

## CHAPTER 4 - DELHI SULTANATE

### THE SLAVE SULTANS (A.D.1206-1290)

- ✓ They are also known as the Slave Kings because many of them were either slaves or were the sons of slaves who had become Sultans. It was then that the new kingdom which is now called the Delhi Sultanate was established. The Sultans of Delhi gradually extended their control up to Bengal in the east and Sind in the west.



- ✓ **Qutb-ud-din Aibak:** After the death of Ghori, there were many contenders for power. One was **Qutb-ud- din Aibak**, who ascended the throne in Delhi and laid the foundation of slave dynasty.
- ✓ **Iluttmish:** **Iluttmish** succeeded Qutbud-din as Sultan, making Northern India a separate kingdom. He faced the following problems during his empire:
  - ❖ First from the Turkish nobles; even though Sultan provided them with land grants, they were never satisfied and always ready to revolt.
  - ❖ Next problem was from the local rulers - Rajput chiefs, who had been defeated. They gathered soldiers around them and kept harassing the armies of the Sultanate.
  - ❖ Further north, there was new trouble. The rulers of Afghanistan were quiet, but the Mongol people of Central Asia, led by Chenghiz Khan, made fresh conquests. The area along the Indus river came under Mongol domination. Every now and then they would cross the river and attack Punjab. For some years, they actually conquered Punjab and threatened the Sultanate.

✓ **Razia Sultana**

After Sultan Iltutmish, his daughter Raziya succeeded him. Being a woman ruler made it even more difficult for her. Nevertheless, she ruled for only a short while.

✓ **Balban**

- ❖ After a number of less important Sultans came Balban, a strong and iron-willed Sultan.
- ❖ Balban was more successful in solving these problems than Iltutmish had been. He defended the Sultanate from the attacks of the Mongols on the north.
- ❖ The assertion of authority by Balban led to constant military campaigns against defiant governors and against their local allies.
- ❖ Balban believed that the power of the Sultan was absolute and that no one could challenge it. He had heard about the great emperors of Iran, the Achaemenids and the Sassanians and he modelled himself on them. He encouraged people to do the **sijdah** in his presence, that is, they had to kneel and touch the ground with their forehead in salutation to him. The orthodox Muslims were horrified at this because according to Islam, all men are equal, and therefore no one should do the sijdah before anyone else except God.

**THE KHALJIS (1290-1320)**

The Slave Sultans were succeeded by a new dynasty of kings in 1290 called The Khaljis. As Balban's son, Kaiqubad, was found unfit to rule, his three-year-old son Kaymars was placed on the throne. As there was no unanimity on the choice of a regent and a council to administer the empire, the contending nobles plotted against each other. Out of this chaos, a new leader, Malik **Jalal-ud-din Khalji**, the commander of the army, emerged supreme.

✓ **Ala-ud-din Khalji**

- ❖ An ambitious young man, Ala-ud-din, a nephew and son-in-law of Jalaluddin Khalji became Sultan in 1296. Ala-ud-din had even bigger dreams than Balban. He wanted to become a second Alexander and conquer the world. He began by trying to establish an all India empire. For this, he needed to do three things: to win the loyalty of the nobles and to curb their power, to conquer the Deccan and Rajasthan, and to force the Mongols to withdraw.
- ❖ But in order to do all this, he also needed a large army. He gave presents of gold to the citizens when he became Sultan. Yet at the same time, he made it clear that he was a strong and powerful ruler and that he would deal severely with anyone who showed signs of disloyalty.
- ❖ A vast sum of money was required in order to maintain a large army. For this, he took the following measures:
  - He raised the land taxes on the wealthier people of the Doab (the fertile-area between the Ganga and Yamuna rivers).
  - In addition to this, he kept a strict watch on the revenue which the nobles got from their land and did not allow them to keep anything which was not their due.

- The prices of goods were also controlled, so that, no one could make large profits and everyone could afford to pay the price demanded.
- Another important thing which he did was to order a new assessment of the cultivated land and the revenue:
  1. First, the land under cultivation in his kingdom was measured.
  2. Then, the revenue from the land was assessed on the basis of this measurement.
  3. Then, the revenue from the land was assessed on the basis of this measurement.By ordering this new assessment, he was also able to record the amount of revenue collected by various persons, and to keep a control on it.

- **Campaigns by Ala-ud-din Khalji:** He campaigned against the kingdoms of Gujarat and Malwa. He tried to establish his control over Rajasthan by capturing the famous forts of Ranthambhor and Chittor. Ala-ud-din also sent a large army southwards under **Malik Kafur**. The- intention was not only to conquer the peninsula but also to try and obtain money and wealth. Malik Kafur plundered in all directions and gathered together a large amount of gold from the various kingdoms of the south, including the **Yadavas at Devagiri, the Kakatiyas at Warangal and the Hoyasalas at Dvarasamudra.**

Thus, for a very brief period, Ala-ud-din ruled over an empire almost as large that of Ashoka. However, his control over the northern Deccan remained indirect.

