

The Delhi Sultanate

FOUNDING OF DELHI SULTANATE

Muhammad Ghori died in 1206AD. He had no son. His commander, Qutbuddin Aibek, therefore, became master of his Indian Empire. He was the slave of Muhammad Ghori. Dynasty founded by him was, therefore, called 'Slave Dynasty'. All the Sultans after Aibek made Delhi as the capital of their kingdom. It was, therefore, named as Delhi Sultanat and its rulers were called as Sultans of Delhi.

The period from 1206 to 1526 AD in the Indian History is called the Age of Sultans. During this period, five dynasties ruled:

1. Slave Dynasty (1206 – 90 AD)
2. Khilji Dynasty (1290 -1320 AD)
3. Tughlaq Dynasty (1320 – 1414 AD)
4. Sayyad Dynasty (1414 – 51 AD)
5. Lodhi Dynasty (1451 – 1526 AD)

SLAVE DYNASTY

Qutbuddin Aibek was the representative of Indian empire of Muhammad Ghori in India. After the death of Muhammad Ghori, he founded an independent Muslim state in India. He founded the first royal dynasty of Muslim kings in Indian. All the sultans of this dynasty were either slaves or the off-springs of the slaves. This dynasty is, therefore, termed as slave dynasty. The rulers of this dynasty, ruled for about 84 years (1206 – 90 AD).

EARLY LIFE OF QUTBUDDIN AIBEK:

Qutbuddin Aibek was born in an aristocratic family of Turkistan. He was sold even in childhood. A Qazi of Nishapur (Khurasan) purchased him. He managed for his religious and military education. After the death of the Qazi, his sons sold him to a trader. This trader took Aibek to Ghazni and sold him to Muhammad Ghori. Pleased with his ability and qualities, Muhammad Ghori appointed him as head of the stable of the horses. He helped his master considerably in his Indian campaigns. Therefore, after winning the second battle of Tarain, Muhammad Ghori appointed Aibek as ruler of his Indian empire. Aibek ruled from 1192 AD to 1206 AD as the representative of Muhammad Ghori. He became an independent sultan of India after the death of Muhammad Ghori. He ruled for about 4 years (1206 – 10 AD).

DIFFICULTIES OF QUTUB - UD - DIN AIBEK:

Qutub-ud-din, faced the following difficulties before he became the de facto ruler:

1. *The problem of the Defence of the North Western Frontier:* To consolidate his forces on the North-Western border was a great problem for Qutub-ud-din Aibak. The Shah of Khwarizim had defeated Ghori and established a powerful empire in Central Asia. The South Eastern frontier of his empire touched the Indian border. It was a constant danger for Aibak.

The Delhi Sultanate

2. *Aibak a Slave*: Aibak was a slave. That was a great problem for him. According to the law of Islam, no one could become a king as long as he was a slave. So many people were not ready to accept Aibak as the king.

3. *Danger from Other Slaves of Ghori*: Like Aibak, the other slaves of Ghori were also ambitious to become the ruler. Tajud-din Yalduz, Nasir-ud-din Kubacha and Baha-ud-din Tugril were principal among them. They were a constant danger to him. Tajud-din Yalduz had occupied Ghazni.

4. *Lahore a part of Ghazni*: Lahore was a main part of the Ghazni empire. Aibak had got his 'Khutba' read in Lahore yet the rulers of Ghazni redeemed form the empire of Ghazni.

5. *Danger form the Hindu Sardars*: The remain Hindu Sardars could also become a problem for Aibak.

ILTUTMISH

1. *Early Life of Iltutmish*: Iltutmish belonged to the Ilbari tribe of Turkistan. As a child he was purchased by a trader of Baghdad. Later on, he became a slave of Aibak who was impressed by his wisdom and intelligence. By dint of his bravery and intelligence he rose to the position of the Amir-i-Shikar. Later on, Aibak married his daughter to him and made him the governor of Gwalior. After Aibak's death the nobles dethroned his inefficient son, Aram Shah, who had succeeded his father, and made Iltutmish the Sultan of Delhi.

2. *His Difficulties*: On his accession Iltutmish had to face many difficulties. Some of the Turkish nobles thought themselves as eligible as Iltutmish to sit on the throne of Delhi and they all looked to every opportunity of putting forward their own claim. Islamic law forbade a slave from becoming a king, therefore, Taj-ud-din Yalduz in Ghazni, Qabacha in Sindh and the Khiljis in Bengal declared themselves as independent rulers. The Rajput rulers were also clamouring to regain their lost independence.

