



A Peer-Reviewed Article
ISSN: 3136-9049
eISSN: 3136-9057

North Bengal International
University Journal
<https://journal.nbiu.edu.bd>

Sultan Alauddin Khalji's Price Control System was a Ground Breaking Step: A Review

Md. Abdulla Sarkar^{*}

Abstract

Sultan Alauddin Khalji was one of the greatest rulers of the Sultanate. He is remembered in history for implementing several notable reforms during his reign. In addition to military and political victories, the ruler was also incredibly successful in economic reforms. Notable among the economic reforms was the price control system. By introducing a price control system, he was able to bear the expenses of a large army, control the prices of goods and gain the trust of the general public, which marked the beginning of a new trend in Alauddin Khalji's economic reforms. Although the price control system was involved as part of the discussion and criticism, the price control system was a breath of fresh air for the general public including the military.

Keywords: Alauddin Khalji, Price Control System, Market-Reforms, Army, Consequences.

Introduction

The Delhi Sultanate era is an important chapter in world history. Five dynasties ruled during this era. The Khalji dynasty was one of them. Alauddin Khalji was one of the greatest rulers of this dynasty. Alauddin Khalji's reign was from 1296 AD to 1316 AD. Since his accession to the throne, he has been immortalized in history by resisting the Mongol invasion, suppressing the rebellion of the neo-Muslims, master planning, military victories, Ranthambore victory, Chittor victory, Deccan victory. Along with the fiscal system, military reforms, he also achieved success in economic reforms. He is a unique in history by introducing economic reforms in the history of the Sultanate and the

^{*}Lecturer, Department of Islamic History and Culture, Boalkhali Sirajul Islam (Degree) College, Boalkhali, Chattogram, Bangladesh.

whole of India. Historian Lanepool has therefore called him "an adventurous political economist".

The identity of Alauddin Khalji

Alauddin Khalji was Jalal Uddin Khalji's nephew and son-in-law. Although Jalal Uddin Firoz Khalji was the founder of the dynasty, Alauddin Khalji was the greatest ruler.¹ Sultan Alauddin probably 1262-1267 AD. was born in.² His accession to the throne was a novel event. He ascended the throne in 1296 AD. Alauddin was the son of Sultan Alauddin Khalji's elder brother Shihabuddin Khalji. His real name is 'Ali Ghurshap'. After sitting on the throne, he took the name 'Alauddin'.³ During the reign of Jalaluddin Firuz Khalji, he was one of the governors of Kara Province. Basically since then, his plan to gain the throne has led him to the golden pinnacle of success.⁴ Following the footsteps of his predecessors, he added the part 'Yamin-ul-Khilafat' next to the name. Alauddin Khalji was a visionary ruler. Also assumed the title of Ameer ul Mumineen.⁵ Even Alauddin's contribution to Jalaluddin's accession to the throne was outstanding.⁶ Alauddin's accession to the throne was mainly to pave the way for the establishment of a permanent large Muslim empire in the Indian subcontinent. He was an able ruler, conqueror and warrior. His plans have placed him on the golden pinnacle of history.⁷

Initial problems after accession

After Alauddin Khalji ascended the throne, he initially realized several problems. He had to face internal and external problems. The nobles repeatedly rebelled and plotted against the Sultan to try to undermine his power. The aristocracy was lazy and indulged in internal strife. Often the coffers become empty due to weak revenue systems. As there is no system of supply of daily necessities to the army and common people at fixed prices, their suffering increases. The throne was endangered under the pressure of the Mongol invasion.⁸

What is price control method?

The ambitious ruler Alauddin Khalji raised a large army to perpetuate his vast empire. He took special measures to control the prices of goods in order to maintain such a large army and provide a comfortable living for the soldiers on low salaries. Which is popularly known as Alauddin Khalji's Price Control System.⁹ According to historical data of Barani, the number of cavalry of Sultan Alauddin Khalji was 4,75,000. According to the historian Firishta, it was difficult to bear the expenses

of about 50,000 employees.¹⁰ At that time the copper coin was called Jital. On the other hand 1 jital = 1 anna or six paise equal and 48 jital = 1 tonka.¹¹

