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Mohammad Bin Tuglaq (1325-1351)

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Abstract:

Mohammad bin Tughlaq was the son and successor of Ghiyas ud din Tughlaq and second ruler of Tughlaq dynasty. Tdynasty. Tarikh e firuzshahi of barni and kitab I rehla of ibnbatuta gave information about his reign.he was the most educated one among all sultans of Delhi.he had deep knowledge of Arabic, Persian, mathematics, astrology, medicine etc.he considered himself as equivalent to Caliph and entitled as Amir ul Mominon.he did away with supremacy of ulemas and appointed officers on the basis of merit.even Hindus were appointed on high position during his reign.mohammad bin Tughlaq empire extended to a large area.his empire was divided into 23 provinces

Mohammad bin Tughlaq

1. Sultan Mohammad Bin Tuglaq was one of the foremost rural in history of Delhi Sultanate His rule of about 26 years enjoys a place of great significance in Turki Afghan rule in India because with his rise to throne of Delhi, sultanate assumed a new character. He imparted a new orientation to the state system through his ideas, innovations and reforms.
2. Monarchical despotism reached its climax during the reign of sultan Muhammad Bin Tuglaq. He did not allow anybody to challenge his authority. The Nobility, ulemas and women people all lived in fear during his reign.

- (a) Sultan Mohammad bin Tughlaq did whatever he thought. Nobody could dare to advise him otherwise.
3. For the 1st time in the history of Delhi, the state assumed a secular outlook. He did not disseminate among the people on the basis of their religion.
- (a) He used to celebrate the festival of Holi in his court. He was close to scholars of different religions. Jain scholar Jina Prabhusuri was his close friend.
4. Meritocracy was established by Mohammad. Bin Tuglaq State offices were given by him on the basis of merit. The meritocracy candidates were respected.
5. Sultan Mohammad . Bin Tuglaq created a heterogenous nobility by appointing non- Turk Foreigners, Indian muslims as well as Hindus in nobility.
6. Imperialism was carried to new heights by sultan because he followed policy of direct rule over peninsular India.
- (a) The Deccani state such as Yadava Kingdom of Devgiri, Kakiyas of Warangal, Hoysalas of Dwarsamudra and Pandayas of Modurai were annexed by him.
- (b) He ruled over most extensive empire in history of Delhi Sultanate
7. Sultan Mohammad Bin Tuglaq was not satisfied with status quo. He initiated a no. of reforms. some of projects undertaken by him were innovative in nature.
- (a) His major projects such as transfer of capital and introduction of taken currency also imported a new orientation to Delhi Sultanate

Transfer of Capital

1. In 1327-28, sultan transferred his capital from Delhi to Daulatabad.
- (a) In 1327 members of Royal family were sent and in 1328 others were moved to Daulatabad.

Why was Capital Transferred?

1. Acc. to Ibn Batuta the Moroccan traveler, who visited India during 1337-45. Sultan wanted to punish people of Delhi because they used to write him abusive letters.

2. This view is not accepted by modern historians because it was practically impossible to throw letters from outside to sultan palace without getting caught.
3. It is accepted that capital was transferred because
 - (a) He wanted capital in the middle of empire so that all the territories could be controlled effectively.
 - (b) Capital was required close to south, because southern states were annexed to sultanate by Mohammad Bin Tuglaq.
 - (c) Capital at Daulatabad was to remain safe from any Mongol threat.

Extent of Capital Transfer

1. Acc. to Ibn Batuta and Barni all residents of Delhi were ordered to move to Daulatabad. Nobody was left in Delhi.
2. Recent researches have brought to light that Delhi was not abandoned completely.
 - (a) An inscription found in Naraina village near Delhi dated 1328 informs that Delhi was quite prosperous.
 - (b) Recently one gold coin issued from Delhi in 1329 has been discovered. This coins indicate that administrative machinery was there in Delhi.
3. Modern historians believe that only state officials, ulemas sufi saints and their families were transferred to Daultabad leaving behind ordinary people in Delhi.

Why was Capital Brought Back

1. Capital was retransferred to Delhi in 1335-36.
2. Acc to Barani, sultan realised his mistake after reaching Daultabad and ordered people to return to Delhi but this view does not represent truth.
3. Capital was brought back to Delhi because of Changed geo political scenario in peninsular India.
 - (a) A severe epidemic of plague broke out in south which killed a large no. of royal soldiers.
 - (b) Taking advantage of this crisis, the governor of Madurai declared independence in 1335 and in 1336 Vijayanagar Kingdom was established by Hari Hara and Bukka.