3. *His Conquests and other Events*: But Iltutmish was not to be discouraged in face of these difficulties. With his patience, perseverance and wisdom he firmly curbed all his difficulties and saved the Islamic State in India from being disintegrated.

(a) Curbing the Rebellious Chiefs: Other Turkish chiefs and nobles in the court rose in rebellion against Iltutmish. Iltutmish suppressed their revolts very firmly and awarded them such harsh punishments that none of them or their successors could dream of challenging his authority again.

(b) Defeat and Death of Yalduz: After Ghori's death one of his slaves Yalduz had declared himself the ruler of Ghazni. Even Aibak could not make him yield to submission. During Iltutmish's reign he again captured the Punjab. Iltutmish defeated him in 1215 AD. In the Battle of Tarain and put him to death. In this way he got rid of a powerful rival.

(c) Defeat and Death of Qabacha: Qabacha was also a slave of Ghori and the Governor of Uch. He refused to accept Iltutmish's claim to the throne of Delhi and

The Delhi Sultanate

captured parts of Punjab and Sindh. In 1217 AD. Iltutmish chased him out of the Punjab. In 1227 AD. He invaded Sindh. Qabacha, who tried to escape, died of drowning in the Indus river.

(d) Suppression of the Khiljis of Bengal: After Aibak's death, Khiljis of Bengal declared their independence under their leader Ali Mardan. After his death his son Ghias-ud-din also refused to accept Iltutmish's submission. Therefore, Iltutmish marched on Bengal in 1220 AD. Ghais-ud-din at once sought his submission but as soon as the Delhi armies marched back he again declared his independence. Therefore, Iltutmish carried another military expedition against him. As a result Ghais-ud-din was defeated and killed and his kingdom was annexed to Delhi.

(e) Other conquests: Taking advantage of the chaos that prevailed after Aibak's death the rulers of Gwalior and Ranthambhor declared their independence. Many other Rajput rulers were also clamouring to free themselves. In 1231 AD., Iltutmish marched on Gwalior and subdued its ruler. From 1231 to 1236 AD. He carried military expeditions against other Rajput kingdoms of Malwa, Ranthambhor, Mandu and Ujjain and occupied their territories thus extending his empire to the river Narmada.

(f) Invasion of Changez Khan, AD: In 1221 AD. The Mongal leader Changez Khan pursued his enemy, the King of Khwarizm, Jalal-ud-din, into the Indian borders. The ruler of Khwarizm sought from Iltutmish refuge in India which Iltutmish refused very politely on the ground that the hot climate of Delhi would not suit him. In this way he saved his kingdom from a big scourge and Changez Khan went back carrying fire and sword in the territories beyond Indus.

CHARACTER AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF ILTUTMISH:

Iltutmish is regarded as one of the great ruler of the Slave Dynasty. By dint of his ability, perseverance and intelligence he was able to establish an independent empire for himself. He rendered great service to the Islamic Empire in India. He suppressed not only the rebellious chiefs and nobles but also his powerful rivals like Yaldoz and Qabacha and the Khiljis of Bengal to protect the Muslim Empire in India from various challenges. He, therefore, deserves to be called the 'protector of the Muslim Empire in India'. He strengthened the foundations of the Muslim Empire in India. Mohammad Ghori and Aibak had no time to organize their conquered territories. In this way, Iltutmish fulfilled their incomplete mission. He also strengthened the Islamic Empire in India by destroying the power of the Rajput princes and thus brought the whole of North India under his control.

Instead of Lahore, Iltutmish made Delhi as his capital and the centre of the Muslim Empire. In this respect he can also be regarded as the founder of the Delhi Sultanate.

Iltutmish was also a good administrator. He made Delhi his capital. He issued gold and silver coins to facilitate trade. He also built good roads. As a king, he was just and dispensed equitable justice to all. Iltutmish was a far sighted diplomat. He silenced his rivals by obtaining from the Caliph of Baghdad, robe of honour as the

The Delhi Sultanate

Defender of the Muslim Empire in India. He saved India from a virtual calamity by putting off politely the King of Khawarizm who sought refuge in India from the wrath of Chingiz Khan.

