



GS FOUNDATION BATCH FOR CSE 2024

**Ancient, Medieval & Culture - 8
(Delhi Sultanate - Important Rulers)**

Important Rulers and their Contributions

Mamluk/ Ilbari Dynasty (1206-90)

Qutubuddin Aibak (1206-10)

After the death of Mohammed Ghori, Aibak, his **governor at Lahore** claimed his Indian territories.

However, before he could resolve the conflict against Yaloz and Qabacha, he **died accidentally while playing Chaugan (Polo)** in 1210 and thus could not consolidate his power.

- It is generally held that in spite of the title of Sultan and the manumission received from Ghori, Aibak should not be regarded as a sovereign of Delhi Sultanate. This is due to the following factors -
 - **No coins** has yet been discovered bearing his name
 - **Khutba** was not read in his name
 - **Ibn Battuta** does not consider him as the first independent sovereign of Delhi
 - His name is **not included in the list of Delhi** sultans that Firuz Shah Tughlag ordered to be inserted in the Friday Khutba.

Important details:

- He made **Lahore** as his capital.
- He was popularly known as '**Quran Khawan**' and '**Lakh Baksh**'.
- He constructed the **Quwwat-ul Islam Mosque** (1st mosque in India) at Mehrauli, over the destroyed remains of a Vaishnavite temple, which was earlier a Jain Temple.
- He built the **Adhai Din Ka Jhonpra Mosque** (2nd mosque in India) at Ajmer over the remains of an old Buddhist monastery.
- He **started construction on the Qutub Minar** and was able to complete the first storey.
 - The second, third and fourth stories were built by Iltutmish.
 - It was repaired by Feroz Shah Tughlaq after being destroyed by lightning and a fifth story was added.
 - The Qutub Minar was built as a **victory tower** symbolising Turkish victory over India.
 - It was dedicated to **Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki** (a Chishti Sufi saint).

Iltutmish (1211-36)

He is considered to be the **real founder** of the Delhi Sultanate. He provided a solid administrative, military, economic and cultural foundation to the Empire in its infancy and protected it from external challenges also.

Challenges Before Iltutmish

We can evaluate the achievements of Iltutmish in context of the problems which Iltutmish had to face in his career.

- Almost all the **Rajput states rebelled successfully** during the weak rule of Aram Shah.

- The **governor of Bengal, Iwaz, declared his freedom** and became the independent ruler in the name of Giyasuddin Iwaz Shah.
- The threat of the **Mongol invasion** was looming large over the newly founded Delhi Sultanate.
- **Yalduz and Qabacha** continued to threaten Delhi's independence.
- The Sultanate lacked the support of an efficient **administrative structure**.
- Further, the newly founded Delhi Sultanate still lacked **legitimacy and acceptance from the caliph**.

Measures taken by Iltutmish

- He shifted his capital to **Delhi** from Lahore.
- After the death of Qutubuddin Aibak, several **Rajput states had declared independence**. But Iltutmish quickly **subjugated** them again. These included:
 - Kannauj
 - Katihar
 - Badaun
 - Banaras
 - Ranthambore
 - Jalore
- He **eliminated Yalduz and Qabacha** as well.
- With his astute diplomacy, he was able to **prevent a Mongol invasion** of India under Genghiz Khan.
- He was the first Sultan to have a permanent royal bodyguard called the **Sar-i-Jahandar**, the precursor to a standing army.
- He also introduced the permanent cavalry called the **Hashm-i Qalb**.
- He provided an **efficient administrative structure** to this newly founded state.
 - He selected some important slaves from the long list of slaves of Muhammad Ghori and formed a group of officers known as '**Turkan-e-Chihalgani**'.
 - Most of the slaves were of Turkish origin but Iltutmish selected some Tajik slaves as well to put create a proper system of **checks and balance**. All the important posts were given to the members of the Chahalgani.
- He also introduced the **Iqta system**. Among the sultans of Delhi, Iltutmish was the first sultan who recognized the **economic importance of Gangetic Doab**.
 - He divided a large area from Multan to Lakhnauti into administrative iqtas and allocated them to the nobles.
 - Similarly, he gave small villages in the Ganga Yamuna Doab area to about 2000 Shamsi chiefs in return for military service rendered to the state. Thus he also organised the military system.
- He was the first Sultan to introduce **standard Arabic currency**.
 - **Silver Tanka**
 - **Copper Jital**

- Earlier, coins issued by Mohammed Ghori were simply the defaced and restruck coins of Prithivraj III. They carried the image of the Goddess Lakshmi and the name of Ghori in Devanagari script written as 'Sri Muhammad bin Sam Suratan'
- He built two colleges at Delhi
 - **Nasiria**
 - **Muzia**
- He also built the '**Agrasen ki Baoli**' / '**Gandhak ki Baoli**'.
- He was the first Sultan to receive the **Mansur** (letter of investiture from the Caliph). After this, he adopted the title 'Amin-ul Mominu Khalifa' (deputy of the leader of the faithful).
- During his reign, Delhi became the **cultural centre of the Islamic world**.
 - The sacking of Baghdad, Damascus, Samarkand, Samana, Aleppo, etc. by the Mongols had suddenly uprooted the developed Islamic culture of West Asia. A large number of Muslim scholars, artists, architects, engineers and craftsmen migrated to Delhi as the last refuge of Islam.
 - Thus, Delhi witnessed unprecedented cultural progress and became famous as '**Hazrat-i-Delhi**'.

