

(Gayasuddin Balban)

Balban: The Greatest Among the Early Sultans of Delhi

Balban was the greatest among the early Sultans of Delhi. He established the Sultan's power and prestige on a new level, expanded the Turkish state, and established a strong administrative system.

Early Life of Balban: Balban's real name was Bahauddin. He claimed to be related to the Afrasiyab dynasty (a famous dynasty of Persia), but there is no definite proof for this. Most historians believe that Balban belonged to the Ilbari Turk tribe. He was born into a prosperous family. His father or grandfather was the head of a large clan of Ilbari Turks. Unfortunately, Balban was taken prisoner by the Mongols in his youth. The Mongols took him to Basra and sold him as a slave to Khwaja Jamaluddin. Khwaja arranged for his education and made him cultured. Khwaja brought Balban to Delhi in 1223 AD. Impressed by Balban, Iltutmish bought him and included him in his group of slaves. Through his talent, Balban steadily progressed.

Iltutmish initially kept him as a servant but soon included him in the "Chahalgani" (the Forty), a group of powerful Turkish slaves. From this time onwards, Balban rose rapidly. Due to opposing Ruknuddin and supporting Razia, he had to spend some time in prison. After becoming Sultan, Razia appointed Balban to the position of Amir-i-Shikar (Master of the Hunt). During the power struggles in Razia's time, Balban sided with Bahram Shah and obtained the position of Amir-i-Akhur (Master of the Royal Stables) for himself. He was also given the jagirs (land grants) of Rewari and Hansi. During the reign of Sultan Alauddin Masud Shah, Balban was given the position of Amir-i-Hajib (Lord Chamberlain). It was during this time that he defeated the Mongols and captured Uch. This further increased Balban's power and prestige. He then deposed Masud Shah and placed Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud on the throne.

Balban as Naib (Regent): The reign of Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud was the period of Balban's political rise. Throughout his reign, despite many oppositions, Balban remained the center of power. He was made Naib-i-Mulk (Regent of the Kingdom) and was given the title of Ulugh Khan. During this period, Balban not only overcame his opponents and strengthened his internal power but also served the Sultanate significantly. His military campaigns secured the Sultanate. He curbed the expansionist power of the Mongols, suppressed the Khokhars, Rajputs, and other rebels. He also suppressed the Mewatis (see Nasiruddin Mahmud for details). To strengthen his position, Balban married his daughter to the Sultan. The Sultan also married one of his daughters to Balban's son, Bughra Khan.

Balban's military achievements and his marital relations with the Sultan reached the peak of his power and prestige. Therefore, he suppressed the rebellions of envious nobles, the main ones being Qutlugh Khan, Kishlu Khan, and those in Samana (Punjab). Balban adopted a strict policy to maintain peace and order. He severely punished criminals and those who conspired against Nasiruddin. Balban wanted to make the Delhi Sultanate powerful. He built a strong defensive line against the Mongols. He repaired old forts and built new ones. Balban defeated the Mongols in 1254

AD during his regency. The Sultan was pleased with this victory and supported the administration of the state.

Balban's Justice System: At the time of becoming Sultan, Balban faced many difficulties. The upper class, especially the Turkish nobles, had lost their power. They made every possible effort to maintain their political dominance in the administration. A group of nobles was even plotting against the Sultan. Balban was determined to suppress the nobles. He believed that the king was God's representative and should be respected like God on earth. He introduced the practices of "Sijda" (prostration before the Sultan) and "Paibos" (kissing the Sultan's feet). He organized his court based on Iranian traditions. He did not give important positions to non-Turkish nobles in the court. He himself did not drink alcohol but would take a cup of wine from the hands of his Turkish nobles. He declared his eldest son Muhammad (the martyred prince) as his successor. Balban did not want to rule as a puppet in the hands of the Turkish nobles but wanted to rule according to his own will, free from their influence. He tried to establish high-ranking Iranian and Arab political principles in the court. By belittling non-Ilbari chiefs, he tried to re-establish the importance of the Ilbari dynasty in the Delhi Sultanate. For some time, Balban wanted to abolish the slave system, but he could not do so due to many difficulties. He ensured the security against Mongol invasions and reorganized the administration. These actions of Balban made the Sultanate's position stronger than before.

Balban's Works: The works (achievements) of Balban's time can be conveniently divided into two categories. The first category includes those works based on which Balban established control over the nobles and other opponents and tried to strengthen the Sultan's ability to secure against external invasions. Such works can be placed under his policy of "blood and iron" for his repressive management.