According to Barani's works, Alauddin had to maintain a large army to resist the Mongol invasion and expand the new empire. The Sultan used to pay his soldiers in cash at the rate of Rs.234. According to Farishta, Alauddin had to bear the expenses of about 50,000 slave servants. would have been After 1303, Sultan Alauddin built several magnificent and expensive palaces. A lot of money is required for the reasons mentioned. Although he also raised the level in revenue and brought a lot of money from Devgiri. Calculation shows that the money will be exhausted to meet the expenses of 5 or 6 years. In this situation he took the advice of the trusted ministers of the state. They said that if the price of goods can be kept under control without increasing the salary, it will be enough to pay the army at the rate of 2347 rupees according to the current income. Because if the price of the goods is affordable, the army will be able to meet the living expenses with this money. All these reasons Alauddin introduced price control system.¹² It was not only the soldiers benefited but also created a special area of economic advantage for a large part of the country's population.¹³

Background of Market Reforms

There are several reasons behind Alauddin Khalji's market reforms.

1. Concern for public benefit: The Khalji dynasty of the Sultanate period is discussed for various reasons. Most of the empire's population lived in poverty. Keeping in mind the financial benefits of the people, the Sultan took innovative measures to keep the prices within the purchasing power.
2. Meeting Military Expenditure: Sultan Alauddin Khalji was one of the most visionary rulers. He formed a huge army to protect the country, expand the empire and prolong his throne. But it was very difficult for him to bear the expenses of so many soldiers. How to manage such a large army and take special measures to keep the prices of goods under control to keep the soldiers running on low salaries? Which was one of the reasons for the price control system?
3. Dealing with Inflation and Economic Crisis: Success in the Deccan expedition brought a lot of wealth from there. As a result, commodity prices increased abnormally with inflation in

the empire. As a result, price control system was introduced to control inflation and deal with economic crisis.¹⁴

4. Political objective: To gain the trust and love of the common people by controlling the prices of goods and as a proof of his foresight as a ruler, he introduced the price control system.
5. Social factors: Social factors also play an important role in introducing price control system. Sultan Alauddin Khalji introduced the price control system due to the syndicate of mujutdar, artaddar, fariya, brokers.

Main Features of Market Reforms

Sultan Alauddin Khalji's market reform system was contemporary and practical. The main features are highlighted below.

1. Establishment of granaries and storage system: In order to ensure supply according to the actual needs of the people, he constructed large granaries in the state and also procured and stored extra grain from various places in case of crisis. Provides loans to businessmen on easy terms. No farmer or trader should store more than 10 maunds of food grains: promulgated that provision. Failing this, he introduced a strict peace system.¹⁵
2. Fixation of commodity prices: One of the features of market reforms was the fixation of commodity prices. He fixed the fixed price of every commodity. Apart from daily necessities, food grains, luxuries and even labor are fixed prices. Through which Alauddin Khalji's market system underwent a revolutionary change.
3. System of regular market inspection: Alauddin Khalji started a special office called 'Diwan-i-Riyasat' for market inspection. Regular monitoring was carried out whether buying and selling is done at fixed price, whether there is excess stock or not, whether the weight is underpaid or not. As part of this, he appointed two high-ranking officials, Shahan-i-Mondi (market supervisor) and Dewan-i-Risalat (textile and general market inspector). They visit the market regularly with the general public.¹⁶
4. Introduction of spy system: Apart from royal servants, spies were appointed to supervise markets. They used to secretly visit the markets and give the Sultan a real picture of the

market system. Sultan took strict action against dishonest and profiteering traders.

5. Enactment of Peace Payment Rules: The Sultan issued peace payments against under-weight, overstocking of grain, late opening of shops, non-compliance of purchase and sale with price list etc. If someone gave less weight, then there was a provision to cut the same amount of meat from the body. As a result, unscrupulous businessmen did not have the courage to engage in corruption and irregularities.
6. Ensuring supply and rationing system: With the development of communication system, goods were quickly delivered from one place of the state to another. When natural disasters and famines occur, rationing system is introduced so that the price of goods does not increase suddenly.
7. Introduction of special facilities for the army: Arrangements were made to provide food to the large number of troops at low cost. This made it possible to carry a large number of armies.