He was also a great lover of art and education. He completed the Qutab Minar and the Qutabi Mosque. Great scholars like Minhaj-us-Siraj, Ruhani and Usmanin lived in his court.

Iltutmish was a successful ruler. His greatness lies in not only saving the infant Muslim Empire in India but also in organizing the conquests of Ghori and Aibak into a well – administered empire. By dint of this wisdom and dauntless bravery, he transformed a weak, vulnerable kingdom left by Aibak and Ghori not a stable Muslim empire in India. That is why he is often called the real founder of the Muslim Empire in India.

WHAT WERE THE CAUSES OF ALA-UD-DIN'S SUCCESS IN THE DECCAN?

Chief Causes of Ala-ud-Din's Success in the Deccan. Ala-ud-Din had conquered Devgiri, Warrangal, Dwarsamudra and Madura etc. in the Deccan within a short period, from 1305 to 1311 A.D. The chief causes of his success in the Deccan were as under:

1. Lack of Unity. At that time there were several small kingdoms both in the north and the south. Not only there was lack of unity among the northern and the southern kingdoms but they were also always at war with one another.

2. Absence of a strong power in the Deccan. There was no strong power in the Deccan that could match in resources to the Khilji Empire in the north.

3. Establishment of a vast Army by Ala-ud-Khilji. Ala-ud-din always felt the threat of the Mongal invasions. Therefore, he had raised a vast army of 4,75,000 soldiers. The kingdom of the Deccan could not face this vast army of Ala-ud-Din Khilji.

4. Malik Kafur, an Able General. Ala-ud-Din had invested Malik Kafur with the task of the Deccan conquest. He was both a brave and faithful general who was loyal to Ala-ud-Din.

5. Ala-ud-Din was a Great Ruler. Ala-ud-Din himself was a great ruler and a successful general. He knew how to achieve his aim.

6. Liberal Treatment to the Rulers of the Deccan. Like an able statesman Ala-ud-Din did not annex the Deccan territories. He only squeezed their wealth and left their chiefs as independent rulers. He also treated them with due respect and honour. As a result these rajas became his allies in his future conquest of the Deccan

CONQUESTS OF NORTHERN INDIA

1. Conquest of Gujarat. In 1297 A.D Ala-ud-din sent his forces to conquer Gujarat. This army besieged Anhilwara and conquered Gujarat. King Karan Dev ran to Devgiri along with his daughter Debal Devi. Thus, Gujarat came into his hands.

The Delhi Sultanate

2. **Conquest of Ranthambhor.** Rana Hamir Dev was the independent ruler of Ranthambhor. He had given shelter to the Mongols. Ala-ud-Din, thus became his enemy. In 1299 A.D. he sent an army under the command of Nusrat Khan and Ulugh Khan to conquer Ranthambhor. Rana Hamir fought bravely. Nusrat Khan was killed in this battle. Ala-ud-din himself took over the command of the army. Ultimately, fort of Ranthambhor fell to Ala-ud-din in 1301 A.D

3. **Conquest of Mewar.** After the conquest of Ranthambhor, Ala-ud-din attacked Mewar. In 1303 A.D. he besieged Chittor and captivated Rana Ratan Singh. Ala-ud-din entrusted Chittor to his son Khizar Khan and himself returned to Delhi. In 1311 A.D., the Rajputs killed Khizar Khan and reoccupied Chittor.

4. **Conquest of Malwa.** After the conquest of Chittor Ala-ud-din directed the governor to Multan, Ain-ul-Mulak to march against Malwa. King Mahlak Dev of Malwa gave him a tough fight, but he was defeated in the end. The Muslims occupied Ujjain, Dhar, Chanderi, Mandu and Malwa

CONQUESTS OF THE SOUTHERN INDIA

The hero of Ala-ud-din's conquests of the Deccan was "Hazar Kinari" of Malik Kafur. Here follows an account of Ala-ud-din's conquests of the south.

1. **Conquest of Devgiri.** Malik Kafur set out to conquer Devgiri in 1306 A.D. at the head of a large army. King Rama Chander of Yadav Dynasty ruled over Devgiri. Malik Kafur destroyed most of Devgiri. In the end Rama Chander had to make a treaty with Muslims

2. **Conquest of Warangal.** Ala-ud-din ordered Malik Kafur to attack Warangal in 1309 A.D. plundering and looting on the way Kafur reached Telangana and besieged Warangal. The Kaikaty King Pratap Rudra Dev put a hard defence, but he submitted in the end.