First Category

Control Over Turkish Chiefs: To strengthen his position, Balban first began to gather the old loyal chiefs of Ilutmish around him. After that, he started the process of establishing control over ambitious Turkish chiefs. To maintain the Sultan's authority as supreme, Balban propounded the 'theory of kingship' and presented himself to the people as God's representative. He firmly established his respect in the court. He did not appoint people of non-Turkish descent to high positions and punished treacherous individuals. Only Turks of noble blood were reinstated to high positions. Not only that, but nobles of suspicious character were humiliated and punished. His spies were spread in every corner and gave him all the information about his opponents. Balban even had his younger brother Sher Khan killed. Malik Bakhtiyar, the governor of Badaun, Haibat Khan, the governor of Amin Khan, and the ruler Amir Ali were also humiliated and punished. The property of the nobles was confiscated, and their families were kept under strict control. As a result, the 'Chahalgani' (the Forty) was eliminated, and the Sultan became all-powerful. Many historians have criticized this harsh repressive policy of Balban. Barni and Nizami supported his strict rules. Balban ignored the interests of the Turkish ruling class. He did not appoint anyone from the new Firdausi lineage of Iranian descent to high positions, except for the Turks. He strictly enforced the practices of Sijda and Paibos in the court. He controlled drinking and luxuries. He even forbade the Turkish chiefs from laughing and joking excessively in the court.

Suppression of Internal Rebellions: After strengthening his position, Balban focused on suppressing internal rebellions. He first suppressed the disturbances of the Mewatis. They used to loot and rob in the areas around Delhi, which troubled the lives of Delhi residents. Balban himself led the army and clashed with the Mewatis. He had hundreds of Mewatis killed and forced the rest to leave Delhi. After this, the rebellions of Malik Bakhtiyar, the governor of Badaun, and Haibat Khan, the governor of Awadh, were suppressed. Haibat Khan was declared a traitor and sentenced to death by hanging. In Delhi, he tried to establish law and order. He freed the routes and roads from robbers. The suppression of the Mewatis not only established peace in the areas near Delhi but also increased the military power of the Sultanate. Besides the areas near Delhi, peace was also achieved in Uttar Pradesh. Similarly, Balban also suppressed the Rajputs of the Doab who had created disturbances. They had looted temples and police stations, making revenue collection difficult. Balban took strict steps and forced them to surrender. After the suppression of all these, the farmers of this region breathed a sigh of relief, and this province became safe for revenue farmers and government officials. Military outposts were established to maintain peace in these areas. Hindu chiefs who rebelled against Balban, their women and children were enslaved and brought to Delhi. Balban took strict punitive actions against the rebels. The defeated rebels were brutally put to death. Thus, Balban's feudal army of "blood and iron" suppressed the rebels and established peace and order in this region. He also suppressed the rebellions of the Shah-i-Raiyat (peasant-king).

Tughril Khan's Rebellion in Bengal: The most dangerous rebellion during Balban's time was that of Tughril Khan in Bengal. Tughril was Balban's Turkish slave. Although he was given this position in military service, Balban, due to his ability and experience, made him the independent ruler of Lakhnauti in 1279 AD when it rebelled. He had the Khutba (sermon) read in his name and had coins minted. Upon receiving news of this rebellion, Balban sent his most loyal noble to suppress it, but he returned unsuccessful. Some more chiefs were sent to suppress the rebellion. Two other commanders (Targhi and Sahasrawa) were also defeated by Tughril. Balban now himself attacked Bengal. Tughril fled to Orissa but was caught and killed there. A reign of terror was established in Lakhnauti, and many rebels were hanged. Balban said, "How did a Turkish slave dare to rebel to defeat an old and weak man like me?" Hundreds of Mongol soldiers were captured and enslaved, and they were branded on their bodies with hot iron whips for high ranks and titles. Such a horrific sight had never been seen before, and many people were freed from terror and hatred. He reinstated his son Bughra Khan as the governor of Bengal. While returning to Delhi, he also warned Bughra Khan to always remain loyal to the Sultan.

Timur Khan's Invasion (Mongol Invasion): There was always a fear of Mongol invaders on the northwestern border of India. Balban had previously fought the Mongols in this region. After becoming Sultan, Balban took measures for the security of this border. Old forts were repaired, and new forts were built. Military units were established. An army under Sher Khan was reinstated for the security of the frontier, and he himself prevented the Mongol flood from advancing further. After his death in 1270 AD, Balban entrusted the security of the provinces of Multan, Sindh, Lahore, and Samana to his two sons, Muhammad and Bughra Khan, respectively. These two maintained the security of the frontier. In 1285 AD, Lahore and Depalpur were looted due to Timur Khan's invasion. Muhammad was killed fighting the Mongols; however, Balban defended a part of his army along the Jhelum River for the Mongol ruler. Due to Balban's efforts, the Mongols could

not enter India. In the last years of his life, Balban did not achieve many significant decisions as Sultan, yet his rule and that of the former Sultans became much more extensive.

Second Category

Balban's second category of works mainly includes his theory of kingship and the administrative structure. These actions were aimed at maintaining the dignity of the Sultan's position and providing stability to the Turkish state.

