

## **HISTORICAL EVOLUTION AND ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICE OF RAZIYASULTAN: FIRST AND LAST WOMAN RULER OF DELHI, INDIA**

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### **ABSTRACT:**

Iltutmish put his daughter Raziya ahead of his son Ruknuddin Firoz to become the heir to the Delhi throne. Born in 1205, Raziya Sultan ruled the nation from 1236 to 1240. The first Muslim woman to ascend to the Delhi throne was Raziya Sultan. Because they disliked Raziya as Sultan of Delhi, the Delhi nobility plotted to have her removed. This setting centred on Raziya's accession to the throne and the struggles she encountered both before and after. The emphasis is also on her management of the nobility, her efforts to curb the influence of the Turks—who had turned against the monarchy—her coinage and monetary system, and her leadership of a nation in which, at least in India, there was hardly any historical precedence for a female head of state. But several events involving women overcoming male chauvinism contributed to her downfall. The nobility, who had ruled since Sultan Iltutmish's time, deposed her in a plot, thus ending her prosperous reign. In this article, historical evolution and administrative practice of Raziya Sultan: first and last woman ruler of Delhi, India has been discussed.

**Keywords:** Raziya Sultan, Woman, Ruler, Delhi, India.

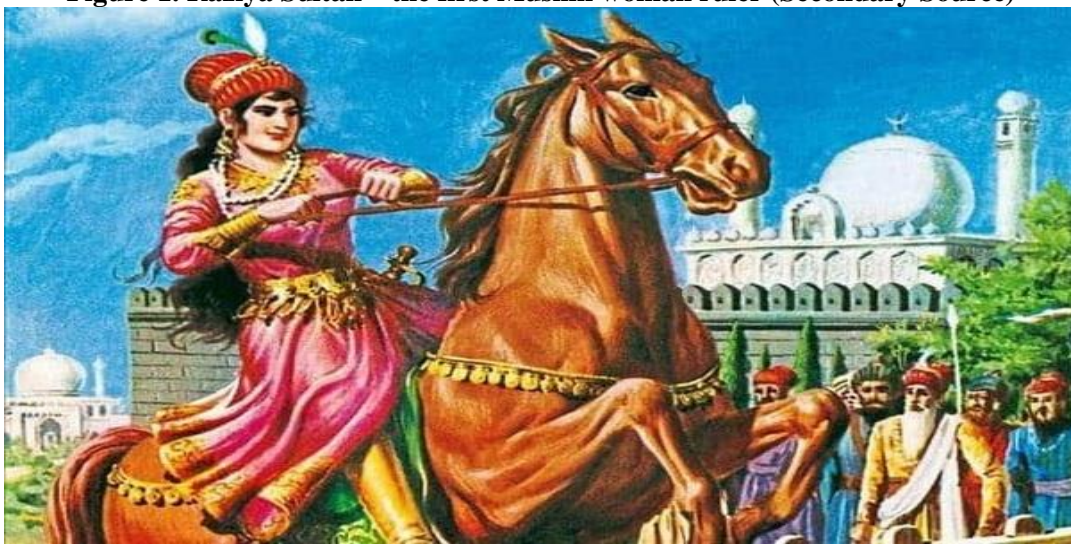
### **INTRODUCTION:**

Born in 1205, Raziya Sultan ruled the nation from 1236-1240. The first Muslim woman to hold the Delhi throne was Raziya Sultan. In 1236, after her father, Shams-ud-din Iltutmish, passed away, she became the Sultanate of Delhi. Like her father, Raziya Sultan was a great warrior, an astute administrator, and fearless. [1] Although her reign was brief, history has preserved her actions in its annals. One place that honours the memories of this brave woman is Raziya Sultan's Tomb in Delhi.

She sat in an open durbar, dressed like a male. She ruled with effectiveness and exuded royal qualities. Raziya had minimal interaction with the women of the variety of mistresses during her childhood and early adulthood; hence, she was not exposed to the expected behaviour of women in Muslim society. Yes, even prior to becoming sultan, she had a strong affinity for carrying out her father's will. As sultan, Raziya wore a man's crown and tunic; against convention, she would later show her face when leading her army on an elephant during combat. [2]



**Figure 1. Raziya Sultan – the first Muslim woman ruler (Secondary Source)**



**Figure 2. Raziya Sultan Power (Secondary Source)**

### **HISTORICAL EVOLUTION:**

India's first female ruler was Raziya Sultan. She was Shamsuddin Iltutmish's daughter. Raziya Sultan, known for being the first Muslim woman to lead the Delhi Sultanate, held the position from 1236 until 1240. Since no woman had ever governed before, the Mamluk dynasty's history did not include anyone being given the title of "Sultan" or addressing a woman as such.