Outcome of Price Control System: Positive Aspects

The results of Sultan Alauddin Khalji's price control system were far-reaching. The price controls introduced by him brought positive aspects to a large extent. As a result, the price of goods was within the purchasing power of the common people, and it was possible to maintain a large army on low wages. Besides, smuggling, black market and illegal syndicates were stopped.¹⁷ Historians including Lanepool, W. Haig, Ishwari Prasad and KK Dutta have termed the price control system as successful and benevolent. According to Ishwari Prasad, Alauddin Khalji's system of market control was one of the wonders of medieval governance.¹⁸ Sufi writers probably praised Alauddin's principles highly. Alauddin's price control system was undoubtedly novel in the medieval context. Lenpool has rightly said that "Alauddin kept the poor by depriving the rich."¹⁹

Consequences of Price Control System: Effectiveness and Negative Aspects

The general public was happy with the price control system but the traders were dissatisfied and angry with fixed prices i.e. mandatory prices. As this practice was introduced by Sultan Alauddin Khalji himself, the price control system was abolished with his death.

Professor Sriram Sharma and according to P. Saran, the price control system was an irrational and coercive system. Because Sultan's economic policy was not based on supply and demand.²⁰ There is also some truth in historians' criticisms of price controls.²¹ According to K. S. Lal, as the price of crops and commodities are fixed, the common citizens benefit but the farmers and business class suffer. This resulted in a negative impact on trade and commerce.²² Apart from the army and the general public, high level businessmen were affected by this policy. Even its effectiveness was not observed everywhere in the empire.

Conclusion

The Sultanate period was important for many reasons. The accession of Sultan Alauddin Khalji, the 2nd ruler of the Khalji dynasty, also bears witness to his diplomatic skills. The market reforms introduced by him had a revolutionary impact not only in the Sultanate period but also in the entire Indian subcontinent. He also succeeded in introducing price controls. Through which he was able to gain the trust of the army and the general public. It also bears witness to his political skills. But the businessmen were angry with this decision of the Sultan.

Despite this, price controls were successfully implemented in the empire under strict orders of the Sultan.

References

- ¹ Dr. Syed Mahmudul Hasan, *History of India (Muslim and British Rule)*, (In Bengali), (Dhaka, Globe Library Pvt. Ltd, 2002), p. 73.
- ² Hasan Ali Chowdhury, *History of Indian Subcontinent*, (In Bengali), (Dhaka, Ideal Library, 1996), p. 118.
- ³ Sri Prabhatanshu Maiti, *India's History Parikrama*, (In Bengali), (Calcutta, Sridhar Publications, 1991), p. 67.
- ⁴ Dr. Syed Mahmudul Hasan, *Op. Cit.*, p.73.
- ⁵ A. K. M. Abdul Alim, *History of Muslim Rule in India*, (In Bengali), (Dhaka, Bangla Academy, 1983), p. 13.
- ⁶ Hasan Ali Chowdhury, *Op. Cit.*, p. 119.
- ⁷ Md. Zahurul Haque and Dr. Md. Osman Gani, *IHC-Paper II (In Bengali)*, (Dhaka, Puthinillooy, 2017), p. 67.
- ⁸ Sri Prabhatanshu Maiti, *Op. Cit.*, p. 70.

- ⁹ Md. Zahurul Haque and Dr. Md. Osman Gani, *Op. Cit.*, p. 71.
- ¹⁰ Md. Mahmudul Hasan, *IHC-Paper II (In Bengali)*, (Dhaka, Lecture Publications, 2025), p. 85.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 85.
- ¹² Sri Prabhatanshu Maiti, *Op. Cit.*, p. 80.
- ¹³ Md. Zahurul Haque and Dr. Md. Osman Gani, *Op. Cit.*, p. 71.
- ¹⁴ Hasan Ali Chowdhury, *Op. Cit.*, p. 98.
- ¹⁵ Md. Zahurul Haque and Dr. Md. Osman Gani, *Op. Cit.*, p. 72.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 72.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 73.
- ¹⁸ Md. Mahmudul Hasan, *Op. Cit.*, p. 88.
- ¹⁹ Sri Prabhatanshu Maiti, *Op. Cit.*, p. 83.
- ²⁰ Professor Dr. Mohammad Siddiquir and Professor Dr. A. T. M. Shamsuzzoha, *IHC-Paper II (In Bengali)*, (Dhaka, Akkharpatra Prakashani, 2025), p. 96.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 96.
- ²² *Ibid.*, p. 96.