



DELHI SULTANATE

Class 11th Tamil Nadu Book

Chapter 16

LESSON 16

DELHI SULTANATE

Learning Objectives

Students will acquire knowledge about

1. Political History of Delhi Sultanate.
2. Slave Dynasty – Aibak, Iltutmish, Raziya, Balban.
3. Khaljis – Alauddin Khalji's achievements.
4. Tughlaqs – Mahmud-bin-Tughlaq and his experiments.
5. Firoz Tughlaq and his administration.
6. Sayyids and Lodis.

The Muslim invasions into India had ultimately resulted in the establishment of Delhi Sultanate which existed from A.D. 1206 to 1526. Five different dynasties – the Slave, Khalji, Tughlaq, Sayyids and Lodis – ruled under the Delhi Sultanate. Not only they extended their rule over North India, but also they penetrated into the Deccan and South India. Their rule in India resulted in far-reaching changes in society, administration and cultural life.

Slave Dynasty

The Slave dynasty was also called Mamluk dynasty. Mamluk was the Quranic term for slave. The Slave dynasty ruled Delhi from A.D. 1206 to 1290. In fact, three dynasties were established during this period. They were

1. Qutbi dynasty (1206-1211) founded by Qutbuddin Aibak.
2. First Ilbari dynasty (1211- 1266) founded by Iltutmish.

3. Second Ilbari dynasty (1266-1290) founded by Balban.

Qutbuddin Aibak (1206-1210)

Qutbuddin Aibak was a slave of Muhammad Ghori, who made him the Governor of his Indian possessions. He set up his military headquarters at Indraprasta, near Delhi. He raised a standing army and established his hold over north India even during the life time of Ghori. After the death of Ghori in 1206, Aibak declared his independence. He severed all connections with the kingdom of Ghori and thus founded the Slave dynasty as well as the Delhi Sultanate. He assumed the title Sultan and made Lahore his capital. His rule lasted for a short period of four years. Muslim writers call Aibak *Lakh Baksh* or giver of lakhs because he gave liberal donations to them. Aibak patronized the great scholar Hasan Nizami. He also started the construction of after the name of a famous Sufi saint Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar. It was later completed by Iltutmish. Aibak died suddenly while playing *chaugan* (horse polo) in 1210. He was succeeded by his son Aram Baksh, who was replaced by Iltutmish after eight months.



Qutbuddin Aibak

Iltutmish (1211-1236)

Iltutmish belonged to the Ilbari tribe and hence his dynasty was named as Ilbari dynasty. His half brothers sold him as a slave to Aibak, who made him his-son-in law by giving his daughter in marriage to him. Later Aibak appointed him as iqtadar of Gwalior. In 1211 Iltutmish defeated Aram Baksh and became Sultan. He shifted his capital from Lahore to Delhi. During the first ten years of his reign he concentrated on securing his throne from his



QUTB MINAR

rivals. In the meantime, Temujin popularly known as Chengiz Khan, the leader of the Mongols, started invading Central Asia. He defeated Jalaluddin Mangabarni, the ruler of Kwarizam. Mangabarni crossed the river Indus and sought asylum from Iltutmish. Iltutmish refused to give him shelter in order to save his empire from the onslaught of the Mongols. Fortunately for Iltutmish, Chengiz Khan returned home without entering into India. In fact, the Mongol policy of Iltutmish saved India from the wrath of Chengiz Khan.



PORTRAIT OF CHENGIZ KHAN

Iltutmish marched against Bengal and Bihar and reasserted his control over them. He also annexed Sind and Multan into the Delhi Sultanate. He suppressed the Rajput revolts and recovered Ranthampur, Jalor, Ajmir and Gwalior. He led an expedition against the Paramaras of Malwa but it was not successful.

Iltutmish was a great statesman. He received the mansur, the letter of recognition, from the Abbasid Caliph in 1229 by which he became the legal sovereign ruler of India. Later he nominated his daughter Raziya as his successor. Thus the hereditary succession to Delhi Sultanate was initiated by



SILVER TANKA OF ILTUTMISH

Iltutmish. He patronized many scholars and a number Sufi saints came to India during his reign. Minhaj-us-Siraj, Taj-ud-din., Nizam-ul-mulk Muhammad Janaidi, Malik Qutb-ud-din Hasan and Fakhrul-Mulk Isami were his contemporary scholars who added grandeur to his court. Apart from completing the construction of Qutb Minar at Delhi, the tallest stone tower in India (238 ft.), he built a magnificent mosque at Ajmir.

Iltutmish introduced the Arabic coinage into India and the silver *tanka* weighing 175 grams became a standard coin in medieval India. The silver *tanka* remained the basis of the modern rupee. Iltutmish had also created a new class of ruling elite of forty powerful military leaders, the Forty.