3. **Conquest of Dwar Samundra and Madur.** In 1310 A.D. Ala-ud-din sent Kafur to attack Dwar Samundra, the capital of Hoysala kingdom in the far East. The Hoysala King, Veer Vallabh III fought bravely. In the end he had to pray for treaty.

4. **Re- conquest of Devgiri.** In 1307, the ruler of Devgiri, Rama Chander had accepted the Sovereignty of the Sultan, but after his death, his son, Shanker Dev became the ruler of Devgiri. He refused to pay the annual tribute to the Sultan. So, Kafur attacked Devgiri. He defeated Shanker Dev, Lulled him and occupied Devgiri.

ALA-UD-DIN'S NEW THEORY OF KINGSHIP

The new theory of kingship as propounded by Ala-ud-Din Khilji was similar to that of Balban, he maintained that the Sultan was the God's representative on earth. As such none had the right to flout his authority; the sultan is the focal point of all the administration. He is the Commander-in-Chief, the Chief Justice and the Supreme administrator, all in one. He was intolerant to any section that would seem to challenge his authority. In this way he did not sit in peace until he had brought

The Delhi Sultanate

under his effective control the rich aristocracy, the ulema and the commoners. He appointed a team of able ministers to assist him in establishing an autocratic set-up. All the central ministers were really able and efficient and they helped the Sultan whole-heartedly. These provinces were governed with the help of highly efficient persons. These governors were loyal to the Sultan. Malik Kafur, Ulugh Khan and Ghazi Malik were some of the famous officers. It was the help of these ministers and governors that Ala-ud-Din succeeded in establishing his personal autocracy.

1. Administrative and Revenue Reforms. In the earlier period of Ala-ud-Din reign several of his nobles broke out in open revolt. After deliberate thinking he came to the conclusion that excess of money with the Amirs, habit of drinking wine, inter-mixing of nobles and Sultan's own negligence were the root causes of these rebellions. Therefore he took several to curb seditions and revolts:

a. **Confiscation of Wealth.** Ala-ud-Din confiscated the Jagirs of the Amirs and the nobles. He also confiscated their wealth on one pretext or the other. He reduced them to such a state of poverty that most of the time they were worried about a square meal a day. In such circumstance they could hardly think of any revolt.

b. **Ban on Drinking.** Ala-ud-Din himself gave up drinking and emptied the jars of wine stored for the royal use. Sale and drinking of wine was prohibited. Those who broke this law were severely punished.

c. **Ban on inter-mixing among Nobles.** The Amirs and the nobles were prohibited from entertaining one another at feasts and parties of contracting matrimonial alliances, without the Sultan's permission. It was done so that they might not form a group or hatch a conspiracy or sedition against the Sultan. Now the Amirs kept themselves shut in their homes.

d. **The Spy-System.** Ala-ud-Din had spread a strong spy-system throughout his realm. It helped him in keeping close vigilance on all happenings in his kingdom as well as on the activities of his Amirs and nobles and to defeat and curb their seditious designs before they were hatched. The Amirs were so scared of these spies that they were afraid even of expressing their personal views openly.

e. **The Revenue System.** Ala-ud-Din reformed his revenue system in order to amass enough money for suppressing revolts and maintaining a strong army for keeping internal peace and order. Land-revenue for all the lands was re-fixed. In the Doab, the revenue rates were doubled and the people living there were forced to pay it in kind. The salaries of the revenue officials were increased to make them desist from accepting bribes. The revenue records were kept up to date and the dues were realized strictly.

f. **Harsh Treatment of the Hindus.** Ala-ud-Din policy towards the Hindus was quite harsh and cruel. They were to pay higher rate of land revenue and several other taxes which reduced them to mere paupers.

The Delhi Sultanate

g. **Administration freed from Religious Domination.** Ala-ud-Din was an orthodox Muslim and held the Ulemas in high esteem. But he kept politics separate from religion. He never tolerated religious interference in the affairs of the state, nor did he give the Ulemas and their views any importance in matters of administration.

