

The Dynasties of the Delhi Sultanate:

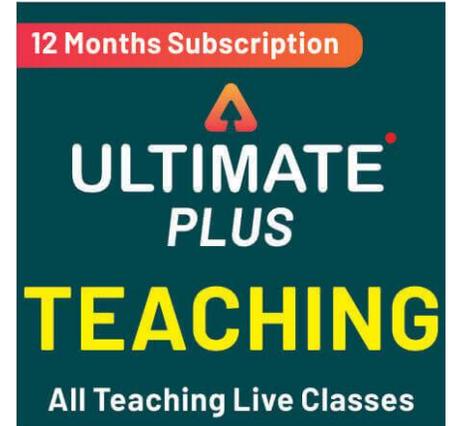
Slave Dynasty (1206 to 1290 CE) The Delhi Sultanate was started by Qutubuddin Aibak, who was originally a slave of Muhammad Ghauri.

Khalji Dynasty (1290 to 1320 CE) Alauddin Khalji was the most famous Sultan of this dynasty. He successfully resisted the repeated invasions of the Mongols from Afghanistan.

Tughlak Dynasty (1320 to 1413 CE) Here Muhammad-bin-Tughlak, the eccentric Sultan was well known.

Sayyid Dynasty (1414 to 1451 CE) They ruled Delhi on behalf of Timur after he had sacked Delhi in 1398CE.

Lodi Dynasty (1451 to 1526 CE) The last ruler, Ibrahim Lodi was defeated by Babar, the founder of the Mughal dynasty, at Panipat.



Beginning of the Sultanate:

- Delhi originally became the capital of a kingdom of Tomar Rajputs, who were defeated around 1150 CE by the Chauhans of Ajmer. The last ruler of the Chauhans, Prithviraj, died in 1192 CE.
- Timur sacked Delhi in 1198 and returned to Central Asia. His slave, Qutubuddin Aibak, founded the Slave dynasty to rule Delhi from 1206 CE.
- However, Qutubuddin stayed mostly in Lahore. Although, he started the Minar (tower) in Delhi which bears his name, he could hardly complete its first storey. He died due to falling from his horse while playing Chaugan (a forerunner of the modern game of Polo).
- Accounts of those times were called tawarikh (histories), being written by scholars and administrators in the Persian language.

Expansion of the Sultanate:

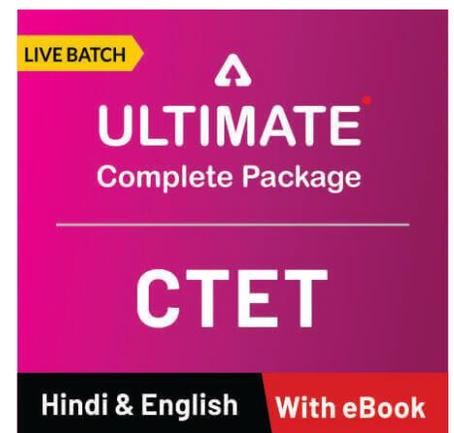
- Since, the Sultans controlled only the fortified towns manned by garrisons, they did not have any control over the hinterland and were dependent on trade, tribute or plunder for their requirements.
- Controlling towns far away from Delhi was also difficult and they were also challenged by Mongol invasions from the North-West.
- The expansion of their empire occurred due to the campaigns of a succession of able rulers like Ghiyasuddin Balban, Alauddin Khalji and Muhammad-bin-Tughlak.

Administration of the Empire:

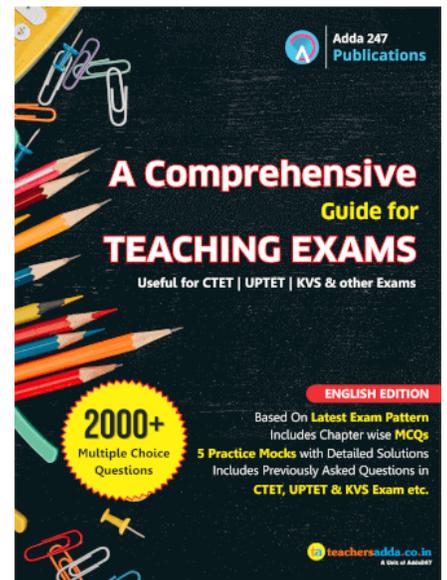
- Initially, the Governors and administrators of the provinces were handpicked faithful followers or even slaves of the Sultans, called bandagans. However, because of their humble birth, these choices were not liked by many elite people.
- Military commanders were also appointed as governors and could collect revenue from the territory given to them. However, they were frequently transferred and also subject to audit by the Sultan's accountants.
- In the reign of Alauddin Khalji, the assessment and collection of land revenue was directly controlled by the state. Even the local chieftains had to pay tax to the state.
- Ibn Battuta, a scholar who travelled with Timur to India, has mentioned in detail how the local chieftains arranged their defense against the Sultans.
- Due to frequent attacks by the Mongols, the Sultans carried out many defensive measures.

Achievements and Legacy of the Sultanate:

- The main achievement of the Delhi Sultanate was its successful defense of India from Mongol invasion. Of course, it suffered from the sacking of Delhi in 1398 by Timur, due to which independent Sultanates were established in Awadh, Bengal, Jaunpur, Gujarat and Malwa.
- The Sultanate ushered in a period of Indian cultural renaissance. The resulting 'Indo-Muslim' fusion left lasting monuments in architecture, music, literature and religion.
- The Khiljis conquered Gujarat and Malwa and set the first expeditions South of the Narmada River, as far South as present day Tamil Nadu.
- The main achievement of the Tughlaqs was the introduction of a monetary economy in the provinces (sarkars) and districts (pargannas) that had been established and founded; a network of market centers through which the traditional village economies were integrated into the wider culture.



- State revenues remained based on successful agriculture, which induced Muhammad-bin-Tughlak to have village well dug, offer seed to the peasants and to encourage cash crop like sugarcane. He moved the capital from Delhi to Daulatabad, which proved very unpopular and was subsequently reversed.
- The main achievement of the Sayyid dynasty was the consolidation of the Muslim presence in Kashmir.
- Overall, Sultans of Delhi had reasonably good relations with other Muslim rulers in the near East and owed them no allegiance.
- The Sultans based their laws on the Quran and the Sharia. They permitted non-Muslims to practice their religion only if they paid Jizya or Head Tax.
- The Sultans ruled from urban centers. Military camps and trading posts provided the nucleus for towns that sprang up in the countryside.
- The Sultanate provided the foundation for the Mughal Empire, which continued to expand its territory.



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