Balban's Theory of Kingship:

Balban was the first Sultan of Delhi who established the principles of kingship. Like the ancient rulers of India, he believed in the divine theory of kingship. Through this, he wanted to make the Sultan's power unlimited. The main elements of his theory of kingship were as follows:

- The Sultan is God's representative.
- He is entitled to God's guidance.
- The Sultan is "Zille Allah," meaning the shadow of God.
- He claimed to be God's deputy ("Nayab").

Balban also believed that "the heart of the king is a special repository of God's grace, and in this regard, no one is a partner." He had unwavering faith in absolutism. He advised his nobles to obey the Sultan's orders. Therefore, "keep yourselves loyal to the Sultan and advise your future generations to obey as well." He also taught his sons to rule according to the high ideals of kingship and to make their personal character exemplary so that others could follow them. He also well understood the responsibilities and duties of a king. He had a monopoly on the administration of justice. He maintained the security of high lineage and power. The Sultan adopted the divine theory of the king, which was given special importance at that time.

Some historians believe that when Balban ascended the throne, the Sultan's prestige had become almost non-existent. Many of Iltutmish's successor Sultans had lost their lives as victims of the conspiracies of the Turkish nobles. In such a situation, there was a need for a strong and powerful organization of military and civil power, which could not only end the power of the nobles but also establish control over law and order. Due to the protection of several weak Sultans before him, the power of the nobles had increased greatly. It was necessary for the Sultan to make himself all-powerful. He knew that Balban's attempt to elevate the Sultan to a high position was merely his stubbornness and a way to prove himself superior and powerful. Behind these constant teachings, one can sense the complex knots of his inferiority complex and guilt. To crush the constant rebellious spirit of his subordinates and nobles, most of whom were his companions over the years, he declared kingship a divine institution. He used to say that the high position of kingship he held was obtained through divine and supernatural qualities. In any rebellion or unrest, anyone who participates in a riot or uses a dagger for "justice" is a coward. Before becoming Sultan, Balban gave the divine theory of kingship to compensate for the lack of his legitimate right to the throne. Along with this, it is also possible that Balban was not freed from the group of Turkish slaves, so he was legally ineligible for the position of Sultan. Therefore, through these actions, Balban aimed to be powerful in the court. He gave special importance to these actions and established terror. This

was an important success for Balban, and his policy strengthened the foundation of monarchy in the Delhi Sultanate. The king was the highest point of the triangle of "God, ruler, and ruled." The nobles were only his assistants; the subjects had to obey the ruler unquestioningly. The nobles' power, prestige, and property were solely based on the Sultan.

Military System: Balban's vast empire was plagued by various military problems, so he focused on reorganizing the army. He increased the number of his soldiers. योग्य (competent/qualified) soldiers and officers were appointed in the army. Arrangements were made for their training and supervision. Efforts were made for proper arrangements for the soldiers' living and food. However, military problems were not resolved quickly. In addition, those soldiers who were not fit for service had their jagirs taken back, and they were given pensions. He gave them adequate salaries instead of revenue-free land. Soldiers equipped with good weapons, good breeds of horses, and trained in wartime movements were organized into units. Special attention was paid to the discipline of the soldiers. They were strictly instructed to always be ready for war so that they would never be defeated. They were strictly forbidden to commit any kind of atrocities on the innocent public. Military campaigns were always kept secret. Possibly, the practice of branding army horses also began during this time.

Administrative Reforms: Balban himself kept strict supervision over every department of the administration. He himself appointed all important government officials, such as those in the finance department. Strict monitoring was maintained over the governors. They always had to follow the interests of the Sultan. He separated military and financial powers. Diwans (finance officers) and Faujdars (military commanders) were appointed in the provinces. This new system prevented the concentration of more power in the hands of officials who collected revenue. Officials were instructed to treat the public properly.

Organization of the Spy Department: To monitor officials, the people of the state, and opponents, Balban organized a strong spy department. These "Barids" (spies) were spread throughout the empire and conveyed news of every important event in the state to the Sultan. They were given many facilities, but they were severely punished for not fulfilling their responsibilities properly. If a Barid did not report news of a local official's wrongdoing in time, he had to face punishment. The fear of the Barids' actions severely dominated all people during this period because they had not fulfilled their duties. It was with the help of spies that Balban was able to establish himself as a successful ruler.

Reorganization of the Iqta'dars: An important task of Balban was the reorganization of the Iqta'dars in the Doab region. This was a necessary step for the reorganization of these Iqta'dars. Taking advantage of the disorder that prevailed after Iltutmish, the Iqta'dars had become very independent. Therefore, Balban confiscated about two thousand Iqtas in the Doab. So many Iqtas had become hereditary that military personnel were taking advantage of their control over these positions. Many of these Iqta'dars had become old and were no longer fit for military service. Therefore, a pension system was arranged for these Iqta'dars. योग्य (competent/qualified) and capable individuals were recruited into the army in their place. A system of tax-free land was abolished. At the request of some Turkish chiefs, the return of hereditary Iqtas was also reversed, but Balban established effective control over the Iqta'dar system.

