



Muhamad-bin-Tughluq: Mixed character in his emotional and administrative approach- A Study

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Abstract

Muhammad Tughluq was indisputably the talented man among the kings of the medieval period. He ruled between (AD1325-1351). Mohammad bin Tughluq is an extraordinary personality, and to determine his place in the history is a difficult task was he a genius or a lunatic? An idealist or a visionary? A bloodthirsty tyrant or a benevolent? A heretic or a devout Mussalman? Of all kings, who had sat upon the throne of Delhi since the Muslim conquest, he was unquestionably the most educated and accomplished, nature had gifted him with a genius memory, a keen and all-pervading intellect, and a massive capacity for integrating knowledge of all kinds. He was equally good in logic, astronomy, mathematics, philosophy, and the physical sciences. No one could surpass him in composition and calligraphy; he had at his command, a good deal of Persian poetry, of which he made a very extensive use in his writings and speeches. On the other hand, Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq was a multifaceted person with both sympathetic and liberal traits, and narrow minded, determined and cruel qualities. Some historians state that Sultan Muhammad Bin Tughluq was a mixture of opposites; he was the wisest but at the same time the most foolish, the most respectful and the most disrespectful, the most compassionate and embarrassing and the cruellest and the disrespect, the most generous and liberal. Here in our present article, we are trying to analyse his three big Megha projects i.e. taxation in the Doab, Transfer of Capital to Daulatabad, Currency experiment token currency. From the point of his emotional and administrative approach. Study is based on the narratives of the foreign traveller, contemporary writers' scholars' i.e. Habibullah Muhammad Ibn-Batuta, Zia-ud-Din Barani, Dr Haq, prof KA Nizami, Edward Thomas, Ferishta, KA Nizami.

Keywords: Muhamad-bin-Tughluq, Doab, Delhi, Devagiri, coinage, taxation, copper

Introduction

Muhamad-bin-Tughluq ruled Delhi Sultanate between (1325-1351). Of all the royals that ever sat on the throne of Delhi the temperament and activities of Muhammad bin Tughluq have proved to be the highest puzzle. His reign was full of exciting events, some of which were outlandish, and even weird in the extreme. But, curiously enough, although we possess fairly detailed accounts of his reign written by eminent contemporary authors, there is, in consequence, a wide divergence of opinion among scholars regarding the proper reconstruction of the reign and a proper estimate of the character and personality of the monarch. Tughlaq was convinced that the deaths of his father and brother were accidents, but he was actually responsible. He suppressed his guilt, which led to illogical and impractical decisions, and kept him restless. Tughlaq's suppressed guilt caused an unusual struggle between his id, ego, and superego. This struggle was visible in his actions and relationships with others. Tughlaq refused to face his guilt, which led to negative consequences. According to Freud, repressed emotions are never dead, but they come back in uglier ways. Some have complained Tughlaq for being imprudent because most of his experiments failed due to a lack of planning. Ibn Battuta criticized Tughlaq for relying on his own judgment and rarely seeking other people's opinions

Methodology

This research paper is based on the study of the secondary data which focuses on the reviews and references, books, journals, periodicals, newspaper and websites.

Administrative experiments-Taxation in the Doab

The principal reason, which induced the Sultan to enhance the imposts in the Doab, was the richness and fertility of its lands and the obstinate and rebellious conduct of its inhabitants and also probably he wanted to punish them by raising revenue by five to ten percent, by increasing the land tax along with other taxes and also, with a view to raise additional finances to organise an efficient system of administration. Mohammad Bin Tughlaq increased taxes in Doab the territory between Ganges and Jumana. There is no unanimity amongst scholars regarding the increase in taxes and even contemporary Muslim writers have offered different versions. According Barani he increased the taxes by 10 to 20 times. According to Ferishta the increase in taxes was three to four-fold. Baudauni says the taxes were doubled. Elliot says that he increased the taxes caused much hardship to the people of doab. He records "back of the rayats were broken. Barani who put the measure as the first in point of time, says that 'it worked to the ruin of the country and the deterioration of the people', Perhaps these taxes were the house tax and the grazing tax. In order to realize these taxes, the houses of the people in the rural areas were numbered and their cattle were branded. He attempted to realise the land revenue and the newly imposed taxes with rigour. Unfortunately, when the policy of additional taxation was enforced in the doab, there occurred a famine owing to the failure of rains. The people offered resistance. The sultan's officers continued realizing the taxes. Muhammad-bin-Tughluq made an effort to help by giving them substantia loans to buy seed bullocks etc., and making provisions for the digging of wells for irrigation, but

policy failed. In the first place it was too late to have announced the grant of loans. Secondly as people had nothing to eat, they utilised the loans for purposes different from those from which they were intended. Thirdly the house and grazing taxes had been unpopular since they were introduced by Ala-ud-din's successors, their revival by Muhammad was very much resented. Sultan got no extra revenue, in fact, even the usual revenue could not be grasped from Doab. The worst of it all the sultan himself become thoroughly unpopular with his subjects. The Doab experimentation failed due to practical challenges, insufficient infrastructure and poor enactment of irrigation projects, monetary issues, inadequate funding and monetary mismanagement. Social factors include lack of local public involvement and confrontation from farmers

Transfer of the capital, 1326-27 A.D.