Raziya (1236-1240)

Although Iltutmish nominated his daughter Raziya as his successor, the Qazi of Delhi and Wazir put Ruknuddin Feroz on the throne. When the governor of Multan revolted, Ruknuddin marched to suppress that revolt. Using this opportunity, Raziya with the support of Amirs of Delhi seized the throne of Delhi Sultanate. She appointed an Abyssinian slave Yakuth as Master of the Royal Horses. Also, Raziya discarded the female apparel and held the court with her face unveiled. She even went for hunting and led the army. This aroused resentment among the Turkish nobles. In 1240, Altunia, the governor of Bhatinda revolted against her. She went in person to suppress the revolt but Altunia killed Yakuth and took Raziya prisoner. In the meantime, the Turkish nobles put Bahram, another son of Iltutmish on the throne. However, Raziya won over her captor, Altunia, and after marrying him proceeded to Delhi. But she was defeated and killed.

The fall of Raziya paved the way for the ascendancy of the Forty. In the next six years, Bahram and Masud ruled Delhi. There ensued a struggle for supremacy between the Sultans and the nobles. In 1246 Balban succeeded in putting Nasiruddin Mahmud, a younger son of Iltutmish, as Sultan.

Era of Balban (1246-1287)

Ghiyasuddin Balban, who was also known as Ulugh Khan, served as Naib or regent to Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud. He also strengthened his position by marrying his daughter to the Sultan. Balban was all powerful in the administration but he had to face the

intrigues of his rivals in the royal court. He had overcome all the difficulties. In 1266 Nasiruddin Mahmud died without issues and Balban ascended the throne.

Balban's experience as the regent made him to understand the problems of Delhi Sultanate. He knew that the real threat to the monarchy was from the nobles called the Forty. He was convinced that only by enhancing the power and authority of the monarchy he could face the problems. According to Balban the Sultan was God's shadow on earth and the recipient of divine grace. Balban introduced rigorous court discipline and new customs such as prostration and kissing the Sultan's feet to prove his superiority over the nobles. He also introduced the Persian festival of *Nauroz* to impress the nobles and people with his wealth and power. He stood forth as the champion of Turkish nobility. At the same time he did not share power with other nobles. Indian Muslims were not given important post in the government. He appointed spies to monitor the activities of the nobles.

Balban was determined to break the power of the Forty, the Turkish nobles. He spared only the most obedient nobles and eliminated all others by fair or foul means. Malik Baqbaq, the governor of Badaun, was publicly flogged for his cruelty towards his servants. Haybat Khan, the governor of Oudh, was also punished for killing a man who was drunk. Sher Khan, the governor of Bhatinda was poisoned. Instead of expanding his kingdom, Balban paid more attention to the restoration of law and order. He established a separate military department - *diwan-i-arz* - and reorganized the army. The outskirts of Delhi were often plundered by the Mewatis. Balban took severe action against them and prevented such robberies. Robbers were mercilessly pursued and put to death. As a result, the roads became safe for travel.

In 1279, Tughril Khan, the governor of Bengal revolted against Balban. It was suppressed and he was beheaded. In the northwest the Mongols reappeared and Balban sent his son Prince Mahmud against them. But the prince was killed in the battle and it was a moral blow to the Sultan. Balban died in 1287. He was undoubtedly one of the main architects of the Delhi Sultanate. He enhanced the power of the monarchy. However, he could not fully safeguard India from the Mongol invasions.

When Balban died, one of his grandsons Kaiqubad was made the Sultan of Delhi. After four years of incompetent rule, Jalaluddin Khalji captured the throne of Delhi in 1290.

The Khalji Dynasty (1290-1320)

