



UNIQUE STUDY POINT

Chapter 3 The Delhi Sultans

Question 1: Which ruler first established his or her capital at Delhi?

Answer: Ananga Pala of the Tomara dynasty first established his capital at Delhi.

Question 2: What was the language of administration under the Delhi Sultans?

Answer: Persian was the language of administration under the Delhi Sultans.

Question 3: In whose reign did the Sultanate reach its farthest extent?

Answer: In Muhammad Tughluq's reign, the Sultanate reached its farthest extent. Under his reign, the armies of the Sultanate had defeated rival armies and seized cities, and consequently, the kingdom of the Delhi Sultanate was vast.

Question 4: From which country did Ibn Battuta travel to India?

Answer: Ibn Battuta travelled to India from Morocco.

Question 5: According to the "Circle of Justice", why was it important for military commanders to keep the interests of the peasantry in mind?

Answer: According to the "Circle of Justice", it was important for the military commanders to keep the interests of the peasants in mind because the salaries of the soldiers came from the revenue collected from the peasants, and peasants could pay the revenue only when they were prosperous and happy. Hence, the military commanders promoted justice and honest governance.

Question 6: What is meant by the “internal” and “external” frontiers of the Sultanate?

Answer: ‘Internal’ frontiers of the sultanate consisted of the ‘hinterland’ of the garrison towns. The ‘external’ frontiers refer to the unconquered territories especially in the southern parts of the subcontinent.

Question 7: What were the steps taken to ensure that muqtis performed their duties? Why do you think they may have wanted to defy the orders of the Sultans?

Answer: Steps taken to ensure that the muqtis performed their duties well:

- Appointment of accountants to check the amount collected by the muqtis.
- Collection of revenues only which were prescribed by the state, not more than that in any circumstances.
- Fixation of limit to keep the required number of soldiers.
- They might be shifted to another area.
- The muqtis may have wanted to defy the orders of the Sultans because restrictions imposed on them were very rigorous.
- Their appointment was temporary.

Question 8: What was the impact of the Mongol invasions on the Delhi Sultanate?

Answer: Mongol attacks on the Delhi Sultanate increased during the reign of Alauddin Khalji and in the early years of Muhammad Tughluq’s rule. Both Alauddin Khalji and Muhammad Tughluq constructed a new garrison town for their soldiers and collected tax from lands between the Ganga and Yamuna to keep the soldiers fed. Alauddin chose to pay his soldiers in cash rather than iqta, whereas Muhammad Tughluq used a token currency made out of cheap metals.

Question 9: Do you think the authors of tawarikh would provide information about the lives of ordinary men and women?

Answer: The authors of tawarikh were learned men: secretaries, administrators, poets and courtiers. They recounted events and advised rulers on governance, emphasising the importance of just rule.

The authors of tawarikh did not provide information about ordinary men and women because:

- The authors of tawarikh lived in cities (mainly Delhi) and hardly ever in villages.
- They often wrote their histories for Sultans in the hope of rich rewards.
- These authors advised rulers on the basis of birthright and gender distinctions. Their ideas were not shared by everybody.

Question 10: Raziyya Sultan was unique in the history of the Delhi Sultanate. Do you think women leaders are accepted more readily today?

Answer: Raziyya Sultan was unique in the history of the Delhi Sultanate based on her ability as an effective leader of the Delhi Sultanate. Being a woman, she was not accepted as a ruler at the time.

Women leaders are accepted more readily today as we live in a world of equality for both men and women. Women are provided with adequate opportunities to excel. For example, Indira Gandhi and Margaret Thatcher are examples of political leaders who have been accepted for their effective leadership. Moreover, there is scope for positive growth for women leaders in future.

Question 11: Why were the Delhi Sultans interested in cutting down forests? Does deforestation occur for the same reasons today?

Answer: Delhi Sultans were interested in cutting down forests because they wanted to encourage agriculture on the land. They also wanted to cut down forests for creating protected territories against enemies and promoting trade routes.

Today, deforestation occurs due to creation of roads and railways and promotion of industries. Hence, some of the reasons are the same for deforestation, then and now.

