



KHALJI IMPERIALISM (PART-5) खलजी साम्राज्यवाद (भाग-5)

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

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Alauddin Khalji (1296-1316)

(अलाउद्दीन खलजी)

2. Regulations against the Nobles - Alauddin's theory of kingship had protected his autocracy against the *ulemas*. But there was another quarter from where his autocracy was challenged and that was the nobility. The nobility challenged his power most often than not by organizing rebellions. After making a study of the causes of these rebellions, Alauddin took as many as four important measures to keep the nobles under check. In the first place, he ordered the resumption of lands given to nobles, officials and others as state grants, state rewards or gifts.

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Alauddin decided to pay his officials cash salaries in lieu of state grants or jagirs. This step was taken to see that the people did not come to possess more than what they required for their subsistence. Alauddin thought that the general prosperity of the people made them think of rebellions. As a result of this measure, except in the case of a few people, no one could find any gold in the houses of his subjects.

Alauddin then came with an order prohibiting the manufacture, sale and use of liquor. He himself set an example by giving up drink by

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smashing the wine cups and by emptying the wine barrels in the streets of Delhi. The use of wine in feasts and social get-togethers was declared a penal offense. Exemplary punishments were inflicted on those who disobeyed the law. Alauddin prevented the nobles from developing intimacy with each other. Gambling was also forbidden. No one was allowed to go to the house of another noble without his permission. Marriages between noble families could be arranged only with the approval of the Sultan. Alauddin thought that

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one of the causes of the rebellions was his disregard of the affairs of the state. That was because he had no adequate information about them. To overcome this sorry state of affair he created a net-work of spies. Three agencies functioned in the country to pass on to the Sultan the happenings in the different parts of the empire.

3. Revenue Regulations - At the time of his accession, the Sultanate was divided into two parts for the purpose of the collection of land revenue. In one part, the work of revenue collection was given to the *ranas*, *rawats* and the *rais*.

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These chiefs collected land revenue from the people under their control. As they were to send military assistance to the Sultan, they collected a large amount from the peasants. The other part was known as the khalsa.

The task of collecting land revenue in these areas was given to village chiefs called as *muqaddam*, *khot*, or *chaudhri*. They paid the state a stipulated amount and the state did not interfere in their affairs so long as this amount was paid. The government was not interested in the welfare of the peasants.

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Alauddin's revenue reforms related to the second category of lands. The reason behind his reforms was the luxurious life led by the village chiefs who became prosperous on account of the shifting of their tax-burden on the peasants. Their prosperity made them arrogant. They did not respect the revenue officials. Even when they were summoned they did not go to the revenue offices.

To rectify this state of affairs, Alauddin introduced two measures. Every one possessing land was required to pay taxes. Before assessing the tax liability, Alauddin ordered the

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measurement of all lands. Half of the produce was fixed as the land revenue to be paid by all from the village chief down to the *balahar*. Alauddin preferred the payment of tax in kind though the tax-payers were free to pay either in cash or in kind. He abolished *khoti* which the peasants had been paying to the village chiefs all these years. As a result of these measures, the corrupt practices which crept into the collection of *kharaj* were brought to an end. The evil practice of shifting the tax-burden by the well-to-do section to the poorer section of the society was ended.

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The *khots* could no longer lead an extravagant life. Even the ordinary peasants, suffered. As 50 per cent of the produce was collected as tax, they could not lead a comfortable life.

The second regulation dealt with the grazing land. Grazing land was delimited. The grazing tax was fixed according to the number of animals giving milk in the possession of a villager. No one was exempted from the payment of this tax.

As a result of these two measures, the state established direct contact with the peasants.

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This had resulted in great deal of corruption. But Alauddin dealt with such officials very severely.

The government took every possible step to collect the land revenue fully. Those who did not pay were bound with chains and kept in that state for many years. Many were put into prison. Many were beaten. In view of all these many were reluctant to join the revenue department. People were not prepared to give their daughters in marriage to men working in the revenue department. But one great result was that corruption disappeared almost fully.

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4. Military Regulations- Alauddin realized that army was one of the two pillars of the state, the other being the administrative set-up. So he personally recruited the soldiers to his army. He ordered the payment of salary to his soldiers from the state treasury. Each soldier was to get 234 tankas which he must use for maintaining one horse. Seventy-four tankas were given additionally, if the soldier maintained one more horse. Alauddin knew that what he gave by way of salary was not enough to lead a comfortable life. So he introduced the price-control system to enable

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the soldiers to lead a comfortable life with a moderate salary. In order to prevent any corruption, he insisted on every soldier registering his name with the war Department. All details about the soldier (*Chehra*) and his horse were recorded at that time in the register maintained for that purpose: Alauddin introduced the system of branding (*dagh*) horses. All these measures enabled him to prevent the maintenance of horses of inferior quality and using the same horse by many soldiers at the time of periodical review.

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Alauddin was the first Sultan of Delhi to maintain a standing army consisting of 4,75,000 horsemen. The army was divided on the Turkish method. Ten horsemen formed a unit under *sarkhail*. Over ten *sarkhails* there was one *sipahsalar*. Over ten *sipahsalar*s, there was one *amir*. Over ten *amirs* there was one *malik* and over ten *maliks* there was one *khan*.

Alauddin realised the importance of forts in the defence of the country. So he ordered the repair of old ones and construction of new ones. Each fort was placed under an able *kotwal* and was provided with adequate food and weapons of war.

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Impact of Alauddin's Administrative Regulations

As a result of Alauddin's administrative regulations, the prestige of the Sultan increased. A centralized autocracy was established. The influence of the *ulemas* on state administration was practically removed. A powerful standing army was created to lend support to the Khalji militarism.

This army had enabled the Sultan not only to ward-off the Mongol danger but also to conquer and plunder many parts of India. The size of the Sultanate was enlarged. Its treasury was replenished.

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The revenue reforms had helped the state to tide over the financial difficulties with great ease. The people, the Muslims and the Hindus alike suffered. The high taxation reduced the peasants to utter poverty. The village chiefs could not afford the ordinary luxuries like wearing costly dress, riding on horse-back, betel-chewing, etc. The Muslim nobility suffered much. They could not hold social gatherings or enter into matrimonial alliances without the permission of the king. But certain evils like drinking were kept under check. People were now more disciplined. Crimes decreased. There was not much corruption.

(To be continued)