One of the children of Iltutmish, Rukn-ud-daulah, sat on the throne. He oversaw Delhi for about half a year. Raziya Sultan became the ruler in 1236 after defeating her family with the help of Delhi's population.

When Sultan Raziya took the throne, everything went back to how it had been before. Nizam-al-mulk Junaidi, the state vizir, refused to show loyalty and, along with many others, declared a protracted fight against Sultan Raziya.

Later, Tabashi Mu'izzi, the legislative chief of Oudh, hurried to Delhi to aid Sultan Raziya. However, as he crossed the Ganges, the commanders engaged in combat with the city unexpectedly encountered him and took him prisoner, ultimately causing his death.

Raziya had limited interactions with the women of the sultanate during her childhood and adolescence, which prevented her from picking up on the customs of Muslim women. In fact, she had a preference for managing her father's authority even before she was sultan. Raziya donned a man's crown and tunic as a

sultan, and she would later defy convention by not covering her face when leading her army on an elephant during battles. [3]

Iltutmish was a well-balanced man who rejoiced with the birth of his first daughter after having many offspring. He taught her with special zeal, and by the time she was thirteen, Raziya was acknowledged as a skilled archer and horseback rider. She also frequently accompanied her father on his military expeditions.

After Iltutmish gave Raziya control of Delhi during the Gwalior invasion, he was so impressed with Raziya's conduct that he chose Raziya to be his successor when he returned.

When it came to her daughter, Iltutmish said, "This little girl of mine is superior to many sons."

Rukn-ud-mollusk became king after Iltutmish, one of his offspring, passed away. He governed Delhi for about half a year. With the help of the people living in Delhi, Raziya Sultan defeated her relatives in 1236 and took power.

As soon as Raziya took the throne, everything turned against her again. Nizam-al-mulk Junaidi, the vazir of the state, started a protracted fight against Raziya Sultan.

Later, as TabashiMu'izzi, the legislative chief of Oudh, crossed the Ganges to support Raziya in Delhi, the commanders fighting the city arrested him.

Raziya Sultan, a wealthy monarch, established a lawful and perfect peace in her realm, where all individuals abided by the rules and guidelines she established. By improving exchange, constructing streets, digging wells, and other projects, she tried to strengthen the foundation of the country. She also established open libraries, research centres, schools, and institutes. She supported academics, artists, and craftspeople while herself making contributions to culture and workmanship. [4]

Other than her own obsession with Jamal-ud-din Yaqut, nothing could have stopped Raziya. Her life mate was assumed to be the privileged African Siddi slave Jamal-ud-din Yaqut. The administrative chief of Bhatinda, Malik Ikhtiar-ud-Altunia, was opposed to Raziya's connection. Raziya and Altunia were childhood friends. Growing up with Raziya, Altunia became utterly enthralled with her, and the revolt was really a means of regaining Raziya. Yaqut met his demise.

She was being utilised by the Turkish Governor of Batinda to subdue opposition when they took advantage of her untimely departure from Delhi and had her removed. Her kin, Bahram, proclaimed himself king. [5]

Raziya wisely chose to wed Altunia, the Batinda administrative chief, in order to preserve her reputation. Then she and her partner strolled towards Delhi.

#### **Notable Works:**

- Raziya Sultana established lawful and absolute peace in her realm, where all individuals abide by the rules and regulations established by her due to her financial success as a monarch.
- She made an effort to strengthen the foundation of the country by constructing streets, digging wells, and improving exchange.
- Moreover, she established educational facilities, research hubs, libraries, and spaces for study that allowed scholars to work on the Quran and Muhammad's customs.
- Hinduism fulfils the interests in thinking, science, space exploration, and writing that were emphasised in universities and schools.
- She supported scholars, painters, and craftsmen and made contributions even in the areas of craftsmanship and culture.

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICE:**

Raziya Sultan was a brilliant administrator who was very intelligent. Like her father, she was fearless and had the spirit of a fighter. She sat in an open durbar and dressed like a man despite being a lady. She ruled with effectiveness and exuded royal qualities.

As they say, "The head that wears the crown sleeps sweetly," and Raziya had succeeded in the kingdom in spite of great hardships. The issues that surfaced all around her may have discouraged considerably less courageous people. Both common Delhi residents and military defectors supported her.