Limitations

- He didn't create a strong base of administration.
 - The 'Turkan-e- Chahalgani' was just an **ad-hoc arrangement**. Furthermore, his successors had to pay a heavy price as this Chalisa turned to be a **Frankenstein's monster**.
- From the very beginning itself Iltutmish seems to have **encouraged the ambition of Muslim nobility through linking them to landed property**.

Conclusion

- But in spite of the limitations mentioned above we can't diminish the achievements of Iltutmish in the history of the Delhi Sultanate.
- In fact he was the **real founder** of this state and in one sense it was Iltutmish who prepared the base for the strong rule of Balban and the imperialistic expansion of Alauddin Khilji.

Razia Sultan (1236-1240)

- The only capable son of Iltutmish, Mohammad had already died during his lifetime. The rest of his sons were incapable.
- **Iltutmish** tried to break precedence by **nominating Razia as his successor**, but the members of 'Turkan-e-Chahalgani' selected an incompetent prince **Rukn-din-Firuz**.
 - Shah Turkan, his mother, emerged as the real power behind the throne.
- **Corruption was encouraged, law and order deteriorated and anarchy prevailed**.

- Taking advantage of this anarchy, **Razia seized power with the support of the people and a section of the army.** In 1236 AD, she declared herself the sultan of Delhi.

Challenges before Razia Sultan

Unlike ambitious Mughal women like Maham Anga and Nurjahan who worked from behind the scene, Razia occupied the throne and ruled directly. But she had to face several challenges.

- The **Chihalgani felt threatened** by her popularity and independence:
 - Razia was **chosen by the people of Delhi**. This was unacceptable to the nobility, because they wanted a puppet installed by them.
 - Further, Razia was a **competent and efficient ruler**, therefore Turkish nobles feared that their power would be curtailed.
- **Orthodox Muslims and ulemas** considered it against their dignity to be ruled by a woman.
- With a view to take advantage of the chaos during Razia's revolt, **some nobles had laid siege to the capital** with a view to control the outcome.
- Some **Rajput states rebelled** again.

Razia's Response

- She **lifted the siege of the nobles without bloodshed** by sowing the seeds of mistrust and mutual suspicion among them.
- Razia proved to be an **excellent administrator** and quickly brought the anarchy in Delhi under control. Law and order was restored and corruption was curtailed.
 - Minhaj-us-Siraj writes that all the nobles and Maliks from Deval to Lakhnauti bowed before Razia.
- She **started promoting non-Turks** to break the monopoly of Turkish nobles.
 - An Abyssinian noble Yakut, earlier a simple Amir-i-Akhur (Lord of the stables), he became Amir-ul-Umra (Chief of the Nobles).
 - Similarly Hasan Ghori was made chief commander.
- Razia sent Hasan Ghori to **suppress the rebellious Rajputs**. He was able to do so successfully.

Downfall

- The **jealous Turkish nobility and Ulemas** tried to tarnish her image by spreading the rumour of an illicit relationship between Razia and Yakut.
- Then a **series of revolts** were orchestrated. The nobles at Delhi entered into a secret arrangement with the nobles at the provinces.
- As Razia enjoyed the support of the people of Delhi, the nobles compelled her to fight them outside the capital. Ultimately she was defeated.

Reasons for her Downfall

- Many historians try to emphasise that Razia's biggest weakness was her **gender**.

- **Minhaj-us-Siraj** writes that Razia had all the qualities of an efficient ruler; She had only one weakness and that was her womanhood.
- However, this is an **over-simplistic** explanation of her downfall.
- The real reason behind the Shamsi nobility's opposition to Razia was her **independence and ability**. It threatened their unbridled ambition.
 - Razia **refused to become a puppet** in their hands. Infact, she took effective measures to check their power.
 - This, above all, was the main reason for her downfall.

Balban (1266-86)

Balban began his career as a **mamluk foot soldier** in Ghorī's army. The Sultan realised his potential and groomed him for command. He displayed a natural spark for leadership and rose quickly through the ranks.

- During the **Shamsi period** (Iltutmish's reign), he was a **leading member of the Chihalgani, later serving as Naib** (prime minister) during the reign of his son-in-law Nasiruddin Mahmud.
 - Since the king was weak and irresolute, Balban emerged as the **de facto ruler**.
- After serving as Wazir for almost 20 years, it is believed that **he had the Sultan poisoned to death** and took up the mantle of kingship himself.

Challenges before Balban

A proper evaluation of the achievements of Balban can be done in context of problems that Balban had to face. During the time of his coronation Balban had to face a number of problems

- During the period following Iltutmish's reign, the **crown's power and prestige had deteriorated considerably**.
 - The Shamsi nobility had emerged as **kingmakers**
 - During the weak rule of Nasiruddin Mahmud, they had become over ambitious and unruly, openly defying the Sultan.
 - This resulted in **frequent revolts and rebellions**. Eg. Turghil Khan, the governor of Bengal had rebelled and declared independence.
- **Rajput Rebellions and Meo Issue**
 - The breakdown of political machinery was reflected in the deteriorating law and order situation.
 - Robbery became commonplace and fear of the law had virtually evaporated. Many Rajput states of the Gangetic valley were also in open rebellion.
- The problem of **continuous Mongol invasions** on the North- West border of India.
 - The army was in shambles. As a result, the empire's frontiers were poorly defended.
 - The Mongols repeatedly raided Lahore and Multan and reached the outskirts of Delhi on several occasions.

