nobles and Ulemas and declared competent to rule the realm.

FIROZ TUGHLAQ(1351 – 1388)

He appointed *Malik-i-Maqbul his prime minister* and gave him the *title of Khan-i-Jahan*. Malik Maqbul was a Brahmin of Warangal, who had been a convert to Islam. He was an able administrator and his appointment as prime minister proved to be a great asset to the administration.

Firoz had excellent record of benevolent measures to his credit. *The long reign of 37 years was a period of comparative prosperity and happiness of the people*. Till then no Muslim ruler was so much loved and venerated by the people as Firoz. His reign can be studied under two heads; (i) Conquests, (ii) Administration.

CONQUESTS

After his accession Firoz had to face the problem of preventing the disintegration of the Delhi Sultanate. He adopted a policy of trying to appease the nobles, the army and the theologians and of asserting his authority over only such areas which could be easily administered from the centre. He, therefore, made no attempt to re-assert his authority over south India and the Deccan.

He led two expeditions into Bengal in 1353-1354 and 1359-1360, but was unsuccessful in both.

However he won victories in the campaign against the ruler of Jajnagar (Orissa) on his return from Bengal. Firoz desecrated the famous Jagannath temple and gathered a rich plunder, but no attempt to annex Orissa.

CONQUESTS

Firoz Shah Tughlaq led an expedition against Nagarkot in 1360. After a prolonged siege of six months the fort surrendered and the Raja submitted to the Sultan. He was received honorably by the Sultan. The Sultan acquired a great booty which included 1,300 Sanskrit manuscripts, some of which were got translated by the Sultan into Persian.

His longest campaigns were to deal with rebellions in Gujarat and Sindh (1362-1363). Although the rebellions were crushed, the army suffered great hardship.

Thus the military campaigns of Firoz were to a large extent a failure and his costly wars did not benefit the empire in any way.

ADMINISTRATION

Firoz Tughlaq adopted a populist policy of reconciliation in administration. In spite of his military failures, the reign of Firoz was notable and remembered in the history as benevolent administrator. *He did his best and lot to restore the prosperity of the country and to promote to the welfare of the people.* He revert the policies of Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq, which were the reason for peaceful reign of 20 years. *He chose to abide by the Shariat and thus pacified the Ulema. He pleased the nobles and assured hereditary succession to their properties.*

FINANCIAL REFORMS

He restored the rent free lands to the theologians, the learned and the weaker sections. He waived off all the loans granted during the reign of Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq. He *abolished as many as twenty three taxes, including the unpopular grazing and the house taxes. According to the sanction of the Islamic law, only four taxes were retained. These were Kharaj, Zakat, Jizya and Khums.*

Firoz *introduced an irrigation tax at ten percent of the produce on the lands which were irrigated by the state constructed canals.* The revenue officials were strictly warned against demanding anything more than the prescribed dues and were punished for unjust exactions.

FINANCIAL REFORMS

Firoz *not only protected the interests of the peasants, but also tried his best to improve agriculture.* He excavated a large network of canals and tanks and encouraged to establish new agricultural settlements along the banks of the canals. He got two canals dug to bring water from Ganga and Yamuna to Hissar. The longest canal was 200 kilometers which took off from the river Sutlej to Hansi. He also built a number of dams for irrigation. He introduced superior crops and laid more than 1200 state managed fruit gardens.

Firoz took sufficient interest in *promoting internal trade.* In this connection the merchants were relieved from the payment of irregular and oppressive duties, which obstructed the free transportation of goods from one part of the country to another.

FINANCIAL REFORMS

Another important feature of his reign was that *the prices of the articles of common consumption also became low*. Firoz Shah established state owned factories for the manufacture of various necessities of life and luxury goods for the use by the nobility, royalty and the common people.

JUDICIAL AND WELFARE MEASURES

Firoz Shah tried to make judicial administration more humane than before. He *made criminal law very light*. He abolished death sentence. He banned inhuman punishment such as cutting of hands, feet, nose, etc. for theft and other offences. To provide free treatment to all, *he set up a hospital (dar-ul-shafa) in Delhi. He provided dowries for the daughters of poor. A new department called Diwan-i-Khairat was created to take care of orphans and widows.*

CONTRIBUTIONS TO LEARNING

Firoz Shah took very keen interest in the promotion of learning and education. He **extended patronage to scholars, poets, historians and learned men.** He patronized scholars like *Barani and Afif.* *He established many schools and colleges in important cities and towns. Elementary schools were attached to the mosques throughout his empire.* They were provided with adequate financial assistance. The Madrasas at Firozabad rose to be a magnificent university which surpassed all other Madrasas of the time in academic attainments. It is said that *Firoz Shah got some Sanskrit books translated into Persian.*

FOUNDER OF CITIES AND TOWNS

Firoz Shah had great passion for building new cities and renaming the old ones with new names. He himself says

“Among the many gifts which god had bestowed on me, his humble servant was a desire to erect public buildings. So I built mosques, colleges and monasteries”.

He founded a number of new cities and towns. Hissar, Jaunpur and Firozabad in Delhi were the famous among such cities. To beautify his new capital Firozabad, two Asokan Pillars were brought, one from Topara in Ambala and the other from Meerut. He got Qutb Minar repaired.

