



THE MEDIEVAL STATE

In this study material the discussion is on the emergence, nature and expansion of states which emerged in medieval India. The two major state formations discussed here are Delhi Sultanate and Mughal Empire. The medieval rulers basically came from outside India thus they had to influence as well as learn from native political structures. Medieval state may be characterized as a polity headed by a strong ruler, supported by hierarchically organized administrative machinery and legitimized by the authority of religion. The army, bureaucracy by blood and land revenue remained the basic elements of the state. But each ruler had to balance the competing groups for power sharing.



OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson, you will be able to:

- analyse the evolution of state in medieval India;
- recall the nature of medieval state and
- explain the institutions of medieval state.

31.1 THE BACKGROUND

Since the decline of the Gupta state the Indian polity saw decentralization and rise of various regional states. Transition from early to medieval period saw tripartite struggle among the three regional powers- Palas of Bengal, Pratiharas of northern India and Rashtrakutas of Peninsular India. Very soon northern India saw the emergence of Rajput small kings aspiring to become kingdoms. But the arrival of the Turks from north western direction saw emergence of new process of an extended medieval state.

31.2 DELHI SULTANATE

Ilbari Turks

In the thirteenth century, a new kind of dynastic domain emerged in North India. The Delhi Sultanate had its origin in victories by Muhammad Ghauri, who sacked Ghazni in 1151, and then expelled Ghaznavids to Punjab, in 1157. Muhammad Ghauri marched



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into the Indus basin to uproot the Ghaznavids in 1186. On the way, his armies conquered Multan (1175), Sind (1182), Peshawar and Lahore (1186). In 1190, he occupied Bhatinda, which triggered battles with the Rajput King Prithviraj Chauhan, whom he finally defeated in 1192. Having broken the Rajput hold on western routes to the Ganga basin, the Ghaurid armies marched eastward until Bakhtyar Khalji finally defeated Laksmanasena in Bengal, in 1200. Muhammad Ghauri died in 1206. His trusted Mamluk (ex-slave) general, Qutb-ud-din-Aibak, governor of Delhi, then declared an independent rule. This dynasty of Ilbari Turks was the first in a series that became collectively known as the Delhi Sultanate. Later Ghaurid and Ghaznavid efforts to bring Delhi back into their fold were finally defeated by the Delhi Sultan Iltutmish in 1211–1236. Iltutmish must be regarded as the real consolidator of the Turkish conquests in north India. He gave the new state capital, Delhi, a monarchical form of government and governing class. He introduced Iqta—grant of revenue from a territory in lieu of salary. He maintained a central army and introduced coins of Tanka (silver) and Jital (copper). The famous Qutub Minar was completed during his reign. Iltutmish nominated his daughter Raziya (Raziyyat-ud-Din) to be his successor. Still, the new state had enough internal momentum to survive severe factional disputes during the 10 years following Iltutmish's death, when four of Iltutmish's children or grandchildren were in turn raised to the throne and deposed. This momentum was maintained largely through the efforts of Iltutmish's personal slaves, who came to be known as the Forty (Chihilgan), a political faction whose membership was characterized by talent and by loyalty to the family of Iltutmish. The political situation had changed by 1246, when Ghiyas-ud-din Balban, a junior member of the Forty, had gained enough power to attain a controlling position within the administration of the newest sultan, Nasir-ud-din Mahmud (reigned 1246–66). Balban, acting first as na'ib (deputy) to the sultan and later as Sultan (reigned 1266–87), was the most important political figure of his time. Balban stressed the special position of Sultan as 'Shadow of God' (*Zillal-Allah*) on earth. Balban emphasized courtly splendour, decorum and etiquette. He also believed in severe setting example punishments even to the nobles. Balban's immediate successors, however, were unable to manage either the administration or the intergroup conflicts between the old Turkish nobility and the new forces, led by the Khaljis; after a struggle between the two factions, Jalal-ud-din Firuz Khalji assumed the sultanate in 1290.