Balban's Response

- **Despotism** became a central feature of his policy. In order to prevent the empire's disintegration, Balban realised that the **crown's prestige** and **respect for authority** must be restored.
- The Sultanate needed to be **strengthened from within** to protect it from foreign threats.
- Further, he required a **legitimising principle** to justify his accession to the throne.

Theory of Kingship

He propounded a new theory of kingship in order to tackle the problem of the

Turkan-i-Chahalgani, legitimise his rule and ensure dynastic succession.

- Balban claimed that kingship had a **semi-divine origin**.
 - According to him, the office of the Sultan was '**Niyabat-i-Khudai**' (gift of God). No ordinary person can receive this gift. It requires a man of extraordinary capability and piety.
 - Thus, he took the title '**Zilullah**' (shadow of God).
 - In order to inspire high respect for the Crown, Balban also adopted Persian court rituals such as the '**Sijda**' and '**Paibos**'.
 - Nobles had to maintain the proper **decorum** in the court. They had to appear in court in proper dress.
 - An official **Amir-e-Hajib** was appointed to strictly implement court discipline.
- Balban also insisted on the principle that '**Kingship knows no kinship**' i.e. impartial justice.
 - To gain the support of common masses he gave emphasis over justice. Through this measure he tried to give a human face to his despotic regime.
- He adopted a **two-pronged policy towards the Chalisa**
 - '**Blood and Iron**' was a reflection of Balban's despotism.
 - To break the power of the Turkan-i-chahalgani, he transferred some of the members from one region to another. He also killed some of them and punished some others.
 - All political opposition was ruthlessly suppressed and rebellion was subdued with extreme prejudice.
 - Any opposition to the Sultan's rule was regarded as high treason and as a violation to the will of God.
 - The idea of **racial superiority** of the Turkish blood was also an important feature of his theory of kinship.
 - According to him, Turks had the exclusive right to rule.
 - Thus, in the same instance, he emerged as the protector and destroyer of the Shamsi nobility.
- Balban also insisted on **dynastic succession**. Balban claimed to have descended from Afrasiyab (a mythical Persian hero).

- Further, in the style of Persian royalty, he named his sons and grandsons after great Persian Kings such as Qaiqubad and Kaykhusraw.
- To portray himself as superior to ordinary men, he also affected a **remarkable change in his appearance and habits.**

Military Reforms

- To maintain and perfect the **despotic and coercive instrument** in the authority of the crown, it was essential to maintain a **strong centralised army.**
 - Therefore, he increased the numerical strength of his army.
 - He also enhanced the soldiers' pay and gave some of them the assignment of villages as salary.
 - Military exercises were more regular.
 - Changes in strategy, like keeping the objects of campaigns a close secret, were also implemented.
- In order to create a powerful military base he created a new department '**Diwan-e-Arz**' under an official 'Ariz-e-Mumalik' responsible for military administration.

Mongol Policy

- He laid the foundation of the Mongol policy of the Delhi Sultanate. In fact he adopted a **two pronged strategy** against them-
 - He exchanged embassies with the Mongol courts.
 - He created two defence lines in order to repulse Mongol invasion.
 - The first defense line was created along the regions of Lahore, Multan and Dipalpur. He appointed his son prince Muhammad as the warden of the marches.
 - The second defence line was laid in Samana, Sunam and Bhatinda. Buhgra Khan, his youngest son, was appointed on this defence line.

Office of Khwaja

- In order to have better supervision of the income of the Iqta he appointed an officer 'Khwaja' in the Iqtas.

Spy System

- He organised the espionage system. This department was placed under an officer 'Barid-i-Mumalik'.

Response to the Law and Order and Rajput Problems

- In order to restore the law and order situation he **constructed some forts** in Delhi and nearby regions and **appointed Afghan mercenaries** on these forts.
- Likewise, **in the Gangetic basin he repaired some old forts and constructed some new ones** at Jalali, Patiali and Gopalpur etc., so that the revolt of Rajputs and Meo menace could be suppressed.

- In this way he restored the law and order situation in the vast region of North India.

Response to the revolt of Tughril Khan

- The revolt by the governor of Bengal, Tughril Khan was a big challenge to him because it was associated with the relation between the monarchy and the nobility.
- Earlier he sent two military expeditions against Tughril. But these were unsuccessful. So he himself took the command against Bengal.
- He adopted the **policy of terror** against Tughril. Tughril Khan was killed with the members of his family. It was meant as a lesson to the recalcitrant provincial governors. The Bengal campaign to subjugate Tughril ultimately led to the **consolidation** of the empire.

Limitations

- In spite of his best efforts he **couldn't stabilize his dynasty** and just three years after his death his dynasty was uprooted.
- He gave too much emphasis over **racial exclusiveness**. As a result of this the social basis of the state just shrunk.
- Overall the **Mongol policy** was also not successful because the state frontier in the northwest receded from Indus river to Beas river.
- In the course of implementation of his policies he showed **excessive cruelty**.