Balban established an economic-civil and economic-military administrative system. He emphasized the strengthening of central power and established control over the 'Sharifs' (nobles) who made false claims. According to the historian Barni, Balban wanted to give the administration a foundational structure. He expected balanced behavior from both officers and officials. He also wanted the government to be firm in its policies, to keep traders prosperous and satisfied, to make proper use of the state's economic resources, and to keep the army happy. In short, Balban acted according to such ideals and established peace and justice.

Significance of Balban's Reign:

After ruling for about 20 years, Balban died in 1287 AD. Barni says, "On Balban's death, the sorrowing women tore their clothes and threw dust on their heads, soaking the Sultan's body from head to toe with tears of mourning. His death was mourned for forty days, and sadness spread over the land." Undoubtedly, Balban was a great ruler. He made his opponents acknowledge his abilities. He strengthened the administration as the state and as the Sultan. His contribution to providing stability to the Turkish state in India is immense. Although Balban as Sultan could not achieve much expansion or make significant conquests, his greatest achievement was that he raised the Sultan's authority to the height of a transcendent and universally respected position. He reduced the influence of powerful and rebellious nobles. He created a loyal ruling class. To maintain his power and influence, he resorted to terrorism and ruthlessly crushed his opponents, but he adopted a liberal attitude towards the public. He considered justice and fair judgment the primary duty of a king. To give equal justice to all without bias was his basis. It was the only means he used to establish peace. That is why, upon the death of this cruel ruler, people mourned instead of shedding tears of relief, and the nobles grieved. Professor Ishwari Prasad considers Balban the protector of the newly established Muslim state in India and a great figure in medieval Indian history. Undoubtedly, despite being a ruler, Balban was a pious man. He strictly followed the rules of the Quran. He also patronized art and literature. He provided shelter to many Muslim scholars, poets, historians, and saints who came to India, devastated by the Mongol invasions. His court had a high place for Persian literature, scientific studies, and art. The most famous among them were the Hindi and Persian scholar and poet Amir Khusrau. Undoubtedly, Balban was the most influential among the early Turks. Iltutmish left the work unfinished, and Balban provided stability to it through his policies.

Historians Habib and Nizami, while reviewing Balban's achievements, also draw our attention to his failures. According to them, the state did not gain lasting benefits from Balban's elitist tendencies. The policy of giving excessive importance to the nobility of rulers was not possible in the prevailing circumstances. There were two reasons for this. First, the increasing number of new Muslims were from outside the Turkish race. Second, political necessity demanded that even powerful foreign Hindus be given a place in the administrative system, but Balban did not do so. His army, formed on the basis of nobility, also could not become very effective. Balban's military weaknesses are not unfortunate. In fact, Balban's policy of giving importance to nobility instead of merit ultimately proved harmful to the state. Soon after Balban's death, the rule of his dynasty ended. Balban could not make the establishment of his kingship permanent. This can be considered his biggest failure.

Balban's contribution to the strengthening of the Delhi Sultanate is greater than that of Iltutmish as Sultan. However, he provided stability to the Delhi Sultanate. Although his dynasty ended, his political system did not ultimately disappear.

A Comparative Estimate of Balban and Iltutmish:

Among the early (freed from slavery) Sultans of Delhi, Iltutmish was a great and important ruler. Through his actions, he succeeded in providing stability and strength to the Sultanate. There is no disagreement among various historians on this. Some historians consider Balban to be somewhat more important for the Delhi Sultanate than his predecessor. Their comparison can be made on the following grounds:

Both Iltutmish and Balban were slaves. Iltutmish was bought by nobles of Turkish descent, and Balban was bought by Iltutmish. Both were more capable than Balban. Both rose to high positions in the administration through their talent, established their influence on the politics of Delhi, and ultimately became Sultans. Both obtained the Sultanate under different circumstances. When Iltutmish became Sultan in 1210 AD, the throne of Delhi was held by a weak and incompetent ruler like Aram Shah. At this time, the condition of the Delhi Sultanate was deplorable. There was a danger of its disintegration. In such a situation, Iltutmish, impressed by merit and for the security of the Turkish state, formed a new group of Turkish nobles called the 'Chahalgani' (the Forty). This group hindered Iltutmish's imperialistic ambitions. Balban acquired the throne of Delhi more easily. He ruled as the Naib (Regent) during the reign of Nasiruddin Mahmud. He was the real center of power. The Sultan had already strengthened his position by controlling his luxurious activities and taking interest in his administration. Therefore, after Nasiruddin's death, Balban easily became the Sultan of Delhi. No one opposed him.

