

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN INDIA (750-1200 CE)

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

- The political developments after Harshavardhan, about whom you have read in the last chapter, can be best understood if we divide the period from 750 to 1200 CE in two parts (a) 750–1000 CE; (b) 1000–1200 CE.
- The first phase was marked by the growth of three important political powers in India. These were Gurjara Pratiharas in north India, Palas in eastern India and Rashtrakutas in South India.
- These powers were constantly fighting with each other with a aim to set up their control on Gangetic region in northern India. This armed conflict among these three powers is known as 'Tripartite struggle'. In the second phase we notice the break up of these powers. It resulted in the rise of many smaller kingdoms all over the country. For example, in northern India, the disintegration of the Pratihara empire brought to the forefront various Rajput states under the control of different Rajput dynasties such as the Chahamanas (Chauhans), Chandellas, Paramaras, etc. These were the states which fought and resisted the Turkish attacks from northwest India led by Mahmud Ghaznavi and Mohammad Ghoris in the 11th and 12th centuries, but had to yield ultimately as they failed to stand unitedly against the invaders.

GURJARA PRATIHARA

- The Gurjara Pratihara dynasty was founded by Nagabhata I in the region of Malwa in the eighth century. He belonged to a Rajput clan. Later one of his successors, Vatsaraja extended his rule over to a large part of North India and made Kannauj in western Uttar Pradesh his capital. Vatsaraja's policy of expansion brought him in conflict with Dharmapala, the Pala King of Bengal and Bihar. Soon, the Rashtrakuta king Dhruva from south India jumped into the fight. And thus began what is known as 'Tripartite Struggle' i.e. struggle among three powers. It continued for about the next hundred and fifty years under various succeeding kings with ups and downs.
- The Gurjara-Pratiharas, however, could continue to maintain their hold over Kannauj till the last. One of the important kings of this dynasty was Mihira Bhoja (ninth century).
- He was highly praised by an Arabian scholar Sulaiman for keeping his empire safe from robbers.

PALA

- In eastern India, Pala dynasty was founded by Gopala (8th century). As the names of all the succeeding kings ended with 'Pala' this dynasty came to be known as the 'Pala' dynasty. The son and grandson of Gopala, viz; Dharmapala and Devapala greatly extended the power and prestige of

the Pala dynasty. Though their expansion towards west was checked by the Pratiharas, the Palas continued to rule over Bihar and Bengal for nearly four centuries with a small break.

- The Pala kings were the followers of Buddhism. They greatly promoted this religion by making monasteries (viharas) and temples in eastern India. Dharmapala is known to have founded the famous Vikramashila university near Bhagalpur in Bihar.
- Like Nalanda university, it attracted students from all parts of India and also from Tibet. Many Sanskrit texts were translated into Tibetan at this monastery. The most celebrated name associated with Vikramashila University was that of Atisha Dipankara who was greatly respected in Tibet.

RASHTRAKUTA

- In south, Dantidurga was the founder of the dynasty called, Rashtrakuta dynasty (8th AD). The capital of the Rashtrakutas was Manyakheta or Malkhed near Sholapur. It was under the king Dhruva that the Rashtrakutas turned towards north India in a bid to control Kannauj, then the imperial city. And as mentioned above, it led to the beginning of 'Tripartite struggle'. One of the important kings of the Rashtrakuta dynasty was Krishna I. He built the famous Kailasha temple at Ellora (near Aurangabad, Maharashtra). It is dedicated to Lord Shiva and is monolithic i.e. made of one single piece of rock. The Arab accounts inform us that the Rashtrakutas were quite friendly with the Arab traders who visited their empire.
- These traders were allowed to build mosques and follow their religion without any hindrance. It testifies to the liberal attitude of the Rashtrakuta kings and also to their desire to draw economic benefit from the growing sea trade conducted by the Arabs at that time.

CHOLAS

- In South India, the Chola Kings founded a mighty empire during 1000–1200 CE. The relationship between these Cholas, called the "Imperial Cholas" with the earlier Cholas mentioned in the Sangam literature is not clear.
- The Cholas came to power after overthrowing the authority of the Pallavas in South India. The founder of the Chola dynasty was Vijayalaya (9th century CE) but the real architects of the glory of the dynasty were Rajaraja I (985–1014 CE) and his son Rajendra I (1014–1044 CE). During the heyday of the Chola empire, it extended from Tungabhadra (a tributary of Krishna) in north to Kanya Kumari in south.
- The Chola Kings made a successful use of their navy and conquered not only Maldives and Lakshadweep Islands but also Sri Lanka.

- They also defeated the kings of Malaya and Java and Sumatra. One of the greatest contribution of Rajaraja I was the construction of the famous temple known as Rajarajeshwara or Brihadesvara temple, dedicated to Shiva at Tanjore. He also ordered a survey of land for better collection of land revenue in his empire. The rule of his son, Rajendra I was even more dazzling. He carried his arms up to Ganga in Bengal after defeating the Pala King, Mahipala.
- To commemorate this victory he founded a new capital called 'Gangaikondacholapuram' and acquired for himself the title "Gangai-konda" (conqueror of Ganga). He was a great patron of learning and was known as Pandita-chola.
- The last important Chola king was Kullotunga (1070–1122 CE). Under him the Chola empire started disintegrating and shrunk to much smaller area. The above account will make you understand that though there were frequent inter regional clashes, cultural growth was also taking place side by side. In fact, the emergence of big political powers brought about a relative stability in different regions. It led to the developments of distinct cultural patterns related to art, architecture and literature within each of these regions. We shall discuss these patterns slightly later in this lesson.

NATURE OF STATE

- The state structure in this period has often been described as "decentralized" political system.
- What is 'decentralized' polity?
- It is a system in which there is of course a king as the main authority at the top, but he shares his rule with other small chiefs called feudatories or the samantas.
- 'Samanta' basically refers to a king who has been defeated but his kingdom has been restored to him but with the condition that he will continue to accept the over lordship of the conquering king and also pay regular tribute to him in cash or kind. He may also be asked to help with military assistance in times of need. As these chiefs enjoyed freedom of administration over their regions they were quite powerful. Surely you can guess that these chiefs could always be a threat to the overlord, and no wonder whenever there was a weak king at the top, they would assert their independence leading to the break up of the empire. And precisely it was what happened during the last days of Pratihara empire as mentioned above.
- Another aspect the decentralized polity was characterized by the practice of making land grants to Brahmanas and others.
- This practice was initiated by the Satavahanas kings in the 1st and 2nd centuries AD, but after the Gupta period it had become a normal practice all over the country. Now land grants came to made not only to religious persons and institutions but to state officials as well.