- (c) The Sultan was not in a position to reconquer these rebellions' territories immediately and therefore transferred back to Delhi.

Impact of Capital Transfer

1. Acc to Barni and Ibn Batula, capital transfer during city of Delhi completely and it took many years for its prosperity to return.
2. Acc to Baroni, sultan made elaborate arrangements when people were moved to Daultabad as well as while coming back but large number. of people died in both occasions.
3. The capital transfer experiment affected the prosperity of Delhi but the impact would have not been as serious as IBN BATUTA AND BARANI portrayed because Delhi was not abandoned completely.

Token Currency

1. Token currency refers to face value greater than its intrinsic value. Such currency made if poor quality Bronze was issued by sultan in 1329. This taken coin had value equal to gold and silver coin.

Why Did Project Failed?

1. This project was good. It was not an idea ahead of time because taken currency was already in circulation in China and Persia.
2. This experiment failed because design of taken wins was simple and could be easily duplicated.
 - (a) State failed to maintain its monopoly over the meaning of taken coins
3. Very soon the market got flooded with forged coins. Merchants and traders stopped accepting taken coins.
 - (a) Under these circumstances the sultan ordered withdrawal of taken currency from the market.

Impact

1. The failure of the currency experiment affected the state both economically and politically.
2. State lost revenue because peasants used forgotten coins to pay the service.
3. The rebellious elements used forged coins to buy weapons and horses as a results of which revolts and rebellions became frequent.
4. Taking currency adversity affected Trade as well as overall health of economy because merchants and traders had stopped accepting the taken coins.

Khurasan Expedition (1322-23)

1. Khurasan was located in central Asia. It was passing through a phase of serious political crisis. Many Khurasani nobles took shelter in the court of sultan Mohammad Bin Tuglaq. Through them he came to know situation prevailing in Khurasan and planned to conquer it in 1322-33.
2. A large army of 3,70,000 was raised and soldiers were paid for one year in advance. He after 6 months the expedition was cancelled. Sultan did not make any effort to take back advance salary from Sultan.
3. Acc to Barani campaign was canceled when sultan back to senses because campaign was planned by flattering of sultan by khurasani nobles.
4. Khurasani campaign was abandoned by sultan not because he resumed his mistake but because of changed geo-political circumstances.
 - (a) In 1333, a powerful ruler Abu said captured Khurasan and once he was setting on throne it was not advisable to go on with planed campaign.
5. Barni outicized Sultan for not taking back advance salary given to soldiers but this decision of sultan to leave salary with disbanded soldiers was a reflection of his liberal outlook.
6. Acc to Barani when the army raised for Khurasani expedition was disbanded the soldiers lost their employment and they took to anti-social activities. But this view is also difficult to accept because these soldiers were unemployed till 6 months back. There was no reason for them to become robbeas.

Qarachil Expedition (1333-34)

1. Qarachil was a small Hindu kingdom located on Indo China Border in modern Himachal pradesh
2. A strong army of 10000 cavalry men was sent to conquer Qarachil. The campaign was a success because king of Qarachil accepted overlordship suzerainty of Delhi.
3. When the victorious army was returning rainy season commented.
 - (a) The problems like land slides caused unmnence hardships to the soldiers.
 - (b) The local people attacked the soldiers.
 - (c) Due to these challenges most of the soldiers got killed. According to Barani only 10 soldiers could reach Delhi to tell the tale of this error They were also executed at the orders of sultan Mohammad Bin Tuglaq.

Critical Examination of Campaign

1. According to Barani this campaign was a miserable failure because a large no. of soldiers got killed. This weakened the military strength of sultanate.
2. Though it is difficult to accept Barani's statement literally but it can be accepted that the loss during expedition could have been quite big.
 - (a) But at the same time it must be emphasised that this expedition was not a failure. Campaign was a success because king of Qarachil continued to send tribute to Delhi for many years.
3. The losses suffered during campaign were due to important planning by officials. The planners failed to take the account the onset of monsoon season. It was not a mistake of sultan as such

Taxation in Doab (Land between R. Gange and R. Yamuna) (1333-34)

