




CBSE Notes Class 7 Social Science History Chapter 3-Delhi Sultans

Delhi Sultans

Under the Tomaras and Chauhans Delhi became an important commercial centre. Many rich Jaina merchants lived in the city and constructed several temples. Coins called dehlival were minted here and had a wide circulation. Transformation of Delhi into a capital that controlled vast areas of the subcontinent started with the foundation of the Delhi Sultanate at the beginning of the 13th century. The Delhi Sultans built many cities in the area that we now know as Delhi.

Rulers of Delhi

RAJPUT DYNASTIES		
Tomaras	Early twelfth century-1165	
Ananga Pala	1130-1145	
Chauhans	1165-1192	
Prithviraj Chauhan	1175-1192	
EARLY TURKISH RULERS		1206-1290
Qutbuddin Aybak	1206-1210	
Shamsuddin Iltutmish	1210-1236	
Raztuya	1236-1240	
Ghiyasuddin Balban	1266-1287	
	KHALJI DYNASTY	1290-1320
	Jalaluddin Khalji	1290-1296
	Alauddin Khalji	1296-1316
TUGHLUQ DYNASTY	1320-1414	
Ghiyasuddin Tughluq	1320-1324	
Muhammad Tughluq	1324-1351	
Firuz Shah Tughluq	1351-1388	
SAYYID DYNASTY	1414-1451	
Khitir Khan	1414-1421	
LODI DYNASTY	1451-1526	
Bahlul Lodi	1451-1489	

Finding Out about the Delhi Sultans

Tarikh (singular)/tawarikh (plural) are valuable histories, written in Persian, the language of administration under the Delhi Sultans that provide a lot of information. It was written by learned men-

secretaries, administrators, poets and courtiers, who both recounted events and advised rulers on governance, emphasising the importance of the just rule. Following ideas to keep in mind:

- (1) the authors of tawarikh lived in cities (mainly Delhi) and hardly ever in villages.
- (2) They often wrote their histories for Sultans in the hope of rich rewards.
- (3) These authors advised rulers on the need to preserve an “ideal” social order based on birthright and gender distinctions.

Not everybody followed these ideas.

In 1236-Sultan Iltutmish’s daughter, Raziyya became Sultan-chronicler of the age, Minhaj-i Siraj, stated she was more able and qualified than all her brothers-He was not comfortable at having a queen as ruler- Nobles not happy at her attempts to rule independently. 1240-She was removed from the throne.

From Garrison Town to Empire: The Expansion of the Delhi Sultanate

In the early 13th century-control of the Delhi Sultans rarely went beyond heavily fortified towns occupied by garrisons- Sultans seldom controlled the hinterland of the cities-were dependent upon trade, tribute or plunder for supplies-was difficult to control garrison towns in distant Bengal and Sind from Delhi-Rebellion, war, even bad weather caused disconnection of fragile communication routes-Delhi’s authority challenged by Mongol invasions from Afghanistan and by governors who rebelled at any sign of the Sultan’s weakness-The Sultanate barely survived this challenges-consolidation occurred during the reign of Ghiyasuddin Balban and further expansion under Alauddin Khalji and Muhammad Tughluq- first set of campaigns along the “internal frontier” of the Sultanate aimed at consolidating the hinterlands of the garrison towns-campaigns involved forests being cleared in the Ganga-Yamuna doab and expulsion of hunter-gatherers and pastoralists from their habitat-lands were given to peasants-agriculture encouraged-New fortresses, garrison towns and towns were established to protect trade routes-to promote regional trade-second expansion occurred along the “external frontier” of the Sultanate-Military expeditions into southern India started during the reign of Alauddin Khalji-culminated with Muhammad Tughluq-In their campaigns, Sultanate armies captured elephants, horses and slaves and carried away precious metals-By the end of Muhammad Tughluq’s reign, the armies of the Delhi Sultanate had marched across a large part of the subcontinent-defeated rival armies and seized cities-Sultanate collected taxes from the peasantry and dispensed justice in its realm.

The Masjid

A mosque called a masjid in Arabic, is a place where a Muslim prostrates in reverence to Allah. In a “congregational mosque” (masjid-i-jami or jama masjid) Muslims read their prayers (namaz) together. Members of the congregation choose the most respected, learned male as their leader (imam) for the rituals of prayer, who also delivers the sermon (khutba) during the Friday prayer. During prayer, Muslims stand facing Mecca. In India this is to the west. This is called the qibla. Delhi Sultans built several mosques in cities all over the subcontinent and it demonstrated their claims to be protectors of Islam and Muslims.

A Closer Look: Administration and Consolidation under the Khaljis and Tughluqs

Consolidation of a kingdom (as vast as the Delhi Sultanate) requires reliable governors and administrators. Early Delhi Sultans, especially Iltutmish did not appoint aristocrats and landed chieftains as governors. They favoured their special slaves purchased for military service (called bandagan in Persian). The Khaljis and Tughluqs continued to use bandagan and also raised people of humble birth, who were often their clients, to high political positions and appointed them as generals and governors leading to political instability. Slaves and clients were loyal to their masters and patrons, but not to heirs. The accession of a new monarch often saw conflict between the old and the new nobility. Patronage of these humble people by the Delhi Sultans shocked many elites and the authors of Persian tawarikh criticised the Delhi Sultans for appointing the “low and base-born” to high offices.