Why did it so happen?

- It is suggested that one of the reasons for the increase in land grants during this period, was the decline in trade and, therefore the shortage of coined money to pay to

the officials and others for their services. The shortage of coined money in the post-Gupta period is indicated by the absence of the presence of coins in the archeological finds. The land granted to the donee (the receiver of grant) was tax free, i.e., the donee did not pay any tax to the state and used the produce and income on it for his personal benefit.

- The donee was also free from any interference by his king or his officials in managing the land donated to him. Thus, these donees converted the lands granted to them into independent islands of authority with no or little central control.
- In the Chola kingdom in South India, the structure of administration was slightly different. Here at the village level, a great amount of autonomy was enjoyed by the local people. They looked after their administration with the help of self elected local bodies. Two types of village assemblies are mentioned in the records. These were known as Sabha and Ur. Sabha was the assembly in the villages which were inhabited predominantly by the brahmanas, whereas Ur was in the non brahmanical settlements.
- These assemblies looked after the local public works, tax collection, temple management etc., with the help of the members elected through a procedure set by the villagers. It was a unique feature of the Chola administration as it represented a harmonious balance between the central authority and the local self-government.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGES

- The early medieval period was also marked by many social and economic changes. Socially, an important phenomenon of this period was the proliferation or increase in the number of castes.

How did it happen?

- One of the reason for it was the inclusion of newer groups into brahmanical society. It is suggested that as the number of land grants increased, new areas were brought under cultivation. It made local tribal people leave hunting as their main profession and take up agriculture. They were then transformed into peasants, and assimilated in society as sudras. The land grants in fact resulted in movement and migration of Brahmanas to different internal areas where they were able to introduce and enforce their brahmanical social values. The land grants also led to the increase in the number of Kayastha class.
- The Kayasthas were basically scribes and they specialized in drafting and writing land grant documents. Naturally, with increase in the number of land grants their importance also increased .
- But the most important feature of this period was the rise of a new class of people called the Rajputs, such as Chahmanas, Paramaras, Pratiharas, Chandellas etc. Some historians believe that they were the descendants of various groups of foreign invaders such as Sakas, Kushanas, Hunas etc, who had been coming to India

from northwest during different times of history. These people gradually settled down in the region of Rajasthan and, after intermingling with the Indian society, emerged as a warrior class. There are others who treat them as a part of the Kshatriya varna of the brahmanical system. But today many scholars see a connection between the rise of Rajput class and the extension of agriculture activities in Rajasthan. It is pointed out that with the spread of land grants there was an increase in the number of agriculture settlements. As a result, many local chiefs came to acquire enough financial and political power to set up an independent authority. In order to acquire legitimacy and authenticity to their newly acquired position in the eyes of their subjects, they invited brahmanas from Gangetic and other regions to perform for them royal rituals and ceremonies, and in return gave them land and other things as fee, i.e. dakshina. They also made brahmanas write about their illustrious ancestry linking them with lord Rama (of the solar race) and lord Krishna (of the lunar race) to claim a dignified position of a warrior class.

AGNIKULA RAJPUT CLANS

Early Rajputs arose from the ruins of the older Pratihara Kingdom. Following four were the important clans-

1. The Pratihara-also known as Parihara who based themselves in Southern Rajasthan.
2. The Chauhans-ruled an area in Eastern Rajasthan, helped Pratihara against Arabs.
3. The Solankis-also called Chalukyas of Guajrat were based in Kathiawar.
4. The Pawars or Parmars-established their control in Malwa with their capital at Dhar near Indore.
 - All the four claimed descent from mythical figure who arose out of the vast sacrificial fire pit near Mt. Abu. Consequently they were described as the Agnikula of the fire family.
 - Economically, the first phase, i.e, 750–1000 CE, is believed to be one of decline. It is evident from the absence of coins for exchange and the decayed condition of towns in northern India. But in the second phase after 1000 CE, we notice a revival of trade activities. Not only do we come across new gold coins, there are also numerous references to trade goods and towns. What could be the reason for it? There seem to be two main reasons for it. One, there was increase in agricultural activities on account of land grants in fresh areas. It led to surplus production of goods for exchange. And second, the Arab traders had emerged on the coastal areas of India as important players in international sea trade. The Arabs had acquired a foothold in Sind in 712 CE and later, gradually, they set up their settlements all along the sea from Arabia to China. These settlements served as important channels for the sale and purchase of Indian goods, and thus helped in the growth of Indian external trade. In south India, the Chola kings maintained close commercial contact with southeast Asia (Malaya, Indonesia etc) and China.

ARAB INVASION OF INDIA

- In the early 8th century Arabs invaded India from the North-West region. This Arab invasion in 712CE was led by Muhammad Bin Qasim a general of the Umayyad caliphate.
- Invasion on India was part of the policy of Arab expansion during this period. The rise of Islam in Arabia gave rise to a new political system.
- During the early years of the 8th Century, the Umayyads reached the height of their power. They had created the largest ever-Muslim state that existed.
- Arabs were also attracted by the wealth of India. Arab merchants and sailors had brought back stories of great wealth of India.
- The reason for the invasion of Sindh was to avenge the plunder of Arab Ships by pirates of Debol. King Dahir refused to punish the pirates. Hajjaj the governor of Iraq despatched an army under Muhammad Bin Qasim. He arrived in Sind in 712 CE, and besieged Debol which was situated on the sea coast. After crossing the Indus he marched forward.
- At Rawar, Muhammad Bin Qasim attacked Dahir who was defeated. Arabs killed a large number of fleeing soldiers. Dahir was also caught and killed. Muhammad Bin Qasim now proceeded forward and within a short span he conquered various important places in Sind including Brahmanabad.
- The economic life of Sind got disturbed as a result of campaigns of Qasim.
- A large number of people and merchants had fled from Sind. He had conquered the major portion of Sind up to the lower Punjab.
- His rule lasted only for two years. However many Arabs settled down in Sind and established relations with the local population.
- The Arab influence continued for a long period with pockets of Muslim influence established in various parts of Sind.