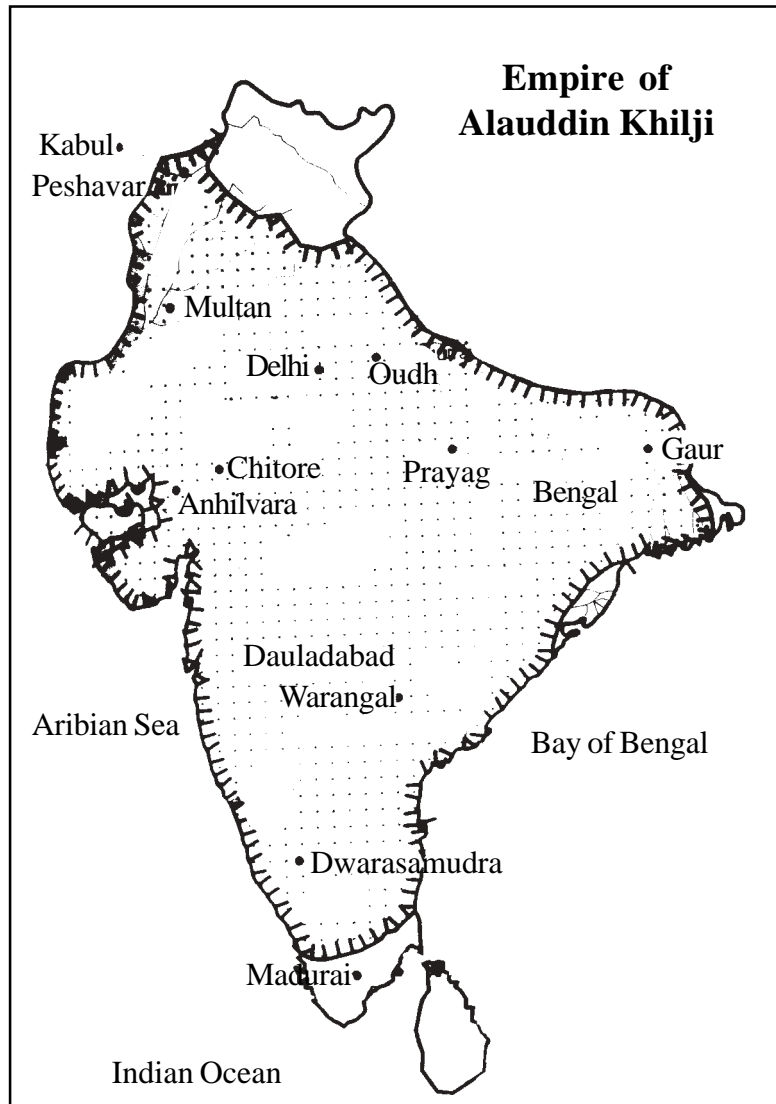
The advent of the Khalji dynasty marked the zenith of Muslim imperialism in India. The founder of the Khalji dynasty was Jalaluddin Khalji. He was seventy years old when he came to power. He was generous and lenient. Malik Chhajju, nephew of Balban was allowed to remain the governor of Kara. His leniency was misunderstood as weakness. When Chhajju revolted, it was suppressed but he was pardoned. When the thugs (robbers) looted the country, they were allowed to go after a severe warning. In 1292 when Malik Chhajju revolted for the second time, he was replaced by his son-in-law, Alauddin Khalji. In 1296 Alauddin Khalji took an expedition to Devagiri and returned to Kara. During the reception there, Alauddin Khalji treacherously murdered his father-in-law Jalaluddin Khalji and usurped the throne of Delhi.

Alauddin Khalji (1296-1316)

Alauddin Khalji made enormous gifts to the hostile nobles and Amirs of Delhi to win



Alauddin Khalji



over them to his side. Those who still opposed him accession were punished severely. He framed regulations to control the nobles. He was convinced that the general prosperity of the nobles, inter-marriages between noble families, inefficient spy-system and drinking liquor were the basic reasons for the rebellions. Therefore, he passed four ordinances. He confiscated the properties of the nobles. The intelligence system was reorganized and all the secret activities of the nobles were immediately reported to the Sultan. The public sale of liquor and drugs was totally stopped. Social gatherings and festivities without the permission of Sultan were forbidden. By such harsh measures his reign was free from rebellions.

Reforms of Alauddin Khalji

Alauddin Khalji maintained a large permanent standing army and paid them in cash from the royal treasury. According the Ferishta, he recruited 4,75,000 cavalymen. He introduced the system of *dagh* (branding of horses) and prepared *huliyā* (descriptive list of soldiers). In order to ensure maximum efficiency, a strict review of army from time to time was carried out.

The introduction of paying salaries in cash to the soldiers led to price regulations popularly called as Market Reforms. Alauddin Khalji established four separate markets in Delhi, one for grain; another for cloth, sugar, dried fruits, butter and oil; a third for horses, slaves and cattle; and a fourth for miscellaneous commodities. Each market was under the control of a high officer called *Shahna-i-Mandi*. The supply of grain was ensured by holding stocks in government store-houses. Regulations were issued to fix the price of all commodities. A separate department called Diwani Riyasat was created under an officer called *Naib-i-Riyasat*. Every merchant was registered under the Market department. There were secret agents called *munhiyans* who sent reports to the Sultan regarding the functioning of these markets. The Sultan also sent slave boys to

buy various commodities to check prices. Violation of regulations was severely punished. Harsh punishment was given if any shop-keeper charged a higher price, or tried to cheat by using false weights and measures. Even during the famine the same price was maintained. We are not sure whether the market regulations in Delhi were also applied in the provincial capitals and towns.

Apart from market reforms, Alauddin Khalji took important steps in the land revenue administration. He was the first Sultan of Delhi who ordered for the measurement of land. Even the big landlords could not escape from paying land tax. Land revenue was collected in cash in order to enable the Sultan to pay the soldiers in cash. His land revenue reforms provided a basis for the future reforms of Sher Shah and Akbar.

Military Campaigns

Alauddin Khalji sent his army six times against the Mongols. The first two were successful. But the third Mongol invader Khwaja came up to Delhi but they were prevented from entering into the capital city.



Rani Padmini

The next three Mongol invasions were also dealt with severely. Thousands of Mongols were killed. The northwestern frontier was fortified and Gazi Malik was appointed to be the Warden of Marches to protect the frontier.

