

Chapter 3 – The Delhi Sultanate

3. L. Administration under Delhi Sultanate

a) Principals of administration and Central administration

- Administration during the Delhi Sultanate was based on the laws of the Shariat or the laws of Islam.
- Political, legal and military authority was vested in the Sultan.
- Thus military strength was the main factor in succession of throne.
- Administrative units were, Iqta, Shiq, Paraganaa and Gram.
- The sultan was the absolute power. However there was a council of ministers to help the smooth functioning of the administration.
- Wazir was the chief minister.
- Diwan was the finance minister.
- Qazi was the chief justice.
- Diwan-i-Ariz was the army minister.

b) Iqta system

- Iltutmish established the "Iqta system" based on Mohammad Ghori's ideas.
- It was very close to the original form of Iqta' as its main function was only to collect taxes by Muqtis/Iqtedars in India.
- They had no other right to the subjects apart from the taxes as long as taxes were paid.
- Under Iqta System, the land of the empire was divided into several large and small tracts called Iqta and assigned these Iqtas to his soldiers, officers and nobles.
- In the beginning, an Iqta was based upon salary. Later, under Firoz Shah Tughlaq it became hereditary. There were Large Iqtas and Small Iqtas.

c) Revenue system

- Before Alauddin's reforms, the Delhi Sultanate did not collect the land revenues directly from the peasants.
- Subsequently, his administration decided to collect the revenues directly from the cultivators.
- All cultivators, from the village chiefs to the peasants, had to remit half of their revenues to the crown.
- Three types of landed revenues were levied from the farmers were Kharaj-e-Jiziya, Charai and Ghari.
- He got the whole land measured and then fixed the share of the state on the basis of a pattern called Vishva.
- The land revenue, known as Karaj, was increased from 1/3 of the total produce to 1/2 especially in the Doab.

d) The army

- Ala-ud-din Khilji established a separate military department known as Diwan-i-Wizarat and Diwan-i-Ariz.
- The Sultans of Delhi Sultanate were a perfect autocrat and their real source of authority was military strength.
- The standing army of the Sultanate consisted of the royal bodyguard and troops of the capital which were, in times of need, reinforced by the levies sent by the provincial Viceroys and the Maqtas and the contingents of Hindu troops. The forces were arranged in ranks.

e) Provincial administration and Local administration

- The Delhi Sultanate was further divided into smaller provinces for it was convenient for the ministers to help them in the 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.

3. M. Economic Conditions under Delhi Sultante

- Inland and foreign trade flourished under the Sultans. As for the internal trade we had the various classes of merchants and shopkeepers.
- The main being The Gujaratis of the North, the Chettis of the South, Banjaras of Rajputana were the main traders. Bigger deals of commodities were made in the 'Mandis.
- Despite constant warfare of the Sultans of Delhi, affluent agricultural and industrial production and foreign trade had enriched India and maintained its prosperity.
- Achievements in various fields of Indian economy were mostly on account of private enterprise.
- The trade was dominated by the Arabs, but the Tamils, the Kalingas, and Gujaratis also participated in trade.

3. N. Social Conditions under Delhi Sultante

- The Delhi sultanate society was broadly divided into four major groups' viz. nobles (Aristocrats), Priests, Towns people and Peasants.
- Nobles included Sultan and his relatives, courtiers and holders of Iqta, Hindu and Muslim chieftains, merchants, bankers etc.
- During the Delhi Sultanate, the society was in transition phase. Based on the religion, people were broadly categorized into Hindus and Muslims.
- This established the social stratification among Muslims.
- Nobles lived a luxurious and lavish life because of their position and monetary condition.

3. O. Religious, Cultural & Architectural Developments under Delhi Sultante

Religion:

- As in other Islamic empires, there were provisions for dhimmi within the Delhi Sultanate. The dhimmi were non-Muslim subjects under Muslim rule. They were generally allowed to practice their religion in peace, so long as they accepted Muslim rule and paid a special tax called a jiziya. Thus, varied types of religious sects existed in India at that time. However, the novelties of this period were the progress of Sufism among the Muslims and the Bhakti movement among the Hindus.

Cultural and Architectural Developments:

- The Hindustani language (A mix of modern-day Hindi and Urdu) began to emerge in the Delhi Sultanate period, developed from the Middle Indo-Aryan apabhramsha vernaculars of North India. The Hindu style of architecture greatly influenced Islamic style and gave birth to Indo-Islamic architecture. The sultanate is noted for its integration of the Indian subcontinent into a global cosmopolitan culture (as seen concretely in the development of the Hindustani language and Indo-Islamic architecture)
- The Delhi Sultanate's greatest contribution to Indian fine arts , however, was the introduction of Islamic architectural features, including true domes and arches , and the integration of Indian and Islamic styles of architecture. The Delhi Sultanate ruled the city between 1206 and 1526. Their rule saw the development of early Indo-Islamic architecture, the most prominent being the Qutb complex, a group of monuments surrounding the Qutb Minar.

