

Alauddin Khalji's market reforms were oriented more towards administrative and military necessities than internal restructuring. Alauddin's market reforms and their effectiveness was a cause of wonder to the contemporaries. Medieval rulers were expected that necessities of life, especially food grain, should be available to the city folk at fair or reasonable price. This was because the cities were centres of power and authority all over the Islamic world, the village folk being considered backward and immersed in their own narrow world.

However, apart from imposing periodical checks on the traders, few rulers had been able to control the prices effectively or for any length of time.

Alauddin Khalji was more or less the first ruler who looked at the problem of price control in a systematic manner and was able to maintain stable price for a considerable period.

Barani says that Alauddin Khalji instituted the market reforms because after the Mongol siege of Delhi, he wanted to recruit a large army, but all his treasuries would have soon been exhausted if he had to pay them their normal salaries. As a result of price control and the fall in prices, we are told that he was able to recruit a cavalryman with one horse and pay him 238 tanks annually and 75 tanks more for horses.

Barani gives a second reason for the market reforms. He thinks that it was a part of Alauddin's general policy to impoverish the Hindus so that they would cease to harbour thoughts of rebellion.

According to Barani, Alauddin set up three markets at Delhi, the first for food grains, the second for cloth of all kinds and for expensive items such as sugar, ghee, oil, dry fruits etc. and the third for horses, slaves and cattle. Detailed regulations (Zawabid) were framed for the control and administration for all these markets.

For controlling the food prices, Alauddin tried to control not only the supply of food grains from the village and its transportation to the city by the grain merchants, but also the distribution to the citizens. These undoubtedly were the three most important aspects in controlling food prices.

Alauddin's first effort was to see that there were sufficient stocks of food grains with the government, so that the leaders didn't try to hike up prices by creating an artificial scarcity, or indulge in profiteering. For the purpose, royal stores were set up at Delhi. It was ordered that in areas near Delhi, such as JHAJRAWAN, half of the royal share. One fourth of the produce was to be demanded from the peasants. The grain was first sent