

TURKISH RULE IN INDIA :SHAMSHUDDIN ILTUTMISH (PART-2)

भारत में तुर्की शासन

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Dr. MD. NEYAZ HUSSAIN
PROFESSOR & HOD
PG DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
M.B.R.R.V.PRASAD SINGH COLLEGE, VKSU,
ARA (BIHAR)

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(iii) Defeat of Nasiruddin Qubacha (1217) - After the defeat of Yaldoz at the hands of Iltutmish, Nasiruddin Qubacha once again occupied Lahore. When he was challenged by Iltutmish at the head of a large army, he, however, retreated towards Multan. Iltutmish chased him and defeated him at Mansura, on the banks of the river Chenab. However, Iltutmish refrained from marching upon Sind due to his anxiety to defend the North-West frontier in the face of the rapidly deteriorating political situation in Central Asia.

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Therefore, Qubacha continued to rule over Sind almost as an independent ruler till his death in 1227 .

(iv) Mongols on the North-West Frontier (1220-24)

- The Mongol threat was also averted by Iltutmish's tact and diplomacy. The Mongols came in hot pursuit of Jalaluddin Mankbarani, the Crown Prince of Khwarazm, who sought refuge in India.

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This placed Iltutmish on the horns of a dilemma. To help Jalaluddin Mankbarani meant to incur the wrath of Chengiz Khan. And this would have been suicidal for the infant Turkish Empire. To refuse aid bluntly to a fugitive, who had become a hero in the Islamic world, would have alienated the Muslim sentiments. But Iltutmish keeping in view alone the interest of the Turkish Empire followed dilatory tactics which discouraged Jalaluddin Mankbarani who left India in 1224. Close on his heels departed the Mongols who had no immediate design for the conquest of India.

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It is also to be noted that Chengiz Khan died in 1227. Thus, Iltutmish saved his kingdom from the Mongol invasion and also from the ill effects of the politics of Central Asia.

(v) Re-conquest of Multan and Sind (1227-28) – After the aversion of the threat of Mongols, Iltutmish launched an offensive against Nasiruddin Qubacha from two sides-Lahore and Delhi. Multan and Uchh were captured and Qubacha was besieged in the fort of Bhakkar on the bank of the Indus.

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Surrounded from all sides by the enemy and totally exhausted, Qubacha made his last bid to escape by plunging into the Indus river, and was drowned. The Sumra ruler of Debal principality hastened to acknowledge the suzerainty of Iltutmish soon after. Both Multan and Uchh were occupied by Iltutmish.

(vi) Conquest of Bihar and Bengal – After the death of Qutubuddin Aibak, Ali Mardan had declared himself independent and, therefore, the province of Bengal was lost by the Delhi Sultanate. therefore, Iltutmish turned his attention towards Bengal, which had been a constant source of trouble to Delhi.

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Ali Mardan having been murdered in 1211 was succeeded by Husamuddin Iwaz Khalji, who assumed full sovereign powers. He assumed the title of Ghiyasuddin and proved to be a very successful ruler. It took three campaigns before Bengal could be subjugated and the authority of the central government re-established in this rebellious province. In 1225, the Sultan, led a successful expedition and Bihar was subsequently annexed. Iltutmish forced Iwaz to pay an indemnity and accept the overlordship of Delhi. When Iwaz tried to assert his independence once again Nasiruddin Mahmud, the eldest son of Iltutmish, was assigned the task to suppress the rebellious chief.

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Nasiruddin Mahmud defeated and killed Iwaz. He conquered Lakhnauti in 1226. The last campaign was necessitated by a fresh outbreak following the sudden death of Nasiruddin Mahmud. Iltutmish led an army in person. He decisively defeated the rebels. Thus, Iltutmish once again brought the eastern region consisting of the provinces of Bihar and Bengal under the control of Delhi. With the purpose of bringing the region under his effective control, he appointed two separate governors, one for Bengal and the other for Bihar.