After becoming Sultan, both Iltutmish and Balban faced almost similar complex problems. Iltutmish's biggest problem was to end the power of the Turkish nobles and the Forty chiefs. Its ambitious members wanted to achieve higher positions. They had become powerful. They always hindered the Sultan's work and acted according to their own wishes. The Rajput rulers and Hindu officials had also become a major challenge for the Sultanate. Iltutmish dealt with this carefully and through administrative reforms. Balban's problems were also almost the same, but from a comparative perspective, Balban's position was stronger. By remaining in the position of Naib for about 20 years, he had maintained control over the state and administration. Therefore, he became the unopposed Sultan. After becoming Sultan, Balban's major problems were to curb the power of the Turkish nobles and to establish the power and prestige of the Sultanate.

Both Iltutmish and Balban were skilled generals, courageous, determined, and efficient administrators. Externally, both paid attention to the security of the interests of the people from the northwest, but their methods were different in this regard. Iltutmish's control was undoubtedly greater. Neither Iltutmish nor Balban hesitated from bloodshed when necessary. Both their personal lives were far from luxury. They acted according to the rules of the Quran, but both adopted a liberal policy in religious matters.

Before becoming Sultan, both Iltutmish and Balban faced many weaknesses. Iltutmish had to deal with his opponents and fraudsters. Both Sultans ended conspiracies and conspiratorial groups and established control over rebellions. To break the power of the opposing nobles, Iltutmish formed the 'Chahalgani,' but Balban destroyed the power of this 'Chahalgani' and centralized power in his own hands. Balban established the Sultan's authority by freeing himself from the control of the Turkish nobles. This was a major achievement for him.

Both Iltutmish and Balban tried to increase the power and prestige of the Sultan, but Balban was a more effective ruler in this area. By establishing an absolute monarchy, Balban made the Sultan's position a symbol of divine right and respect. He gave the Sultan's position a divine form similar to that of ancient Indian rulers. As a result, he received the respect and cooperation of both the public and the noble class. Although Iltutmish strengthened his position by obtaining the approval of the Caliph, Balban was able to make the Sultan's position even more influential than Iltutmish.

Both Iltutmish and Balban were rich in military talent. Iltutmish expanded the borders of the Sultanate through his military victories. He ensured the security of the state from foreign invasions. However, the threat of Mongol invasion remained on the northwest border. Balban also conducted many military campaigns, but as Sultan, he did not succeed in any major imperial expansion. Balban's only military achievement as Sultan was the re-establishment of the Sultanate's authority in Bengal.

Balban's achievements in the administrative field are more significant than those of Iltutmish. Iltutmish tried to strengthen the administrative system by establishing the Iqta system. He also emphasized military organization and reformed the justice system. Balban's greatest achievement was the formulation of a new theory of kingship. He re-established the power and prestige of the Sultan and established a strong administrative system. He adopted a repressive policy of blood and iron, strengthened the intelligence system, and centralized the administration. Balban's administrative reforms established peace and order throughout the state.

Both Iltutmish and Balban also faced the threat of Mongol invasion. During Iltutmish's time, the newly formed Turkish state faced the potential invasion of the Mongol leader Genghis Khan. However, Iltutmish, displaying his political foresight and diplomacy, created a situation that forced Genghis Khan to return from across the Indus River. This should be considered a major achievement of Iltutmish, as the newly established Turkish state was not in a position to face the Mongol invasion. Balban also faced the Mongols, but he secured his borders. However, the death of Muhammad (the martyred prince) was a great shock to him. Despite this, Balban prevented the Mongol invaders from entering India.

Similarities can also be seen between Iltutmish and Balban in relation to art and literature. Both Sultans showed interest in patronizing art and literature. With the death of Iltutmish, the construction of magnificent buildings in Delhi was interrupted. Balban was considered a lover of art. However, before or after him, other rulers of Delhi ruthlessly destroyed art. With Nasiruddin Mahmud, Iltutmish's dynasty ended. He was also possibly murdered by Balban. Similarly, a few years after Balban's death, his successors had to lose power. Both Kaiqubad and Kaimur lost their

lives. Through a bloodless revolution, the Khaljis seized the throne of Delhi in 1290 AD. Thus, both Iltutmish and Balban left a do-or-die path as a legacy for their descendants.

Despite these many similarities, there were some differences between Balban and Iltutmish. Iltutmish was liberal and calm by nature, while Balban was cruel and autocratic. Iltutmish wholeheartedly accepted the authority of the Caliph, but Balban did not accept this criticism and centralized power in his own hands. Balban established the Sultan's authority by freeing himself from the control of the Turkish nobles. This was a major achievement for him.