The Khaljis

The Khaljis were not recognized by the older nobility as coming from pure Turkish stock (although they were Turks), and their rise to power was aided by impatient outsiders, some of them Indian-born Muslims, who might expect to enhance their positions if the hold of the followers of Balban and the Forty were broken. To some extent, then, the Khalji power seizure was a move toward the recognition of a shifting balance of power, believed to be the result of both to the developments outside the territory of the Delhi Sultanate, in Central Asia and Iran, and to the changes that followed the establishment of Turkish rule in northern India. Under the Khaljis external policy of conquest and internal methods of absolute control were followed through military expeditions and regulations. The Khaljis used their Afghan descent to win the loyalties of the discontented nobles, who felt that they had been neglected by the earlier sultans. Jalaluddin Khalji (1290 AD – 1296 AD) tried to mitigate some of the harsh aspects of Balban's rule. He was the first ruler



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to put forward the view that the state should be based on the willing support of the governed and that since the majority of Indians were Hindus, the state cannot be truly Islamic.

In 1296 he was assassinated by his ambitious nephew and successor, Ala-ud-Din Khalji. During the reign of Ala-ud-din Khalji (1296–1316), the sultanate briefly assumed the status of an empire. In order to achieve his goals of centralization and expansion, Ala-ud-din needed money, loyal and reasonably obeying nobility, and an efficient army under his personal control. He had earlier, in 1292, partly solved the problem of money when he conducted a lucrative raid into Bhilsa in central India. Using that success to build his position and a fresh army, he led a brilliant and unauthorized raid on the fabulously wealthy Devagiri (modern Daulatabad), the capital of the Yadavas, in the Deccan early in 1296. The wealth of Devagiri not only financed his usurpation but provided a good foundation of his state-building plans. Centralization and heavy agrarian taxation were the principal features of Ala-ud-din's rule. The magnitude and mechanism of agrarian taxation enabled the sultan to achieve two important objectives: (1) to ensure supplies at low prices to grain carriers, and (2) to fill the state granaries with a buffer stock, which, linked with his famous price regulations, came as a solution to the critical financial problem of maintaining a large standing army. Within five years after Ala-ud-din's death (1316), the Khaljis lost their power. The succession dispute resulted in the murder of Malik Kafur by the palace guards and in the blinding of Ala-ud-din's six-year-old son by Qutb-ud-din Mubarak shah, the Sultan's third son, who assumed the sultanate (1316–20). He was murdered by his favourite general, a Hindu convert named Khusraw Khan. Opposition to Khusraw's rule arose immediately, led by Ghazi Malik, the warden of the western marches at Deopapur, and Khusraw was defeated and slain after four months.

The Tughluqs

Ghazi Malik, who ascended the throne as Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq (reigned 1320–25), had distinguished himself prior to his accession by his successful defense of the frontier against the Mongols. The Tughluqs also wished to rule the whole of India. Ghiyasuddin's (1320–1325) campaign to Warangal, Orissa and Bengal were directed towards this end. He built the city Tughlaqabad near Delhi. While returning from the Bengal campaign, the Sultan was killed when a wooden shelter collapsed on him at Afghanpur, near Delhi. The reign (1325–51) of Muhammad bin Tughlaq marked both the high point of the sultanate and the beginning of its decline. The period from 1296 to 1335 can be seen as one of nearly continuous centralization and expansion. In fourteenth century chronicle of Firuz Shah Tughluq's reign in Delhi, contemporary historian Ziauddin Barani said that, "history is the knowledge of the annals i.e. the historical records and traditions of prophets, caliphs, sultans, and great men of religion and government." The Tughlaq dynasty ended soon after the Timur's invasion but sultanage survived, though it was merely a shadow of its former self. Timur's nominee captured Delhi and was proclaimed the new sultan and the first of Sayyid Dynasty (1414 AD – 1451 AD), which was to rule the earlier half of the fifteenth century. Their rule was short-lived and confined to a radius of some 200 miles around Delhi. They kept the machinery going until a more capable dynasty, the Lodhis, took over. The Lodhis were of pure Afghan origin, and brought an eclipse to the Turkish nobility.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 31.1****Notes**

Correct the following sentences and rewrite:

