

UPSC Civil Services Examination

UPSC Notes [GS-I]

Topic: Slave Dynasty (Sultanate of Delhi) - NCERT Notes on Medieval History

Mamluk Origins

- Mamluk Dynasty is also called Slave Dynasty. Mamluk literally means 'owned' and it refers to a powerful military caste called Mamluks which originated in the 9th century CE in the Islamic Empire of the Abbasid caliphs.
- The Mamluks wielded military and political power in Egypt, Iraq and India. Although they were slaves, they were held in high regard by their masters, and they were mostly generals and soldiers who fought for their masters.
- Mamluk Dynasty was established in Delhi by Qutb ud-Din Aibak.

Slave Dynasty Introduction

- Established by Qutb ud-Din Aibak.
- Dynasty lasted from 1206 to 1290.
- It was the first of the dynasties to rule as the Delhi Sultanate.
- Dynasty ended when Jalal ud din Firuz Khilji overthrew the last Mamluk ruler Muiz ud din Qaiqabad in 1290.
- Dynasty was succeeded by the Khilji (or Khalji) dynasty, the second dynasty of the Delhi Sultanate.

Qutb ud-Din Aibak (Reign: 1206 – 1210)

- First ruler of the Mamluk Dynasty.
- Born to a Turkish family in Central Asia.
- Sold as a slave to Muhammad Ghor, the ruler of Ghor in Afghanistan.
- Aibak rose up the ranks and became Ghor's trusted general and commander.
- He was given the charge of Ghor's Indian possessions after 1192.
- When Ghor was killed in battle, Aibak declared himself Sultan of Delhi in 1206.
- Started construction of the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque in Delhi. This is one of the first Islamic monuments in northern India.
- He began the construction of Qutb Minar in Delhi.

- He was also known as Lakh Bash (Giver of Lakhs) for his generosity. However, he was also responsible for the destruction and desecration of many Hindu temples.
- He reigned till his death in 1210. He was said to have been trampled to death by a horse.
- He was succeeded by Aram Shah.

Illutmish (Reign: 1211 – 1236)

- Aram Shah was a weak ruler. It is not clear whether he was a son of Aibak or not. He was conspired against by a group of nobles who invited Shamsuddin Illutmish to be the ruler.
- Illutmish was a son-in-law of Aibak. He ruled Ghurid regions of northern India.
- He was a turkic slave born in Central Asia.
- Illutmish was the greatest of the slave rulers of Delhi. He shifted his capital from Lahore to Delhi.

Illutmish – Invasions & Policies

- Illutmish's forces captured Bihar in the 1210s, and invaded Bengal in 1225.
- During the first half of the 1220s, Illutmish neglected Indus River Valley, which was under the controversy between the Mongols, the Khwarazm kings, and Qabacha. Post the decline of the Mongol and the Khwarazmian threat, Qabacha took over the region, but Illutmish invaded his territory during 1228-1229.
- He defended his empire against Mongol invaders and also resisted the Rajputs.
- In 1221, he stopped an invasion led by Chenghiz Khan.
- He completed the construction of the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque and the Qutb Minar.
- He set up administrative machinery for the kingdom.
- He built mosques, waterworks and other amenities at Delhi, making it fit to be the seat of power.
- He introduced the two coins of the Sultanate, the silver *tanka* and the copper *jital*.
- Also introduced the Iqtadari system in which the kingdom was divided into Iqtas which were assigned to nobles in exchange of salary.
- He died in 1236 and was succeeded by his daughter Razia Sultana as he did not consider his sons equal to the task.

Razia Sultana (Reign: 1236 – 1240)

- Born in 1205 as Illutmish's daughter.
- Was given a sound education by her father.
- She was the first and last Muslim woman to rule over Delhi.
- Also known as Razia al-Din.

- Before ascending to the throne of Delhi after her father's death, the reign was briefly handed over to her half-brother Rukn ud-din Firuz. But after Firuz's assassination within 6 months of his ascendancy, the nobles agreed to place Razia on the throne.
- She was known as an efficient and just ruler.
- She was married to Malik Ikhtiar-ud-din Altunia, the governor of Bathinda.
- She was reportedly killed by her brother's forces.
- Her brother Muizzuddin Bahram Shah succeeded her.

Ghiyas ud din Balban (Reign: 1266 – 1287)

- The next notable ruler after Razia.
- Ninth Sultan in the Mamluk dynasty.
- He was the wazir of the grandson of Iltutmish, Nasir-ud-din-Mahmud.
- Born of Turkish origins, his original name was Bahauddin.
- He was purchased as a slave by Iltutmish. He rose up the ranks quickly.
- He carried out successful military campaigns as an officer.
- After Nasir's death, Balban declared himself the Sultan as the former did not have any male heirs.
- He carried military and civil reforms in administration which earned him the position of the greatest Sultanate ruler after Iltutmish and Alauddin Khalji.
- Balban was a strict ruler and his court was the symbol of austerity and strict obedience to the emperor. He even demanded that people prostrate before the king.
- He laid out severe punishments to the slightest of offences by his courtiers.
- He had a spy system to keep his nobles in check.
- He introduced the Persian festival of Navroz in India.
- Punjab saw large-scale conversions during his rule.
- After his death, his grandson Qaiqubad succeeded him at the throne of Delhi.
- Qaiqubad died of a stroke in 1290 and was succeeded by his three-year-old son Shamsuddin Kayumars.
- Kayumars was murdered by Jalal ud-Din Firuz Khalji, thus ending the Mamluk Dynasty to replace it with the **Khalji Dynasty**.

Reason behind the decline of the Mamluk Dynasty

The major reasons associated with the decline of the Mamluk dynasty are:

1. Mamluks lacked major warfare skills which resulted in their defeat against Ottomans.
2. Many of the rulers were weak to handle the kingdom for long
3. Improper administration management led to the disruption of the government.

List of Slave dynasty Rulers

Ruler	Reign
Qutb ud-Din Aibak	(1206-1210 AD)
Aram Shah	(1210-1211 AD)
Iltutmish	(1211-1236 AD)
Rukn-ud-din Feroze	(1236 AD)
Razia al-Din	(1236-1240 AD)
Muiz-ud-din Bahram	(1240-1242 AD)
Ala-ud-din Masud	(1242-1246 AD)
Nasiruddin Mahmud	(1246-1266 AD)
Ghiyas-ud-din Balban	(1266-1286 AD)
Muiz-ud-din Muhammad Qaiqabad	(1286-1290 AD)