Extra Questions
Very Short Answer Questions

1. Name the various rulers under Rajput dynasty.

Answer: (i) Tomaras (1130–1145) with most important ruler being Ananga Pala.

(ii) Chauhans (1165–1192) with most important ruler being Prithviraj Chauhan.

2. Who were the early Turkish rulers?

Answer: (i) Qutubuddin Aibak – (1206–1210)

(ii) Shamsuddin Iltutmish – (1210–1236)

(iii) Raziyya – (1236–1240)

(iv) Balban – (1266–1287)

3. Who were the rulers under Khilji dynasty?

Answer: (i) Jalaluddin Khilji – (1290–1296)

(ii) Alauddin Khilji – (1296–1316)

4. Who were the main rulers under Tughluq dynasty?

Answer: (i) Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq – (1320–1324)

(ii) Muhammad Tughlaq – (1324–1351)

(iii) Firoz Shah Tughlaq – (1351–1388)

5. How do we come to know about the Delhi Sultanate?

Answer: Inscriptions, coins and architecture provide a lot of information but especially valuable are 'histories', tarikh (singular)/tawarikh (plural) written in Persian, the language of administration under the Delhi Sultans.

6. Who were authors of tawarikh?

Answer: The authors of tawarikh were learned men which included secretaries, administrators, poets and courtiers, who both recounted events and advised rulers on governance, emphasising the importance of just rule.

7. Mention the four stages in making a manuscript.

Answer: (i) Preparing the paper.

(ii) Writing the text.

(iii) Melting gold to highlight important words and passages.

(iv) Preparing the binding.

8. What is birthright?

Answer: Birthright is privileges claimed on account of birth. For example, people believed that nobles inherited their rights to govern because they were born in certain families.

9. What are gender distinctions?

Answer: Gender distinctions are social and biological differences between women and men. Usually, these differences are used to argue that men are superior to women.

10. What is hinterland?

Answer: The lands adjacent to a city or port that supply it with goods and services.

11. Define garrison town.

Answer: It is a fortified settlement, with soldiers.

12. When did the Delhi Sultanate lay its foundation?

Answer: The Chauhans of Ajmer defeated the Tomars Rajputs in the middle of the 12th century.

13. What is called 'the qibla'?

Answer: The direction towards which Muslims turn while offering prayer or namaaz.

Short Answer Questions

1. How did Delhi become a capital?

Answer: (i) Delhi first became the capital of a kingdom under the Tomar Rajputs, who were defeated in the middle of the twelfth century by the Chauhans (also referred to as Chahamanas) of Ajmer.

(ii) It was under the Tomars and Chauhans that Delhi became an important commercial centre.

2. What were the limitations of authors of tawarikh?

Answer: (i) They lived in cities like Delhi and hardly ever in villages.

(ii) They often wrote their histories for Sultans in the hope of rich rewards.

(iii) These authors advised rulers on the need to preserve an 'ideal' order based on birthright and gender distinctions. Their ideas were not shared by everybody.

3. What did Minhaj-i-Siraj think about Raziyya?

Answer: (i) Minhaj-i-Siraj, a chronicler around 1236 recognised that Raziyya, Iltutmish's daughter was more able and qualified than her brothers.

(ii) However, she could not become the ruler since it was not ordained by God, as women were supposed to be subordinate to men.

(iii) Her attempts to rule independently failed and she was removed in 1240.

4. What was the position of Delhi Sultans in the 13th century?

Answer: (i) In the early 13th century, the control of the Delhi Sultans rarely went beyond heavily fortified towns occupied by garrisons.

(ii) The Sultans seldom controlled the hinterland of the cities and were therefore, dependent upon trade, tribute or plunder for supplies.

5. Why was controlling garrison towns difficult?

Answer: (i) Controlling garrison towns in distant Bengal and Sind from Delhi was extremely difficult.

(ii) Rebellion, war, even bad weather could snap fragile communication routes, Mongol invasion further weakened the Sultanate.

6. What is a mosque? Who has the chief authority in it?

Answer: (i) A mosque is called a masjid in Arabic, is a place where a Muslim prostrates in reverence to Allah.

(ii) In a congregational mosque (masjid-i-jami or jama masjid), Muslims read their prayers (namaz) together.