1. Muhammad Ghauri marched into the Indus basin to uproot the Ghaznavids in 1168.

2. Ghauri's armies conquered Multan in 1157, Sind in 1128 and Parkawas and Lahore in 1168.

3. Iltumish must be regarded as the real consolidator of the Turkish Conquests in South India.

4. After a struggle between the two factions Jalal-ud-din Firoz Khalji assumed the sultanate in 1209.

5. In 1269 Jalaluddin Khalji was assassinated by his ambitious nephew and successor, Ala-ud-Din Khalji.

31.3 THE MUGHALS

In 1526, Babur from Central Asia established Mughal dynasty in India. Babur claimed descend from both Timur and Genghis Khan. His conquest of Delhi and Ganga basin was before the final step in the rise of warrior power in South Asia. The greatest sultans in South Asia were Mughal emperors who (though part Turk through Babur and Timur) adopted Persian imperial culture and took the Persian title *Padshah* to lift themselves symbolically above Turks, Afghans, and all other sultans. Babur was a Chagatai Turk who fled patrimonial lands near Samarkand to escape Uzbek armies. He followed opportunity into the Ganga basin, where he used Uzbek-style fast-horse tightly packed together cavalry equipped with muskets and canon to sweep away the opposition. In 1526, he had conquered sultans from Punjab to Bengal. But opposition survived. Thirteen years later, an Afghan soldier who had fought for the Lodis and for Babur, and who styled himself Sher Shah to demonstrate his Persian education (at Jaunpur), declared a new dynasty in Bengal and Bihar. Sher Shah's armies then beat Babur's son, Humayun, back to Afghanistan, where Humanyan raised his own son, Akbar, in exile. The Sur dynasty did not survive the Shah's death, though its lasting accomplishments included administrative innovations and a trunk road from Bengal to Pubjab. Soon after Sher Shah died, Humayun conquered Delhi, in 1555. He died there by accident. His thirteen year old son, Akbar, then ascended his throne under his regent, Bairam Khan. Akbar was crowned in 1556, as Bairam Khan conquered strategic fortress cities at Lahore, Delhi, Agra, and Jaunpur. Bairam Khan had also conquered Malwa and Rajsthan before he was ousted as regent and assassinated. Akbar ruled for fifty years (1556- 1650). He continued to conquer to the end.



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His armies surpassed all before in their size, funding, leadership, technology, and success. At his death, his domains stretched from Kabul, Kashmir, and Punjab to Gujarat, Bengal, and Assam; and they were still increasing in the south and up into mountains on all sides. His mantle was passed to his son, Jahangir (1605–1627) then to his grandson, Shah Jahan (1627–1658), and to his great-grandson, Aurangzeb (1658–1707), whose death was followed by imperial fragmentation. Though the dynasty survived until 1858, when it was dethroned by the British. The Mughal Empire at its peak commanded resources unprecedented in Indian history and covered almost the entire subcontinent. From 1556 to 1707, during the hey-day of its fabulous wealth and glory, the Mughal Empire was a fairly efficient and centralized organization, with a vast complex of personnel, money, and information dedicated to the service of the emperor and his nobility.

Much of the empire's expansion during this period was attributable to India's growing commercial and cultural contact with the outside world. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries brought the establishment and expansion of European and non-European trading organizations in the subcontinent, principally for the procurement of Indian goods in demand abroad, Indian regions drew close to each other by means of a dense overland and coastal trading network. Significantly increasing the internal surplus of precious metals. With expanded connections to the wider world came also new ideologies and technologies to challenge and enrich the imperial edifice. The empire itself, however, was a purely Indian historical experience. Mughal culture blended Perso-Islamic and regional Indian elements into a distinctive but variegated whole. Although by the early eighteenth century, the regions had begun to reassert their independent positions, the Mughal period outlasted imperial central authority. The imperial centre, in fact, came to be controlled by the direction of the Mughal Empire over its first 200 years (1526–1748) thus provides a fascinating illustration of pre-modern state building in the Indian subcontinent.