MAHMUD OF GHAZNI (997-1030 CE)

- In all Mahmud Ghazni invaded India 17 times during 1000–1026 CE.
- Mahmud Ghazni was Son of Sabuktigin, the founder of Ghazni dynasty & Turkish slave commander.
- North India was divided into a number of Hindu states.
- On the frontier of India, there existed the Hindu Shahi kingdom which extended from the Punjab to Kabul. The other important kingdoms of north India were Kanauj, Gujarat, Kashmir, Malwa and Bundelkhand.
- The initial raids were against the Hindu Shahi kingdom in which its king Jayapala was defeated in 1001. After this defeat, Jayapala immolated himself because he thought that his defeat was a disgrace.
- His successor Anandapala fought against Mahmud but he was also defeated in the Battle of Waihind, the Hind Shahi capital near Peshawar in 1008. In this battle, Anandapala was supported by the rulers of Kanauj and Rajasthan.

- As a result of his victory at Waihind, Mahmud extended his rule over most of the Punjab.
- The attack against Nagarkot in 1008CE has been described as his first great triumph.
- The subsequent raids of Mahmud into India were aimed at plundering the rich temples and cities of northern India.
- In 1018, Mahmud plundered the holy city of Mathura and also attacked Kanauj. The ruler of Kanauj, Rajyapala abandoned Kanauj and later died.
- Mahmud returned via Kalinjar with fabulous riches. His next important raid was against Gujarat.
- In 1025, Mahmud embarked on the most ambitious Indian campaign, the attack on the Somnath temple in Saurashtra. Mahmud captured the city after grim struggle.
- He defeated the Solanki King Bhimadeva I, plundered Anhilwad and sacked the famous temple of Somanatha. Then, he returned through the Sind desert. This was his last campaign in India.
- His attacks on India were an attempt to fulfil his ambition to make Ghazni the formidable power in the politics of Central Asia.
- Mahmud's raids into India were only to acquire the famous wealth of India. This wealth would help him to consolidate his vast rule in Central Asia. He did not wish to establish an empire in India.
- Mahmud died in 1030 CE. Mahmud was not a mere raider and plunderer of wealth. He built a wide empire from the Punjab in the east to the Caspian sea on the west and from Samarkand in the north to Gujarat in the south.
- The Ghaznavid empire roughly included Persia, Transoxiana, Afghanistan and Punjab. His achievements were due to his leadership and restless activity. Mahmud was considered a hero of Islam by medieval historians.
- He also patronized art and literature. Firdausi was the poet-laureate in the court of Mahmud. He was the author of Shah Namah.
- Alberuni stayed in Mahmud's court and wrote the famous Kitab-i-Hind, an account on India.
- His conquest of Punjab and Multan completely changed the political situation in India. He paved the way for the Turks and Afghans for further conquests and made deeper incursions into the Gangetic valley at any time. He drained the resources of India by his repeated raids and deprived India of her manpower.
- The exhaustion of India's economic resources and manpower had its adverse effect on the political future of India.
- The Hindu Shahi kingdom was guarding the gates of India against foreign invaders. Mahmud destroyed it and thus India's frontiers became defenceless. The inclusion of Punjab and Afghanistan in Ghazni's kingdom made the subsequent Muslim conquests of India comparatively easy.
- Other commanders of Muhammad Ghor like Yalduz, Qubacha and Ali Mardan rose in defiance again.
- The chief of Jalor and Ranthambore joined Gwalior and Kalinjar in declaring their independence. Apart from this, the rising power of Mongols under Chenghiz Khan threatened the North West Frontier of the Sultanate.
- Iltutmish took up the task of consolidating his position.
- He defeated Yalduz in 1215 in the battle of Tarain.
- In 1217 he drove away Qabacha from Punjab.
- In 1220, when Chenghiz Khan destroyed the Khwarizm empire, Iltutmish realised the political necessity of avoiding a confrontation with the Mongols. Thus when Jalaluddin Mangbarani, the son of the Shah of Khwarizm, while escaping from the Mongols, sought shelter at Iltutmish's court, Iltutmish turned him away. He thus saved the Sultanate from destruction by the Mongols.
- From 1225 onwards, Iltutmish engaged his armies in suppressing the disturbances in the East. In 1226–27 Iltutmish sent a large army under his son Nasiruddin Mahmud which defeated Iwaz Khan and brought Bengal and Bihar back into the Delhi Sultanate.
- Similarly a campaign was also launched against the Rajput chiefs. Ranthambore was captured in 1226 and by 1231 Iltutmish had established his authority over Mandor, Jalore, Bayana and Gwalior.
- There is no doubt that Iltutmish completed the unfinished work of Aibak.
- Besides this, he also organised his trusted nobles or officers into a group of "Forty" (Turkan-i-Chahalgani). He was a farsighted ruler and he consolidated and organised the newly formed Turkish Sultanate in Delhi. Iltutmish established 'Group of Forty' (Turkan-i-Chahalgani). These were Turkish amirs (nobles) who advised and helped the Sultan in administering the Sultanate.
- After the death of Iltutmish, this group assumed great power in its hands. For a few years they decided on the selection of Sultans one after the other. The group was finally eliminated by Balban.
- Iltutmish effectively suppressed the defiant amirs of Delhi. He separated the Delhi Sultanate from Ghazni, Ghor and Central Asian politics.
- Iltutmish also obtained a 'Letter of Investiture' in 1229 from the Abbasid Caliph of Baghdad to gain legitimacy.
- Iltutmish made a significant contribution in giving shape to administrative institution such as iqtas, army and currency system.
- He gave the Sultanate two of its basic coins– the silver 'Tanka' and the copper 'Jittal'.
- To affect greater control over the conquered areas Iltutmish granted iqtas (land assignments in lieu of cash salaries) to his Turkish officers on a large scale. The recipients of "iqtas" called the "iqtadars" collected the land revenue from the territories under them. Out of this they maintained an armed contingent for the service of the state, enforced law and order and met their own expenses. Iltutmish realized the economic potentiality of the Doab and the iqtas were distributed mainly in this region. This secured for Iltutmish the financial and

SHAMSUDDIN ILTUTMISH (1211-1236CE)

- The credit of consolidating the Delhi Sultanate lies largely with him. When Iltutmish ascended the throne, he found himself surrounded with many problems.

administrative control over one of the most prestigious regions of North India.