(iii) Members of the congregation choose the most respected learned male as their leader (imam) for the rituals of prayer.

(iv) He also delivers the sermon (khutba) during the Friday prayers.

7. Write a short note on Raziya Sultan.

Answer: (i) Iltutmish nominated his daughter as his successor in 1236.

(ii) She was the only woman Sultan to rule over India.

(iii) Being a woman, she faced great opposition and rebellion from the nobles. She was brave, intelligent and a just ruler.

(iv) However, she was defeated by Altunia, the governor of Sirhind.

(v) She later married Altunia to recover the throne.

(vi) However, the nobles plotted against her and she was put to death in 1240 as they found it humiliating to work at her command.

8. How did Sultans promote Islam?

Answer: (i) The Delhi Sultans built several mosques in cities all over the subcontinent.

(ii) These demonstrated their claims to be protectors of Islam and Muslims.

(iii) Mosques also helped to create the sense of a community of believers who shared a belief system and a code of conduct.

(iv) It was necessary to reinforce the idea of a community as Muslims belonged to different backgrounds.

9. Why were bandagans important?

Answer: (i) The early Delhi Sultans especially Iltutmish, favoured their special slaves purchased for military service, called 'bandagan' in Persian.

(ii) They were carefully trained to man some of the most important political offices in the kingdom.

(iii) Since they were totally dependent upon their master, the Sultans could trust and rely upon them.

10. Who were clients?

Answer: (i) The Khiljis and Tughluqs continued to use bandagan and also raised people of humble birth, who were their clients, to high positions like governors and generals.

(ii) Client is someone who is under the protection of another, a dependent, a subordinate or a servant—another name for bandagan/slave.

(iii) They were appointed as generals and governors. However, this also introduced an element of political instability.

11. To whom were slaves and clients loyal? What problems emerged on their succession?

Answer: (i) Slaves and clients were loyal to their masters and patrons, but not to their heirs.

(ii) New Sultans had their own servants. As a result, the accession of a new monarch often saw conflict between the old and the new nobility.

(iii) The patronage of these humble people by the Delhi Sultans shocked many elites and the authors of Persian tawarikh criticised the Delhi Sultans for appointing the low and born to high offices.

12. What were the three types of taxes imposed in Delhi Sultanate?

Answer: (i) Taxes were on cultivation called kharaj and amounting to about 50% of the peasant's produce.

(ii) Taxes on cattle.

(iii) Taxes on houses.

13. How did, according to Ibn Battuta, chieftains protect themselves?

Answer: (i) According to Ibn Battuta, the chieftains fortified themselves in mountains, in rocky, uneven and rugged places as well as in bamboo groves.

(ii) Further chieftains lived in forests which served them as ramparts and where no one could enter.

14. What happened to Delhi Sultanate after 1526?

Answer: (i) By 1526, Delhi Sultanate was reduced to Delhi and Agra.

(ii) By then, Jaunpur, Bengal, Malwa, Gujarat, Rajasthan and the entire South India had independent rulers who had established flourishing states and prosperous capitals.

(iii) This period also saw the emergence of new ruling groups like the Afghans and the Rajputs.

15. Write a short note on Qutub-ud-din Aibak.

Answer: (i) Qutub-ud-din Aibak had started his career as a humble slave of Muhammad Ghori.

(ii) He rose to prominence after his master's death in 1206.

(iii) He consolidated his power through matrimonial alliance. He got the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosques constructed in Delhi and Ajmer.

(iv) He started the construction of Qutub Minar in the memory of the Sufi saint, Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki.

(v) He died in 1210 while playing Polo at Lahore.

16. Write a short note on Muhammad bin Tughlaq.

Answer: (i) He was both, a great scholar and cruel.

(ii) He is known for his reforms but he lacked practical wisdom.

(iii) Due to this, his weakness resulted in repeated attacks in many parts of his kingdom.

Long Answer Questions

1. Write a note on Khalji dynasty.

Answer: (i) Balban's successors were very weak. Gradually, one of the commanders, Jalaluddin Khalji established the Khalji dynasty (1290–1296).