Another reform carried out by Muhammad Tughlaq which has won him much notoriety was the transfer of capital from Delhi to Devagiri, renamed as Daulatabad. Contemporary writers and modern scholars have attributed different motives for this decision. According to Ibn Battuta, Muhammad Bin Tughlaq decided to shift the capital from Delhi with a view to punish the people for their scandals against the Sultan. Similarly, Isami also says that he decided to shift the capital to break the power of the citizens of Delhi. According to Prof Habibullah Muhammad was motivated by three considerations in shifting capital *Viz.* Administrative convenience, prosperity of south and to spread the Muslim culture to south. According to Prof A.L. Srivastava, Muhammad Tughlaq was prompted to shift capital by consideration of central location of Daulatabad to protect his capital from frequent Mongol invasions to effectively subdue and manage the territories in South India and to utilise the rich resources of south more easily and effectively. Some scholars like Dr Mehndi Hussain and KA Nizami have expressed the view that Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq wanted to keep Delhi as well as Daulatabad as his two capitals, while Delhi was to serve as capital of North, he wanted to make Daulatabad as capital for Malwa Gujarat and Deccan. The sultan also did his best to make the new capital a suitable abode for his officers, and the people by providing it with beautiful buildings, the splendour of which has been described by Iban Batutah, Abdul Hamid Lohari. All facilities were provided for the intending immigrants. Spacious road was provided for their migration, shady trees being planted on both sides of it and a regular post being established between Delhi and Daulatabad. Even Barani writes that the Sultan "was bounteous in his liberality and favours to the emigrants both on their journey and on their arrival". In all this the Sultan acted reasonably. Tughlaq moved the capital to Daulatabad to rule the entire Indian subcontinent.

There was an unwarranted assumption of Ibn Batuta that a search was instituted in Delhi under a royal mandate to find out if any of the inhabitants still locked in their houses, and that it resulted in the discovery of two men, one lame and the other blind, who were dragged to Daulatabad, It was true, the Sultan's orders were carried out in a relentless manner, It must be said to his credit that, when he saw the failure of his scheme, he ordered the inhabitants to go back to Delhi and on the return, journey treated them with great generosity and made full amends for their losses, but Delhi was a depopulated city. From far and near the Sultan

brought learned men, merchants, and landlords to take up their abode in the deserted capital, but no inducement proved of any avail to reconcile them to the changed surroundings. The old prosperity did not return, and Delhi did not recover her former grandeur, for the Moorish traveller found it in 1334 A.D. uninhabited in some places and still bearing the marks of desolation. Daulatabad remained, as Lane-Poole writes, a monument of misdirected energy. The scheme of transfer failed disastrously. That it would have, in the event of success, enabled the Sultan to keep a firm hold upon the different parts of the empire, may well be doubted. He failed to see that Daulatabad was situated at a long distance from the northern frontiers of the empire, which needed to be watched with constant vigilance. Tughlaq moved the capital to Daulatabad to rule the entire Indian subcontinent. However, he later realized his mistake and moved the capital back to Delhi in 1335.

The Currency Experiment (1329-30)

Edward Thomas has described Mohammad Tughlaq as "a prince of moneyers. He points out that one of his earliest acts of his reign was to remodel the coinage to re-adjust its divisions to the altered values of the precious metals and to originate new and more exact representative of the subordinate circulation. A new gold coin weighing 200 grains called Dinar by Iban Batuta was issued by Mohammad Tugulak. He revived the Adali coin containing 140 of silver in place of the old gold and silver coins weighing 175 grains, and Dinar. This change was probably due to a "fall in the relative value of gold to silver, the imperial treasury having been replenished by large quantities of the former metal as a result of the campaigns of the Deccan. "The corroborative and supplementary evidence available in the contemporary foreign as well as other Indian source of information may also be referred to Shihab uddin-al-Umari was informed in the Damascus by Shaikh Mubarak (an Indian traveller) that the coins circulation in the Sultanate of Sultan Muhammad-bin- Tugulak were Yakgani (one anna of British colonial period, Dugani (two ganis) also called Sultani Shashgani (coins equal to 6 ganis in value) hastitgani (equal to eight ganis) and duazdehgani (the coins worth 12 ganis. Thus 16 ganis made one tanka.