Conclusion

- In spite of the limitations mentioned above we can't downsize his achievements. He was the **real consolidator** of Delhi Sultanate.
- **It is true that he didn't take interest in political expansion** and rather gave priority to the consolidation of his state but it was equally true that it was **due to this consolidation that the future expansion of Delhi Sultanate became possible**.
 - He **restored law and order** in the Gangetic basin that was one of the most productive regions in the world.
 - So it led to **economic growth** in the region.
 - That's why we can not deny that **it was Balban who laid the foundation of Khilji imperialism**.

Khilji Dynasty (1290-1320)

Khilji Revolution

It is a term that denotes the replacement of the Ilbari dynasty by the Khilji dynasty. But it was **not simply a change of government**, rather it was something more than that. It involved the following aspects -

- Khiljis came to power not due to the support of the nobility or Ulema or the common people but by **dint of their military strength**.
- It was a **rejection of the racial policy of Ilbari Turks**.

- The Khiljis opened the gate of the nobility class not simply to non-Turks but also to Indian Muslims.
- Alauddin Khilji made a declaration that 'kingship knows no kinship'. So the social basis of the state broadened.
- Khilji revolution implied a revolt of the lower class Muslims against the established Muslim aristocracy.
- In one sense it was a revolt against those who were looking to Ghazni and Ghur region for their pedigree.
- The Khilji revolution emphasised the **separation of religion from politics**.
- The Khilji revolution had a **negative side** as well.
 - It gave too much emphasis on the military aspect of government, but in spite of that limitation Khilji revolution implies the beginning of a new era.

Jalaluddin Khilji (1290-96)

- He founded the Khilji dynasty by overthrowing the last Mamluk king. He was 70 at the time of his accession to the throne.
- His rise to power **ended the monopoly of Turks in high offices**. The Khilji's were an Afghan tribe who could not claim the nobility of pure Turkish blood.
- He also **tried to mitigate some of the harsh aspects of Balban's rule**.
 - He believed that the state should be based on the willing support of the governed, and that any state in India could not be a truly Islamic State due to the Hindu majority.
 - Thus, he tried to win the goodwill of all his subjects by following a policy of tolerance.
 - For this reason, he was considered a weak ruler.
- His forgiveness of Balban's nephew, Malik Chajju's revolt for the second time in 1292 was seen as a sign of weakness, leading to his ultimate assassination by Alauddin Khilji, his nephew and son-in-law.

Alauddin Khilji (1296-1316)

- He had helped Jalaluddin in his rise to power and was appointed ○ **Amir-i-Tuzuk** (master of ceremonies) and **Ariz-i-Mumalik** (commander-in-chief).
- During his predecessor's reign he had gained the reputation for **military conquest** due to his two victorious campaigns against:
 - Bhilsa/Vidisha (1292)
 - Devagiri (1296) - The first Turkish expedition to South India.
- In 1296, he assassinated Jalaluddin, crowned himself Sultan, and propounded his own theory of kingship

Theory of kingship

He borrowed some elements from Balban's theory and introduced some unique elements of his own.

- The **principle of strength** was emphasised upon, according to which any person of strength and capability could become Sultan.
 - Qualifications like legitimate kingship were purely academic and all questions regarding the legality of the Crown were futile.
 - Alauddin believed that the crown is justification in itself.
- **Despotism** was central to his theory, even more so than Balban's.
 - According to Alauddin, the **king is answerable only to God**. There should be no secular or religious check on his authority.
- **Secularism** was an extension of Alauddin's despotism.
 - He maintained a **strict separation between the state and religion**. He prohibited the ulema from interfering in state affairs.
 - Thus, he frequently issued '**Zawabits**' (secular decrees).
- **Racism was absent** and Alauddin did not discriminate on the basis of ethnicity, language or ancestry.
 - This was a reflection of his Afghan origin, as unlike Balban, he could not claim pure Turkish nobility.
 - He promoted capable people on the basis of **merit**, including Turks, Afghans, Persians, Tajiks and even Indian Musalmans.
- **Imperialism** was another central feature. Alauddin believed that neighbouring states are necessarily antagonistic. Thus, it was the duty of a strong Sultan to subjugate his neighbours. His dream of conquest is reflected in his title, '**Sikander-i-sani**' (Second Alexander).
 - He was the first Sultan of Delhi to have a conscious policy of imperialism. ○ In **North India**, he followed the policy of **direct control**:
 - 1299 – Gujarat
 - 1301 – Ranthambore
 - 1303 – Mewar
 - 1305 – Malwa
 - 1308 – Jalore
 - In **South India**, he followed the policy of **indirect control**. Defeated rulers were restored on the condition of annual **tribute** and **recognition of overlordship** of the Sultan. The south Indian campaigns were led by his trusted general, **Malik Kafur**, who subjugated:
 - 1306 – Devagiri
 - 1308 – Warangal
 - 1309 – Dwara Samudra
 - 1310 – Madurai
 - Thus, Alauddin transformed the Sultanate from a north Indian principality into a pan Indian empire.

Military Reforms

- In order to fulfil his imperialistic ambitions, Allauddin maintained a **huge standing army of 3,50,000 soldiers**.
- He organised his army on the **decimal pattern**.
- He introduced the practice of **Dagh and Huliya**.
- He discontinued the practice of being soldiers through Iqtas. Instead, they received regular **cash salaries**.
 - Cavalrymen were paid 238 Tankas per annum
 - An additional allowance of 75 Tankas was given for the maintenance of a horse.
 - Infantrymen were paid 75 Tankas per year.

