

# DELHI SULTANATE-ADMINISTRATION (PART-1)

B.A. HISTORY (HONS) PART-3 PAPER-5

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# INTRODUCTION

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The period from 1206 to 1526 has been called as the period of Delhi Sultanate. During this period, India was ruled by a number of Turkish Sultans who belonged to the *Ilbari Turkish clan*. These Sultans were also called *Mamluks*. Five dynasties ruled over Delhi during this period They are the Slave dynasty, Khalji dynasty, Tughlaq dynasty, the Sayyid dynasty and Lodi dynasty. Except the Lodis all other Delhi sultans were Turkish in origin. The Lodis were Afghans.

The policy of the rulers of the Delhi sultanate was largely influenced by their religion, Islam. Their policies were influenced by the *Ulemas* or Muslim intellectuals. In theory the Delhi sultanate was a theocracy. It was based on Islamic law as given in

# INTRODUCTION

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*Quran* and the *Hadis* expounded by the Ulemas.

The government established by the Turks was a compromise between Islamic political ideas and institutions on the one hand and the existing Rajput system of government on the other. Consequently many elements of the Rajput political system with or without changes became part and parcel of the Turkish administration in India. Most of the Sultans kept up the pretence of regarding the caliph as the legal sovereign while they themselves were the caliph's representatives. Most of them included the name of the caliph in the *Khutba* and the *Sikka* and adopted titles indicative of their subordination to the caliph.

# CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

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The Sultan dominated the central government as he was the legal head of the state and acted as the chief executive and the highest court of appeal.

Though he owed nominal allegiance to the Abbasid Caliphs, yet for all practical purposes, he was totally independent. The chief responsibilities of the Sultan were the protection of the state, the settlement of disputes, the defense of the realm of Islam, the enforcement of laws, the collection of taxes, and the welfare of people. The nobility, civil services and Ulema supported the Sultan. In most cases, a predecessor either nominated the Sultan, or he had to fight a war of succession.

# CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

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The Delhi Sultans could make civil and political regulations for public welfare. *Khutba* and *Sikka* were recognized as important attributes of sovereignty. The *Khutba* was the formal sermon following the congregational prayer on Fridays wherein the name of the Sultan was mentioned as the head of the community. Coinage was the ruler's prerogative : his name was inscribed on the coins (sikka).

With the exceptions Alauddin Khalji and Mubarak Shah Khalji, all other Sultans styled themselves as deputies of Caliph with the title such as *Nasir-i-amir Ur Momin* -assistant of the leader of the faithful or *Yamin ul Khalifa* i.e. the right hand man of Caliph.

# CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

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**Wazir:** The most important post next to the Sultan was that of the Prime Minister, or the 'Wazir'. He was in charge of the entire fiscal administration of the realm and all matters relating to income and expenditures. His department was known as the Diwan-i-Wazarat.

**Musharraf-i-Mumalik:** This post was equal to the present-day Accountant General.

**Mustauf-i-Mumalik:** This post was equal to the present day Auditor General. The duties involved auditing the accounts.

**Sadr-us-Sadur:** His role was to deal with religious affairs and immunities to scholars and men of piety.

**Munshi-i-Mumalik:** This post dealt with the entire state correspondence.

# CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

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The revenue structure of the empire followed the Islamic traditions. The state depended on agricultural produce.

There were various sources of income of the Delhi Sultans. They are

- (1) ***KHARAJ (LAND TAX)***- This was the mainstay of the finance of the government. It was charged from Muslims and non-Muslims ranging from  $\frac{1}{5}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  under various reigns
- (2) ***KHUMS (1/5 OF THE WAR SPOILS)***- It also includes the products of mines. According to Islamic law,  $\frac{1}{5}$  of the booty goes to state and rest  $\frac{4}{5}$  to soldiers
- (3) ***JIZYA***- This was the religious tax on non-Muslims which they had to pay for their Protection

# CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

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- (4) **ZAKAT**- This was a religious tax which was imposed only on the Muslims collected for the maintenance of the poor Muslims
- (5) **IRRIGATION TAX**- It was imposed by Firoz Tughlaq as 1/10 of the product on the peasants who used the water of the canals developed by the state. Ala ud Din also imposed two new taxes i.e. house tax and grazing tax.

(To be continued)