31.4 NATURE OF MEDIEVAL STATE

What did it mean to be a Sultan? In the *Quran* this Arabic word represents a man with spiritual power. Mahmud of Ghazni was the first man to be styled "Sultan" by contemporaries, which indicates his success in cultivating admirers. The title seems to have been popular first among Turks. Seljuq dynasties in Western and Central Asia were the first to use this title of 'Sultan' routinely, and later, Ottoman Turks made it famous in Europe. When the Caliph began conferring the title, it spread quickly among Muslim rulers and changed along the way. The Sultans of Delhi acknowledged the sovereignty of Caliph of Baghdad and considered their kingdom as a part of *Dar-ul-Islam* of which the Caliph was the juridical head. India under the Mughal emperors was governed under the Muslim law *Sharia*. Even so neither under the Sultans of Delhi nor under the Mughal Emperors did the state conform absolutely to Islamic ordinances since it had to adapt itself to the realities and often may not be the correct one. The Turkish and Afghan rulers of India had to treat the Hindus, who formed the vast majority of the population, with consideration and toleration. In fields relating to religion, property and several other non-religious affairs, the non-Muslim population was allowed full freedom to have their cases tried by their own communal courts. The land revenue system under the Sultan and the ceremonies and the procedure at the royal court bear the unmistakable evidence of Indian tradition. The question arises that whether the medieval Indian state was government by priest? In formal sense

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the medieval state under the Muslim rule was definitely a theocracy, since it had all its essential elements- the sovereignty of God and government by the direction of the God through priests in accordance with divine laws. The Sultans of Delhi considered themselves as deputies or assistants of the Caliph who was God's representation. Sher Shah and Islam Shah assumed the title of Caliph and the Mughal Emperors, from Akbar to Aurangzeb, adopted titles like 'Shadow of God', and 'Agent of God on earth'. The sovereignty of God was unquestioned. The supremacy of the Sharia was always acknowledged, though Akbar added to the Sharia the state laws. However, these rulers did not allow the Muslim divines to dictate the policies of the state.

Basically, defense, law and order and collection of revenue were the primary concerns of the Sultanate of Delhi. In other matters, it generally followed a policy of non interference, as the welfare of the people was not the primary concern of the sultans. Toleration under the Sultans was the exception rather than the rule. Thus, while claiming to be Islamic the state of Delhi Sultanate was militaristic and aristocratic in character. In contrast the Mughal Empire stood on altogether different ground. Toleration and kindness were the guiding principles of Akbar's government. Akbar considered his subjects as his children and hence held himself responsible for their welfare. The state as conceived by Abul Fazl and established by Akbar was not confined to any particular class and was based on the principle of 'peace with all' (*Sulh-i-Kul*). But in spite of Akbar's enlightened policy and its circumstantial continuation by Jahangir and Shah Jahan, the Mughal rule had limited scope in its function. In spite of imparting charities and kind Monarchs the Mughal state was not a welfare state. Extraction of the land revenue and defense were its main functions. The form of government was a Monarchy which in spite of being hereditary could not develop a well defined law of succession. Theoretically, the king was the fountainhead of all branches of the government but weak persona of the ruler could provide the opportunity to the nobility and the *ulema* to exercise effective check on the royal power.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 31.2**

Fill in the Blanks

1. Babur claimed descend from both _____ and _____.
2. After Sher Shah Suri died, Humayun Conquered Delhi in _____.
3. From 1556 to _____, during the hey-day of its fabulous wealth and glory the Mughal Empire was a _____ and _____ organization.
4. India under the _____ empire was governed under Muslim law _____.

31.5 THE KINGSHIP

Whatever his title, a monarch was a man of personal greatness, not only as an army commander but as a spiritual and moral being. A man of civilization, his wars were civilizing, by definition, though what this meant varied and changed. A Sultan's grandeur emerged from the work of people around him. Putting halos on Muslim monarchs was a job for poets, scholars (*imams and ulema*), architects, chroniclers,



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biographers, spiritual guides (*sufis*), and Friday prayer leaders at the *Jama Masjid*, the great congregational mosque essential in any domain. Skilled service providers and cultural activists competed for the honors to glorify sultans, and in doing so the Sultan's personality thus emerged in context. Experts and allies around him shaped his opinions, policies, and priorities. He cultivated people to secure his success; and his power depended on their power. Thus the social institution of a monarch's power extended well beyond the throne. Early Sultans like Mahmud of Ghazni relied entirely on kin and close ethnic allies. As the political landscape became more complex, more complex personalities developed and under the Mughals assumed epic proportions. The Sultan's body, speech, piety, personal habits, hobbies, family. Household, ancestors, wives, son, and in-laws formed the inner core of his public identity; they appeared in public gossip, art, lore, song, and chronicle.