Administrative Reforms

Allauddin Khilji was concerned about the possibility of rebellions, which were the most serious challenge to the health of the Sultanate.

After deep introspection and consultation, he came to the conclusion that these rebellions had the following root causes:

- Excessive wealth with the people
- Negligence of the Sultan's
- Intermarriage among nobles
- Alcohol

In response he proclaimed **four ordinances**:

- To **confiscate all tax-free land grants** such as Inaam, Milk and Waqf; and abolish all tax exemptions enjoyed by the upper and lower nobility.
- To **reorganise the spy system**, with a large number of regular spies (Barid) and irregular spies (Muhiyan).
- All **nobles must seek prior permission from the Sultan before intermarrying**.
- To **prohibit consumption of alcohol**.
 - According to Barni, he gave it up himself. However, people started fermenting their own wine.
 - Therefore, he modified the order and allowed private consumption.

Revenue reforms

These were part of his larger internal reforms and restructuring, through which he wanted to fill the state treasury so that he could raise a large army.

He was also determined to take away the excess wealth from his subjects to prevent the possibility of a rebellion.

- He introduced the **Mashahat system** of survey and measurement.
 - A new unit of land measurement known as the **Wafa-i-Biswa** was introduced to measure farm area.
 - Produce was estimated by applying the average yield to the farm area. ○ The rate of land revenue was fixed at 50% of the produce.

- All **intermediaries** such as Khut, Muqaddam and Iqtadars were **deprived of their revenue collection duties**.
 - They were also **ordered to pay land revenue at the prevailing rate**. Their tax exemptions were abolished.
 - **Diwan-i-Mustakharaj** was created to collect accumulated revenue from the upper and lower nobility on a retrospective basis
- All **tax-free land grants were confiscated**.
- **Ghari** (house tax) and **Charai** (grazing tax) were imposed.
- The rate of **Khums** (states share in war booty) was increased to 4/5.
- The **Patwari's accounts were frequently inspected** in order to prevent embezzlement.
 - Irregularities were punished severely.

Market Reforms/ Price Controls

- These were an elaborate system of price controls **designed to allow him to raise and maintain a large army** to fulfil his imperialistic ambitions of a pan Indian empire.
- The Empire was divided into: ○ **Free zone**
 - **Control zone** – Price control was implemented only here.
 - It stretched from Lahore to Allahabad.
 - This was the most populous region of the Empire.
 - The control of the Sultan was strongest here.
 - The majority of the army was garrisoned in cities within the zone.
- A new department called **Diwan-i-Riyasat** was created to implement these reforms.
- **Three different kinds of markets** for established:
 - **Mandi** for food items
 - **Sardar Adl** for essential goods such as sugar, salt, oil and cloth
 - **Market for living beings** such as horses and slaves
- **Prices of all commodities were fixed by the state**.
 - A strict system of weights and measures was introduced.
 - Underweighing, overpricing and black marketing were punished severely.
 - Spies employed by the state used to report such activities. ■
Surprise inspections were also conducted.
- Steps were taken to **ensure the availability** of important commodities:
 - Half the revenue from the Doab was collected in kind.
 - Licences were issued to Banjaras (nomadic grain traders) to transport grains from the countryside to the cities.
 - Only licensed traders were allowed to set up shop inside the market.
 - Luxury goods were rationed
 - The state subsidised imported items.
- A police official known as the **Shahna-i-Mandi** was appointed to maintain law and order.

Impact of Price Controls

- Alauddin's price controls were remarkably successful. He was able to raise a large army at a low-cost.
- According to Barni, city dwellers benefited from the low prices and easy availability of goods.
- However, food producers/farmers outside cities suffered.
 - They were not able to drive the benefit of price controls themselves.
 - Moreover, their bargaining power with respect to grain traders also suffered.

Tughlaq Dynasty (1320-1412)

Ghiasuddin Tughlaq (1321-25)

- Originally called 'Ghazi Malik', he was an important commander under Alauddin.
- He ascended to the throne as Ghiasuddin Tughlaq in 1321, thus becoming the founder of his dynasty.
- He laid the foundations of Tughlaqabad near Delhi.

Mohammed bin Tughlaq (1325-51 CE)

Originally called **Jauna Khan**, he assassinated his father and ascended the throne as Mohammed bin Tughlaq.

- In history, he is looked upon as a **paradox** - a mixture of opposites; a generous and at the same time a pitiless ruler; a 'Mad King;' and the 'Wisest Fool'.
 - This was mostly due to his ambitious schemes and the novel experiments which were all far ahead of their time.
- He was the only Delhi sultan to have received **comprehensive literary, religious and philosophical education**.
- **Very tolerant religiously**, he heavily patronised non-Muslims:
 - He promoted a number of Hindus to high office, both in civilian as well as military capacities.
 - Jina Prabha Suri (Jain scholar) was his close personal friend and trusted advisor.
 - He celebrated the festival of Holi with great fanfare.
 - He even visited the Hindu and Jain Temples of Mt. Abu and made donations towards them.
- He maintained **diplomatic relations with Egypt, Persian, China**.
- As a Prince he led an expedition against the Kakatiya ruler Rai Rudra Dev and brought **Warangal** under the **direct control** of the Delhi Sultanate.
- In 1324 he also defeated Bhanu Dev II, the ruler of **Janjagar** (Odisha), who had helped Rai Rudra Dev and annexed his territory as well.