The last of the Khaliji rulers were killed and another family from the Tughluqs—began to rule from Delhi.

### **THE TUGHLAQ DYNASTY**

The Tughlaq dynasty was a Muslim dynasty of Turko-Indian origin which ruled over the Delhi sultanate in medieval India. Its reign started in 1320 in Delhi when Ghazi Malik assumed the throne under the title of Ghiyath al-Din Tughluq. The dynasty ended in 1413.

- ✓ **Muhammad-bin-Tughluq:** Most important rulers were Muhammad-bin-Tughluq (1325-51). The North African Arab traveller, Ibn Battutah, was in India during this time and has left a detailed description of the condition of the country under Muhammad. Muhammad was a man of ideals and tried, as far as possible, to rule on the principles of reason. He had a mathematician and a logician as advisers. Many of his ideas were very sensible and rational but they did not work out well because he did not do the right things to make them work.
- **Transfer of Capital**
  - Muhammad Tughlaq's attempt to shift the capital from Delhi to Devagiri in Maharashtra, which he named Daulatabad, was a bold initiative. However, the plan failed, and soon Muhammad realised that it was difficult to rule North India from Daulatabad. He again ordered the transfer of capital back to Delhi.
- **Token Currency**

The next important experiment of Muhammad was the introduction of token currency. This currency system had already experimented in China and Iran. When Muhammad issued bronze coins, fake coins were minted, which could not be prevented by the government.

- **Increase in taxes to raise army**

Muhammad wanted to conquer territory not only in India but also in Central Asia. So in order to get more money, he increased the taxes which the peasants had to pay in the Doab area. However, it also failed miserably. It coincided with a prolonged and severe famine in the Doab.

Unfortunately for Muhammad, his policies went wrong, and he gradually lost the support not only of the people but also many of the nobles and the ulema.

- ✓ **FIROZ SHAH TUGHLAQ**

- When Firoz Shah came to the throne (1351-88), he realised that one of the reasons for the failure of Muhammad was that he did not have the support of the nobles and the ulema. So Firoz made his peace with them and kept them content by giving them grants of revenue. He was lenient in his dealings with the nobles. He allowed the orthodox ulema to influence state policy in certain matters.
- He was less tolerant, not only of the non-Muslim but also of those Muslims who were not orthodox.

Thus, Firoz improved his relationship with the powerful groups at the court but at the same time, the power of the Sultan decreased.

- He improved parts of the kingdom by starting.
- He improved parts of the kingdom by starting new irrigation schemes, such as the building of new canals, e.g., Yamuna canal.
- He also established new towns such as Ferozpur, Ferozabad, Hissar-Firoza and Jaunpur.
- He increased the number of educational centres and hospitals.
- He also had two of the pillars of the emperor Ashoka brought to Delhi and one of them was placed on the roof of his palace.

### **THE BREAK-UP OF THE DELHI SULTANATE**

In 1398, northern India once again felt the power of the armies of Central Asia. The Turkish chief Timur, led an army into India. Timur's hordes poured into Delhi and looted the city and killed its people. As in the case of Mahmud of Ghazni, he was mainly interested in looting.

The Tughluq dynasty ended in 1413 and a local governor occupied Delhi. He declared himself Sultan and founded the Sayyid dynasty (1414-51). However, this dynasty had a very short life. It gave way to another governor who usurped the throne of Delhi. He was an Afghan noble with the family name of Lodi.

### **THE LODI DYNASTY (A.D. 1451-1526)**

- ✓ The Lodi Dynasty was established by **Bahlul Lodi (1451–1489)** whose reign witnessed the conquest of Sharqi Kingdom (Bengal).
- ✓ **Bahul Lodhi's son Sikandar Lodhi (1489–1517)** shifted the capital from Delhi to Agra in 1504.
- ✓ The last Lodi ruler Ibrahim Lodi was defeated by Babur in the First Battle of Panipat (1526), which resulted in the establishment of the Mughal Dynasty.

## NOBLES

- ✓ Nobles became very powerful during times of Delhi Sultanate and they came to have a large influence over state policy.
- ✓ Most of these nobles came of Turkish or Afghan families which had settled in India. Some of them were men who came to India in search of fortune and worked for the Sultan; most of the

## ADMINISTRATION OF THE SULTANATE

- ✓ The administration of the Sultanate was concerned mainly with the work of collecting and recording the revenue from the land, and of course, maintaining law and order
- ✓ **Revenue:** Some of the lands was reserved and came directly under the control of the Sultan. The revenue from this land was used for the Sultan's personal expenses The amount of revenue from such lands was fixed at one-third of the produce and this was the share of the state. The revenue was collected by local officials working in the village and the- district.

