



# KHALJI IMPERIALISM (PART-6) खलजी साम्राज्यवाद (भाग-6)

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

Dr. MD. NEYAZ HUSSAIN  
PROFESSOR & HOD  
PG DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY  
MAHARAJA COLLEGE, VKSU, ARA  
(BIHAR)

# Alauddin Khalji (1296-1316)

## (अलाउद्दीन खलजी)

### Economic Regulations

We have seen earlier the regulations relating to land revenue. But the most important of his economic regulations was the **price-control system**. According to some, the price-control system was brought into being to promote the well-being of the people and thereby win the support of the people for his rule. This view is not acceptable. Having known that the basic cause of frequent outbreak of rebellions was the general prosperity of the people, Alauddin took every possible step to reduce the people to poverty.

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That being the case it is highly doubtful whether he had brought into existence the price-control system for enabling the people to lead a comfortable life. Further the Khalji rule was a militarism. For such a government what was required was the support of an army, not public support. So there was no need for cajoling the people through his market regulations.

Others think that the price-control system was purely a military measure. Alauddin was forced to maintain a big army to deal with the recurring Mongol raids.

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The revenue which was collected was found to be insufficient for maintaining a huge army. Alauddin has to devise a system by which he could raise the size of the army without increasing the financial allotment made for maintaining the army. For that purpose, he decided to fix the salary of a soldier at 234 tankas. As he found that, that salary would not be enough to enable the soldier to maintain his horse, buy equipment and at the same time to lead a comfortable life, he decided to control the prices of articles required by the soldiers.

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The prices of articles were fixed in the presence of the Sultan on the basis of the cost of production (*bar award*). After fixing the prices, Alauddin organized the grain market (*Shahna-imandi*) for selling the articles at the prices fixed. The grain market functioned under the supervision of the superintendent of the grain market. The state collected its revenue in kind from the grown lands and raised the stock of grain. No one was allowed to purchase grain from the cultivators, except those merchants who were authorized to do so. All merchants in Delhi were required to register themselves in

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the office of the superintendent of the grain market. The state advanced money to those merchants who did not possess enough capital of their own. These merchants were to bring the food grains to Delhi at the appropriate time and sell them to the people at rates fixed.

A special officer was appointed to determine the quality of grains sold in the markets. Steps were taken to ensure that no attempt was made by the merchants to sell an under-weighted commodity. All kinds of speculation and black marketing were severely punished.

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Hoarding of grain and other commodities was viewed with seriousness. In times of famine people purchasing more quantity of grain than what they required were punished. A system of rationing was adopted for proper distribution of the available grain.

Alauddin passed regulations controlling the cloth market (*Sera-i-Adl*). Besides cloth, a number of manufactured articles were also sold in this market. The prices of cloth and other articles were fixed on the basis of the cost of production. Alauddin advanced money to the merchants to bring the goods to the *Sera-i-Adl* from different parts.

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To prevent people from buying articles at lower price in the *Sera-i-Adl* and selling them at a higher price outside Delhi, Alauddin ordered the consumers to indicate the kind of articles they required together with the quantity as well as their income. After examining all these the official would determine the amount of articles one was entitled to buy. Costly items were sold only to those who obtained special permits.

A horse market was also set up. Alauddin sought to eliminate the horse-merchants. The horse brokers were screened and honest brokers

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alone were retained under stern state supervision. These regulations were applied to the slave-market and cattle-market also.

Alauddin sent his price schedules to the *Diwan-i-Riyasat* which in turn sent them to the market superintendents. It was the duty of the market superintendents to find out whether the articles were sold at the prices mentioned in the schedule. The market superintendents were vested enormous powers. They could even flog the merchants for the violation of the regulations. Alauddin used to send his slaves to go to the market and buy certain articles to find out whether they were properly weighed.

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If a merchant was found guilty of weigh less, the same amount of flesh was cut-off from his body.

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### Impact of Alauddin's Economic Regulations

The price-control system of Alauddin Khalji affected trade. The merchants were unable to realize sufficient profits. The severe punishments given to erring merchants made many to stop their business. Agriculture suffered. The peasants were unable to take home the surplus produce even after paying 50 per cent of their produce as land revenue. They were compelled to sell their grain at a low price to the merchants who were permitted to purchase grain. So many had lost interest in agriculture.

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The fact that articles were sold at cheap rates in Delhi made many to migrate to Delhi. Among them were learned men and excellent craftsmen. As a result the fame of Delhi increased. The people of Delhi were happy. They were prepared to follow the rules prescribed by the state. They became more disciplined. Hence crimes decreased. This had benefited the state much. Alauddin's military strength had increased on account of the price-control system. The increased strength of the army enabled the Sultan to free the Sultanate from the Mongol menace, to keep under control

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the Hindu chiefs and to lead successful expeditions into South India. The South Indian expeditions enabled the Sultan to replenish the treasury. The autocracy of Alauddin also went unchallenged because it gave the people, at least the citizens of Delhi, a comfortable living.

One question remains to be answered whether the price-control system was enforced throughout the state or in Delhi only? According to some scholars it was in operation only in Delhi. Others think that it was in operation throughout the empire of the Delhi Sultan.

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With the limited resources no Sultan, however able he might be, could have enforced the regulations throughout the country. So it is reasonable to assume that the price-control system operated only in Delhi. Even so, Alauddin deserves credit for successfully enforcing his price-control system.

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### Significance and Implications of Khalji Imperialism

The imperial policy of Alauddin helped him to bring the whole of Rajasthan under his control. But this had caused him enormous difficulties. Alauddin was able to capture the Rajput posts only after a terrible battle each time. He was therefore much irritated and he showed his anger by killing thousands of innocent people. The *Jauhar* performed by the Rajput women took a heavy toll of lives.

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So far as Alauddin was concerned he could not rule his newly won dominions with peace of mind. The Rajputs were making efforts to regain the lands they had lost. Khizr Khan, who was appointed governor of Chitor returned to Delhi unable to withstand the difficulties posed by the Rajputs. Jalor soon became free.