Muhammad bin Tughlaq is famous for his 6 experiments

Transfer of capital (1327-1328)

- The capital was shifted from Delhi to **Daulatabad**.

- He had established **direct control over South India** and Daulatabad was better suited to govern the new territory.
- Moreover, it was **relatively safer than Delhi**, which was constantly under Mongol threat.
- According to **Barni**, all residents of Delhi were forced to make the long journey in the height of summer, on foot. Not even cats and dogs had been left behind.
- Soon after reaching Daulatabad, the Sultan was forced to reconsider the transfer due to **shifting political currents** in South India.
 - Many newly acquired territories had **rebelled** against the Sultanate and his position in Daulatabad had become precarious.
- Further, most historians suggest that **Delhi was never deserted completely**. Coins struck in 1329 have been discovered, along with 2 Sanskrit inscriptions from Naraina in Delhi, belonging to 1327 & 1328.

Token Concurrence (1329–1333)

- Mohammed bin Tughlaq issued **base metal coins** of copper and bronze instead of gold and silver coins.
- This experiment had to be **abandoned due to widespread forgery**.
- As a result of forgery, public confidence declined and the state was forced to replace them with precious metal coins.
- Barni says that peasants used forged coins to pay revenue and rebels used them to buy horses and arms.

Khorasan explanation (1333–1334)

- Muhammad bin Tughlaq wanted to capture the Khorasan region (Central Asia).
- According to **Barni**, the **flattery** of some Khorasani nobles had filled the Sultan's head with lofty ideas.
 - Other **contemporary sources** suggest that the plan was the outcome of the prevailing **political chaos** in Khorasan after the death of Tamarshin Khan.
- He raised a **3.7 Lakh strong army** and paid them 1 year's salary in advance.
- However after waiting for six months the **plan was abandoned**.
 - **Barni** says that the Sultan realised his mistake and came to his senses.
 - According to him the treasury had been emptied completely and the soldiers turned to highway robbery.
- However, other contemporary sources inform that **Abu Said** (a powerful ruler), had established control over Khorasan before the Sultan's plan could materialise.

Qarachil expedition (1333–1334)

- Qarachil was a **small Himalayan tributary state** of the sultanate, along the Indo-Tibetan frontier.
 - During Muhammad bin Tughlaq's reign, it **declared independence** and stopped paying the annual tribute.

- The Sultan in turn, sent a force of 10,000 soldiers to subdue the recalcitrant state.
- According to **Barni** the hasty campaign was disastrous.
 - The men were poorly supplied and the Sultan had made the mistake of appointing Hindu commanders.
 - Thus, the forces were soundly defeated, and only 10 men returned to Delhi, empty handed.
 - In a fit of rage, the Sultan executed them on the spot.
- However, **other contemporary sources** suggest that it was **successful**, and Qarachil was brought back into the fold.
 - However, it was also **costly** due to the unfamiliar terrain and inclement weather.
 - While returning there was heavy rainfall and many soldiers were lost in landslides.

Taxation in the Doab (1333–1334)

- Due to expensive military campaigns and disastrous policy experiments, the imperial **treasury was critically depleted** and in order to replenish it, the Sultan introduced a **new tax policy** in the Ganga Yamuna doab.
 - According to **Barni** the burden of taxation was increased by **10-20 times**.
 - **Sirhindi** informs us that it was increased by more than **20 times**. ○ **Isami** says that it was **doubled**.
- **Modern** historical research suggests that the official rate of the taxation was the **same as Alauddin's reign (50%)**.
- However, the policy failed due to the **insensitivity and corruption** of state officials in collecting revenue from helpless peasants.
 - The very year that the policy was implemented, a **severe drought** affected north India, resulting in widespread crop failure.
 - However, tax officials **forced peasants to pay** the increased land revenue.
 - Further, they also collected '**Abwabs**' (illegal cases) from the already distressed peasants.
- Many peasants abandoned their fields, let their cattle loose and fled to the forests. **Agriculture collapsed** completely and contemporary sources inform us that **famine affected north India for the next eight years**.
- When the Sultan learnt of the situation, he immediately suspended tax collection and introduced **rehabilitative measures**.
 - A new department of agriculture known as the **Diwan-i-Amir Kohi** was established, through which the state made rehabilitative loans known as '**Sondhar/Taqavvi**' loans to peasants so that they may purchase seeds, agricultural implements, animals, and fodder. The state also provided assistance in digging wells.

- A new **famine code** was also promulgated, consisting of guidelines regarding the state's response to famine.

Model Agricultural Farm (1337–38)

The disastrous Taxation experiment in the Doab had resulted in a complete collapse of agriculture.

- To **revive** it, the Sultan created a model agricultural farm, from which **new methods, techniques and practices** could be taken to the general population.
- Further, the farm was also meant to **expand agriculture** in order to replenish the state treasury.
- A parcel of land measuring roughly **100 square kilometres** was selected and a sum of **70 Lakh Tankas** was set aside for distribution among peasants to expand agriculture.
- According to Barni, **not a single inch of additional land** was brought under the plough.
 - The Sultan had envisaged expansion of agriculture by bringing uncultivated fertile land under the plough. However, the plot of land selected was **completely barren**.
 - Much of the money set aside to expand agriculture was **misappropriated** by the bureaucracy.
 - Finally, the money which reached the peasants was used by them to **fulfil their basic needs since they had still not recovered from the long years of famine**.