Iltutmish is the real founder of the Turkish state in India, and Balban further strengthened its foundations. He established peace in the country by suppressing many internal rebellions. He became Sultan immediately after the rule of the weak successor Aram Shah. His dynasty ended within three years of his death, but the Mamluk Sultans continued to rule for many years on the strong foundation laid by Iltutmish. If Iltutmish had not established the Turkish state, Balban could not have made his rule as effective as he did.

The Khalji Revolt and Disintegration of the Mamluk State (Slave Rule):

Balban's successors were incompetent and ineffective Sultans. With his death in 1287 AD, the dynasty of Sultans came to an end. Many reasons were responsible for the fall of the Sultan's dynasty. The Khaljis revolted, established power, and laid the foundation of a new dynasty – the Khalji dynasty.

Kaiqubad:

Balban wanted to appoint his most योग्य (incompetent/unworthy) grandson Muhammad as his successor, but Balban's nobles opposed him. As a result, after Balban's death, his grandson Kaiqubad was appointed his successor; however, he was not a powerful Sultan. He was always immersed in luxurious pleasures. His nobles became active again. They themselves made Kaiqubad the Sultan and nominated him to maintain their dominance over his rule. Due to Kaiqubad's incompetence, the Kotwal (police chief) Fakhruddin acquired significant power. The factions of nobles clashed among themselves, reaching even the Sultan.

Balban had raised Kaiqubad with great affection and strict discipline. He was also given restrained education; but as soon as he became Sultan, he disregarded those traditions and became indifferent to happiness and sorrow. Consequently, his interest in the royal court ended. He always remained surrounded by flatterers, dancers, jesters, and clowns. The discipline of the court ended. Nobles and officials began to adopt an autocratic attitude. Conspiracies dominated the court. Due to the Sultan's incompetence, the superiority of the Turkish nobles ended. Each noble became the king of his own region. Power became centralized in the hands of nobles and officials. Unrest and disorder engulfed the entire state.

The Naib (Viceroy) and Ariz-ul-Mumalik (Minister of War) Nizamuddin of Delhi, who was the nephew and son-in-law of Kotwal Fakhruddin, took advantage of this situation. Through his wife, he kept the Sultan entangled in revelry and continued to expand his power within the harem. He himself was looking for an opportunity to seize the Sultan's position. He took all the rights of the

Naib into his own hands. He had his opposing nobles murdered, their property confiscated, and they were humiliated and punished. He even had the paralyzed Kaiqubad murdered. At this time, the entire control of the government depended on Bughra Khan (the Sultan's father) in Bengal, so he refused to interfere in the government. Now Kaiqubad was completely paralyzed. His unhealthy mother advised Kaiqubad, but he did not receive a reply. Finally, on the advice of the nobles, an elderly Turkish noble named Jalaluddin Khalji was appointed as the guardian. He was entrusted with the responsibility of running the government of Delhi along with 'Kaimur' and his other minor sons. Jalaluddin marched towards Delhi with the old nobles and the army. Nizamuddin summoned Bughra Khan and asked him to accept his subordination. Initially, the armies of both sides clashed. Bughra Khan sent a message of reconciliation through mediation. After accepting Nizamuddin's subordination, Bughra Khan forced his son to come to Delhi. But Kaiqubad suspected Nizamuddin, and Bughra Khan found his position suspicious. Consequently, Bughra Khan returned to Bengal after advising Kaiqubad to be cautious of Nizamuddin.

The Khalji Revolution: Ignoring his father's advice, Kaiqubad ordered Nizamuddin to go to Multan, but he did not pay attention to it. Consequently, Kaiqubad, enraged, had Nizamuddin murdered. Kaiqubad now began to try to establish his influence on the government. On the advice of his Turkish nobles, important positions were given to the Khaljis. He had understood the importance of the Khalji chiefs who fought the Mongols. The most योग्य (competent/able) and अमीर (wealthy/powerful) among the Khaljis was Jalaluddin (Muhammad Khalji). Through this diplomacy, Kaiqubad angered the Turkish nobles. They plotted to kill the Khaljis. The Sultan was ill and bedridden for a long time. The Turkish nobles placed Kaiqubad's minor son Kaimur on the throne. Jalaluddin was appointed his guardian. In the meantime, Kaiqubad was also murdered.

The New Dynasty: Keeping the power of Ishwari... (the text seems to have a slight break here, but the meaning is that the Khaljis were now challenging the existing power structure). Jalaluddin's threat forced many Turkish nobles (Ghiyasuddin) to go outside Delhi to Baharpur. This frightened the people of Delhi. Jalaluddin ordered Kaimur to be brought to Delhi along with Jalaluddin. The people of Delhi enthusiastically opposed Jalaluddin and imprisoned him. Although Jalaluddin killed many Khaljis, keeping in mind the representation of the people, he installed Kaimur on the throne as Sultan and himself remained his guardian. Three months later, Kaimur was imprisoned and murdered, and Jalaluddin himself became Sultan (1290 AD). Thus, the rule of the Ilbari Turks ended, and the power of the Khalji dynasty was established.