The military conquests of Alauddin Khalji include his expedition against Gujarat, Mewar and the Deccan. He sent Nusrat Khan and Ulugh Khan to capture Gujarat in 1299. The king and his daughter escaped while the queen was caught and sent to Delhi. Kafur, an eunuch, was also taken to Delhi and later he was made the Malik Naib – military commander. Then in 1301, Alauddin marched against Ranthampur and after a three month's siege it fell. The Rajput women committed *jauhar* or self-immolation.

Alauddin next turned against Chittor. It was the powerful state in Rajasthan. The siege lasted for several months. In 1303 Alauddin stormed the Chittor fort. Raja Ratan Singh and his soldiers fought valiantly but submitted. The Rajput women including Rani Padmini performed *jauhar*. This Padmini episode was graphically mentioned in the book *Padmavath* written by Jayasi.

Alauddin Khalji's greatest achievement was the conquest of Deccan and the far south. This region was ruled by four important dynasties – Yadavas of Devagiri, Kakatiyas of Warangal, Hoysalas of Dwarasamudra and the Pandyas of Madurai.

In Alauddin sent Malik Kafur against the ruler of Devagiri, Ramachandra Deva, who submitted and paid rich tributes. In 1309 Malik Kafur launched his campaign against Warangal. Its ruler Prataparudra Deva was defeated and enormous booty was collected from him. Malik Kafur's next target was the



ALAI DARWAZA

Hoysala ruler Vira Ballala III. He was defeated and a vast quantity of booty was seized and sent to Delhi. Kafur next marched against the Pandyas. Vira Pandya fled the capital Madurai and Kafur seized enormous wealth from the Pandya kingdom and returned to Delhi.

Alauddin Khalji died in 1316. Although the Sultan was illiterate, he patronized poets like Amir Khusrau and Amir Hasan. He also built a famous gateway known as *Alai Darwaza* and constructed a new capital at Siri.

Mubarak Shah and Khusru Shah were the successors of Alauddin Khalji. Ghazi Malik, the governor of Dipalpur, killed the Sultan Khusru Shah and ascended the throne of Delhi under the title of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq in 1320.

The Tughlaq Dynasty (1320-1414)

The founder of the Tughlaq dynasty was Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq. Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq sent his son Juna Khan to fight against Warangal. He defeated Pratabarudra and returned with rich booty. Ghiyasuddin laid the foundation for Tughlaqabad near Delhi. Ulugh Khan was said to have treacherously killed his father and ascended the throne with the title Muhammad bin Tughlaq in 1325.

Muhammad bin Tughlaq (1325-1351)

He was a very attractive character in the history of medieval India owing to his ambitious schemes and novel experiments. His enterprises and novel experiments ended in miserable failures because they were all far ahead of their time. He was very tolerant in religious matters. He maintained diplomatic relations with far off countries like Egypt, China and Iran. He also introduced many liberal and beneficial reforms. But all his reforms failed. Contemporary writers like Isami, Barani and Ibn Battutah were unable to give a correct picture about his personality. But, Muhammad bin Tughlaq was the only Delhi Sultan who had received a comprehensive literary, religious and philosophical education.

Transfer of Capital

Muhammad bin Tughlaq wanted to make Devagiri his second capital so that he might be able to control South India better. In 1327 he made extensive preparations for the transfer of royal household and the ulemas and Sufis from Delhi to Devagiri, which was renamed as Daulatabad. When they resisted the Sultan enforced his orders ruthlessly and caused great hardship of the population of Delhi. The distance between these two places was more than 1500 kilometres. Many people died during the rigorous journey in the summer. After two years, the Sultan abandoned Daulatabad and asked them to return to Delhi.

Token Currency

In 1329-30 Muhammad bin Tughlaq introduced a token currency. There was a shortage of silver throughout the world in the fourteenth century. Kublai Khan issued paper money in China. In the same manner, Muhammad bin Tughlaq issued copper coins at par with the value of the silver *tanka* coins. But he was not able to prevent forging the new coins. The goldsmiths began to forge the token coins on a large scale. Soon the new coins were not accepted in the markets. Finally, Muhammad bin Tughlaq stopped the circulation of token currency and promised to exchange silver coins for the copper coins. Many people exchanged the new coins but the treasury became empty. According to the Barani, the heap of copper coins remained lying on roadside in Tughlaqabad.



COPPER COINS OF MUHAMMAD BIN TUGHLAQ

Taxation in Doab

The failure of these two experiments affected the prestige of the Sultan and enormous money was wasted. In order to overcome financial difficulties, Muhammad bin Tughlaq increased the land revenue on the farmers of Doab (land between Ganges and Yamuna rivers). It was an excessive and arbitrary step on the farmers. A severe famine was also ravaging that region at that time. It had resulted in a serious peasant revolts. They fled from the villages but Muhammad bin Tughlaq took harsh measures to capture and punish them. The revolts were crushed.

Agricultural Reforms

However, the Sultan realized later that adequate relief measures and the promotion of agriculture were the real solution to the problem. He launched a scheme by which *takkavi* loans (loans for cultivation) were given to the farmers to buy seed and to extend

cultivation. A separate department for agriculture, *Diwan-i-Kohi* was established. Model farm under the state was created in an area of 64 square miles for which the government spent seventy lakh *tankas*. This experiment was further continued by Firoz Tughlaq.