As a result of these disastrous policies, **revolts and rebellions** were frequent.

- **1335** – **Madurai** broke away from the Sultanate
- **1336** – Harihara and Bukka declared independence and established the **Vijaynagar** Empire.
- **1338** – Rebellion erupted in **Bengal** which declared its independence.
- **1347** – Deccan slipped out of the grasp of the Sultanate and Alauddin Bahman Shah established the **Bahmani** Sultanate.

Feroz Shah Tughlaq (1351-88)

- After the death of Muhammad bin Tughluq, his cousin Feroz Shah Tughlaq was elevated to the position of Sultan by the nobles.
- Feroz Shah Tughlaq ascended to the throne at a time of **great crisis**. His predecessor's policies had extracted a heavy cost.
 - The Sultanate had lost much of its **territory** and been reduced to a north Indian principality.
 - **Agriculture** was in ruins and was yet to recover from the disastrous taxation policy. **Unrest** among the peasants was high and they were on the verge of rebellion.
 - Likewise, the **nobility and clergy** had seen their power and privilege disappear under Muhammad bin Tughluq and were looking to retaliate.
 - The **treasury** was completely depleted due to Muhammad bin Tughluq's adventurism.

- **Rebellions** were frequent, with **Bengal and Sind** being the most problematic.
- The situation demanded an able administrator and gifted general. Feroz Shah Tughlaq lacked both these qualities. Therefore, he adopted a **policy of appeasement**, both internally and externally.

External Policy

- In the early part of his reign, Feroz Shah Tughlaq undertook **four military campaigns**.
 - He **successfully raided Nagarkot** (HP), destroyed the Jwalamukhi temple there, and extracted tribute from its ruler.
 - The **other three** campaigns ended in **complete failure**, two against Bengal and one against Sind.
 - The **Sind invasion could not even materialise** because the Sultan and his army lost its way in the Rann of Kutch and had to be rescued by his Prime Minister Khan-i-Jahan.
- Following this, the Sultan **abandoned the policy of war**. He declared that he did not wish to gain territory by shedding the blood of innocent Muslims.
- However, most modern historians believe that his pacifism was a result of his **military ineptitude**.

Internal/ Domestic Policy

Feroz Shah Tughlaq's reign was more notable for his internal administration, to which he also applied his **policy of appeasement**, and to restore normalcy after the turbulent rule of his predecessor.

- **Revenue Reforms**
 - A **detailed survey** was conducted under Khan-i-Jahan (Prime Minister). The revenue of the entire Sultanate was permanently fixed at 6.5 Crore Tankas.
 - Feroz Shah Tughlaq abolished 21 non-Shariat taxes and replaced them with the **5 Shariat taxes**.
 - Kharaj - Land revenue collected from non-Muslims
 - Ushr - Land revenue collected from Muslims
 - Khums - The share of the state in war booty - it was restored to the prescribed proportion of $\frac{1}{5}$.
 - Zakat - Charitable donation made by Muslims.
 - Jizya - Poll tax imposed on Non-Muslims. He was the first Sultan to collect it separately from Kharaj. He also imposed it upon Brahmins, who had been exempted till now.
 - **Barni** informs us that as a result of these reforms, agriculture flourished and the imperial treasury was refilled. There was no shortage or famine, the peasants were happy and new land was brought under the plough.
- **Agrarian Reforms**
 - **Small experimental farms** were set up in the vicinity of Delhi.

- **1200 orchards** and gardens were laid around Delhi, which yielded an annual income of 1.8 Lakh Tankas.
- The state also encouraged the cultivation of **superior crops** such as wheat instead of millets and rice instead of paddy.
- The **Taqavi loans** made during Mohammed bin Tughlaq's reign were **written off**.
- A network of **five major canals** was constructed around Delhi - Two from the Yamuna, and one each from the Ghaggar, the Sutlej and the Kali Sindh.
- An irrigation tax of 10%, known as '**Haq-i-Sharb**' was also introduced.
- **Barni** reports that these reforms were highly successful and that there was no shortage of food during his reign.
 - The prices of food grains and fruits were low
 - Even the poor could afford rich fare including fruits and ghee.
- **Judicial Reforms**
 - The **penal code was made milder** and inhumane practices such as torture and amputations were prohibited.
- **Welfare Initiatives**
 - Firoz Shah Tughlaq used the state machinery for the welfare of his subjects.
 - **Diwan-i-Ishtiaq** - Created to help those who had suffered under the reign of Muhammad bin Tughluq by giving them state pensions.
 - **Diwan-i-Khairat** - Established to help poor parents marry their daughters.
 - **Diwan-i-Bandagan** - You look after the welfare of slaves. The Sultan himself and more than 1.8 lakh slaves.
 - **Dar-ul Shifa/ Dawakhana** - These were hospitals/ infirmaries overseen by competent physicians employed by the state. Treatment was provided free of cost.
 - **Free Kitchens** - The state organised Langars to provide free meals to the poor.
 - **Travellers' Welfare** - A number of measures were initiated for the welfare of travellers, such as maintenance of state owned rest houses and inns, plantation of shady trees along roads and digging of wells along state highways at state expense.
 - It must be kept in mind that under Feroz Shah Tughlaq, these welfare programmes were aimed not only to provide relief to subjects but also as a **means of promoting Islam**. They were available only to Muslims and were meant to act as inducements to non-Muslims to convert to Islam.
 - **Public Works**
 - Firoz Shah Tughlaq was the most prolific builder among all the Sultan's of Delhi.
 - He built five cities
 - Feroz Shah Kotla/ Firozabad (Delhi)
 - Fatehabad (Haryana)

