

Administrative Reforms Introduced by Ala-ud-Din

1. Centralized administration:

Ala-ud-Din attempted to translate his theory of Kingship that the king was the representative of God on earth and that he was there to rule, through the administrative practices.

His word was law. He was an absolute despot. He possessed unlimited powers. He was the head i.e. Commander in Chief of the army, head of the executive, head of the judiciary and the sole authority in enforcing religious matters.

All powers of affairs of the state were centralized in him. He used to say, "I do not know whether this is lawful or unlawful, Whatever I think to be for the good of the state or suitable for the emergency that I decree." In the words of Ashraf, "the Sultan of Delhi was in theory an unlimited despot, bound by no law, subject to no material check and guided by no will except his own." The prevailing circumstances needed such a strong monarch to run the affairs of the state effectively and without any kind of interference.

2. Administration free from the influence of the ulemas:

In the words of Dr. Ishwari Parsad, "Ala-ud-Din was opposed to the interference of the Ulemas in matters of state and in this respect he departed from the tradition of the previous Sultans of Delhi. The law was to depend upon the will of the monarch and had nothing to do with the law of the Prophet. This was the guiding maxim of the new monarch." Dr. R.P. Tripathi has observed, "Kingship could exist without any special religious support and that the outlook of a King was very different from that of the clergy. This was the greatest contribution of Ala-ud-Din."

3. Role of Ministers:

The Sultan appointed trusted ministers to assist him in the running of administration. Their advice was in no way binding on the Sultan. There were 10 ministers to assist him. Next to Sultan was the 'Wazir', who was both a civil and military officer. Among the ministers, mention may be made of the 'Amir-Kohi' incharge of agriculture and 'Shahana-i-Mandi' and 'Dewan-i-Riyat-looking after markets.

4. Provincial administration:

The entire country was divided into 11 provinces. Each province was under a governor who enjoyed his position at the pleasure of the Sultan.

5. Judicial administration:

According to Prof. K.S. Lai, the Sultan was as relentless and unflinching in administering justice as Balban. The Sultan was the fountain of justice. He was the final court of appeal. Next to him was 'Qazi-ul-Qazat or Lord Chief justice. Then were other junior judicial officers. The punishments inflicted upon the accused persons were very severe. Mutilation of limbs and torture were very common.

6. Efficient system of espionage:

The system of espionage organised by Ala-ud-Din was very systematic and effective. According to Zia-ud-Din Barani, "No one could stir without his (Ala-ud-Din's) knowledge and whatever happened in the houses of the Maliks and Amirs, officers and great men was communicated to the Sultan. Day and night did they tremble in their own houses an account of the activity of the patrol. Nor did they do anything nor utter a single word which would subject them to reproof or punishment."

A similar account of the espionage is given by Moreland, "He (Ala-ud-Din) organised so effective a system of espionage that no body dared to whisper a seditious word. The jovial atmosphere of the capital turned into suspicious gloom but conspiracy for the time being was at its end."

7. Administrative measures to check the power of the nobles, and their tendency to revolt:

After having wide-range consultations, Ala-ud-Din came to the conclusion that following were the causes of revolts:

- (i) Inefficiency of the spy system resulting in the ignorance of the Sultan regarding the state of affairs in the country.
- (ii) Existence of huge wealth with the nobles resulting in leisure time leading to conspiracies.
- (iii) Drinking parties among nobles bringing them close to each other and encouraging them to conspire.

(iv) Social intercourse and inter-marriages among the families of nobles making them a compact body dangerous to the state and also forming antagonistic groups among themselves, leading to rivalry.

For exercising control over the activities of the nobles, the king took the following measures:

- (1) Organisation of an efficient spy system.
- (2) Confiscation of jagirs given to nobles, on one pretext or the other.
- (3) Prohibition of the sale and use of wine and other intoxicating drugs.
- (4) Restrictions on social gatherings and inter-marriages among the nobles.

8. Administrative measures for the market control:

9. Organisation of the postal system:

Ala-ud-Din established a proper postal system for establishing a regular contact with various parts of the empire. In his book "Medieval Routes in India," Dr. H.C. Varma writes that Sultan Ala-ud-Din posted several horsemen and clerks in the news posts. From the accounts of Ibn Batutah and Barani, it appears that postal system was in good condition during Ala-ud-Din's reign.

Military Reforms Introduced by Ala-ud-Din

Army as the basis of strength:

Ala-ud-Din's position was threatened on the one hand by the revolts of the nobles and Rajput's and on the other hand by the Mongols who occasionally invaded the frontier of India in the north-west.

Moreover, he desired to extend his empire. All these needed a well-equipped army.

As observed by Dr. P. Saran,

"The problem of maintaining the huge army in a good state of equipment and efficiency with limited resources of the kingdom was the sole motive which prompted control of prices of all necessities of life so as to make them cheap enough for the soldiery to maintain themselves on the low salaries which they were to be paid according to the decision of the Sultan."

It may be remembered that Ala-ud-Din based his kingship on his military power. He was fully aware that he had usurped power by force and the same could be maintained only by force and this force was his military force. Ala-ud-Din owed everything to his efficient military.

Strength of the army:

It is not possible to give the exact strength of his army. Ferishta informs us that Ala-ud-Din maintained 4, 75,000 cavalry men. (Horse riders). The strength of the infantry must have exceeded the cavalry. War elephants also constituted an important part of the army. Among other weapons like swords, bows and arrows, stone-throwing machines were also used in battles.

Main features of the reforms in the army:

1. For the first time army was paid in cash.
2. Three grades of soldiers, were fixed. A foot soldier was paid 156 'tankas' (silver rupees) a year. The soldier with one horse was paid, 234 'tankas' and with two horses 312 'tankas' i.e. 78 'tankas' more. In this salary, the soldier had to look after his horse/horses and other things. It is observed that the amount paid to a soldier was not a small sum for the first decade of the 14th century. During the reign of Sher Shah it was 230 'tankas' i.e. 4 'tankas' less. During Akbar's time in the 16th century, it was 240 'tankas' i.e. more by four 'tankas' only.
3. The 'Ariz-i-Mamlik' (Army Minister) himself recruited the soldiers of the army.
4. Ala-ud-Din was the first Sultan to keep a standing army at the centre. He did not depend upon the feudal chiefs for the supply of the soldiers.
5. Ala-ud-Din, instituted the practice of recording the 'hulia' (description) of individual soldier and 'dagging' (branding of horses). This helped to stop corrupt practices like giving inflated figures of the soldiers and horses.
6. Army was given suitable training.
7. Army was properly equipped.

8. A periodical inspection was made and horses and arms of the soldiers were thoroughly examined.

9. Old forts were repaired and new forts were constructed.

10. Soldiers were permanently kept in these forts and suitable arrangements were made for the regular supply of arms to them.

11. Grains and fodder always remained stored in the forts.

12. Well-trained and loyal commanders were appointed in the army organisation.

13. Ala-ud-Din kept spies in every unit of the army. They submitted regular reports to him about the movements of the military officers.

14. Ala-ud-Din controlled the price of the essential commodities which enabled the soldiers to make a good living within their salaries.