Rebellions

The latter part of Muhammad bin Tughlaq's reign witnessed a spate of rebellions by the nobles and provincial governors. The rebellion of Hasan Shah resulted in the establishment of the Madurai Sultanate. In 1336 the Vijayanagar kingdom was founded. In 1347 Bhamini kingdom was established. The governors of Oudh, Multan and Sind revolted against the authority of Muhammad bin Tughlaq. In Gujarat Taghi rose in revolt against the Sultan who spent nearly three years in chasing him. Muhammad bin Tughlaq's health became worse and he died in 1351. According to Baduani, the Sultan was freed from his people and the people from the Sultan. According to Barani, Muhammad bin Tughlaq was a mixture of opposites. His reign marked the beginning of the process of its decline.

Firoz Tughlaq (1351-1388)

After the death of Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq in 1351 Firoz Tughlaq had the unique distinction of being chosen as sultan by the nobles. He appointed *Khan-i-Jahan* Maqbal, a Telugu Brahmin convert as wazir (prime minister). The wazir helped the Sultan in his administration and maintained the prestige of the Sultanate during this period.

Military Campaigns

After his accession Firoz had to face the problem of preventing the disintegration of the Delhi Sultanate. He tried to safeguard his authority over north India instead of reasserting his authority over the Deccan and south India. He led two expeditions to Bengal but they were not successful. Bengal became free from the control of

Delhi Sultanate. Firoz led a campaign against Jaj Nagar (modern Orissa). He returned with rich booty acquired from the temples. He marched against Nagarkot and made its ruler to pay tributes. During this campaign the Sultan collected 1300 Sanskrit manuscripts from the Jawalamukhi temple library and got them translated into Persian. Firoz next marched against Thatta in the Sind region and crushed a rebellion there.

Administrative Reforms

The reign of Firoz Tughlaq was more notable for his administration. He strictly followed the advice of the ulemas in running the administration. He pleased the nobles and assured hereditary succession to their properties. Thus the iqta system was not only revived but also it was made hereditary. As per the Islamic law he levied the taxes. Jiziya was strictly imposed on non-Muslims. He was the first Sultan to impose irrigation tax. But at the same time he dug irrigation canals and wells. The longest canal was about 200 kilometres from Sutlej to Hansi. Another canal was between Yamuna and Hissar. There were about 1200 fruit gardens in and around Delhi yielding more revenue. The special tax on 28 items was abolished by him since they were against the Islamic law. He also developed royal factories called *karkhanas* in which thousands of slaves were employed. About 300 new towns were built during his reign. The famous among them was Firozabad near Red Fort in Delhi, now called Firoz Shah Kotla. Old monuments like Jama Masjid and Qutb-Minar were also repaired.

A new department called *Diwan-i-Khairat* was created to take care of orphans and widows. Free hospitals and marriage bureaus for poor Muslims were also established. Firoz patronized scholars like Barani and Afif. As he was guided by the ulemas, he was intolerant towards Shia Muslims and Sufis. He treated Hindus as second grade citizens and imposed Jiziya. In this respect he was

the precursor of Sikandar Lodi and Aurangzeb. Also he increased the number of slaves by capturing the defeated soldiers and young persons. In his regime the number of slaves had increased to one lakh eighty thousand. When Firoz died in 1388 the struggle for power between the Sultan and the nobles started once again. His successors had to face the rebellion of the slaves created by Firoz.

In the following years, the Delhi Sultanate had disintegrated further. Many provinces like Malwa and Gujarat declared their independence. The invasion of Timur in 1398 had worsened the situation. When Timur entered Delhi there was no opposition and he sacked Delhi for three days murdering thousands of people and looting enormous wealth. He withdrew from India in 1399 and his invasion in fact delivered a death blow to the Tughlaq dynasty.

Sayyids (1414-1451)

Before his departure from India, Timur appointed Khizr Khan as governor of Multan. He captured Delhi and founded the Sayyid dynasty in 1414. He tried to consolidate the Delhi Sultanate but in vain. He died in 1421 and was succeeded by his son, Mubarak Shah. Muhammad Shah who succeeded him was always busy against conspirators and gradually lost control over his nobles. Buhlul Khan Lodi dominated everything. Muhammad Shah died in 1445 and was succeeded by his son Alam Shah (1445-1451) the weakest of the Sayyid princes. He handed over the throne to Buhlul Lodi and retired to Badaun.

Lodis (1451-1526)

The Lodis, who succeeded Sayyids, were Afghans. Buhlul Lodi was the first Afghan ruler while his predecessors were all Turks. He died in 1489 and was succeeded by his son, Sikandar Lodi.