31.6 THE ROYAL COURT

A daily dramatization of the Sultan's public self occurred in his court. At his public *darbar*, where he received guests, ambassadors, supplicants, allies, and payers of taxes and tribute. The institution of the *darbar* evolved over time. Its early Central Asian home was a regal tent on the battlefield' in later centuries, it acquired architectural grandeur, as at the Mughal fort-cities in Fatehpur Sikri, Agra, and Delhi, whose *darbar* halls are massive stages for the emperor's performance of power. Many *darbars* incorporated Hindu and Muslim traditions of display and drama. We have a detailed rendering of *darbar* scenes in eighteenth century paintings that now accompany the seventeenth century *padshahanama*, the chronicle or the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan. These illustrations show hanging rugs that recall the *darbar's* nomadic heritage, and each and every person depicted in the paintings had a specific rank at court and relation to the emperor. The *darbar* became a place for dramatizing in public all the personal identities that were being defined in relation to sultans. To dramatize all the various personalities of power that comprised his domain, a sultan, took his *darbar* wherever he went. A *darbar* spent considerable time on the move, especially in battle. The ruler's traveling court became an enduring cultural phenomenon; and in later centuries, touring administrators, tax collectors, and politicians effectively became touring sultans of modern times.

31.7 PERSONA OF THE KING

A Sultan's retinue (a group of retainers in attendance), regalia privileges & a king and family symbolized his greatness. Sultans were sticklers for public etiquette and limited protocol, lest subordinates exceed their station. The sultan had to have the biggest, richest, most elaborate, extravagant, valuable things visible on his person, to dramatize his ascendancy constantly. Vijayanagar Rayas styled themselves "Lords of the Eastern and Western Oceans" by adorning their bodies with precious commodities from overseas trade, specifically, perfumes and precious things like Chinese porcelain. The Sultan's home was a larger version of his own body and dramatized his power to accumulate, command, control, and define wealth, value and taste. The grandiose habits of consumption of the great influencer became an enduring fact of political life in South Asia.

Significant features of a Sultan's persona emerged in publicly visible domestic dramas, above all, marriage. Weddings were great events of political life because marriage was the most secure method of political alliance. In the *padshahnama*, warfare and weddings are depicted by the artists most elaborately. Even the Mughal

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Empire was at bade a family affair. In the inner secret deep inside area of the palace, family members vied for influence and engaged in the secret plans that often culminated in wars of succession, in which relatives killed one another, as they did in the epic Mahabharata. At home, the Sultan's honour rested on the stainless virtue of his mother, wives, daughters, and sisters. Separated from public view women of the palace lived behind a curtain, *pardah*; and women in seclusion, *pardahnasheen*, became the sultan's own virtue. Practices of female seclusion spread among elites who modeled themselves on sultans, Hindus and Muslims alike, at all levels of society.

31.8 THE NOBILITY

The sultans looked different titles that indicate ethnic origins and cultural affiliations in addition to marking personal status. Every Sultan sought to form and organize a group of nobles which would be personally loyal to him. Thus not only the Turkan-i- Chihalgani (Group of Forty nobles) tried to capture all privileges and power but groups having personal loyalty to Sultans like Qutbis (loyal to Qutub-ud- din Aibak), Shamsis (loyal to shams-ud-din Ilututnish), Balbanis and Alai amirs remained dominant throughout this period. Almost all the high nobles, including the famous Forty in the thirteenth century, were of Central Asian origin; many of them were slaves purchased from the Central Asian bazaars. The same phenomenon also led to the destabilization of the core of the Turkish Mamluks. With the Mongol plunder of Central Asia and eastern Iran, many more members of the political and religious elite of these regions were thrown into north India, where they were admitted into various levels of the military and administrative cadre by the Delhi Sultans. Ala-ud-din was one of the first rulers to deliberately expand political participation within the sultanate government. Not only did he partly open the gates to power for the non-Turkish Muslim nobility-some of whom were even converted Hindus within the political world he viewed as legitimate. Both Ala-ud-din and his son married into the families of important Hindu rulers, and several such rulers were received at court and treated with respect. Under the Tughluq, the non-Mumlim Indians rose to high and extremely responsible officers, including the governorships of provinces. Muhammad bin Tughluq was the first Muslim ruler to planned efforts to induct Hindus into administration.