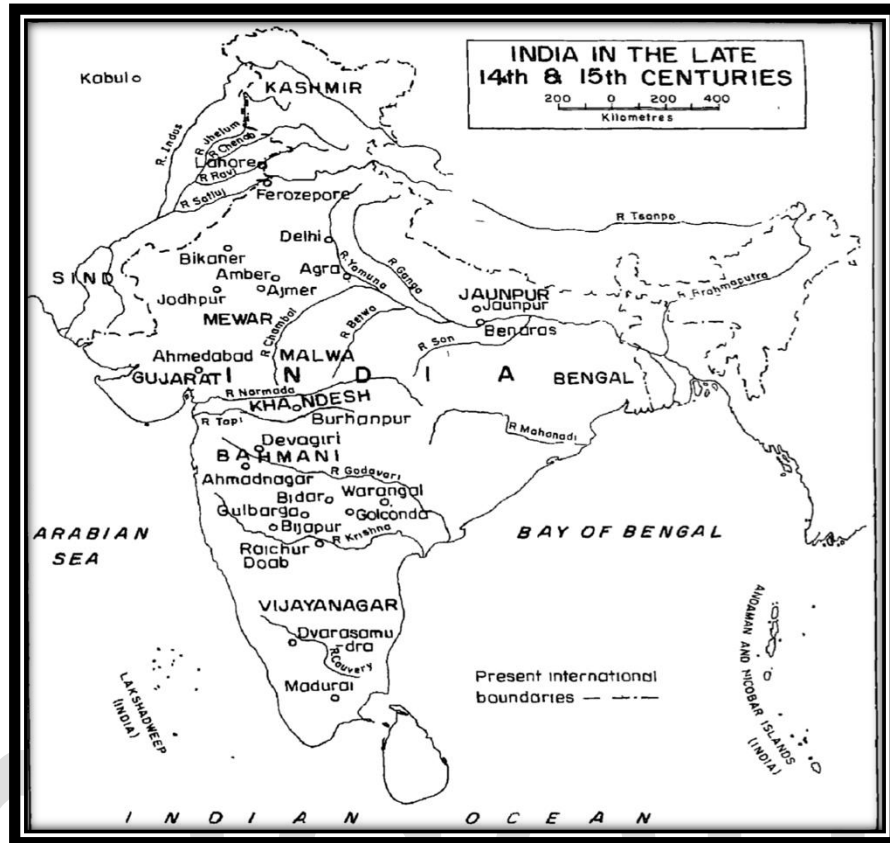
- ✓ **Officers in Sultanate**

<b>MUQADDAM</b>	Hereditary headman of the village
<b>PATWARI</b>	Kept the local records
<b>MUSHRIF</b>	Attended to the revenue when it was collected
<b>WAZIR</b>	Checked the revenue when it came in, and kept a record of the grants; also supervised the work of all these officers.
<b>QAZI</b>	Advised on religious matters

## NEW KINGDOMS

As the power of the Sultanate gradually declined, a number of new kingdoms arose in various parts of the subcontinent. Most of them began as provinces of the Sultanate which gradually became independent.





- ✓ In western India, there were the **kingdoms of Gujarat and Malwa**. Ahmed Shah, who founded the city of Ahmedabad, was also responsible for strengthening the power of Gujarat.
- ✓ **The kingdom of Kashmir** came into prominence. The most popular of the kings of Kashmir was Zain-ul-Abidin, also known as 'Budshah', who ruled in the fifteenth century.
- ✓ In eastern India, the two important **kingdoms** were those of **Jaunpur and Bengal**.
- ✓ In the Deccan and further south, there arose two kingdoms, one of which is the **Kingdom of Bahmani** and the other was the **kingdom of Vijayanagara**.

**The Bahmani kingdom** was founded by a man called Hasan Gangu, who worked as an officer under Muhammad-bin-Tughluq. Hasan led a rebellion against the Sultan and proclaimed the independence of the Bahmani kingdom in 1347. He took the title of Bahman Shah and became the first ruler of the dynasty. The Bahmani kingdom included the whole of the northern Deccan up to the river Krishna.

South of this lays the **kingdom of Vijayanagara**. This was founded by two brothers - Harihara and Bukka. They also noticed the declining strength of the Sultanate. They conquered the territory of the Hoysalas (the modern Mysore State) and declared themselves the rulers in 1336.

But unfortunately, they were always at war. There were many reasons for this:

- One was that both kingdoms claimed the Raichur Doab as part of their territory. This was the rich and fertile land between the Krishna and Tungabhadra rivers which also lay in between the two kingdoms.

- Another reason was that Golconda in the Bahmani kingdom had diamond mines and the kings of Vijayanagara were, therefore, eager to conquer Golconda.
- Another reason was that the rulers of both kingdoms were very ambitious and wished to control the Peninsula.

gradeup