The populace, probably drawn from all social strata, made her sign an oath of allegiance despite her immediate crowning as queen. No pomp and circumstance; no coronation; no time for that. Unaware of this development, the rebel maliks were moving quickly towards the city to reclaim their exclusive right to choose the monarch. [6]

Raziya was fearless and full of energy, and she grew more self-assured and forceful when things got difficult. Her goal was to undermine the rebel alliance with all her might. She and her army camped down on the Yamuna River's banks to fight the aristocrats.

Raziya exercised caution in her selection of appointees so as to avoid consolidating power in the hands of a select few nobility. This prevented any political party from establishing itself at the imperial court in order to further its own self-serving agenda. Recruiting and pampering non-Turkish nobility was one of Raziya's ideas for creating a new force to fulfil her political aspirations.

Jamaluddin Yaqut, an Ethiopian slave, received special consideration because he was not a Turk. He possessed the esteemed title of Amir-i-Akhur, which was previously exclusive to Turkish nobility. The Sultan's decision infuriated the Turkish nobility because it meant they were losing their rights and privileges. These approaches were intended to improve the administration. Her manner, however, proved to be disastrous for her government. [7]

For three and a half years, Raziya ruled successfully. She was a master at handling intrigues, showed an amazing command of military strategy, made her own decisions with grace, and skillfully made peace with the holders of the iqta. Her ability to transcend the biases of her day was her greatest achievement. It is hard to argue against Minhaj's statement that "Raziya was the most capable of Iltutmish's successors." Raziya's accomplishments so impressed her father, Iltutmish, that he prioritized her over his two sons, Ruknuddin Firoz and Muizzuddin Bahram, after the passing of his eldest son, Prince Nasiruddin Mahmud, in 1229 A.D. Raziya's ability and experience running the Sultanate's government served as the basis for her claim to the throne. Iltutmish had taken great care to provide her with the necessary administrative training and prepare her for the position he had given her. When Iltutmish left the city in 1231 A.D. to go on an expedition against Gwalior, he left the administration in the capable hands of Raziya. Raziya understood that Purdah hindered the efficient and straightforward management of administrative affairs as soon as she was promoted. She decided to discard it as a result. She also saw that the ambition of the Turkish aristocracy was a big obstacle to the preservation of peace and order, so she decided to create a nobility that was non-Turkish in order to oppose the Turks. Raziya oversaw the functioning of every department, presided over an open court, and paid attention to the problems of her residents. Her ability, love of justice, sense of merit, and work ethic left everyone in amazement. She demonstrated proficiency and experience managing daily administrative tasks. She was a master of the battlefield. She courageously and skillfully led a group of soldiers into combat. She became quite picky in her selection of brave people for the army after recognising the value of a well-run military. During her time in the army, Naib-i-Lashkar rose to prominence, but after her passing, it lost its significance. With the same fervour, bravery, and dedication, the Naib-i-Lashkar led the contingents throughout the Sultan's absence. Raziya was particularly concerned about the security of the soldiers. She had a reputation for lavishing presents on the soldiers to make them feel content and joyful. Malik Saifuddin held the role of Naib-i-Lashkar, and after his demise, Qutubuddin Hasan Ghori took over, both performing admirably in it. We might see a hint of foresight and statesmanship in Raziya's character, which was uncommon in those days of wild travel, in a passing reference to her diplomatic relations with Malik Hasan Qarlugh, one of the Khwarazmian governors of Ghazni. While battling the Mongols in Ghazni, Iltutmish and Qarlugh formed an alliance, and their combined soldiers were driven out. In 636 A.H./1238 A.D., Qarlugh was forced to flee his realm and took sanctuary in the western regions of the Delhi Sultanate. Owing to Raziya's accession as a talented and determined ruler, as well as Qarlugh's own personal need, he made the decision to attempt again to turn the previous friendship into a formal political and military alliance. He sent his son to convince the Delhi government to accept his proposals, most likely to negotiate a military alliance. However, Raziya was unwilling to comply with it. She was no fool to count the enmity of the invincible Mongols, much less hope to defeat them, with the fate of the Khwarizmi