Within the first three decades of Akbar's reign, the imperial person of the highest class has grown enormously. As the Central Asian nobles had generally been nurtured on the Turko – Mongol tradition of sharing power with the royalty – an arrangement not in tune with Akbar's ambition of structuring the Mughal Centralism around himself – the emperor's principal goal was to reduce their strength and influence. The emperor encouraged new elements to join his service, and Iranians came to form an important block of the Mughal nobility. Akbar also looked for new men of Indian background. Indian Afghans, being the principal opponents of the Mughals, were obviously to be kept at a distance; but the Sayyids of Baraha, the Bukhari Sayyids, and the Kambus among the Indian Muslims were specially favoured for high military and civil positions. More significant was the recruitment of Hindu Rajput leaders into the Mughal nobility. This was a major step, even if not completely new in Indo – Islamic history, leading to a standard pattern of relationship between the Mughal autocracy and local cruel rulers.

31.9 OFFICES AND HIERARCHICAL STRUCTURE

Neither the government of the Delhi Sultanate nor that of the Mughal Empire was slave like. Both the governments were organized bureaucracy with regular gradation of departments and officers. No officers, either civil or military, was hereditary and



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thus the officers were appointed, transferred and dismissed by the Monarch at his will and were accountable to him only. Under the Sultanate immediately after Sultan the office of *Wazir* was there to supervise all affairs of the government. The Mughals called their Prime Minister as *Wakil*, later on synonymous with *wazir* or *diwan*. The Sultans established the *Diwan-i-Arz* (the Military Department) Headed by *Ariz-i-Mumalik* while under the Mughals *Mir Bakshi* was in-charge of army and general administration of royal establishment. In Sultanate religious affairs and charity were looked after by *Diwan-i-Risalat* headed by *Sadr-us-Sudur* (chief *sadr*). As far as the officer was concerned Mughals continued with the same title. Both the regimes combined the office of Chief Qazi (Chief Justice) with that of *sadr*. In Sultanate *Mushrif-i-Mamalik* (Accountant General), *Mushaufi-i-Mamalik* (Auditor General), *Diwan-i-Insha* (State Correspondence Department) headed by *Dabir-i-Khas* and *Barid-i-Mumalik* (Head of the Intelligence Department) were some important offices and departments.

31.10 PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION

Under the Sultanate *muqtis* or *walis* were in-charge of the provinces. Provinces also had a *Sahib-i-diwan* assisted by *mutasarrifs* and *karkuns* to control income and expenditure in the end of the thirteenth century *Shiqq* emerged as an administrative division later known as *Sarkar* as well. For justice courts of the *Qazi* and the *Sadr* functioned in the provinces. The Mughal empire was divided into 15 provinces—Allahabad, Agra, Avadh, Ajmer, Ahmadabad, Bihar, Bengal, Delhi, Kabul, Lahore, Multan, Malka, Qhandesh, Berar, and Ahmadnagar. Kashmir and Qandahar were districts of the province of Kabul, Sindh, then known as Thatta, was a district in the province of Multan. Orissa formed a part of Bengal. The provinces were not of uniform area or income. There were in each province a governor, a *dewan* (revenue and finance officer), a *bakhshi* (military commander), a *sadr* (religious administrator), and *qazi* (judge) and agents who supplied information to the central government. Separation of powers among the various officials (in particular, between the governor and the *diwan*) was a significant operating principal in imperial administration. The Mughal provinces were also divided into districts (*sarkars*). Each district had a *faujdar* (a military officer whose duties roughly corresponded to those of a collector); a *qazi*, a *bitikchi* (head clerk); and a *khazanedar* (treasurer). Justice was administered by a hierarchy of courts rising from village *panchayat* to the *pargana*, *sarkar* and provincial courts (under the *Qazi*, *Amir-i-Dad* and *Mir Adl*) and finally to the chief *sadr cum qazi* and ultimately the emperor himself. Both under Sultanate and Mughal, the *Kotwal* was the enforcer of law at the local level.