The Khalji and Tughluq monarchs appointed military commanders as governors of territories of varying sizes (called iqta) and their holder was called iqtadar or muqti- duty of the muqtis to lead military campaigns and maintain law and order in their iqtas- In exchange for their military services, the muqtis collected the revenues of their assignments as salary- paid their soldiers from this revenues- to make the control over muqtis most effective their office was not inheritable- they were assigned iqtas for a short period of time before being shifted- appointed accountant checked the amount of revenue collected by the muqtis- As the Delhi Sultans brought the hinterland of the cities under their control, they forced the landed chieftains – the Samanta aristocrats and rich landlords to accept their authority- Under Alauddin Khalji, the state brought the assessment and collection of land revenue under its own control- rights of the local chieftains to levy taxes cancelled and were also forced to pay taxes- Some of the old chieftains and landlords serve the Sultanate as revenue collectors and assessors.

There were three types of taxes: (1) on cultivation called kharaj and amounting to about 50% of the peasant's produce, (2) on cattle and (3) on houses- Large parts of the subcontinent remained outside the control of the Delhi Sultans- was difficult to control distant provinces like Bengal from Delhi- after annexing southern India, the entire region became independent- In the Gangetic plain, there were forested areas that Sultanate forces could not penetrate- Local chieftains established their rule in these regions- Rulers like Alauddin Khalji and Muhammad Tughluq could force their control for a short duration in these areas.

1219- Mongols under Genghis Khan invaded Transoxiana in north-east Iran- Delhi Sultanate faced their onslaught soon after- Mongol attacks on the Delhi Sultanate increased during the reign of Alauddin Khalji and in the early years of Muhammad Tughluq's rule- forced the two rulers to mobilise a large standing army in Delhi which posed a huge administrative challenge.

See, below how both the sultans dealt with these administrative challenges:

Alauddin Khalji	Muhammad Tughluq
Delhi was attacked twice, in 1299/1300 and 1302-1303. As a defensive measure, Alauddin Khalji raised a large standing army.	The Sultanate was attacked in the early years of Muhammad Tughluq's reign. The Mongol army was defeated. Muhammad Tughluq was confident about the strength of his army and his resources to plan an attack on Transoxiana. He therefore raised a large standing army.
Alauddin constructed a new garrison town named Siri for his soldiers. See Map 1.	Rather than constructing a new garrison town, the oldest of the four cities of Delhi (Dehli-i Kulna) was emptied of its residents and the soldiers garrisoned there. The residents of the old city were sent to the new capital of Daulatabad in the south.
The soldiers had to be fed . This was done through the produce collected as tax from lands between the Ganga and Yamuna. Tax was fixed at 50 per cent of the peasant's yield.	Produce from the same area was collected as tax to feed the army. But to meet the expense of maintaining such a large number of soldiers the Sultan levied additional taxes. This coincided with famine in the area.
The soldiers had to be paid . Alauddin chose to pay his soldiers salaries in cash rather than <i>iqta</i> s. The soldiers would buy their supplies from merchants in Delhi and it was thus feared that merchants would raise their prices. To stop this, Alauddin controlled the prices of goods in Delhi. Prices were carefully surveyed by officers, and merchants who did not sell at the prescribed rates were punished.	Muhammad Tughluq also paid his soldiers cash salaries. But instead of controlling prices, he used a "token" currency, somewhat like present-day paper currency, but made out of cheap metals, not gold and silver. People in the fourteenth century did not trust these coins. They were very smart: they saved their gold and silver coins and paid all their taxes to the state with this token currency. This cheap currency could also be counterfeited easily.
Alauddin's administrative measures were quite successful and chroniclers praised his reign for its cheap prices and efficient supplies of goods in the market. He successfully withstood the threat of Mongol invasions.	Muhammad Tughluq's administrative measures were a failure. His campaign into Kashmir was a disaster. He then gave up his plans to invade Transoxiana and disbanded his large army. Meanwhile, his administrative measures created complications. The shifting of people to Daulatabad was resented. The raising of taxes and famine in the Ganga-Yamuna belt led to widespread rebellion. And finally, the "token" currency had to be recalled.

Alauddin's defensive measures-Muhammad Tughluq's measures were a military offensive against the Mongols.

The Sultanate in the 15th and 16th Centuries

Tughluqs, the Sayyid and Lodi dynasties ruled from Delhi and Agra until 1526- Jaunpur, Bengal, Malwa, Gujarat, Rajasthan and entire south India had independent rulers in this time - they established flourishing states and prosperous capitals- period saw the emergence of new ruling groups like the Afghans and the Rajputs-small but powerful and extremely well administered. Sher Shah Sur (1540-1545) started his career as the manager of a small territory for his uncle in Bihar and eventually challenged and defeated the Mughal emperor Humayun (1530-1540, 1555-1556)-captured Delhi and established his own dynasty-Sur dynasty ruled for fifteen years (1540-1555)-introduced an administration that borrowed elements from Alauddin Khalji and made them more efficient-Sher Shah's administration became the model for great emperor Akbar (1556-1605) when he consolidated the Mughal Empire.