- He nominated his daughter Raziya as his successor. Thus the hereditary succession to Delhi Sultanate was initiated by Iltutmish. He patronized many scholars and a number Sufi saints came to India during his reign.
- Minhaj-us-Siraj, Taj-ud-din, Nizam-ul-mulk Muhammad Janaidi, Malik Qutb-ud-din Hasan and Fakhrul-Mulk Isami were his contemporary scholars who added grandeur to his court.
- Apart from completing the construction of Qutb Minar at Delhi, the tallest stone tower in India (238 ft.), he built a magnificent mosque at Ajmer.

RAZIYA (AD 1236–40)

- The problem of successor troubled Iltutmish during his last days. Iltutmish did not consider any of his sons worthy of the throne. His own choice was his daughter Raziya hence he nominated her as his successor.
- But after his death his son Ruknuddin Firoz ascended the throne with the help of army leaders. However with the support of the people of Delhi and some military leaders, Raziya soon ascended the throne.
- Despite her obvious qualities, Raziya did not fare significantly better primarily because of her attempts to create a counter nobility of non-Turks and invited the wrath of the Turkish amirs. They were particularly incensed over her decision to appoint the Abyssinian, Malik Jamaluddin Yaqut, as the amir-i-akhur (master of the horses); the recruitment of a few other non-Turks to important posts further inflamed matters.
- The nobility realized that, though a woman, Raziya was not willing to be a puppet in their hands, therefore the nobles started revolting against her in the provinces. They accused her of violating feminine modesty and being too friendly to an Abyssinian noble, Yaqut.
- In 1240, Altunia, the governor of Bhatinda revolted against her. She went in person to suppress the revolt but Altunia killed Yakuth and took Raziya prisoner. In the meantime, the Turkish nobles put Bahram, another son of Iltutmish on the throne. However, Raziya won over her captor, Altunia, and after marrying him proceeded to Delhi. But she was defeated and killed.
- The fall of Raziya paved the way for the ascendancy of the Forty. In the next six years, Behram Shah (1240–42) and Masud Shah (1242–46) ruled Delhi. There ensued a struggle for supremacy between the Sultans and the nobles.
- In 1246 Balban succeeded in putting Nasiruddin Mahmud, as Sultan.
- After them, in AD 1246, Ulugh Khan (later known as Balban) placed the inexperienced and young Nasiruddin (grandson of Iltutmish) on throne and himself assumed the position of Naib (deputy). To further strengthen his position, he married his daughter to Nasiruddin. Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud died in 1266. According to Ibn Battuta and Isami, Balban poisoned his master Nasiruddin and ascended the throne.

BALBAN (1266–87)

- Balban ascended the throne in AD 1266. When Balban became the Sultan, his position was not secure. Many Turkish chiefs were hostile to him; the Mongols were looking forward for an opportunity for attacking the Sultanate, the governors of the distant provinces were also trying to become independent rulers, the Indian rulers were also ready to revolt at the smallest opportunity.
- The law and order situation in the area around Delhi and in the Doab region had deteriorated.
- In the Ganga-Yamuna doab and Awadh, the roads were infested with the robbers and dacoits, because of which the communication with the eastern areas had become difficult.
- Some of the Rajput zamindars had set up forts in the area, and defied the government. The Mewatis had become so bold as to plunder people up to the outskirts of Delhi. To deal with these elements, Balban adopted a stern policy. In the Mewat many were killed.
- In the area around Badayun, Rajput strongholds were destroyed.
- Balban ruled in an autocratic manner and worked hard to elevate the position of the Sultan. He did not allow any noble to assume great power. He even formulated the theory of kingship. The historian Barani, who was himself a great champion of the Turkish nobles, says that Balban remarked ‘whenever I see a base born ignoble man, my eyes burn and I reach in anger for my sword (to kill him).’ We do not know if Balban actually said these words but his attitude towards the non-Turks was that of contempt.
- Balban was not prepared to share power with anyone, not even with his own family. Balban was determined to break the power of the Chahalgani.
- To keep himself well informed, Balban appointed spies in every department. He also organised a strong centralized army, both to deal with internal disturbances, and to repel the Mongols who had entrenched themselves in the Punjab and posed a serious threat to the Delhi Sultanate.
- Balban re-organised the military department (diwan-i-arz) and deployed army in different parts of the country to put down rebellion. The disturbances in Mewat, Doab, Awadh and Katihar were ruthlessly suppressed.
- Balban also secured control over Ajmer and Nagaur in eastern Rajputana but his attempts to capture Ranthambore and Gwalior failed.
- In 1279, encouraged by the Mongol threats and the old age of Sultan the governor of Bengal, Tughril Beg, revolted, assumed the title of Sultan and had the khutba read in his name.
- Balban sent his forces to Bengal and had Tughril killed. Subsequently he appointed his own son Bughra Khan as the governor of Bengal. By all these harsh methods, Balban controlled the situation.
- According to Balban the Sultan was God’s shadow on earth and the recipient of divine grace. Balban introduced rigorous court discipline and new customs

such as prostration and kissing the Sultan's feet to prove his superiority over the nobles. He also introduced the Persian festival of Nauroz to impress the nobles and people with his wealth and power. He stood forth as the champion of Turkish nobility. At the same time he did not share power with other nobles. Indian Muslims were not given important post in the government.