31.11 IQTA, JAGIR AND MANSAB

Iqta under the Sultanate and *Jagir* under the Mughals were developed as the officers for the collection of revenue which *Iqtadars* or *jagirdars* realized on behalf of the state with a view to obtain their salary. But their judicial preview over hand depended on the pleasure of the emperor. The *muqtis* or *iqta* holders were required to furnish military assistance to the Sultans in times of need, apart from maintaining law and order and collecting the revenue from their *iqta*. These revenue assignments were generally non-hereditary and transferable. Similarly, the *Mansab* system was based upon the organization of the public services of the Mughal Empire. It was neither hereditary nor hierarchical. *Mansab* means literally a rank or a position which was fixed according to

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the personal merit and status (zat) of the officer and the contingent (sawar) he maintained. Generally, the mansabdars were assigned a territory known as a jagir, who's estimated revenue (Jama) was equal to the pay due for both their zat and sawar mansabs, though some mansabdars were also paid in cash from the imperial treasury.

31.12 TAXATION

The system of taxation in Sultanate comprised taxes like Kharaj (varied from one sixth to one third of the gross produce), Jaziya (levied upon adult non-Muslim males with independent means of maintenance in lieu of military service), Zakat (a tax raised from well to do Muslims for the purpose of charity), Khams or Ghaninah (the booty taken in war) and other transit and octroi duties along with natural resources were the main sources of income. The chaudhuris, muqqadams and khuts were the village revenue collector functioning under the amils, shiqdars and provincial muqtis. Khalisa land revenue was reserved for the Sultan's treasury only. The Mughals improved upon this system particularly in the area of land revenue. The system of measurement zabt introduced by Sher Shah Suri was adopted and improved by Akbar. Ultimately, Ain-i-Dahsala the final method of revenue settlement was based upon the average annual yield of the previous ten years from a particular field. The Gaz-i-Ilahi, a new yard for land measurement brought uniformity in the land survey. Productivity of the land, nature of the crop, prices, and irrigation facilities were the other major factors deciding the cash value of the revenue demand of the government. Option of paying land tax could be done through various systems. Ownership of the land always belonged to the cultivator.

31.13 ARMY

Both the Sultanate and the Mughal state were dependent on army whose main strength was the cavalry. Ariz-i-Mumalik under the Sultans and Mir Bakshi under the Mughal Emperors were the officers in charge but the ruler himself commanded all the armed forces. Balban was the first one to recruit a regular standing army, this system was further strengthened by Ala-ud-din-Khalji who introduced the branding system (Dagh) of the horses. The royal cavalry in Delhi Sultanate was called Hasham-i-Qalb or Afwaj-i-Qalb. Hasham-i-Atraj was the cavalry posted at provincial level. This army was organized on the basis of decimal system. Mughal army was organized on the basis of mansab system, described above. Ahadis were the royal troopers directly under the command of the emperor. The artillery had developed rapidly in India after the advent of Babur. Apart from siege i.e. the process of surrounding and attacking a fortified place there were heavy guns mounted on forts. The infantry, though numerous, consisted of both fighting and non-fighting classes. The fighting men were mainly matchlock men, called banduqchis. By the time of Akbar, matchlock contingent was also included in the infantry. Both Sultans of Delhi and Mughals used elephants on the battle fields. Navy always remained a weak point of the Indian rulers.

31.14 CURRENCY SYSTEM

The standard coin under the Sultans from Iltutmish onwards was the silver tanka weighing 175 grains. The currency system was, however, bimetallic, there being parallel coin in copper, the basic unit of which was the jital. In the fourteenth century, 48 or 50 jitals were held equal in worth to tanka. The Sultans issued bullion coins as



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well, and gold issues have also survived. The Lodis, who never minted silver, issued a heavy bullion coin 145 grains called bahloli. Sher Shah Suri established a bimetallic system by issuing a rupee of silver and making the tanka a purely copper coin. The Mughals from Akbar onwards continued the same system: their rupee weighed 178 grains (180 under Aurangzeb), and the alloy in these never rose above 4 per cent. In copper they minted dams of 323 grains each, these being originally the half tanka of Sher Shah. In the last years of Akbar, a rupee fetched 40 dams, and this became subsequently the paper value of the rupee. In fact, the copper price of the rupee declined throughout the seventeenth century. The Mughals also issued gold coins, known as mohur or asharfi, but these were not normally used in the market. The Mughal coinage was of great metallic purity and uniformity. The minting was 'free' in the sense that any one could take bullion to the mint and get in coined at a small charge.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 31.3