ECONOMIC REFORMS AND CONTROL OF THE MARKET

Ala-ud-Din had to maintain a large army for the defence of his empire. Even the revenue reforms, enhancement of revenue rates and enormous wealth obtained from the South could not meet the expenditure of his large army. Therefore, he was compelled to introduce economic reforms and control the market:

1. **Fixation of Prices.** As the taxes were already high, there was no scope to raise them further. On the other hand, the soldiers felt it hard to meet their both ends with the wages and salaries that were paid to them. Therefore, Ala-ud-Din fixed the prices of almost all the articles of daily use as low as possible.

2. **Storage and supply.** Besides fixing the prices, large quantities of commodities were also stored by the state. (i) All farmers and producers within 100 miles of Delhi were ordered to sell their produce direct to the government. (ii) Granaries and store-houses were built with large storage capacity to store large quantities of corn. (iii) Grain was sold to people at a fixed price during draught and scarcity.

3. **Control over the Means of Transport.** Strict control was also exercised on the means of transport. The Banjara traders (Pedlars) engaged in transportation of corn were required to get their names registered with the authorities. Protection was given to both the life and property of these traders. Loans were also given to them.

4. **Supervision of the Market.** There were two officials, called the 'Diwan-i-Risalat' and the 'Shahani-i-Mandi', to see that the traders did not over-charge or under-weigh. Those who gave short weight were severely punished by cutting from their body a piece of flesh equivalent to the deficit in weight.

5. **Merits of the System.** Ala-ud-din succeeded in maintaining a large army at the lowest possible cost by fixing lower rates of different articles. Besides the army it also benefitted the poor-workers and small artisans also who could get the articles of daily need at quite low rates.

6. **Demerits of the System.** (1) The farmers and cultivators were discontented with system as they had to sell their produce quite cheap to the government agencies. (2) The traders and merchants also could not get the desired profit. (3) The shopkeepers and traders always lived in fear of being punished for any default, conscious of unconscious. (4) The wide network of spies and scarcity of luxury items in the market hit the pleasure-loving nobles and Amir as well.

The Delhi Sultanate

CHARACTER AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF ALA-UD-DIN KHILJI

Ala-ud-Din Khilji was a despot and autocrat. Muslim autocracy reached its zenith during his reign. He was a great military leader and a good administrator. Most of the historians regard him as the greatest of all the Sultans of the Delhi Sultanate:

1. A Brave General. Ala-ud-Din Khilji was a brave soldier and an able general. He protected the country against the Mongol invaders and gave peace and security to the people. He expanded his empire by making several conquests. He subdued many rulers of the South. It all shows that he was a great military leader and conqueror.

2. An Efficient Administrator. Ala-ud-Din was not only a great conqueror but also an efficient administrator. He provided his kingdom with an efficient administrative set-up. He curbed internal revolts and rebellions and checked external invasions by maintaining a strong standing army. His military reforms, his economic reforms and his administrative reforms prove his unrivalled ability as a great administrator.

3. A Man of Sense and Strong Determination. Ala-ud-Din Khilji was a man of sense and strong determination. He planned his every measure thoughtfully and executed it with strong determination. He had the capacity and the will to admit his error. In this respect, the steps taken by him to suppress the rebellious nobles, to check the Mongol invaders and to control the market prove his firm grasp over the administration and his strong determination to do what he planned.

4. A Patron of Art and Education. Ala-ud-Din was undoubtedly illiterate. But he was a great patron of art and education. He had in his court such great scholars of repute as Amir Khusro, Sheikh Nizam-ud-Din Aulia, Qazi Ala-ul-Mulk etc. He was also a great builder. He built the new town of Siri near Delhi and the 'Hauz Khas', a big tank for the royal bath. He also built several mosques and forts etc. To commemorate his Deccan conquests he built the famous Alai Darwaza near Qutab Minar.

5. A Benevolent Despot. Ala-ud-Din was a despot in whose reign the Muslim despotism in India reached its climax. He crushed the power of the landed aristocracy and kept his administration free from religious interference. He always kept in his mind the welfare of his people.

AN ESTIMATE OF MOHAMMAD TUGHLAK

WHY MOHAMMAD TUGHLAK IS CALLED "A WISE FOOL?"

There are two distinct sides of Mohammad Tughlak's character. He was in fact an admixture of both good and evil.