- In order to impress the people with the strength and awe of his government, Balban maintained a magnificent court. He refused to laugh and joke in the court, and even gave up drinking wine so that no one may see him in a non-serious mood.
- He also insisted on the ceremony of sijada (prostration) and paibos (kissing of the monarch's feet) in the court.
- He appointed spies to monitor the activities of the nobles.
- Balban was determined to break the power of the Forty, the Turkish nobles. He spared only the most obedient nobles and eliminated all others by fair or foul means. Malik Baqbaq, the governor of Badaun, was publicly flogged for his cruelty towards his servants. Haybat Khan, the governor of Oudh, was also punished for killing a man who was drunk. Sher Khan, the governor of Bhatinda was poisoned.
- Balban was undoubtedly one of the main architects of the Sultanate of Delhi, particularly of its form of government and institutions.
- By asserting the power of the monarchy, Balban strengthened the Delhi Sultanate. But even he could not fully defend northern India against the attacks of the Mongols.
- Moreover, by excluding non-Turkish from positions of power and authority and by trusting only a very narrow racial group he made many people dissatisfied. This led to fresh disturbances and troubles after his death.
- Balban adopted a policy of consolidation rather than expansion. He introduced a new theory of kingship and redefined the relations between the Sultan and nobility. Through these measures Balban strengthened the Delhi Sultanate.
- Balban died in 1287.
- After his death the nobles raised his grandson Kaiquabad to the throne.
- He was succeeded by his son, Kaimurs, who remained on the throne for a little over three months.
- During Balban's reign, Firoz had been the warden of the marches in north-west and had fought many successful battles against the Mongols. He was called to Delhi as Ariz-i-Mumalik (Minister of War).
- In 1290 Firoz took a bold step by murdering Kaimurs and seized the throne. A group of Khalji nobles led by him established the Khalji dynasty. Some scholars call this event as the 'dynastic revolution' of 1290.
- It brought to an end the so called slave dynasty and Firoz ascended the throne under the title of Jalaluddin Khalji.

THE KHALJIS (1290-1320 CE)

Jalaluddin Khalji (1290-1296 CE)

- Jalaluddin Khalji laid the foundation of the Khalji dynasty. He ascended the throne at the age of 70 years. Although Jalaluddin retained the earlier nobility in his

administration, but the rise of Khaljis to power ended the monopoly of nobility of slaves to high offices. Jalaluddin ruled only for a short span of six years. He tried to mitigate some of the harsh aspects of Balban's rule.

- He was the first ruler of the Delhi Sultanate to clearly put forward the view that the state should be based on the willing support of the governed, and that since the large majority of the people in India were Hindus, the state in India could not be a truly Islamic state.
- Jalaluddin tried to win the goodwill of the nobility by a policy of tolerance. He avoided harsh punishments, even to those who revolted against him. He not only forgave them but at times even rewarded them to win their support. However many people including his supporters, considered him to be a weak sultan.
- Malik Chhajju, nephew of Balban was allowed to remain the governor of Kara. His leniency was misunderstood as weakness. When Chhajju revolted, it was suppressed but he was pardoned.
- When the thugs (robbers) looted the country, they were allowed to go after a severe warning. In 1292 when Malik Chhajju revolted for the second time, he was replaced by his son-in-law, Alauddin Khalji.
- Jalaluddin's policy was reversed by Alauddin Khalji who awarded drastic punishments to all those who dared to oppose him.

ALAUDDIN KHALJI (1296-1316 CE)

- Alauddin Khalji was Jalaluddin's ambitious nephew and son-in-law. He had helped his uncle in his struggle for power and was appointed as Amir-i-Tuzuk (Master of Ceremonies).
- Alauddin had two victorious expeditions during the reign of Jalaluddin. After the first expedition of Bhilsa (Vidisa) in 1292 CE, he was given the iqta of Awadh, in addition to that of Kara. He was also appointed Ariz-i-Mumalik (Minister of War).
- He led the first Turkish expedition to southern India and plundered Devagiri. The successful expedition proved that Alauddin was an able military commander and efficient organiser.
- In July 1296 CE, he murdered his uncle and father-in-law Jalaluddin Khalji and crowned himself as the Sultan.
- Alauddin Khalji made enormous gifts to the hostile nobles and Amirs of Delhi to win over them to his side. Those who still opposed him accession were punished severely.
- Alauddin decided to curb the powers of the nobles and interference of Ulema in the matters of the state. He also faced, a few rebellions in succession during the early years of his rule.
- According to Barani, the author of Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi, Alauddin felt that there were four reasons for these rebellions: 1) The inefficiency of the spy system, 2) the general practice of the use of wine, 3) Social intercourse among the nobles and inter marriage between them and 4) the excess of wealth in the possession of certain nobles.
- In order to prevent the reoccurrence of these rebellions, Alauddin formulated certain regulations and implemented them. (1) Families that had been enjoying

free land to support themselves should pay land tax for their holdings. This curbed the excess of wealth owned by some people. (2) The Sultan reorganized the spy system and took measure to make it more effective. (3) The use of liquor and intoxicants was prohibited. (4) The nobles were ordered not to have social gatherings or inter-marriages without his permission.

- Reforms of Alauddin Khalji- Alauddin Khalji maintained a large permanent standing army and paid them in cash from the royal treasury.
- According the Ferishta, he recruited 4,75,000 cavalrymen.
- He introduced the system of dagh (branding of horses) and prepared huliya (descriptive list of soldiers).
- In order to ensure maximum efficiency, a strict review of army from time to time was carried out.
- The introduction of paying salaries in cash to the soldiers led to price regulations
- Market Regulations of Alauddin Khalji- Alauddin's measures to control the markets were one of the most important policy initiative. Since Alauddin wanted to maintain a large army, he therefore, lowered and fixed the price of the commodities of daily use. To control the prices, Alauddin set up three different markets for different commodities in Delhi.
- These markets were the grain market (Mandi), cloth market (Sarai Adl) and the market for horses, slaves, cattles, etc.
- To ensure implementation, Alauddin appointed a superintendent (Shahna-i-Mandi) who was assisted by an intelligence officer. Apart from Shahna-i-Mandi, Alauddin received daily reports of the market from two other independent sources, barid (intelligence officer) and munhiyans (secret spies). Any violation of Sultan's orders resulted in harsh punishment, including expulsion from the capital, imposition of fine, imprisonment and mutilation.
- Control of prices of horses was very important for the Sultan because without the supply of good horses at reasonable price to army, the efficiency of the army could not be ensured. Low price in the horse market were ensured by putting a stop to the purchase of horses by horse dealers and brokers (dalals) in Delhi market.
- Apart from market reforms, Alauddin Khalji took important steps in the land revenue administration. He was the first Sultan of Delhi who ordered for the measurement of land. Even the big landlords could not escape from paying land tax. Land revenue was collected in cash in order to enable the Sultan to pay the soldiers in cash. His land revenue reforms provided a basis for the future reforms of Sher Shah and Akbar.
- Under Alauddin Khalji the territorial expansion of the Delhi Sultanate, beyond North India, was the most important achievement.
- Alauddin first began his territorial conquest with a campaign against Gujarat. Alauddin was motivated by his desire to establish a vast empire and obtain the wealth of Gujarat. The riches of Gujarat were to pay for his future conquests and her sea port was to ensure a regular supply of Arab horses for his army.