Significance of the Khalji Revolution: The Khalji Revolution has special significance in medieval Indian history. Initially, the rule of the Khaljis was not accepted by the nobles of Delhi, and they opposed it, but later they had to accept it. The Khaljis acquired power by force and maintained their authority by force. They acquired power without hereditary succession, election, tradition, religious fanaticism, or local acceptance, or the consent of the people, nobles, and Ulema (religious scholars). The Khalji Revolution, by establishing the dominance of public opinion over "royal blood," proved that might is everything. A person could seize power if he had the strength and ability to keep it in his hands. In the words of Professor S. S. Lal, "This (the Khalji Revolution) not only marked the rise of a new dynasty but also ushered in an era of continuous victories, extraordinary uses of diplomacy, and unparalleled literary activity." In fact, the Khalji Revolution has an important place

in the development of Muslim kingship in India. Its significance was not just a change of dynasty and monarchy. During the Khalji rule, there was a struggle with the new Muslims. Military power was challenging the religion of the monarchy and the noble class. The Khaljis gave importance to power and ability instead of racial pride. Now they were challenging the influence of the nobles and the religious rules of governance. The main aim of the Khalji Revolution was to establish the superiority of power. This revolution in history was a struggle between "royal blood" and "non-royal blood," in which ultimately non-royal blood triumphed, and the Khalji dynasty established its dominance over the Delhi Sultanate. In short, the Khalji Revolution was the end of an era and the beginning of a new one.

It must also be remembered that the rule of the Khaljis also had some misfortunes. Despite all their achievements, the Khaljis could not gain the same respect and affection from the common people as the Mamluk Sultans had received. According to Dr. R. P. Tripathi, the Khalji Revolution weakened the political structure of the Delhi Sultanate. According to him, "If the Khaljis did not improve the political and administrative traditions, then only through violence and blood, with their weak and incomplete power, which was theoretically and from a distance anarchic, new inspiration for rights and duties and hope and obedience would be established." The Khalji Revolution presented such a fatal example of maintaining the dynamism of the daily life of the government that it was weakening the vitality of the Delhi Sultanate.

The Sultanate established by Alauddin Aibak and Iltutmish, and stabilized by Balban, collapsed within 100 years. Several factors contributed to this. The Turks had lost their moral ground, resulting in a lack of public support. The Turkish rulers also did not treat the entire population equally. They failed to establish clear rules of succession, leading to succession struggles after each Sultan's death, which greatly harmed the newly established Turkish state. Turkish nobles were constantly involved in conspiracies and factions. Insufficient attention was paid to administration, and no efforts were made to make it liberal and welfare-oriented. With a few exceptions, most Sultans of this dynasty were incompetent and unfit to rule. Real power rested in the hands of nobles and officials, making the Sultan merely a puppet. In such a situation, ambitious nobles were always trying to seize power. The Turks' policy towards Hindus and the people of the country involved heavy taxation and a condescending attitude aimed at maintaining their prestige. Taking advantage of this intolerance, the Khaljis established a new dynasty through a revolution.

The Causes for the Decline of the Mamluk Dynasty:

The early Turkish Sultans of Delhi, or the Mamluk dynasty (Slave dynasty), founded by Qutb al-Din Aibak and Iltutmish and given stability and consolidation by Balban, ended within 100 years (1206-1290). After Balban, there was no योग्य (competent/worthy) ruler in his lineage who could manage the Sultanate. Consequently, the Khaljis politically took advantage and ended the rule of the Turks, laying the foundation of the Khalji imperialism. Many reasons were responsible for the fall of the Turkish rule.

Foreign Origin of the Delhi Sultans: The circumstances in which the Turks established their victory over India and laid the foundation of the Delhi Sultanate prevented the Turkish Sultans or the Turkish state from gaining public support. The Turks were still considered foreigners and invaders. Therefore, the Rajput rulers continued to try to end the rule of the Turks. The Sultans did not try to adopt Indian culture. Turkish rulers always favored the upper-class Turks. They believed in Turkish racial pride and looked down upon other castes. Turkish Sultans also discriminated in the justice system. They maintained a harsh policy towards Indian rulers. Even Turkish nobles were forbidden to establish marital relations with Indian rulers. The majority of the state's revenue came from Indian farmers, but the Turkish rulers did not adopt a liberal policy that would have earned the Sultan the affection of the poor and oppressed subjects. On the contrary, they focused more on the Sultan's power and prestige. The nobles became excessively powerful and made the Sultan merely a puppet. The election of the successor of a deceased Sultan was also done by the sword. To maintain their power, many incompetent and weak Sultans had their successors blinded or murdered. Thus, the lack of a definite rule of succession deeply weakened the power of the early Turkish Sultans.

