



KHALJI IMPERIALISM (PART-4) खलजी साम्राज्यवाद (भाग-4)

(UG , SEM-4, PAPER MJC-7)

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Alauddin Khalji (1296-1316)

(अलाउद्दीन खलजी)

Conquest of South India

Alauddin's imperialistic instinct is manifested in the campaigns organized in the Deccan and further south. He was the first Sultan of Delhi to cross the Vindhya Mountains and to attempt to subjugate South India. Apart from his desire to establish the suzerainty of the Delhi Sultanate over the South Indian potentates, there were other causes for his Southern expeditions. Alauddin wanted to take possession of the fabulous wealth of South India. He had under his control a large army consisting of 4, 75,000 men. By this time he had established his rule over most of North India.

Alauddin Khalji (1296-1316)

(अलाउद्दीन खलजी)

There was none who had the courage to challenge him. Delhi was completely saved from Mongol menace. The power of the nobles was reduced. A strong government was established at Delhi. Moreover, the Deccan and the farther South India were ruled by four families-the Yadavas, the Kakatiyas, the Hoysalas and the Pandyas. There was no unity among them. They fought against each other for territorial gains among them. In the Pandya kingdom, civil war was raging. All these had created the proper atmosphere for pursuing his imperial policy in the Deccan.

Alauddin Khalji (1296-1316)

(अलाउद्दीन खलजी)

1. Conquest of Devagiri (1306) - The first of the South Indian states to be attacked was Devagiri. Before his accession, Alauddin conducted a raid into Devagiri and took rich booty from there. Now, he found a pretext for a second expedition against Devagiri. Its ruler, Ramachandradeva, had given shelter to Karnadeva and his daughter Devala Devi. Moreover, the ruler of Devagiri had not paid annual tribute for three years. Besides, these objectives, Alauddin had the motive of capturing Devala Devi, the daughter of Karnadeva who was at the Yadava capital. In 1306 Alauddin sent his trusted and able general

Alauddin Khalji (1296-1316)

(अलाउद्दीन खलजी)

Malik Kafur who proceeded against Devagiri and met with success. He captured Devala Devi and sent her to Delhi where she was married to Khizr Khan, the eldest son of the Sultan. Ramachandradeva was permitted to rule his kingdom as the Sultan's vassal. He had to pay tribute to the Sultan.

2. Conquest of Warangal (1309) - Then came the turn of Warangal which was ruled by Prataparudradeva of the Kakatiya family. The object of the Sultan in undertaking expedition was to secure the treasure of the Kakatiya Kingdom. In 1309, Malik Kafur marched against Prataparudradeva and laid siege to the strong

Alauddin Khalji (1296-1316)

(अलाउद्दीन खलजी)

fortress of Warangal. He forced Prataparudradeva to submit. He returned to Delhi in 1310 with vast booty including elephants, horses and jewels. One thousand camels were used to take the treasure to Delhi. Prataparudradeva consented to pay annual tribute.

3. Conquest of Hoysala kingdom (1310) - As Alauddin was bent upon bringing the whole of South India under his suzerainty, he sent Malik Kafur in 1310 against the Hoysala ruler, Vira Ballala III. The Hoysala king was surprised by the sudden incursion of the Muslim army and

Alauddin Khalji (1296-1316)

(अलाउद्दीन खलजी)

could not defend his capital, Dwarasamudra (modern Halebid). Malik Kafur plundered the city and the temples. Vira Ballala III paid an enormous indemnity and became a subordinate ruler.

The subjugation of the Hoysala Kingdom was followed by the sack of the Pandyan capital, Madurai. Disputed succession between Sundara Pandya and his brother Vira Pandya gave him an opportunity. Exiled from Madurai, Sundara Pandya appealed to Malik Kafur for help. The latter agreed and reached Madurai in 1311.

Alauddin Khalji (1296-1316)

(अलाउद्दीन खलजी)

The Pandyan King fled, Madurai was plundered. Later Malik Kafur advanced Southwards as far as Rameswaram. He returned to Delhi in 1311. Laden with immense booty consisting of 612 elephants, 20,000 horses, and 96,000 maunds of gold and large jewelry.

4. The second attack on Devagiri (1312) - In about 1312, Alauddin sent one more expedition to Devagiri. Ramachandradeva died and was succeeded by his son who refused to pay tribute.

Alauddin Khalji (1296-1316)

(अलाउद्दीन खलजी)

It served as a pretext for sending an expedition against Devagiri. In the battle that followed Shankaradeva lost his life.

By 1312, Alauddin had become the master of the whole of the Deccan and South India and received recognition of his authority by the rulers.

Though his Deccan campaigns were no more than mere raids, they paved the way for the establishment of the imperialism of Delhi over the Deccan and farther South.