Fill in the blanks with appropriate word from the bracket

1. The emperor encouraged new elements to join his service, and _____ came to form an important block of the Mughal normality. (Afganian, Irarian, Turkish)
2. Under this Sultanate immediately after Sultan the office of _____ was there to supervise all affairst of the government. (chief sadas, chief Justice, Wazil)
3. _____ under the Mughals was developed as the office for the collection of revenue who realized on behalf of the state. (Mansab, Sadr, Jagir)
4. The standard coin under the Sultan from Iltutmish onwards was the silver tanka weighing _____ grains. (175, 200, 225)

Thus the growth of the medieval state was an ever growing process along with conquests and consolidations. In the art of the governance certain central Asian institutions were introduced but at the same time previous practices were not substantially disturbed. As far as organization of the administration and ruling class were concerned, it was not a monolithic structure. Each monarch as a single source of power had to establish a balance between varying compositions and interest groups to ensure the durability and stability of his dynasty. But the set of beliefs of a composite culture was always taken care of.



WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

With the decline of the Gupta state, the Indian polity saw decentralization and rise of various regional states. In the 13th century, a new kind of domain emerged in North India. The Delhi Sultanate had its origin in victories by Mohammad Ghauri, who sacked Ghazni in 1151, Ghazni's armies conquered Multan, Sind, Peshawar and Lahore. Later Iltutmish was regarded as the real consolidator of the Turkish conquests in North India.

**Notes**

The political situation had changed by 1246 when Ghiyas-ud-din gained enough power and acted first as naib (duty) to the Sultan and later as Sultan (1266–87) was the most important political figure of his time. In 1296 he was assassinated by his ambitious nephew and successor, Ala-ud-Din Khalji. During his reign (1296–1316) the sultanate briefly assumed the status of an empire. However, within five years after Ala-ud-din's death the khaljis lost their power.

Ghiyas-ud-din Tughlaq (1320–25) and Mohammad bin Tughlaq marked the high point of the sultanate and wished to rule the whole of India. It was the period of continuous centralization and expansion.

In 1526, Babur from central Asia established Mughal dynasty in India. His conquests of Delhi, Ganga basin and later from Punjab to Bengal entitled him to take the persian title of padshah. His son Humayun lost to Sher Shah and retreated to Afghanistan. After Sher Shah's death Humayun conquered Delhi in 1555 and died by accident. His 13year old son Akbar ascended the throne and under the guidance of his regent Bairam Khan conquered the strategic fortress cities of Lahore, Agra and Jaunpur. Akbar ruled from, 1556-1605. His domain stretched from Kabul, Kashmir, Punjab to Gujrat, Bengal and Assam. His successors Jahangir (1605–1627) and grandson Shah-Jahan (1627–1658) and great grand –son Aurangzeb (1658-1707). The Mughal Empire was at its peak, commanded resources unprecedented in Indian history.

The 16th and 17th centuries brought the establishment and expansion of European and non-European trading organization in the sub continent, principally for the procurement of Indian goods in demand abroad.

In this lesson you have also learnt about nature of medieval state, kingship, royal court and nobility. Besides you have acquired information about provincial administration, the process of taxation, medieval army and the currency system.

**TERMINAL QUESTIONS**

1. Briefly describe the role of Muhammad Ghauri
2. Mention the principal features of the era of Balbans and Khalji's.
3. "The reign of Muhammad bin Tughlaq marked both the high point of the Sultanate and the beginning of its decline". Comment.
4. Assess the rule of the Mughals during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.
5. Examine the nature of Medieval state.
6. What is meant by persona of the King?
7. Write a brief note on provincial administration.

**ANSWER TO INTEXT QUESTIONS**

- 31.1** 1. 1186
2. 1175, 1182 and 1186

**Notes**

3. North India.

4. 1290

5. 1296

31.2. Fill in the blanks:

1. Timur, Genghis khan

2. 1555

3. 1707, efficient, Centralised

4. Mughal, Sharia

31.3. Fill in the blanks with appropriate words from the brackets ():

1. Iranian

2. Wazir

3. Jagir

4. 175

HINTS TO TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. See para 31.2

2. See para 31.2

3. See para 31.2

4. See para 31.3

5. See para 31.4

6. See para 31.5

7. See para 31.10