THE SLAVE SYSTEM

Another step which Firoz took was both economic and political in nature. He increased the number of slaves by capturing the defeated soldiers and young persons. It is said that there was 1,80,000 slaves in his empire and 40, 000 slaves were employed in his palace alone.

ESTIMATE OF FIROZ TUGHLAQ

Firoz Tughlaq was essentially a *man of peace*. He was a *poor military general* who had neither the courage nor the skill to undertake extensive military campaigns. He inherited a fast disintegrating empire but did not show eagerness to bring back all the lost territories into the fold of the Sultanate. Most of the military campaigns undertaken by him proved unsuccessful and exposed the poor organizational skill, lack of direction and incompetence of the Sultan as a general. Firoz thoroughly revised the fiscal policy of his predecessors with the twin objectives of ensuring adequate state revenues and reducing the burden on the tax payers. Firoz, on account of his unscientific fiscal measures, extravagant expenditure on the civil works, maintenance of a large number of Slaves etc., rendered the treasury bankrupt. The cumulative effect of these measures reduced the Delhi sultanate into a weak state.

ESTIMATE OF FIROZ TUGHLAQ

His last years were “full of tragedies, troubles and turmoil's” made worse by the Sultan’s physical and mental infirmity. Towards his end he reclined more towards Islam. During these years the royal powers remained concentrated in the hands of the ambitious and arrogant hereditary *prime minister Khan-i-Jahan*. The process of decay and disintegration of the Sultanate, which had begun during the reign of Muhammad–bin-Tughlaq gained momentum under Firoz and within two decades of his death the Sultanate of Delhi was reduced to a local principality.

When Firoz died in 1388 the struggle for power between the Sultan and nobles started once again. His successors had to face the rebellion of the slaves created by Firoz.

DECLINE OF TUGHLAQ DYNASTY

Firoz Tughlaq was *succeeded by his grandson Tughlaq Shah*, who assumed the *title of Ghiasuddin Tughlaq II*. Within a year of accession the ruler fell a victim to the intrigues and was beheaded on February 19, 1389. During the next five years – three Sultans – Abu Bakr, Muhammad Shah and Alauddin Sikander Shah ascended the throne. The *last Sultan was Nasiruddin Muhammad*. During his reign northern India fell a victim to the fury to Amir Timur and his marauding hordes in 1398-1399, Nic named Timur-i-lang.

TIMUR INVASION

Timur, who was a Turk, had started his career of conquests in 1370 and gradually brought under his rule the entire track from Syria to Trans-Oxiana and from southern Russia to Indus. He was the second most barbaric, blood thirsty and awe inspiring warrior after Chengiz Khan, who sat on the throne of Samarqand. The weakness of the Delhi Sultanate was made even worse by Timur invasion. Amir Timur thought of invading India in 1397 with the two fold object of waging a holy war against the 'infidels' and laying his hands upon the fabulous wealth of the country. The political anarchy that prevailed in India facilitated his task. Timur reached Delhi in December 1398 and ordered general massacre. When Timur entered Delhi there was no opposition and he sacked the city for 3 days, killing thousands of people and looting enormous wealth. It resulted in the drain of large amount of wealth, gold, silver, jewellery etc. from India.

TIMUR INVASION

Timur inflicted more misery in India than any other conqueror, in single invasion. Timur left India in early 1399. *The invasion of Timur may however, be regarded as marking the end of the face strong rule by the Delhi Sultans, although the Tughlaq dynasty itself lingered on till 1414.*

Thus in the midst of centrifugal forces the Tughlaq dynasty disappeared unceremoniously in the history of the Delhi Sultanate. *On its ruins Khizr Khan Sayyid, the viceroy of Punjab, founded the Sayyid dynasty in 1414.*

COINS OF TUGHLAQ DYNASTY



Ghiyasuddin Tughluq (1320-25), Billon 4-gani
Weight: 3.19 gm., Diameter: 15-17 mm., Die axis: 10 o'clock
Legend: al-sultan al-ghazi ghiyath al-dunya wa'l din /
Legend: abu'l muzaffar tughluq shah al-sultan, AH date 723
(= 1323 CE)



Ghiyasuddin Tughluq (1320-25), Billon 4-gani
Weight: 3.35 gm., Diameter: 15 mm., Die axis: 9 o'clock
Legend: al-sultan al-ghazi ghiyath al-dunya wa'l din /
Legend: abu'l muzaffar tughluq shah al-sultan, AH date 724
(= 1323-24 CE)



Ghiyasuddin Tughluq (1320-25), Billon 4-gani (posthumous)
Weight: 3.15 gm., Diameter: 15 mm., Die axis: 1 o'clock
Legend: al-sultan al-ghazi ghiyath al-dunya wa'l din /
Legend: abu'l muzaffar tughluq shah al-sultan, AH date 726
(= 1325-26 CE)

PLATE-1 (GHIYASUDDIN TUGHLAQ)

COINS OF
TUGHLAQ
DYNASTY



PLATE-2 (MUHAMMAD TUGHLAQ)

COINS OF
TUGHLAQ
DYNASTY



PLATE-3 (FIROZ TUGLAQ)

