

UPSC Civil Services Examination

UPSC Notes [GS-I]

Topic: Administration under Delhi Sultanate [Medieval Indian History for UPSC]

Administration of Delhi Sultanate

Administration under the Delhi Sultanate

- The Delhi Sultanate period extended from 1206 A.D. to 1526 A.D. for almost 320 years.
- The administration was based on Islamic laws (Sharia).
- A Theocratic and a Military State.

Ministers to Sultan

- Wazir – Prime Minister and Finance Minister
- Diwani-I-Risalt – Foreign Affairs Minister
- Sadr-us-Suddar – Minister of Islamic Law
- Diwan-I-Insha – Correspondence Minister
- Diwan-I-Ariz – Defence or War Minister
- Qazi-ul-quzar – Minister of Justice

Central Administration

- The Sultan was the head of the empire.
- He possessed vast powers.
- Also other officials were appointed to take care of the administration.

Provincial Administration

- The empire was divided into a number of Iqtas.
- Iqtadars administered the Iqtas.
- Iqtas further were divided into smaller units called Parganas, Shiqqs, and the villages.
- Amil or Munsif – an important official of the Pargana.

Local Administration

- The village was the smallest unit of administration.

- The village administration was carried out by local hereditary officers and the Panchayats
- The Panchayat looked after education, sanitation, justice, revenue etc.
- The Central Government did not interfere in the village administration.

Revenue Administration under Delhi Sultanate

- Land revenue was the main source of income.

Judicial Administration

- The Sultan was the highest judicial authority.
- Qazi-ul-qazar – the Chief Judicial officer.
- A Quazi was appointed in every town.
- Criminals were punished severely.

Military Administration

- The Sultan was the Commander of the army
- The four divisions of the army were
 1. The Royal army
 2. Provincial or Governor's army
 3. Feudal army and
 4. War Time army

Social life of the Sultanate period

The people in the society were divided based on their nationality and they are:

- Foreign Muslims
- Indian Muslims
- Hindus

Economic conditions of the people

- The people were mainly involved in agriculture and industry
- Textile industry was the primary industry.
- Paper Industry, metal work, pearl diving, ivory and sandal works, stone cutting, Sugar industry were the other industries of this period.

Textiles

- Indian textiles were in great demand in foreign countries.
- Bengal and Gujarat were famous for their quality fabrics.

- Cotton, woollen and silk of different varieties were produced in large quantities.
- The clothes had gold, diamonds, pearls, silver and stone works.

Contributions of the Delhi Sultanate

Art and Architecture

- Delhi Sultans had a great taste for architecture.
- Architectures were a blend of Indian and Islamic styles.

The three well-developed styles were

1. Delhi or Imperial Style
2. Provincial Style
3. Hindu architectural style

Architecture during Mamaluk Period

- Qutubminar
- Quwat-ul-Islam mosque
- the tombs of Nasir-ud-din Muhammad
- Balban Siri the new town in Delhi

Architecture during Khilji Period

- Dargah of Hazrat Nizam – ud – din Aulia
- The Alai Darwaza

Architecture during Lodi Period

- The Lodi Garden
- Moti Masjid in New Delhi, and
- The tomb of Sikandar Lodi

Literature

The Sultanate of Delhi period witnessed some great scholars and some are:

- Alberuni
- Amir Khusrau
- Zia-ul-Barani

Many Sanskrit works were translated into Arabic and Urdu language originated during the Sultanate period.

Scholars of sultanate period

Alberuni

- An Arabic and Persian Scholar patronized by Mahmud of Ghazni.
- He learnt Sanskrit and translated two Sanskrit works into Arabic.
- He was impressed by the Upanishads and Bhagavad Gita.
- In his work Tarikh-ul-Hind, he had mentioned the socio-economic conditions of India.

Amir Khusrau

- He was a great Persian poet.
- He is said to have written four lakh couplets.
- He was a great singer and was given the title 'Parrot of India'.

Impact of Turkish Conquest

- The Turkish conquest of India had its impact on various fields.
- It paved the way to a centralized political organization.
- It re-established relations with the rest of Asia and parts of Africa.
- A permanent army was established.
- Trade was established due to the uniform legal system, tariff regulations and currency.
- Persian became the court language and brought uniformity in the administration.

Disintegration of the Delhi Sultanate

- The disintegration of the Delhi Sultanate had begun during the Tughluq period.
- The invasion of Timur and the incompetent and intolerant nature of some of the Sayyid and Lodi rulers led to the collapsing of the Delhi Sultanate.
- The rulers of the Vijayanagar and Bahmani Kingdom in the South were the first to break free from Delhi.
- Other regions like Assam, Bengal, Khandesh, Gujarat, Jauripur, Kashmir, Multan, Malwa, Sind, and Orissa also became independent.
- Babur ended the Lodi Dynasty by defeating Ibrahim Lodi in the first Battle of Panipat in 1526 A.D., which brought the downfall of the Delhi Sultanate in India.