empire and many other smaller states before her eyes, the growing influence of hostile Hindu princes in India, and the sovereign's precarious position among her powerful and ambitious courtiers. Allocating Baran's earnings to the Qarlugh prince's needs, Raziya showed him the grace and attention she had learned from her father. She must have been adamant that he not listen to the proposition because he went straight to his father, who, left with no other option, got to work carving out a principality for himself in Sindh. She chose to stay close to the Mongols as a result of her refusal to forge an alliance against them, which would have prevented Mongol invasions of the Sultanate. Siraj speaks well of Minhaj-us, saying, "All maliks and amirs surrendered to her authority from Lakhnauti to Debal." The people of Delhi had remained steadfast in their support for Raziya during her three-and-a-half-year reign. The amirs and maliks tried as they might, but they never managed to take her into the capital or break into the royal palace. They would have fought the amirs tooth and nail to maintain her on the throne because they must have been afraid of the Delhinese people who had placed her there. Raziya had a comparatively peaceful time when she used exceptional wisdom and expertise to run her enormous dominion. She came to see that the survival of Turkey depended on keeping the aristocracy's influence under check. Raziya fulfilled all of her father's expectations. She was an excellent ruler. [8] Both the Delhi population and the soldiers of the Sultan offered their support. She needed all the help she could get in order to rule. Some of her most influential governors, who have been opposing her, might even return to her. Talking to them, Raziya showed her extraordinary intelligence. She forced one of their most potent commanders, Wazir Muhammad Junaidi, to quit politics after defeating him militarily. She did not take long to win over most of the other nobles to her cause. She was destined to serve the kingdom and her people for the rest of her life. She didn't seem to like conversing with her victims; there is no evidence that she tried to maintain a safe distance from them. Raziya performed her duties in the audience hall impartially, as did the qazis and muftis. She dissolved the prior arrangement of female guards and the screen during her weekly court and conducted official business as a king would. She was a former judge; therefore, she was familiar with the operation of the legal system. However, Raziya meant to seize control of the situation as soon as dependable and loyal administrative machinery was in place. She then went on to alter her lifestyle significantly, creating a new pattern. Because she was unable to exercise direct control while observing purdah and staying in isolation, she became a purdah martyr. Iltutmish was a well-balanced guy who taught his pupils to plan splendid celebrations to mark the arrival of his first child after having other children. With a passion instilled by her father's instruction, Raziya became acknowledged as a skilled archer and horseback rider when she turned thirteen. She would frequently accompany her father on his military adventures. Once, when Iltutmish was fighting the Gwalior, he gave Raziya control of Delhi. When he returned, he was so impressed with Raziya's performance that he chose Raziya to be his successor. [9]

#### **CONCLUSION:**

Among the Turkish kings of India in the Thirteenth Century, Raziya is one of the best-known. She was the most capable and befitting of the position of ruler among Iltutmish's successors. She expressed her sincere regret for Ruknuddin's distress and skillfully maintained her position in the face of strong opposition. Had she been born a male, her chances of success would have been greater because the wazir and other nobility would not have opposed her, and there would be no space for a plot based on rumours about her Yakut connections. She had curbed the Turks' dominance and was laboriously forming a replacement organisation when her reign suddenly ended. As a result, her triumph remained partial until 1238. Although she was nearly always victorious, since 1239, her adversaries have grown stronger, and she has not been able to defeat them. Multiple circumstances caused her failure. Mediaeval historians say it has a lot to do with her gender. On the other side, the might and hunger of the nobility were equally, if not more, significant. Since the people viewed them as outsiders and followers of a different religion, the Sultans of those days could never rely on the support of the people. Raziya raised her prominence by getting residents in Delhi to aid her. A few sons of Iltutmish remained, and self-centered nobles could utilize them as pawns to amass ever-greater power without endangering the succession of their master. Aside from that, the central government's authority over the local entities was far from total. Hindu

resistance was strong, and the Turkish state was still in its infancy. As a result, the Sultans had to grant extensive financial and military authority to their governors. They might quickly grow to be too strong if they banded together to oppose the Sultan. For the reasons described above, the Sultan's authority was often low throughout this period, and until Balban's accession, there was a great degree of chaos and instability. Other than her own obsession with Jamal-ud-din Yaqut, nothing could have stopped Raziya. This unfulfilling love served as the explanation for her ending. Jamal-ud-Din Yaqut was an African Siddi slave who became an affluent individual. He lived next to her and the Delhi court thought of him as her life mate. No matter how it transpired behind different spreads and doorways, their relationship was not a mystery to the Delhi court. [10] The administrative chief of Bhatinda, Malik Ikhtiar-ud-Altunia, was opposed to Raziya's connection. According to legend, Altunia and Raziya were childhood friends. Growing up with her, he became utterly enamoured of Raziya, and the rebellion was really a means of regaining her. Destruction followed quickly. Altunia retained Raziya after Yaqut's death. While attempting to quell a rebellion led by the Turkish Governor of Batinda, they exploited her unfortunate weakness in Delhi and exiled her. They assigned Bahram, her kin. Raziya wisely chose to wed Altunia, the Batinda administrative chief, in order to preserve her reputation. Then she and her partner strolled towards Delhi. Bahram powdered her down on October 13, 1240, and the couple met a terrible end the following day.

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