1. Sultan Mohammad bin Tuglaq tried to increase the income of state by enhancing the state of land revenue in doab region and by imposing other taxes.
2. There is no definite information about extent of.
 - (a) According to Zia-ud-din Barani the taxes were increased by 10-20 times.
 - (b) According to Yahya-bin-Ahmad-Sarhindi (Author of Tarikh-i-mubarak shahi) the taxes were increased by 20 times. Along with that Ghari and Charai were imposed.
 - (c) According to Abdul-Qadir-badayuni author of Mutakhab-ut-Twarikh the taxes were doubled.
3. Modern historians believe that rate of land revenue was raised to 50% of produce. The taxes of Ghari and Charai were also imposed.
 - (a) This burden was not in practical high as such because same taxes were collected by Ala-ud-din Khilji.
 - (b) The burden of taxes was increased synchronously during the reign of Mohammad Bin Tuglaq because of use of wafa-i-farmani (state decreed yield) and Nirth-i-farmani (state decreed process).
4. The peasants would have paid these taxes but when these new rates were applied a severe draught struck Doab region
 - (a) The crops got destroyed.
 - (b) At a time when peasants were not even in a position to pay taxes at old rate the state officials demanded tax at new state. As a result of this the

peasants abandoned their villages and escaped into forests. The agriculture got secured and the people suffered immensely.

5. When sultan get to know about these challenges he ordered the remission of land revenue and other taxes.
 - (a) Somehar loan was given to peasants so that they would purchase seeds, implements and annuals and could dig their wells.
 - (b) It took many years for normally to return in Doab region

Model Agriculture Farm (1337-38)

1. After the failure of taxation project sultan decided to the income of state by carrying out extension of cultivation.
2. To achieve this objective, a new deptt knoon as Diwan-e-Amir kohi was established.
 - (a) An area measuring 100 ×100 pms was selected to cultivation by bringing more land under the plough.
 - (b) An amount of 70, 00, 000 tanka was invested over a period of 3 years.
3. This project failed because the piece of land selected for extension of cultivation was completely barren.
 - (a) The idea was to bring uncultivated fertile land under the plough but the officers responsible for executing the project selected a wrong piece of land.
4. Another reason for the failure of the project was that the people used the amount given to them for extension of cultivation for their personal use because the area had recovered from a long drought.
 - (a) The period of 3 years was also quite short to produce any significant result.

Transcendent Failure

1. Sultan Mohammad Bin Tuglaq was one of the greatest rulers in the history of Delhi Sultanate . His 26 years long reign has attracted the attention of modern historians much more than any where ruler of Delhi.
2. So, Critics of Sultan Mohammad bin tughlaq emphasised that he was a complete failure. Whatever the initiative he undertook, he failed miserably.
 - (a) It is emphasized that his failure was beyond all imaginations and experiences.
3. The closer examination of various developments of the reign of Mohammad . Bin Tuglaq clearly reveal that he was not a complete failure.

- (a) All the projects initiated by him did not fail because the Khurasan expedition was never executed.
 - (b) The Qarachil campaign was a success though this success came at a big price.
4. Sultan Mohammad Bin Tuglaq imported a new orientation to Delhi Sultanate. His new ideals and approaches were remarkable.
 5. Sultan Mohammad Bin Tuglaq was an agrarian innovator. He initiated a no. of steps for the advancement of agriculture.
 - (a) He tried to carry out extension of cultivation by bringing more land under the plough. This initiative could not succeed but the idea was very progressive
 - (b) He was the first Sultan of Delhi to set up department for agriculture (Diwan-i-Amir kohi)
 - (c) He was the only sultan of Delhi to grant sondhar loans to peasants for the regeneration of their agriculture.
 - (d) Acc to Barani, Sultan Mohammad Bin Tuglaq encourage cultivation of superior crops. In those areas where Barley was being cultivated the peasants were encouraged to cultivate wheat. The peasants cultivating wheat were encouraged to grow sugarcane and in those areas where sugarcane was being cultivated peasants were encouraged to grow grapes.

Sultan Mohammad Bin Tuglaq as a Person with Contradictory Qualities

1. Sultan Mohammad . Bin Tuglaq is the most controversial personality in the history of D.S. He has attracted extreme appreciation as well as extreme wondernation from different quarters. The historians both contemporary and modern have expressed different opinions about him
2. While Barani praises sultan for his knowledge and generosity but he criticised sultan for his high handedness and extreme despotism. He terms sultan as mixture of opposites.
 - (a) Ibn Batuta also praised sultan for his justice and fairness and generality but he portrayed him as blood thirsty tyrant. According to Ibn Batuta a long queue of people would be seen at one gate of palace and other gate people could be seen receiving capital punishment.