(ii) He was murdered by his ambitious nephew Alauddin.

(iii) Alauddin Khalji was an able commander and a great administrator.

(iv) He conquered Gujarat, Malwa, Ranthambor and Chittor.

(v) Alauddin was a great reformer and is famous for his social reforms.

(vi) He was even successful in countering the Mongol attack. Alauddin's empire was as large as that of Ashoka.

(vii) Ghazi Malik, murdered the last ruler of Khalji dynasty, Khusran Khan, and occupied the throne of Delhi.

2. Describe the administration under Delhi Sultanate.

Answer: The Muslim state was a theocratic state. The Sultan ruled in the name of God and Islam was the religion of the state.

Central Administration

- The Sultan was at the head of both civil and military administration.
- He carried on the administration with the help of a number of ministers like Wazir, Diwan (the finance minister) and the Qazi (Chief Justice).

Army

The standing army was directly under the control of Sultan. The Army Minister was called Diwan-i-Ariz.

Provincial Administration

The empire was divided into a number of provinces headed by governors called Naib Sultan.

Local Administration

The provinces were further divided into Shiqdar.

3. How do we know about Delhi Sultanate?

Answer: (i) Inscriptions, coins, architecture, historical records (tarikh/tawarikh in Persian language) are the important sources of knowing about Delhi Sultanate.

(ii) Tawarikh was composed by learned men, poets and courtiers who advised rulers on important issues.

(iii) Minhaj-i-Siraj wrote that women were supposed to play subordinate role and this order had been set by God and it could not be violated.

4. How did Delhi Sultanate expand?

Answer: (i) In the early 13th century, Delhi Sultans ruled in Delhi, which was heavily fortified by garrisons.

(ii) Sultans never controlled the hinterland of the cities and thus, had to depend on trade, plunder and tribute for supplies.

(iii) The real expansion of Delhi Sultanate came in three phases.

Phase I: Consolidation

- The initial phase of Delhi Sultanate aimed to consolidate the hinterland of the garrison towns.
- For this, forests were cleared in the Ganga-Yamuna Doab and nomadic pastoralists were driven away. Peasants were given lands and agriculture was encouraged.
- New forts and towns were entrenched to protect trade routes and provide regional trade.

Phase II: Expansion

- The expansion of the Delhi Sultanate took place on the external frontier of the Sultanate.
- The military expeditions into Southern India started under the rule of Alauddin Khilji and continued till the rule of Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq.
- During their campaigns Sultanate armies captured elephants, horses, slaves and carried away precious metals.

Phase III: Territories

- By the end of Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq's rule, Sultanate armies had marched-across a large part of the subcontinent.
- Rival armies were defeated.
- For maintenance, the Sultanate armies had to collect taxes from the peasants.

Hots (Higher Order Thinking Skills)

1. Describe the Iqta system as developed under Delhi Sultanate.

Answer: (i) The nobility was a powerful group under the Sultanate period.

(ii) Instead of paying cash salary to an officer, the state granted him a certain revenue arising from a piece of land or village reserved for the purpose.

(iii) The land grants were known as Iqtas and their holders were called Iqtadars.

(iv) The Iqtadars were even responsible for maintaining law and order in the Iqta and supply soldiers in times of war.

2. Give a comparative study of Alauddin Khilji and Muhammad-Bin-Tughlaq.

Answer:

Alauddin Khilji	Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq
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He raised a large standing army to face Mongol invasion.	He defeated the Mongols and raised a huge standing army to capture Transoxiana.
He constructed a new garrison town called Siri for his army.	He emptied the oldest of the four cities of Delhi (Delhi-i-Kuhna) of its residents and garrisoned his soldiers there.
Soldiers were retained from 50% tax collected from peasants of the GangaYamuna Doab.	In addition to taxes on peasants, additional taxes were collected to maintain a huge standing army
Soldiers were paid in cash. Alauddin himself fixed prices and punished those who violated his orders.	He paid salary in cash. He introduced a token currency of cheap metals which could be counterfeited easily.
He was a successful administrator and faced Mongol invasion with ease.	His administrative reforms failed. His campaign to Kashmir was a disaster; additional taxes led to revolt in the Ganga plains.

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