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(vii) War against the Rajputs - The Rajputs presented another problem with which Iltutmish had to grapple. They were making a fresh bid to throw off the yoke of Turkish rule. The security of the Turkish political ascendancy in India demanded the subjugation of the insurgent Rajputs and the recovery of the territories lost to them. Iltutmish achieved this methodically. Ranthambhor was captured from Chauhans in 1226. The victory over Ranthambhor was followed by Nagor next year i.e., 1227 .

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Gwalior was also brought under the possession of the Delhi Sultanate in 1231 . The campaigns in Rajputana were rounded off by the sack of Bhilsa and Ujjain (1234-35). The Gangetic valley was also pacified, and the Turkish rule was re-established by force in Awadh and the Doab. Iltutmish attempted to bring the khokars under his subjugation in 1235. Exhausted by continuous warfare, Iltutmish fell sick, returned to Delhi and breathed his last in April 1236 . He was buried in Delhi.

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(vii) Administration of Iltutmish - Though the Turkish rule was established in North India after the second battle of Tarain (1192), no concrete steps were taken to gear up the existing administrative machinery. Muhammad Ghori had no time to spare for this task, and whatever he initiated was not sufficient enough to provide stability to his newly founded empire. Personally he was available in India only for launching military campaigns. The burden of running the administration was left to the slave-officers. After his death when Qutubuddin Aibak came at the helm of the affairs but there was no appreciable change in the situation.

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It was the arrival of Iltutmish that for the first time the Turkish state thought of understanding the administrative problems with some seriousness. Though, in the beginning, Iltutmish took some time to settle himself, but once he strengthened his position he was not prepared to lower the authority of his office. He believed in upholding the status and dignity of the Sultan. He was not prepared to compromise sovereignty. Therefore, first of all he cleared from his path all those opponents who renounced his sovereignty and tried to get rid of him.

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Once he got of his arch rivals he turned to more concrete measures. As a Sultan he knew that single-handedly he could not perform his task. Therefore, he built around him a group of loyal and trustworthy slaves called *Turkan-i-Chihalgani* (Forty Turkish Slave Officers). They were not only used in conquering the new territories but were assigned the administrative tasks also. It was some sort of a mini but powerful machinery at the personal command of the Sultan. We know that with the establishment of the Turkish rule the empire was divided into many iqtas or the administrative-cum-revenue units.

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These were not of a uniform size. Some Iqtas were quite extensive while the others were small. Those who were assigned the iqtas were known as the muqtai. The muqtai were entrusted with the task of keeping law and order and to collect taxes. Though not much is known about the actual working of *Iqtadari System* during the reign of Iltutmish, but whatever evidence is available indicates that the system continued to operate more or less smoothly. The medieval historians have shown great appreciation for Iltutmish's care for rendering justice. Long after his death the people remembered his justice.

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Ibn Battuta, who visited India in the reign of Muhammad bin Tughlaq, records that Iltutmish fixed two statues of lions on the gate of imperial palace. Hanging chains were attached with them and on the other end of the chains a bell was fixed. As soon as an aggrieved person reached the spot he pulled the chain which made the bell ringing. This act was sufficient to draw the attention of the relevant authorities to the person concerned. However, this practice of pulling the chain was usually confined to night alone. But during the day time aggrieved person used the coloured garment for catching the attention of the concerned authorities.

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Besides, Iltutmish saw to it that *amiri-i-dads* were appointed in almost all the important towns of his empire to dispense justice. At the central level there was the *Chief Qazi* who passed judgment on the appeals coming from the lower courts. However, in all important matters relating to justice Iltutmish could directly intervene and pronounce his judgment. Iltutmish made a place for himself in monetary system also. It was during his reign that introduction of the *tanka* (silver coin) and the *jital* (copper coin) took place.

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Commenting on Iltutmish's performance in this field Nelson Wright remarks:

"The reign of Iltutmish stands out as a landmark in the coinage of Delhi..... Iltutmish was a great moneyer. That he established the silver tanka and the billion jital on a firm footing was in itself a remarkable achievement."

(To be continued)