3. It is emphasised that sultan was generous at times and other occasions he was harsh and cruel.
 - (a) Mohammad Bin Tuglaq behaved like a genius when he planned his projects but at the time of implementation he was nothing less than a fool.
 - (b) Sultan has also been portrayed as a man with great insight as well as a man lacking vision completely.
4. The closer examination of various ideas, principles, projects and other initiatives of sultan clearly reveals that he was not a man with contradictory qualities.
 - (a) A ruler has to be liberal and generous towards man of learning, religion and the poor. At the same time a ruler has to be cruel towards rebels and criminals.
 - (b) Just because some of the projects of sultan could not succeed, he should not be portrayed as a fool and a blind man. Any initiative can fail. Sultan was not personally responsible for failure of his projects. The officers were solely responsible for failure in some cases, in some others failed due to natural calamities.

Estimate of Personality of Sultan Mohammad Bin Tuglaq

1. Sultan is considered as one of the most striking personality in history of Medieval India. Historians modern as well as his contemporary have expressed different opinions about him as a person as well as a ruler.
 - (a) He has been termed as wonder of creation, of inconsistency, fear of nature, a nightmare, a mad man as well as a most generous ruler.
2. Sultan as a ruler, as a person, as a military commander as well as a patron of art and culture was remarkable.
3. He was the most learned ruler to sit on throne of Delhi in entire history of Medieval India. He knew many languages like Persian and Arabic. He knew mathematics as well as astronomy. He was one of most accomplished scholar of his time. Even Zia-ud-din Barani a strong critic of sultan described him as a learned scholar and wonder of creation.
 - (a) He was a kind hearted person. He raised his cousin Firoz Shah Tughlaq like a son.

- 4 sultan was a great ruler. He adopted liberal and progressive ideas during his region.
- He took deep personal interest in the affairs of state.
 - He did not allow the ulemas to dictate the state policy religious freedom was granted by sultan to all the people.
 - He tried to stop the evil practice of sati.
5. he was a successful military commander as well. He ruled over the most extensive empire in the history of Delhi Sultanate
6. Sultan was a great patron of Art and culture. The city of Jahanpanah was built by him in Delhi. A large no. of Scholars both Indian and Foreigners lived in his court.
- The man of learning recieved gifts and favours from sultan Because of this he has been praised by his contemporaries.
 - Zia-ud-din-Barani lived in his court. Moroccan traveller Ibn Batuta was patronised by him. He was appointed as Qazi of Delhi.
- Sultan also took interest in cultivating friendly relations with his neighbouring countries. Ibn Batuta was sent as his ambassador to China though he could not reach and returned midway.
- Chinese ruler was granted permission by him to repair temples of Himalayan kingdom at Qarachil that were damaged by the army of Delhi.
8. Sultan was failure as a ruler because when he sat on throne of Delhi, sultanate was strong and stable. There was peace and prosperity everywhere but when he died in 1351 there was crisis everywhere.
- Entire peninsular India had declared independence. Madurai was the 1st to declare independence from Delhi in 1335. In 1336 independent state of Vijyanagar was founded by sangam brothers. (Harihara and Bukka). In 1347, Bahmani Kingdom covering parts of MP, Maharashtra Gujarat, Andhra and Karnata was founded by Abul Hasan Behman Shah.
 - Indian was up in ashrams. At the time of his death he was busy in suppressing revolts in Sindh.
 - People of Delhi were seeping with resentment because of impact of Capital transfer project.

(d) Peasants of Doab region were also in rebellious mood because taxation project destroyed their agriculture.

SUMMARY :

Mohammad bin Tughlaq had best intentions, excellent ideas and exemplary qualities but he failed as ruler. His intention in the above policies and experiment were sound and grand. Abolition of sati, no discrimination on the basis of religion, establishing department of agriculture (diwan e Amir kahi) were other grand projects initiated by him. But in implementation of these projects he lacked balance and sense of proportion apart from this his officers and nobles also misguide him. Thus reign of Mohammad bin Tughlaq saw zenith of Delhi Sultanate but disintegration also started. Badauni has rightly said "the king was freed from his people and people from their king".



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