

BOOK REVIEW

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 Author of the book: Fouzia Farooq Ahmed
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Fouzia Farooq Ahmed's book *MUSLIM RULE IN MEDIEVAL INDIA: POWER AND RELIGION IN THE DELHI SULTANATE* gives insight into the historical account of the Delhi Sultans and their power holding measures. Ahmed's arguments revolve around the Sultans, their initiatives for stabilizing their rule and the patrimonial bureaucratic staff of the sultan. Likewise, she generates an argument regarding the disintegration of the rules. She argues that sultans rule was concerned with sultan himself only. Weak sultan brought chances of the disintegration of his rule and strong sultan tried to concentrate on the personalization of his rule to make it safe from his rivals. In her words, the power structure of the Delhi sultan was concentrated on sultan himself due to inefficient bureaucratic system. While she also discusses all accounts of the emergence to the downfall of the Delhi Sultanate. Ahmed analyzed that sultanate was not centralized in Delhi Sultanate but a sultan himself tried to be centralized by his own measures and kept all powers in his hands. Further, Social base was taken from power and religion to legitimize their centralized/personalized rule.

She traces the authority patterns of the Muslim rules from Arab invasions and the ruling measure taken by Ghaznavids and Ghurids for rooting out them with Delhi sultanate. The historical background of the Delhi sultanate has been given by Fouzia Farooq Ahmed in the analytical approach regarding the emergence of Arabs, Ghaznavids and Ghurids. Ahmed describes the power structure of the Delhi sultanate while creating a base in the form of the description of structural power dynamics of the Arabs, Ghaznavids and Ghurids.

It can be said that the Indian political culture was, to some extent, based on how to concentrate power in one hand and how to maintain the rule. Around 500 BC Kautilya compiled a book *ARTHASHASTRA*, in which the realistic measures were highlighted regarding the conservation of power and rule. Likewise, Ahmed's account says regarding the Tughluq that they were intrigued from three directions such as from their kinsmen, hostile groups of umra (nobility), and local political elite. Therefore, all the measure whether brutal or kind were taken to crush the opponents and establish personalized rule based on the personal powerbase.

Ahmed's arguments regarding the use of religious and cultural symbols in Delhi sultanate is worth mentioning. the more inclination of the scholars towards the religion of Delhi sultanate was that the sultans were orthodox in their religious matters but Fouzia analyses that the religion was just one of the sources of legitimacy. Ghaznavids used Sunni orthodox Islam to legitimize their rule. The locals were made understand that the ruler was not alone in his doings but foreign hands were supporting the ruler. Fouzia's

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arguments are clear that Mahmud and Masud symbolized Islam and their military attacks were secular. Especially, like Ghanvids, Ghurids, Iltutmish and Balban used cultural and religious symbols to legitimize their rule but the same veracity of the using of religious and cultural symbols is missing during the rule of Ala al-Din Khilji.

Ahmed further analysis the governmental nature of the Delhi sultanate. The patrimonial Bureaucratic patronage was the core instrument of the Delhi sultans. But the administrative instruments were inefficient because of the overwhelming personalized control of the sultan over the instruments and incompetent way of the appointing of the bureaucrats. Sultan Shihab Al- Din Ghuri relied extensively on the patrimonial bureaucratic staff and patrimonial officers, to some extent, were sub-sovereigns. On the other hand, Iltutmish divided his staff in hierarchy such as Khan, Malik, Amir, and Sipah Salar. Further, Ahmed argues that after the death of Iltutmish, the umra/nobility were the powerbase. They were the decision makers at that time. Razia Sultana's enthronement was also the step of the nobility.

Ahmed further describes that although the Delhi sultans tried to implement new reforms and new policies to strengthen their rule yet they were failure due to basic flaws in their ruling pattern. The law of succession was missing. They were not able to create social base. Their nobility always tried to introduce oligarchy. During Delhi sultanate, there was a game of throne. All the sections of society were in a chance to overtake the rule. The major and minor rebellions were related to chance. Unlike Shihab Al-Din Ghuri and Aybeg, Iltutmish was successful to convert his rule into a dynasty. But it also failed after some course of time. The core flaw of the Delhi sultanate was lies in the absence of the law of succession and personalization of the rule. The Delhi sultans were not legalist but it was law whatever they uttered or decided. Apart from law of succession and legalism, they never ever tried to balance the power. All the laws especially related to maintenance and tax collection were decided by monarch himself.

Fouzia Farooq Ahmed while examining the causes of the success of the Muslim invaders, says that they were militarily accomplished. Muhammad of Ghazna divided his military in three distinctive groups such as his slaves, members of his family and free men. Although the military commanders of Shihab al-Din Ghuri enjoyed independence yet they did not announce their independence until the death of the ruler. Further, Iltutmish, Balban and Alau al-Din Khilji they all patronized and reformed military to strengthen their power base. But the inefficiency of their military administration was that the recruitments were not legalized. They wanted they appointed.

Ahmed's book is mainly dependent on the primary sources. She brought a crucial topic on the forefront. The structure of power and the use of religion have been remained a bit of discussion from many years. Unfortunately, the main theme of her topic is power and religion but the religion has not been dealt fully. Mahmud, Iltutmish, and Tughluqs religious policies have been dealt shortly. Overall religious power structure has been defined only in the one point that they used religion to avail legitimacy. But what kind of legitimacy was there when the Muslims were in a minor minority. How the social base of the local rulers accepted their legitimacy? Further, the foreign relations and their relationship with the power structure of the Delhi sultanate have been lacked as well. Only Muhammad bin Tughluq's foreign relations with China have been discussed and Mahmud's times foreign political prevalence was mentioned briefly.

In a nutshell, the book under review is a great effort to deal the broad topic of power and religion in the Delhi sultanate. The structural flaws of the government of Delhi sultanate can be linked with the present authoritative nature of the governments of Pakistan. The work indicates the root causes of the failures of the governments. It suggests that power should be balanced through division. Concentration of power in a few or one hand would lead towards destruction of the governments. In last, Ahmed argues that the power was the only rule that was also a source of the legitimization of the Delhi sultanate.