Sikandar Lodi (1489-1517) was the greatest of the three Lodi sovereigns. He brought the whole of Bihar under his control, many Rajput chiefs were defeated. He attacked Bengal and forced its ruler

to conclude a treaty with him, and extended his empire from the Punjab to Bihar. He was a good administrator. Roads were laid and many irrigational facilities were provided for the benefit of the peasantry. Despite certain laudable qualities, he was a bigot. He destroyed many Hindu temples and imposed many restrictions on the Hindus. Yet, he was one of the great Lodi sultans who made the sultanate strong and powerful.

Sikandar Lodi was succeeded by his eldest son Ibrahim Lodi who was arrogant. He insulted his nobles openly in court and humiliated them. Those nobles who revolted were put to death. His own uncle, Alauddin revolted. Daulat Khan Lodi, the governor of the Punjab was insulted and disaffection between king and courtier became very common. Greatly displeased by the arrogance of Ibrahim, Daulat Khan Lodi invited Babur to invade India. Babur marched against Delhi and defeated and killed Ibrahim Lodi in the first battle of Panipat (1526). The Afghan kingdom lasted for only seventy-five years.

Learning Outcome

After learning this lesson the students will be able to explain

1. *Political History of Delhi Sultanate from 1206 to 1526 A.D.*
2. *The rulers of Slave Dynasty – Aibak, Ilutmish, Raziya, Balban – and their achievements.*
3. *Khalji Dynasty – Alauddin Khalji's military achievements and reforms.*
4. *Tughlaq Dynasty – Mahmud-bin-Tughlaq's achievements and his administrative experiments.*
5. *Firoz Tughlaq and his administration.*
6. *Sayyids and Lodis and the decline of Delhi Sultanate.*

MODEL QUESTIONS

I. Choose the correct answer.

- Arabic coinage of *tanka* was introduced in India by
 - Alauddin Khalji
 - Iltutmish
 - Mahmud-bin Tughlaq
 - Firoz Tughlaq
- The commander of the South Indian expedition under Alauddin Khalji
 - Alauddin Khalji
 - Qutbuddin Aibak
 - Malik Kafur
 - Jalaluddin Khalji

II. Fill in the blanks.

- Ramachandra Deva was the ruler of
- Author of the book *Padmavathi* was
- collected Sanskrit manuscripts from the library at Jawalamukhi temple.
- The last ruler of the Delhi Sultanate was

III. Match the following.

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Mahmud-bin-Tughlaq | a) Theory of Kingship |
| 2. Alauddin Khalji | b) Hasan Nizami |
| 3. Balban | c) Market Reforms |
| 4. Qutbuddin Aibak | d) Token Currency |

IV. Find out the correct statement. One statement alone is right.

- The agricultural department, *Diwan-i-Kohi* was established by Alauddin Khalji.

- Alai Darwaza was built by Mahmud-bin-Tughlaq.
- The department called *Diwan-i-Khairat* was created by Firoz Tughlaq to take care of orphans and widows.
- Iltutmish introduced the Persian festival of *Nauroz* to impress the nobles and people.

V. State whether the following statements are True or False.

- Tughril Khan, the governor of Bengal revolted against Balban.
- Firoz Tughlaq patronized poets like Amir Khusrau.
- Daulat Khan Lodi invited Babur to invade India.

VI. Write short notes (Any three points).

- Raziya
- The Forty
- Token Currency
- Sayyids
- Lodis

VII. Answer briefly (100 words).

- Assess the achievements of Qutbuddin Aibak.
- Examine the Market reforms of Alauddin Khalji.
- Write a note on the South Indian expedition of Malik Kafur.

VIII. Answer in detail (200 words).

- Give an estimate of the achievements of Iltutmish.
- Examine the rule of Balban and his theory of kingship.
- Evaluate the personality of Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq.
- Write an essay on the reforms of Firoz Tughlaq.

LESSON 17

INDIA UNDER THE DELHI SULTANATE

Learning Objectives

Students will acquire knowledge about

- 1. Administration under the Delhi Sultanate.*
- 2. Economic Condition under the Delhi Sultanate.*
- 3. Social Life under the Delhi Sultanate.*
- 4. Art and architecture of the Delhi Sultanate.*
- 5. Literary Development.*

Administration

The establishment and expansion of the Delhi Sultanate led to the evolution of a powerful and efficient administrative system. At its zenith the authority of Delhi Sultan had extended as far south as Madurai. Although the Delhi Sultanate had disintegrated, their administrative system made a powerful impact on the Indian provincial kingdoms and later on the Mughal system of administration.

The Delhi Sultanate was an Islamic state with its religion Islam. The Sultans considered themselves as representatives of the Caliph. They included the name of the Caliph in the *khutba* or prayer and inscribed it on their coins. Although Balban called himself the shadow of God, he continued to practice of including the name of Caliph in the *khutba* and coins. Iltutmish, Muhammad bin Tughlaq and Firoz Tughlaq obtained *mansur* or letter of permission from the Caliph.

The office of the Sultan was the most important in the administrative system. He was the ultimate authority for the military,

legal and political activities. There was no clear law of succession during this period. All the sons had equal claim to the throne. Iltutmish even nominated his daughter in preference to his sons. But such nominations or successions were to be accepted by the nobles. Sometimes *ulemas* played crucial role in accepting the succession to the throne. However, the military superiority remained the main factor in matters of succession.