In 1329 and 1330, the Sultan issued a token currency in copper coins. There were already examples of such a currency in China and Persia. Kublai Khan, the Mongol Emperor of China, had introduced a paper currency in China towards the close of the 13th century. Gai Khatu, the ruler of Persia, made a similar experiment in 1294 A.D. with these examples before him, Muhammad Tughluq issued a decree proclaiming that in all transactions, copper tokens should be accepted as legal tender like gold and silver coins. According to Barani, "This edict turned the house of every Hindu into a mint and the Indians of the provinces coined lakhs and crores of copper coins, with which they paid their tribute and bought horses and arms and fine things of all sorts. The Rais, the village headmen and land-owners grew rich on these copper coins but the state was impoverished. In no long-time distant countries would only accept the copper Tanka as metal and in places where reverence for the edict prevailed the gold Tanka rose to be worth a 100 copper Tankas. Every goldsmith struck copper coins in his workshop and the treasury was crammed with them. They feel so low that they were no more valuable than pebbles. The people in general hoarded gold and silver coins and turned their copper utensils into coins, paid off the state revenue and other taxes in these fake coins. Trade being

disrupted, the Sultan repealed his edict and in great wrath proclaimed that all the copper coins should be redeemed in gold or silver at the treasury. Thousands brought them for exchange and their heaps rose up in Tughluqabad like mountains." Barani tells us that the experiment was due to two causes. The first cause was the need of money to maintain the great army of conquest numbering 3,70,000. The second cause was the deficiency in the treasury caused by the lavish gifts made by the Sultan. Another probable cause can be the relative scarcity of silver in the market.

According to Dr. Ishwari Prasad, another probable cause was the love of experiment on the part of the Sultan who was a man of original cast of minds, well-versed in the arts and sciences of the age. The Sultan might have felt a powerful impulse for the experiment in a scientific spirit. The Moroccan traveller, Ibn Battuta who came to Delhi in 1333 could not see any harmful after-effects of these experiments.

Character and estimate of Muhammad Tughluq

There is a lot of controversy regarding the character and achievements of Muhammad Tughluq. Elphinstone was of the view that Muhammad Tughluq was affected by some degree of insanity and writers like Havel, Edward Thomas and Smith have followed him. Gardiner Brown has ignored altogether the dark aspect of the life of Muhammad Tughluq and has absolved him of the charges of madness, blood-thirstiness and of being a visionary. Zia-ud-Din Barani and Ibn Batuta have opposite views about the personality, virtues and faults of Muhammad Tughluq. The controversy is as fresh as ever. In his emotional and administrative approach His characteristics portray that he was a complex person, but he was more kind generous and humble as a human being. On the other hand, he was narrow minded stubborn and partly cruel. These mixed natures of Tughluq made him a complex person. Indian history referred to him as a wise fool because he tried several administrative changes and got success in very few, it is only because of his lack of judgement

Observation

To start with his project of taxation at Doab He attempted to realize the land revenue and the newly imposed taxes with rigour. Unfortunately, when the policy of additional taxation was enforced in the Doab, there occurred a famine owing to the failure of rains. The people offered resistance. the sultan's officer continued realising the taxes. Then sultan ordered for digging of well, giving loans for buying and sowing of seeds, it was too late. People received, money abandoned their lands and took to highway robbery. Sultan should have planned the taxation of Doab, by taking care of situation and make necessary arrangement for water and seeds.

This change of capital what he thought was right, he entertained that Devagiri is found to be physically centre of India. Mongolian invasion always targeted Delhi so that Delhi might have been affected without causing much hardship. It would have better for sultan to be satisfied only with the removal of the official machinery of the state. But he made an enormous blunder in ordering the people of Delhi, men, women and children, along with cattle to go en masse to Daulatabad. His measure failed not due to he being a visionary, but lack of his common sense caused failure of his plan.

Many reasons have been given for the failure of this monetary experiment of Muhammad Tughluq. It is pointed out that this carefully organised measure failed because it was in advance of the time and the people could not realise its real importance. To the people at large in those days,

brass and copper however urgent the needs of the state might be it was another cause of the failure of the experiment. For Sultan could not make the issue of the copper coins a monopoly of the State. To quote Edward Thomas, "There was no special machinery to mark the difference of the fabric of the royal mint and the handiwork of a moderately skilled artisan. Unlike the precautions taken to prevent the imitation of the Chinese paper notes, there was positively no check upon the authenticity of the copper tokens and no limits to the power of the production by the masses at large." The contention of Elphinstone was that the failure of the token currency was due to the insolvency of the king and the instability of his government. This contention has been found to be groundless as the Sultan successfully withdrew all coins by paying gold and silver coins for the copper tokens. Had the Sultan been insolvent, he would not have been able to give gold and silver coins in exchange.

Conclusion

Muhammad-bin-Tughluq chief offence was that probably inspired by examples of the Khalji sultans. Lacked practical judgement and common sense and rather obsessed with his theoretical knowledge, indulged in lofty theories and knowledge, indulged in visionary projects. His schemes though sound in theory and sometimes showing flashes of political insight proved to be impartible in actual operation and ultimately brought disaster on his kingdom. This was due to certain defects in his character. Hasty and hot tempered he must have his own way would brook no opposition. The growing sense of the failure of his policy made him charge the people with persistence and enhanced his severity foiled in his arms sultan lost the equilibrium of his mind. "Embarrassment followed Embarrassment and confusion became worse confounded. These measures of the sultan as compared with higher qualities have led some later writers to describe him as a "mixture of opposites"

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