1. Good Side of Mohammad Tughlak's Character. Mohammad Tughlak was a learned scholar and a versatile genius. (1) He had mastery over such branches of knowledge as logic, astronomy, mathematics, science, philosophy and medicine. He

The Delhi Sultanate

was also an accomplished poet and calligrapher. (2) Mohammad Tughlak was a kind and generous ruler. He helped the poor and the learned generously. (3) Mohammad Tughlak was a religious man. He led a pious life as commanded by the Islamic Law. He was a man of noble character and he even abstained from drinking. (4) Though a staunch Muslim, Mohammad Tughlak was not a bigot. He was tolerant towards other faiths. He treated well the Hindus, whom he had appointed to many high post of responsibility. He never practiced religious persecutions. He also tried to end Sati. (5) Mohammad Tughlak was a just ruler and gave justice to all. Once, when the Qazi passed the judgment against him he willingly received 20 strokes of lashes. (6) He was also a brave general who crushed several revolts successfully. Thus we can conclude that he has many virtues and he possessed several qualities.

2. Dark Side of his Character. Mohammad Tughlak had a few faults as well which virtually obliterated the noble qualities of his character. (1) Mohammad Tughlak lacked common sense. He was a visionary philosopher and not a successful ruler. He thought of such plans that could hardly be executed successfully. (2) Mohammad Tughlak was by nature hasty and impatient. He was in the habit of going headlong to put his plans into action even before giving them proper thought. That is why he never succeeded in executing his ill-conceived and half-backed visionary plans. (3) Mohammad Tughlak was whimsical and a short-tempered man. He was too proud to tolerate any counter suggestion and he was so obdurate that he wanted all that he said of though to be done even if it meant doom. (5) Ibn Batuta says that Mohammad Tughlak was a heartless and cruel ruler who punished little faults like big crimes. He never hesitated in condemning any one to death.

Thus, we can see from the above account that Mohammad Tughlak was a combination of good and evil. He was an admixture of opposite qualities. That is why he is generally described as partly wise and partly foolish.

GIVE A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE REIGN OF MOHAMMAD TUGHLAQ WITH A SPECIAL REFERENCE TO HIS SO-CALLED VISIONARY PLANS.

The real name of Mohammad Tughlaq was Juna Khan. He had high ambitions. He launched very ambitious plans but he could not get success. This will be clear from the following works done by him:

1. Increase of taxes in the Doab. Mohammad Tughlaq needed money for the execution of his plans. He was on the look out for increasing the revenue. The fertility of the land and the disaffected conduct of Hindus of the Doab led the king to increase the tax of the Doab. The tax was increased ten or twenty times. Unfortunately, there was a famine and the farmers could not pay the tax. Mohammad Tughlaq got the tax collected sternly. Some farmers left their fields and ran away.

2. Shifting of the Capital. The empire of Mohammad Tughlaq had extended in the south. So, he decided to make Devgtiri (Daulatabad) his capital because it was

The Delhi Sultanate

situated in the centre of the country. The place was named Daulatabad. In 1327 A.D., Mohammad Tughlaq ordered all the government officials and the public of Delhi to get to Daulatabad. But it was difficult for Mohammad Tughlaq to rule from this far off palace. At last, the Sultan decided to return to Delhi. The officials and the public had once again to undertake the unpleasant journey of 800 miles. Many people died on the way. Thus, the whole scheme of the transfer of capital proved unsuccessful.

3. **Allurement of Mongols.** The Mongols once again began to attack India. They reached Delhi under the leadership of Taram Shiri. Mohammad Tughlaq gave them money, gold and precious gifts instead of fighting with them. Upon this the Mongols became greedy and they began to attack India.

4. **Token currency.** In the beginning Mohammad Tughlaq introduced many gold and silver coins. But later, he introduced the copper coins which were equivalent in value to the silver coins. But there were no good machines of modern times to prepare standard coins. As a result people began to make fake copper coins at homes. They paid their tax in these coins. The foreign traders, however, declined to accept them. This affected the trade. Now the emperor realized his folly. He declared that people should return copper and get silver coins. This time people minted the maximum number of copper and got silver coins.