Central Government

The Sultan was assisted by a number of departments and officials in his administration. The post of *Naib* was the most powerful one. The *Naib* practically enjoyed all the powers of the Sultan and exercised general control over all the departments. Next to him was the *Wazir* who was heading the finance department called *Diwani Wizarat*.

The military department was called *Diwani Ariz*. It was headed by *Ariz-i-mumalik*. He was responsible for recruiting the soldiers and administering the military department. He was not the commander-in-chief of the army. The Sultan himself was the commander-in-chief of the army. The military department was first set up by Balban and it was further improved by Alauddin Khalji under whom the strength of the army crossed three lakh soldiers. Alauddin introduced the system of branding of the horses and payment of salary in cash. Cavalry was given importance under the Delhi Sultanate.

Diwani Rasalat was the department of religious affairs. It was headed by chief *Sadr*. Grants were made by this department for the construction and maintenance of mosques, tombs and *madrasas*. The head of the judicial department was the chief *Qazi*. Other judges or *qazis* were appointed in various parts of the Sultanate. Muslim personal law or *sharia* was followed in civil

matters. The Hindus were governed by their own personal law and their cases were dispensed by the village *panchayats*. The criminal law was based on the rules and regulations made by the Sultans. The department of correspondence was called *Diwani Insha*. All the correspondence between the ruler and the officials was dealt with by this department.

Local Administration

The provinces under the Delhi Sultanate were called *iqtas*. They were initially under the control of the nobles. But the governors of the provinces were called the *muqtis* or *walis*. They were to maintain law and order and collect the land revenue. The provinces were divided into *shiqs* and the next division was *pargana*. The *shiq* was under the control of *shiqdar*. The *pargana* comprising a number of villages was headed by *amil*. The village remained the basic unit of the administration. The village headman was known as *muqaddam* or *chaudhri*. The village accountant was called *patwari*.

Economy

After consolidating their position in India, the Delhi Sultans introduced reforms in the land revenue administration. The lands were classified into three categories:

1. *iqta* land – lands assigned to officials as *iqtas* instead of payment for their services.
2. *khalisa* land – land under the direct control of the Sultan and the revenues collected were spent for the maintenance of royal court and royal household.
3. *inam* land – land assigned or granted to religious leaders or religious institutions.

The peasantry paid one third of their produce as land revenue, and sometimes even one half of the produce. They also paid other

taxes and always led a hand-to-mouth living. Frequent famines made their lives more miserable.

However, Sultans like Muhammad bin Tughlaq and Firoz Tughlaq took efforts to enhance agricultural production by providing irrigational facilities and by providing *takkavi* loans. They also encouraged the farmers to cultivate superior crop like wheat instead of barley. Firoz encouraged the growth of horticulture. Muhammad bin Tughlaq created a separate agricultural department, *Diwani Kohi*.

During the Sultanate period, the process of urbanization gained momentum. A number of cities and towns had grown during this period. Lahore, Multan, Broach, Anhilwara, Lakhnauti, Daulatabad, Delhi and Jaunpur were important among them. Delhi remained the largest city in the East. The growth of trade and commerce was described by contemporary writers. India exported a large number of commodities to the countries on the Persian Gulf and West Asia and also to South East Asian countries. Overseas trade was under the control of *Multanis* and Afghan Muslims. Inland trade was dominated by the Gujarat *Marwari* merchants and Muslim *Bohra* merchants. Construction of roads and their maintenance facilitated for smooth transport and communication. Particularly the royal roads were kept in good shape. *Sarais* or rest houses on the highways were maintained for the convenience of the travelers.

Cotton textile and silk industry flourished in this period. Sericulture was introduced on a large scale which made India less dependent on other countries for the import of raw silk. Paper industry had grown and there was an extensive use of paper from 14th and 15th centuries. Other crafts like leather-making, metal-crafts and carpet-weaving flourished due to the increasing demand. The royal *karkhanas* supplied the goods needed to the Sultan and his household. They manufactured costly articles made of gold, silver

and gold ware. The nobles also aped the life style of Sultans and indulged in luxurious life. They were well paid and accumulated enormous wealth.

The system of coinage had also developed during the Delhi Sultanate. Iltutmish issued several types of silver *tankas*. One silver *tanka* was divided into 48 *jitals* during the Khalji rule and 50 *jitals* during the Tughlaq rule. Gold coins or *dinars* became popular during the reign of Alauddin Khalji after his South Indian conquests. Copper coins were less in number and dateless. Muhammad bin Tughlaq had not only experimented token currency but also issued several types of gold and silver coins. They were minted at eight different places. At least twenty five varieties of gold coins were issued by him.

Social Life

There was little change in the structure of the Hindu society during this period. Traditional caste system with the Brahmins on the upper strata of the society was prevalent. The subservient position of women also continued and the practice of sati was widely prevalent. The seclusion of women and the wearing of *pardah* became common among the upper class women. The Arabs and Turks brought the *pardah* system into India and it became widespread among the Hindu women in the upper classes of north India.