Alauddin Khalji (1296-1316)

(अलाउद्दीन खलजी)

Administrative Regulations

1. **Theory of Kingship** - Alauddin was not a mere soldier. He was a great statesman too. His theory of kingship bears testimony to the administrative genius. Let us now examine the salient features of his theory of Kingship.

One of the duties of the Muslim rulers was to spread Islam. They conquered lands for this purpose. The Delhi Sultanate was also founded for this reason. But for various reasons not all the people under the Sultanate could be converted to Islam. The majority of the people were non-Muslims.

Alauddin Khalji (1296-1316)

(अलाउद्दीन खलजी)

The Sultans therefore could not do anything that would go against the interests of the majority. For this reason some of the Sultans did not allow religion to dominate politics. Among them was Alauddin Khalji.

Alauddin's theory of kingship is reflected in his conversation with Maulana Mughis-ud-din, the *Qazi* of Bayana. In this conversation four questions were raised. The first one concerned the Hindus. Alauddin imposed on the Hindus heavy taxes which reduced them to such a miserable state that they could not indulge in the ordinary luxuries like betel-chewing.

Alauddin Khalji (1296-1316)

(अलाउद्दीन खलजी)

Many women of Hindu chiefs had to hire out their services in Muslim houses. Alauddin wanted to know whether his action in letting off the Hindus by taxing them heavily without killing them for not embracing Islam was in conformity with the injunctions of the *Quran* and the *Hadis*. As Mughis-ud-din belonged to one school of Muslim theologians who favoured the idea of allowing Hindus to practice their religion on payment of *Jizya*, he replied that the Sultan's action was in conformity with the Quran. The second question concerned the punishments the Sultan had given to the Muslim

Alauddin Khalji (1296-1316)

(अलाउद्दीन खलजी)

officials who defrauded the state by their corrupt practices. The Qazi told the Sultan that the officials were partners of the state. The state treasury belonged to them as much as it belonged to the Sultan. Any misappropriation of state funds could not be regarded as theft. The Sultan was acting against the Islamic law by inflicting cruel punishments for misappropriation of state funds.

The third question was about the wealth he bought from Devagiri before he became the Sultan. Alauddin wanted to know whether he was justified in keeping the entire wealth for himself.

Alauddin Khalji (1296-1316)

(अलाउद्दीन खलजी)

The Qazi told him that this wealth was obtained not by his ability alone. The strength of the Islamic army was largely responsible for his success. Therefore, he must hand over the whole treasure to the state as per Islamic law.

The last question was with reference to his action in treating state treasury for his personal use and for the use of his family. The *Qazi* said that the Sultan following the example of the pious Calipha (*Khalifas*) could take for himself the salary he gave to a soldier or as a *via media* he could take the salary of the highest officer in the country or something more.

Alauddin Khalji (1296-1316)

(अलाउद्दीन खलजी)

If he took anything more he would have to answer for it on the Day of Judgment. After listening to the replies of *Qazi Mughis-ud-din*, Alauddin said that he was an illiterate man; he did not know what was contained in the Quran, but he was a Muslim and so were his ancestors. He proceeded to tell them that during rebellions thousands of people die. So he was bound to take steps to prevent them. People were inclined to do wrong things without any kind of fear. They committed adultery. They stole property belonging to others.

Alauddin Khalji (1296-1316) (अलाउद्दीन खलजी)

They took salaries from the state, but did not maintain the horses and equipment for which they were paid. They drank too much. The only way to stamp these evils known to him was to give severe punishments. He continued to say that all these were done in public interest. He was not bothered whether they were in agreement with the Quran or not. He did not bother about the punishment that would be given to him on the Day of Judgment. Further he said that so far as government policy was concerned his will should prevail whether it was in conformity with Quran or not.

Alauddin Khalji (1296-1316)

(अलाउद्दीन खलजी)

It was his responsibility to determine the state policy. Others had no right to interfere with his policy. People's welfare rather than Islamic law should guide the Sultan's action. Through this theory of kingship, Alauddin dismissed the right of the *Ulemas* to determine the policy of the state. Thus he established the supremacy of the Sultan in matters relating to administration.

This does not mean that he established a secular state. Throughout his life he remained faithful to Islam. He treated the Hindus much more severely than the Muslims.

Alauddin Khalji (1296-1316)

(अलाउद्दीन खलजी)

He never hesitated to take the *Ulemas* into his confidence in dealing with the Hindus. What he was interested in was not the well-being of the Hindus who formed the majority but his personal interests.

Dr.K.S Lal writes, “In a word, like Louis XIV of France, Alauddin regarded himself to be all in all in the state.” During the reign of Alauddin the centralization of administration was complete and despotism touched its peak.

(To be continued)