5. **Plan of the Conquest of the World.** Like Ala-ud-Din Khilji, Mohammad Tughlaq also wanted to conquer the world. First he planned to conquer Iran. He prepared a huge standing army of 3,70,000 soldiers. The soldiers were paid regularly for one year. But later on he abandoned this plan. These soldiers then began to plunder the country.

After that, the Sultan sent an army of one lakh soldiers to conquer Quarachal Pardesh of Himachal. His army was successful in the beginning. But due to heavy rain, the army had to suffer a loss. It is said that out of one lakh soldiers only ten returned to Delhi to narrate the story of great disaster.

CAUSES OF MOHAMMAD TUGHLAQ'S FAILURE AS A KING

1. **Ungratefulness of Foreigner:** The Sultan honoured the foreigners and appointed them at high posts. He spent lavishly on them. This impoverished his treasury. The foreigners from Afghanistan, Iran and Mongolia were ungrateful.

2. **Policy of Religious Tolerance:** Mohammad Tughlaq was a staunch Muslim. But he was not a fanatic like his predecessors. He was religiously tolerant as a ruler. During his reign Muslims did not enjoy any special rights. Even the Mullas were punished if found guilty by him. Due to this tolerant outlook he became unpopular with the Muslims.

3. **Conservatism of the People:** Mohammad Tughlaq was a very great scholar. But his subjects were conservatives. They could not understand his original and useful ideas. There could never be perfect understanding between the king and

The Delhi Sultanate

subjects. The Sultan wanted cooperation for his plans but the people considered them useless. So, the Sultan faced defeat and failure.

4. **Shortage of Money:** No government can run efficiently without a sound economy. When Mohammad Tughlaq ascended the throne there was no shortage of money. But due to his charitable nature, transfer of capital, famines etc., his economy was crippled. The treasury became empty. This was also one of the factors responsible for this failure

5. **Lack of able advisers:** A government runs efficiently due to its wise counsels. But Mohammad Tughlaq had no wise advisers. Ala-ud-din Khilji succeeded by virtue of his able advisers. The Kotwal of Delhi Qazi Ala-ud-Mulk had done commendable work for Ala-ud-din. But Mohammad Tughlaq did not find faithful advisers. Therefore, all his bids failed.

6. **Deccan Policy:** Mohammad Tughlaq wanted to spread Muslim culture in the south. So he added those regions into Delhi Empire. He sent Muslim officers for administration. So, the Hindus of the south became furious. This resulted in revolts.

7. **Vast Empire:** The Empire of Mohammad Tughlaq was very vast. It was very difficult to control so big an empire. When he went to suppress rebellion in one part of the country, the other province revolted and so on. Means of communication were limited. When he went to suppress rebellion in Deccan, another revolt raised its ugly head in Gujarat.

In fact Mohammad Tughlaq was a visionary. His ideals were difficult to achieve. His plans were impracticable.

DISCUSS THE CAUSES OF THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE DELHI SULTANATE.

1. **Moral Degradation of the Muslims:** The Muslims, in course of time became pleasure-loving and lazy. Their physical and mental strength declined, they could not face the Mughals. Consequently, the Delhi Sultanate suffered a great setback in 1526 A.D

2. **Absence of law of Succession:** There was no definite law or convention for the appointment of successors. Every member of the royal family considered himself to be competent for the succession. There was infighting for the throne after the death of a king because every Sultan had generally dozens of sons from his different wives who were jealous of one another. Sometimes, the war of succession began in the life-time of the Sultan. No doubt this was fatal for the Sultanate.

3. **Responsibility of Mohammad Tughlaq:** The character Mohammad Tughlaq was to a great extent responsible for the downfall of the Sultanate. All his plans were a failure. He spent a great sum of money on these plans and this gave a severe blow to the economy. The Sultan used force in the implementation of his plans. Thus, he added to the miseries of people and also encouraged the disruptive tendencies to raise their head and ruin the Sultanate.

The Delhi Sultanate

4. **Timur's invasion:** The invasion of Timur disintegrated the Delhi Sultanate and soon one province after the other became independent of Delhi Sultanate. There was no Sultan on the throne of Delhi for 3 months. The disintegration began and by 1525 A.D., it was reduced to a small state surrounded by areas near Delhi

ADMINISTRATION AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF FIRUZ TUGHAK

Explain why Firuz Tughlak adopted the policy of appeasement of the theologians.