During the Sultanate period, the Muslim society remained divided into several ethnic and racial groups. The Turks, Iranians, Afghans and Indian Muslims developed exclusively and there were no intermarriages between these groups. Hindu converts from lower castes were also not given equal respect. The Muslim nobles occupied high offices and very rarely the Hindu nobles were given high position in the government. The Hindus were considered *zimmi*

or protected people for which they were forced to pay a tax called *jiziya*. In the beginning *jiziya* was collected as part of land tax. Firoz Tughlaq separated it from the land revenue and collected *jiziya* as a separate tax. Sometimes Brahmins were exempted from paying *jiziya*.

Art and Architecture

The art and architecture of the Delhi Sultanate period was distinct from the Indian style. The Turks introduced arches, domes, lofty towers or *minarets* and decorations using the Arabic script. They used the skill of the Indian stone cutters. They also added colour to their buildings by using marbles, red and yellow sand stones.



In the beginning, they converted temples and other structures demolished into mosques. For example, the *Quwwat-ul-Islam* mosque near *Qutub Minar* in Delhi was built by using the materials obtained from destroying many Hindu and Jain temples. But later, they began to construct new structures. The most magnificent building of the 13th century was the *Qutub Minar* which was founded by Aibek and completed by Iltutmish. This seventy one metre tower was dedicated to the *Sufi* saint Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki. The balconies of this tower were projected from the main building and it was the proof of the architectural skills of that period. Later, Alauddin Khalji added an entrance to the *Qutub Minar* called *Alai Darwaza*. The dome of this arch was built on scientific lines.

The buildings of the Tughlaq period were constructed by combining arch and dome. They also used the cheaper and easily available grey colour stones. The palace complex called Tughlaqabad with its beautiful lake was built during the period of Ghyasuddin

Tughlaq. Muhammad bin Tughlaq built the tomb of Ghyasuddin on a high platform. The Kotla fort at Delhi was the creation of Firoz Tughlaq. The Lodi garden in Delhi was the example for the architecture of the Lodis.

Music

New musical instruments such as *sarangi* and *rabab* were introduced during this period. Amir Khusrau introduced many new *ragas* such as *ghora* and *sanam*. He evolved a new style of light music known as *qwalis* by blending the Hindu and Iranian systems. The invention of *sitar* was also attributed to him. The Indian classical work *Ragadarpan* was translated into Persian during the reign of Firoz Tughlaq. Pir Bhodan, a *Sufi* saint was one of the great musicians of this period. Raja Man Singh of Gwalior was a great lover of music. He encouraged the composition of a great musical work called *Man Kautuhal*.

Literature

The Delhi Sultans patronized learning and literature. Many of them had great love for Arabic and Persian literature. Learned men came from Persia and Persian language got encouragement from the rulers. Besides theology and poetry, the writing of history was also encouraged. Some of the Sultans had their own court historians. The most famous historians of this period were Hasan Nizami, Minhaj-us-Siraj, Ziauddin Barani, and Shams-Siraj Afif. Barani's *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi* contains the history of Tughlaq dynasty. Minhaj-us-Siraj wrote *Tabaqat-i-Nasari*, a general history of Muslim dynasties up to 1260.



AMIR KHUSRAU

Amir Khusrau (1252-1325) was the famous Persian writer of this period. He wrote a number of poems. He experimented with several poetical forms and created a new style of Persian poetry called *Sabaq-i-Hind* or the Indian style. He also wrote some Hindi verses. Amir Khusrau's *Khazain-ul-Futuh* speaks about Alauddin's conquests. His famous work *Tughlaq Nama* deals with the rise of Ghyiasuddin Tughlaq.

Sanskrit and Persian functioned as link languages in the Delhi Sultanate. Zia Nakshabi was the first to translate Sanskrit stories into Persian. The book *Tutu Nama* or Book of the Parrot became popular and translated into Turkish and later into many European languages. The famous *Rajatarangini* written by Kalhana belonged to the period of Zain-ul-Abidin, the ruler of Kashmir. Many Sanskrit works on medicine and music were translated into Persian.

In Arabic, Alberuni's *Kitab-ul-Hind* is the most famous work. Regional languages also developed during this period. Chand Baradi was the famous Hindi poet of this period. Bengali literature had also developed and Nusrat Shah patronized the translation of *Mahabaratha* into Bengali. The Bakhti cult led to development of Gujarati and Marathi languages. The Vijayanagar Empire patronized Telugu and Kannada literature.

Learning Outcome

After learning this lesson the students will be able to explain

1. Central government and Local administration under the Delhi Sultanate.
2. Economic life of the people of India under the Delhi Sultanate.
3. Social condition and the impact of Muslim rule on Indian society.
4. Architectural contributions of the Delhi Sultanate.
5. Persian and other scholars lived during the Delhi Sultanate and their contribution.