- Hisar Firoza (Haryana)
- Firozabad (UP)
- Jaunpur (UP)
- He also constructed a network of **five major canals** around Delhi.
- He **repaired the Hauz-i-Shamsi** (built by Iltutmish) and the **Hauz-i-Alai/Hauz Khas** (built by Alauddin Khilji)
- He **repaired the Qutub Minar**, which had been destroyed by lightning, and added its fifth story.
- He **transported 2 Ashokan pillars** to Delhi from Meerut and Topara.
- He designed an astronomical calendar called '**Utsarlab**' in order to better detect the onset of seasons.
- The concept of clock towers was introduced by him. These were known as '**Tas-i-Gharial**'.
- He also constructed a number of saris, palaces, bridges, mosques, madrasas and pleasure resorts.
- **Patronage to Learning**
 - Feroz Shah Tughlaq was a gifted scholar and the only Sultan to write an autobiography called '**Futuh-i-Firoz Shahi**'.
 - He also patronised accomplished **scholars** such as Barni and Afif, among others.
 - During the plunder of the Jwalamukhi Temple (Nagarkot), 1300 rare Sanskrit manuscripts were confiscated. Firoz Shah had them translated to Persian in 3 different compilations.
 - 'Ragdarpan' - A work on music
 - 'Tib-i-Firuzshahi' - A work on medicine
 - 'Dalil-i-Firuzshahi' - A work on philosophy

Firozshah Tughlaq as the 'Ideal Muslim King'

Barni in his '**Fatwa-i-Jahandari**', has highlighted the qualities of an ideal Muslim king. In his judgement, Firoz Shah Tughlaq fulfils these qualities.

- Firoz Shah followed an **orthodox religious policy** in accordance with the Shariat.
- He showed utmost respect to the **ulema**, who became immensely influential during his reign.
- He tried to **promote Islam as a matter of state policy**. For this, the **carrot and stick approach** was adopted.
 - Converted Hindus were rewarded with government appointments, tax exemptions and welfare measures.
 - On the other hand, those who resisted conversion were punished with tools such as Jizya, pilgrimage tax and destruction of temples.
 - He separated Jizya from Kharaj for the first time and also imposed it on Brahmins.

- In his own words, he **abandoned the policy of violent conquest** to avoid shedding the blood of innocent Muslims.
- **Forcible conversions** were also carried out even during peacetime.
- **Persecution of non-Muslims** was also common. He once had a Brahmin burnt alive for merely suggestions that Hinduism is superior to Islam.

Although Barni has portrayed Firoz Shah as an Ideal Muslim King, who not only followed the Islamic law in letter and spirit, but also made it a state priority to promote Islam, many of the **Sultan's personal traits contradict this notion.**

- He was **addicted to gambling and drinking**, which are both prohibited under Islam. He also did not make any efforts to prohibit these practices.
- **Music** is prohibited by orthodox Islamists however, Feroz Shah himself was an accomplished musician and generously patronised musicians.
- Islam permits a man to have a **maximum of 4 wives**. The sultan had many more than that number.
- Although he abolished several non-Shariat taxes, he also introduced the **Haq-i-Sharb**, which does not have any recognition under Shariat.
- While writing off **Taqavi loans**, he did not differentiate between Muslims and Non-Muslims.

A closer examination of his reign reveals that his religious policy was shaped not only by his **personal outlook** but also by his **political compulsions.**

- Many historians believe that:
 - Through his orthodox policy, he was **trying to compensate for having a Hindu mother.**
 - Due to his **weak nature and the political turmoil** within the Sultanate, he was forced to seek the support of the Ulemas and orthodox Muslims, which pulled the state towards greater orthodoxy.

As such, it would be safe to conclude that his religious policy was an more an outcome of his own weakness as a Sultan and the political compulsions of his time, rather than any desire to live up to the model of an Ideal Muslim King.

Invasion of Amir Timur (1398)

Afif, in his '**Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi**', has recounted the horror of the Turkish invasion and the sack of Delhi under Amir Timur, during the reign of **Naseeruddin Mohammad Tughlaq.**

- According to him, the invading forces **slaughtered the entire population of Delhi**, not sparing even the elderly and crippled.
- A **large number of Indians were enslaved** and sent to Central Asia in jeeps.
- There was **large-scale plunder** and the Sultan was forced to pay a sum amounting to **3 years of revenue** to purchase peace.
- The invasion had a **lasting political impact** on the Delhi Sultanate:

- The prestige of the Tughlaqs was completely destroyed leading to its ultimate downfall.
- Frequent rebellions destabilised the empire from
- Punjab slipped out of the grasp of the Sultan. Amir Timur appointed Khizr Khan, as the governor of Punjab. He regularly interfered in the political affairs at Delhi.
- This became the background for the emergence of the Sayyid Dynasty founded by Khizr Khan. It replaced the Tughlaqs in 1414.
- Delhi also **lost its place as the cultural centre** of the Islamic world. Timur also carried off the learned men, artists, architects, poets, musicians, scientists, philosophers, and theologians of Delhi to Samarkand.