Nature of Turkish Rule: The Turkish Sultans established a kind of autocratic military rule in India. In this, all powers were concentrated in the hands of the Sultan and his military officers. The administrative system of these Turkish rulers was entirely military in nature. As long as the Sultan was powerful, he controlled the administration, but as soon as a weak ruler came to the throne, the nobles and military officials seized control of the administration. This happened even after the death of Iltutmish and Balban. Turkish nobles and military officials became involved in conspiracies. No attention was paid to administration, as a result of which the decline of the Sultanate began. The tax collection system was weak. No effort was made to make it liberal and welfare-oriented, due to which the Sultans of Delhi could not get the support and cooperation of the public.

Weak and Incompetent Sultans: Among the early Turkish Sultans who ruled Delhi, except for Qutb al-Din Aibak, Iltutmish, and Balban, all other rulers were weak and incompetent. Either they had character flaws, or circumstances had made them weak. During Aram Shah's time, all power passed into the hands of conspirators. Firoz Shah spent all his time in luxurious pleasures. The Ulema class and Turkish nobles raised the banner of revolt against Razia's rule. The reign of Bahram Shah and his other successors was always a victim of the conspiracies of the Turkish nobles. Nasiruddin Mahmud was a weak ruler with religious inclinations. Balban had become the real ruler. After Balban's death, so much power was concentrated in his hands that Balban became the inevitable Sultan after the death of Sultan Mahmud. Kaiqubad spent all his time in luxurious pleasures and beautiful women. He was always surrounded by flatterers and clowns. During his time, the administrative and courtly dignity established by Balban went into decline. No power could remain safe in the hands of such incompetent Sultans.

Rise of Powerful Turkish Nobles: From the beginning, the basis of the power of the Turkish Sultans in India was the Turkish nobles or the military department. The state was established with the cooperation of Iltutmish. During Balban's reign, the dominance of the nobles was fully established on the throne of the Turkish Sultanate. The Turkish nobles had become so powerful that the Sultan could not do anything against their wishes. On special occasions, they even elected a new Sultan. Instead of increasing the Sultan's power, the Turkish nobles made him a puppet in the hands

of their chief associates. Balban, inevitably taking into account the opposition of powerful and noble Turkish nobles, adopted a very harsh policy, using blood and the sword. All important positions in the state were reserved for such people. The group of forty Turkish nobles of Iltutmish had expanded their power so much that they had a deep influence on the administration of the Delhi Sultanate. They made whomever they wanted the Sultan and dethroned whomever they wanted. Balban destroyed the power of the 'Chahalgani' (the Forty), but the dominance of other Turkish nobles remained. In fact, from the beginning to the end of the Turkish Sultanate, the Turkish nobles continued to pressure the Sultans to maintain control over the administration and to preserve their important rights and autonomy. Weak rulers even sacrificed their lives to autocratic Sultans. The situation deteriorated to such an extent that a weak Sultan could not rule without the support and cooperation of the Turkish nobles. The most unfortunate thing was that the Turkish nobles protected their own interests, not those of the Sultan and the state. This situation proved fatal for the Turkish state.

Opposition of Rajput States: After Balban, the rise of the Rajputs in Indian politics was an important political event. These Rajput rulers had opposed Turkish rule during the invasions of Mahmud Ghaznavi and Muhammad Ghori. It was by defeating these Rajput rulers that the Turks established the Turkish state in India. Compelled by political, economic, and religious reasons, the Rajputs revolted against the Sultans of Delhi whenever they got the opportunity and openly challenged their authority. Rebellions always occurred in Doab, Central India, and Rajputana. The early Turks spent most of their time and energy in suppressing internal rebellions and establishing control over the religious power of the Sultans and the opponents of the empire. The Sultans suppressed internal rebellions many times, but they could not eliminate them. The Rajput states struck a severe blow to Turkish power.

Impact of Mongol Invasions: The early Turkish Sultans always faced troubles from the northwestern frontier as well. The Mongols and Khokhars constantly created disturbances on the northwest border. Therefore, the Sultans of Delhi spent a great deal of time and energy in securing the Turkish state from these Mongol invaders. Almost all Turkish Sultans had to grapple with the problems of the Mongols. These people tried to arrange security in Lahore and the frontier region and to keep the Mongols away from India (Delhi) through political territory, but they failed to stop the Mongol invasions on the northwest frontier region. Mongol invasions weakened the Sultanate economically and militarily. Many important soldiers were killed during the Mongol invasions. The Mongols did not give the Sultans of Delhi an opportunity to establish permanent peace. The Sultans had to stay continuously in Delhi; they could not leave the capital hastily. As a result, provincial officials, especially the provincial rulers of Lahore, became very autocratic. With the weakening of the central authority, the rebellions of these provincial governors became more powerful, which ultimately contributed to the fall of the Sultanate.