- In 1299, an army under two of Alauddin's noted generals Ulugh Khan and Nusarat Khan marched against Gujarat. Rai Karan the ruler of Gujarat fled, the temple of Somnath was captured. An enormous booty was collected.
- Even the wealthy Muslim merchants were not spared. Many slaves were captured. Malik Kafur was one among them who later became the trusted commander of the Khalji forces and led the invasions to South India. Gujarat now passed under the control of Delhi.
- After the annexation of Gujarat, Alauddin turned his attention towards Rajasthan.
- Ranthambore was the first target. Ranthambore was reputed to be the strongest fort of Rajasthan and had earlier defied Jalaluddin Khalji. The capture of Ranthambore was necessary to break the power and morale of the Rajputs.
- The immediate cause of attack was that the ruler of Ranthambore Hamirdeva gave shelter to two rebellious Mongol soldiers and refused to hand over them to the Khalji ruler. Hence an offensive was launched against Ranthambore.
- Nusrat Khan lost his life.
- Finally Alauddin himself had to come on the battle field. In 1301, the fort fell to Alauddin.
- In 1303, Alauddin besieged Chittor, another powerful state of Rajputana. According to some scholars, Alauddin attacked Chittor because he coveted Padmini, the beautiful queen of Raja Ratan Singh. However many scholars do not agree with this legend as this is first mentioned by Jaisi in his Padmavat more than two hundred years later.
- According to Amir Khusrau, the Sultan ordered a general massacre of the civil population.
- Chittor was renamed Khizrabad after the name of Sultan's son Khizr Khan.
- Alauddin however returned back quickly to Delhi as Mongol army was advancing towards Delhi.
- In 1305, Khalji army under Ain-ul-Mulk captured Malwa. Other states such as Ujjain, Mandu, Dhar and Chanderi were also captured.
- After the conquest of Malwa, Alauddin sent Malik Kafur to the South and himself attacked Siwana.
- The ruler of Siwana Raja Shital Deva defended the fort bravely but was ultimately defeated.
- In 1311, another Rajput kingdom Jalor was also captured. Thus by 1311, Alauddin had completed the conquest of large parts of Rajputana and became the master of North India.

DECCAN AND SOUTH INDIA

- The imperialist ambitions of Alauddin were not satisfied with the conquest of the north. He was determined to conquer south as well. The wealth of the southern kingdoms attracted him.
- The expeditions to the south were sent under Malik Kafur, a trusted commander of Alauddin who held the office of the Naib.
- In 1306–07, Alauddin planned fresh campaign in Deccan. His first target was Rai Karan (the earlier ruler of Gujarat),

who had now occupied Baglana, and defeated him.

- The second expedition was against Rai Ramachandra, the ruler of Deogir who had earlier promised to pay tribute to Sultan but did not pay. Ramachandra surrendered after little resistance to Malik Kafur and was treated honourably.
- He was kept a guest at Alauddin's court and was given a gift of one lakh tankas and the title of Rai Rayan. He was also given a district of Gujarat and one of his daughters was married to Alauddin. Alauddin showed generosity towards Ramachandra because he wanted to have Ramachandra as an ally for campaigns in the South.
- After AD 1309 Malik Kafur was despatched to launch campaign in South India. The first expedition was against Pratap Rudradeva of Warangal in the Telengana area. This siege lasted for many months and came to an end when Rai agreed to part with his treasures and pay tribute to Sultan.
- The second campaign was against Dwar Samudra and Ma'bar (modern Karnataka and Tamil Nadu).
- The ruler of Dwar Samudra, Vir Ballala III realized that defeating Malik Kafur would not be an easy task, hence he agreed to pay tribute to Sultan without any resistance.
- In the case of Ma'bar (Pandya Kingdom) a direct decisive battle could not take place. However, Kafur plundered as much as he could including a number of wealthy temples such as that of Chidambaram.
- According to Amir Khusrau, Kafur returned with 512 elephants, 7000 horses, and 500 mans of precious stone. The Sultan honoured Malik Kafur by appointing him Naib Malik of the empire. Alauddin's forces under Malik Kafur continued to maintain a control over the Deccan kingdoms.
- Alauddin Khalji died in 1316.
- Although the Sultan was illiterate, he patronized poets like Amir Khusrau and Amir Hasan. He also built a famous gateway known as Alai Darwaza and constructed a new capital at Siri.
- He was succeeded by Qutbuddin Mubarak Shah.
- During this period, rebellions broke out in Deogir but were harshly suppressed.
- Qutbuddin Mubarak Shah was soon murdered and Khusrau ascended the throne. However he too did not last long as some dissatisfied officers, led by Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq, defeated and killed him in a battle. Thus only four years after the death of Alauddin, the Khalji dynasty came to end and power passed into the hands of the Tughlaqs.

ALAUDDIN KHALJI

- Declared himself second Alexander. The only man who could presume to advise the king was Ala-ul-Mulk, the kotwal of Delhi.
- Brought the farmers in direct relation with the state and curbed and checked middlemen (Khots, Choudhuris, Muqaddams, Patwaris) all were village headmen.
- Created a new department of revenue (Diwan-i-Mustakharaj) to realise arrears.
- Appropriated 4/5 share of Khams (war booty) leaving only 1/5 to the army.

- Introduced house tax and pasture tax, ghari & charai respectively.
- Built 'Alai Darwaja', 'Siri fort', 'Mahal-i-Hazar Situn', "Zamait-e-Khana mosque".