There are two aspects of Firuz Shah's administration which are being described below:

1. **Good Aspects of his Administration.** Firuz Shah (1353-1388) is famous in history for his administration. So much so that some historians call him the 'Akbar of the Delhi Sultanate'. He introduced many reforms for the benefit of his people:

a. **Help to the Poor and Needy.** He gave liberal help to all those who had suffered on account of Mohammad Tughlak's visionary schemes. He also distributed liberal grants among the famine stricken and wrote off the loans advanced to them.

b. **Public Utility Works.** Steps were taken to give jobs to the unemployed. A special department was set-up to help the poor, the orphans and the widows. This department was called 'Diwan-e-Khairat'. Hospitals were opened to give free treatment to the poor and rest-houses were built for the travelers.

c. **Reduction in Taxes.** All vexatious taxes were abolished. The land revenue was reduced. Only four kinds of taxes Kharaj, Zakat, Jazia and Kham, which were allowed under the Muslim Law were retained. Special care was taken to ensure that the officials did not accept bribes from the peasants.

d. **Agricultural Reforms.** He abolished oppressive taxes and reduced several other levies to encourage agriculture. Irrigational projects were constructed to help increase the agricultural production. He got built several canals, wells and tanks. The western Yamuna canal was built by him. All these measures helped in bringing prosperity to the farmers and the kingdom.

e. **Encouragement to Art and Learning.** Firuz Shah was himself a learned man and held in high esteem by the scholars and artists. Barani and Afif lived in his court and enjoyed his patronage. He opened many schools and colleges to spread education. He was also a lover of art. He brought two Ashokan Pillars to Delhi from Ambala and Meerut.

f. **Kindness towards the Slaves.** A separate department looked after the welfare of the slaves. Capable among them were appointed to high offices. They were taught many useful trades and crafts. Firuz Shah reformed the penal code and made punishments mild and humane and stopped infliction of torture etc.

g. **Contruction of Beautiful Buildings.** Firuz Shah was a great builder. He built several mosques, rest-houses, bridges, palaces, mausoleums, baths,

The Delhi Sultanate

hospitals and schools etc. he also built a new town of Firuz Shah Kotla near Delhi. He also built several other beautiful cities as well.

2. Dark Side of his Administration. There were some faults inherent in Firuz Shah's administration which ultimately became the cause of the downfall of the Tughlak dynasty:

a. Religious policy. Much of the misfortunes and troubles of Firoz Shah Tughlak were due to his religious policy. Firuz Shah was a Muslim fanatic who lacked even a little of religious tolerance. He despised all other religions. He plundered and desecrated temples and forced his Hindu subjects to accept Islam.

He did not spare even Shias and treated them with contempt. The non-Muslims and the Shias were not also appointed on high posts. But he forgot that he was living in a country where majority of the people were Hindus. So his religious policy earned much ill will of the people and brought about the downfall of the Tughlak Empire.

b. Incompetent General. Firuz was a weak ruler and an incompetent general. He lacked patience, courage and determination. He could not provide leadership to his armies either in the battle-field or during a siege. He was in the habit of withdrawing at a point when victory was in sight.

c. Habit of Drinking. Firuz was addicted to drinking. Whenever he set out on an expedition he would keep lying in indolence of several days in a state of drunkenness. This habit of Firuz had an adverse effect on his nobles and chiefs and on his forces as well.

d. Evils of the Jagirdari System. Firuz also revived the practice of endowing Jagirs to his officials who were previously paid fixed salaries in cash. Similarly he distributed Jagirs liberally among his nobles and Amirs as well. But this policy proved ruinous in the long run. Gradually, the Jagirdars became too powerful to be kept under the royal control.

e. Defective Slave-Policy. There was no harm in giving help to the poor or helping the slaves earn a living for themselves. But it is always foolish and fatal to gather an army of lazy and work-shy vagabonds. It is estimated that Firuz has as many as 1,80,000 slaves, who were a big drain on the royal treasury. Moreover, the worthless parasites were always in the front rank of the mischief mongers. None of his slaves proved of any worth to the Sultan.

f. Defective Military Organisation. Firuz Shah's military organization was also defective. While Balban and Ala-ud-Din Khilji sacked old and inefficient soldiers in their important positions. He did otherwise it resulted in inefficiency and laxity and became one of the major causes of the downfall of the Tughlaks.

