

Magadh Mahila College

Patna University

Department of History

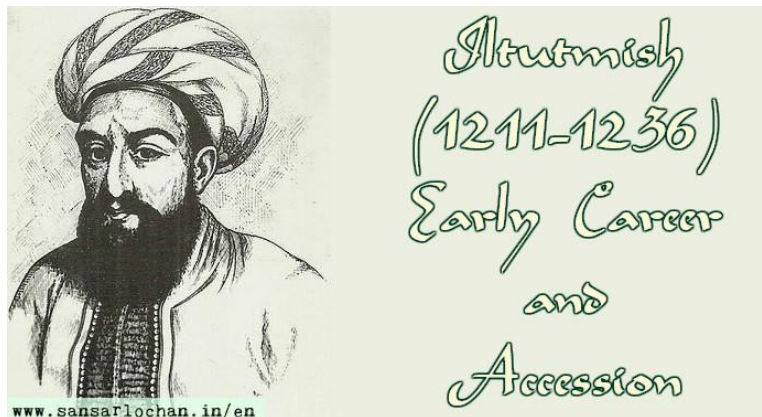
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Expeditions and Reforms of Iltutmish



Conquest of Bengal

Ali Mardan who ruled Bengal with the permission and authority of Aibak, turned out to be a very cruel ruler who was removed after two years of his rule by his officers who made Iwaj Khilji, the next governor of Bengal.

Taking advantage of Iltutmish preoccupation elsewhere he declared himself independent and also started extracting tributes from the states of Tirhut, Baug and Jajnagar. When Iltutmish came to know about this he thought of punishing Iwaj Khilji.

Iltutmish first captured the area of Bihar, South of Ganga and then marched forward. The Sultan appointed Malik Jani as the governor of Bengal and returned back. Meanwhile, Iwaj once again assumed an independent status by defeating Malik Jani. Iltutmish did not retaliate immediately but advised his son Nasiruddin Mahmud, who was the governor of Awadh at that time to look for a suitable opportunity. Iwaj regarded this delay as a sign of weakness and left for a campaign in the east.

Nasiruddin then attacked Lakhnauti. As soon as Iwaj came to know about the came back to defend his capital but was killed and Nasiruddin was given the charge of Bihar region along with Bengal.

But few years later the uncertain death of Nasiruddin resulted in another revolt in Bengal under the leadership of Balka Khilji who declared himself as an independent ruler. This time Iltutmish went to Bengal defeated Balka Khilji and appointed two separate governors for Bihar and Bengal for the purpose of effective administration.

3) To establish control over the Rajputs

In 1226 AD Iltutmish decided to capture the strongest fort of Ranthambhor so that, he could establish his supremacy in Rajputana. In 1227 AD he captured the fort of Mandor. He also captured Tabarhind and established control over almost all important Rajput centers in India.

Third Phase(1228A.D-1236A.D):

In these years Iltutmish concentrated upon consolidating his empire and strengthening it. He introduced numerous administrative reforms such as Iqtadari system, establishment of army, introduction of coins, formation of Chalisa Dal, etc. he also carried out numerous expeditions on the Rajput states in order to extend the extent of his empire. Thus, due to his administrative reforms, expeditions, suppression of revolts against him and his diplomacy Iltutmish can rightly be considered as the real founder of Slave dynasty.



Extent of Delhi Sultanate under Iltutmish. The Sultanate clearly expanded under Shams ud-din into Bengal, the outskirts of Tibet and south to the Ganges plains.

1) Establishment of Iqta System

For the purpose of making administration convenient he established Iqta System. The word Iqta meant a portion and technically it meant the land or revenue assigned by a ruler to an individual. In Persia there were two types of Iqtas (i) iqta-i-ishtighal (khalsaland) (ii) Iqta-i-Tamlik (normal land)

Iqta was the larger category which was further divided into small pieces of land and these lands were allotted to the leading military generals who were supposed to get the land cultivated with the help of farmers. After cultivation out of the total produce one third was to be collected as state revenue. Out of this collected amount military generals also known as Iqtedar was supposed to deduct his own salary as well as the expenses of the horses and soldiers maintained by him. The remaining amount was to be given back to Sultan treasury.

The most important feature of the Iqta System was that the piece of land allotted to the Iqtedar was transferable. The smaller category of land under this system was known as Khalsa Land and all the agricultural produce generated from this was totally given to the Sultan for the maintenance of the palace and royal army.

2) Development of Currency

Iltutmish was the first ruler who contributed towards economic growth and development by starting the circulation of two royal currencies in form of silver and copper. Silver coins were known as Tanka and the copper coins were known as Jital. The introduction of currency led uniform commercial transaction within the Sultanate. According to historian Nelson Wright 'The age of Iltutmish stands out as

a landmark in the coinage of Delhi there need be no hesitation when once credit Iltutmish for strengthening the economical structure of Delhi Sultanate.

4) Organization of the team of forty or Chalisa Dal

Another major contribution of Iltutmish was that he tried all possible means to establish a peaceful administrative atmosphere. He tried to gain the support of leading Islamic scholars known as Ulemas as well as leading military generals. With this objective he established a close group of 40 influential persons which he selected from the section of Ulemas and military generals. This group came to be known as Turk-i-Chihalgaani or Chalisa Dal. These forty members not only played important role in politics but in future also as the king makers.

5) Other Reforms undertaken by Iltutmish

As Delhi was the seat of his government Iltutmish gave more attention to it than Lahore. The construction of the famous Qutub Minar was completed by Iltutmish. Under the rule of Iltutmish Delhi gradually became a great cultural center of muslim talents from all over world. Great scholars like Nuruddin, Hasan Nizami, Muhammad Afi, Minhaj-uddin-Siraj assembled in his court. Religious people, artists came to Delhi making it the 'Baghdad of East'. In the contemporary literature of that period Delhi was not referred by its name but was called Hazrat-i-Delhi or the Sehar.

Lastly we can state that Iltutmish gave a strong hold to this newly established empire. According to A.B.M Habibulla 'Aibak only prepared a sketch of Delhi Sultanate but Iltutmish, undoubtedly was the first ruler who gave a strong base to this empire.' According to R.P Tripathi "In India the beginning of Muslim rule in a real sense is credited to Iltutmish."