THE TUGHLAQS (1320-1412 CE)

- The founder of the Tughlaq dynasty was Ghazi Malik who ascended the throne as Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq in 1320 and this dynasty ruled till 1412.
- Ghiyasuddin rose to an important position in the reign of Alauddin Khalji.
- Ghiyasuddin laid the foundation for Tughlaqabad near Delhi.
- Juna Khan was said to have treacherously killed his father and ascended the throne with the title Muhammad bin Tughlaq in 1325.
- Under the Tughlaqs the Delhi Sultanate was further consolidated. Many outlying territories were brought under the direct control of the Sultanate.

MUHAMMAD BIN TUGHLAQ (1325-1351 CE)

- He was a very attractive character in the history of medieval India owing to his ambitious schemes and novel experiments. His enterprises and novel experiments ended in miserable failures because they were all far ahead of their time. He was very tolerant in religious matters. He maintained diplomatic relations with far off countries like Egypt, China and Iran. He also introduced many liberal and beneficial reforms. But all his reforms failed.
- Contemporary writers like Isami, Barani and Ibn Battutah were unable to give a correct picture about his personality. But, Muhammad bin Tughlaq was the only Delhi Sultan who had received a comprehensive literary, religious and philosophical education.

EXPANSION AND ANNEXATION

- The regions of the Deccan which were conquered by the Khaljis had stopped paying tribute and were proclaiming independent status.
- Muhammad Tughlaq while a prince (called Juna Khan) led the early expeditions against Rai Rudra Dev who was defeated after a prolonged conflict and Warangal was now annexed under direct control of the Sultanate. Ma'bar was also defeated. Now the whole region of Telangana was divided into administrative units and made part of the Sultanate.
- In contrast to Allauddin Khalji's policy the Tughlaqs annexed the Deccan region.
- Muhammad Tughlaq even decided to transfer his capital from Delhi to Deogir and renamed it as Daultabad. In fact he wanted to control the northern region from this place. Substantial number of nobles, religious men and craftsmen shifted to the new capital. It seems that the idea was to treat it as the second capital and not abandon Delhi. Later the whole scheme was given up. However, the plan improved ties between the north and south. Apart from territorial expansion the social, cultural and economic interactions also grew.

- Bhanudeva II, the ruler of Jainagar in Orissa had helped Rai Rudra Dev of Warangal in his battle against Delhi Sultans. In 1324 Bhanudeva II was defeated and his territory annexed.
- In Bengal there was discontent of nobles against their Sultan. The dissatisfied nobles invited the Tughlaq prince to invade their ruler. The army of Bengal was defeated and a noble Nasiruddin was installed on the throne.
- North West-The Mongol invasions from the North-West region were rocking the Sultanate on regular intervals.
- In 1326–27 a big Mongol assault under Tarmashirin Khan took place.

TRANSFER OF CAPITAL

- One of the controversial measures of Muhammad bin Tughlaq was that he transferred his capital from Delhi to Deogir (Daultabad).
- As per Barani, in 1326–27, Sultan decided to shift his capital from Delhi to Deogir (Daultabad) in the Deccan because it was more centrally located.
- According to Ibn Batuta, the people of Delhi used to write letters containing abuses to the Sultan, therefore, in order to punish them Sultan decided to shift the capital.
- Isami say that it was a place at a safer distance from the North West frontier and thus-safe from the Mongols.
- In view of different versions it is difficult to assign one definite reason for this shift.
- The entire population was not asked to leave only the upper classes consisting of shaikhs, nobles, ulema were shifted to Daultabad.
- No attempt was made to shift the rest of the population.
- Though Muhammad bin Tughlaq built a road from Delhi to Deogir and set up rest houses but the journey was extremely harsh for the people. Large number of people died because of rigorous travelling and the heat.
- Due to growing discontent and the fact that north could not be controlled from south, Muhammad decided to abandon Daultabad.
- Muhammad Tughlaq decided to secure the frontier.
- The region from Lahore to Kalanur including Peshawar was conquered and new administrative control was established.
- Besides, the Sultan also planned invasions of Qarachil region (In present day Himachal) and Qandhar but did not succeed.
- In fact these schemes resulted in heavy loss.
- Muhammad Tughlaq was very innovative in adopting new policies.
- He started a new department for the development of Agriculture. It was called Diwan-i Kohi.
- Peasants were given financial support to help in arranging seeds for cultivation. This loan was also given in case of crop failures.
- Another important measure was to introduce token currency to tide over the shortage of Silver. However, this scheme failed causing great financial loss to the sultanate.

TOKEN CURRENCY

- Another controversial project undertaken by Muhammad bin Tughlaq was the introduction of “Token Currency”. According to Barani, the Sultan introduced token currency

- because the treasury was empty due to the Sultan’s schemes of conquest as well as his boundless generosity.
- Some historians are of the opinion that there was a shortage of silver world wide at that time and India too faced the crisis therefore, the Sultan was forced to issue copper/Bronze coins in place of silver.
- Muhammad introduced a copper coin (Jittal) in place of silver coin (tanka) and ordered that it should be accepted as equivalent to the tanka. However, the idea of token currency was new in India and it was difficult for traders and common people to accept it.
- The State also did not take proper precautions to check the imitation of coins issued by the mints. Government could not prevent people from forging the new coins and soon the new coins flooded the markets.
- According to Barani the people began to mint token currency in their houses. However the common man failed to distinguish between copper coin issued by the royal treasury and those which were locally made.
- Thus the Sultan was forced to withdraw the token currency.

Muhammad bin Tughlaq

- Is known as “Mixture of opposites” or a “mad king”. Well-versed in various branches of learning viz. astronomy, mathematics, medicine etc.
- Shifted capital from Delhi to Devagiri (renamed, Daulatabad); Introduced token currency
- Known as a ‘prince of monyers’.
- Formulated ‘famine-code’; Created the department of agriculture (Diwan-i-Amirkohi); First sultan to advance loans known as sondhar (loan) to peasants for digging wells to extend cultivation.
- Faced many rebellions during his reign.
- Muhammad had cordial relations with some of the Asian countries, particularly China. The Chinese emperor, Toghan Timur sent an envoy to Delhi in 1341 seeking Muhammad’s permission to rebuild Buddhist temples in the Himalayan region. These Himalayan temples were demolished by Muhammad’s soldiers during his Qarajal expedition. The Sultan sent Ibn Battuta as an envoy to the court of the Mongol emperor of China. Ibn Battuta started in July 1342, and returned in 1347.

FIROZ SHAH TUGHLAQ (1351-1388 CE)

- After the death of Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq in 1351 Firoz Tughlaq had the unique distinction of being chosen as sultan by the nobles.
- He appointed Khan-i-Jahan Maqbal, a Telugu Brahmin convert as wazir (prime minister).
- The wazir helped the Sultan in his administration and maintained the prestige of the Sultanate during this period.

MILITARY CAMPAIGNS

- After his accession Firoz had to face the problem of preventing the disintegration of the Delhi Sultanate. He tried to safeguard his authority over north India instead of reasserting his authority over the Deccan and south India. He

led two expeditions to Bengal but they were not successful. Bengal became free from the control of Delhi Sultanate.

- Firoz led a campaign against Jaj Nagar (modern Orissa). He returned with rich booty acquired from the temples.
- He marched against Nagarkot and made its ruler to pay tributes. During this campaign the Sultan collected 1300 Sanskrit manuscripts from the Jawalamukhi temple library and got them translated into Persian.

ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS

- The reign of Firoz Tughlaq was more notable for his administration. He strictly followed the advice of the ulemas in running the administration. He pleased the nobles and assured hereditary succession to their properties. Thus the iqta system was not only revived but also it was made hereditary.
- As per the Islamic law he levied the taxes.
- Jiziya was strictly imposed on non-Muslims.
- He was the first Sultan to impose irrigation tax. But at the same time he dug irrigation canals and wells.
- The longest canal was about 200 kilometres from Sutlej to Hansi. Another canal was between Yamuna and Hissar.
- There were about 1200 fruit gardens in and around Delhi yielding more revenue. The special tax on 28 items was abolished by him since they were against the Islamic law.
- He also developed royal factories called karkhanas in which thousands of slaves were employed.
- About 300 new towns were built during his reign. The famous among them was Firozabad near Red Fort in Delhi, now called Firoz Shah Kotla.
- Old monuments like Jama Masjid and Qutb-Minar were also repaired.
- A new department called Diwan-i-Khairat was created to take care of orphans and widows.
- Free hospitals and marriage bureaus for poor Muslims were also established. Firoz patronized scholars like Barani and Afif.
- As he was guided by the ulemas, he was intolerant towards Shia Muslims and Sufis. He treated Hindus as second grade citizens and imposed Jiziya. In this respect he was the precursor of Sikandar Lodi and Aurangzeb.
- Also he increased the number of slaves by capturing the defeated soldiers and young persons. In his regime the number of slaves had increased to one lakh eighty thousand.
- When Firoz died in 1388 the struggle for power between the Sultan and the nobles started once again. His successors had to face the rebellion of the slaves created by Firoz.
- In the following years, the Delhi Sultanate had disintegrated further. Many provinces like Malwa and Gujarat declared their independence.
- The invasion of Timur in 1398 had worsened the situation. When Timur entered Delhi there was no opposition and he sacked Delhi for three days murdering thousands of people and looting enormous wealth. He withdrew from India in 1399 and his invasion in fact delivered a death blow to the Tughlaq dynasty.
- The invasion of Timur in 1398 left the sultanate desolate. By the end of Tughlaq rule (1412) the Sultanate was confined to a small territory in north India.

- A number of regions proclaimed independent status. In the east Bengal and Orissa enjoyed complete autonomy.
- In eastern UP and large parts of Bihar a new independent kingdom of Sharqis emerged. In the Deccan and South Vijaynagar empire and Bahmani kingdom became political powers.
- Large parts of Punjab were occupied by independent nobles. Gujarat and Malwa became fully independent. Rajput states in Rajasthan no longer treated Delhi Sultans as their overlords.

Firoz Shah Tughlaq

- He was offered the crown by the nobles.
- Made 'Iqta system' hereditary. He made systematic assessment of land. Entrusted this task to Kwaja Hisommuddin who assessed the land revenue which amounted to 6 crore and 85 lakh of tankas.
- Diwan-i-khairat was the special creation of Firoz for helping the poor Muslim parents in the marriage of their daughters. The Sultan also opened a large number of hospitals Darul Shafa where medicines used to be distributed free to the people. Experienced physicians, surgeons, eye specialists used to be appointed who attended the patients with great care. The expenses of these hospitals were borne by the State.
- Created an Endowment Fund.
- Established an Employment Bureau to provide work to unemployed.
- Started practice of granting old-age pension. (Diwan-i-Istitaka)
- Started charitable kitchen.
- Founded department Diwan-i-Bandgan was also a new creation of Firoz which administered the affairs of the slaves. Raised a huge force of slaves numbering 180000.
- Besides improving the quality of cultivation, a large number of gardens were laid out by the Sultan, 1200 gardens were laid out in the neighborhood of Delhi. The most remarkable contribution of Firoz that gave a fillip to agriculture was the scheme of artificial irrigation in which the excavation of canals, occupied an important place. The important canals which were excavated were the following: a. The Rajiwah, b. Ulughkhani, c. Firuzabad canal, d. Khakkhar (Ghaggar) canal, e. The canal excavated from the river Budhi.
- Imposed an additional tax at the rate of 1/10 of the total production of such cultivators as were benefited by the new scheme irrigation known as Haqi-i-Shirb.
- Firuz Shah imposed Jizya upon the Brahmanas made Jaziyah a separate tax.
- Founded several cities like Firozabad, Fatehabad, Hissar, Jaunpur, Firozpur etc.
- Wrote autobiography "Futuh-i-Firozshahi".
- The upper storeys of the Qutub Minar which were struck by lightning in 1368 CE were repaired by Firoz. These repaired were confined to the fourth and fifth storey's. He built Kushk Firoz and Kotla Firoz Shah – It was a palace fortress. Situated on the bank of the river Jamuna. Another interesting object in the Kotla of Firuz Shah was the Ashokan pillar. (brought from Meerut and Topara)