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ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM AND INSTITUTIONS

With the establishment of the Delhi sultanate a new ruling class emerged in India. This new class introduced a new administrative system. Some new institutions were also introduced. After the coming of the Mughals some of these underwent changes and a few new ones got introduced. A few of the administrative institution had their roots in Arab and Central Asia from where the new ruling group came. While some others were of Indian origin. A significant feature of these was that many of these got transformed and in due course of time developed as suitable to Indian context.

The new administrative system and institutions contributed in the consolidation of the Sultanate and Mughal empire. It would not be possible for us to discuss all aspects of administration over a period of 500 years in a small lesson. However we will try to provide the basic features, continuity and changes in the administrative structure and some important institutions.

The ruling class kept changing during this period. These institutions were used by various rulers for other purposes also. The rulers from time to time included people from various social classes in the administrative apparatus in order to have social harmony. It was natural on the part of these social classes to stake a claim in the system of governance and various rulers readily accommodated them in this system. In this sense these institutions also emerged as a tool to contain any kind of social conflict in the society, though there were various other measures also that were used by the rulers for this purpose.



OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson you will be able to:

- know about the nature and composition of Sultanate and Mughal ruling class;
- understand the administrative structure of the Delhi Sultanate;
- recall the main administrative departments of the Sultanate period;
- describe the provincial and local administration under the Sultans;
- discuss the main features of the iqta system;
- analyse the market control policy of Alauddin Khalji;
- know about the central and provincial administration of the Mughals;
- discuss main features of jagir system;
- trace the evolution of Mansabdari system and
- understand administrative structure under the Marathas.

HISTORY



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12.1 EVOLUTION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE UNDER DELHI SULTANATE

When Qutubuddin Aibak established himself as an independent Sultan at Lahore, the available administrative apparatus was continued in the initial phase. The prevailing structure was not altered or disturbed and as long, as the local rulers recognised the supremacy of the Sultan in Delhi, they were allowed to collect taxes and send it to the central treasury as tribute. The central officials in these areas were mainly to help the local rulers in their administrative tasks. With the expansion and consolidation of the Delhi Sultanate, new administrative institutions also started emerging. The administrative structures and institutions introduced in India were influenced by the Mongols, Seljukids etc, brought by the new rulers. The existing administrative institutions in different parts of the country also contributed in giving shape to the new system.

The Sultans were aware of the fact that they had to rule over a subject population that was largely non-Islamic. Thus the Sultans of Delhi had to introduce particular measures to suit the prevailing conditions in the Sultanate. From the administrative point of view, the local level administration, it seems, was left mainly in the hands of village headmen etc. The large extent of the Sultanate necessitated the evolution of administrative structure separately for the centre and provinces. Thus, during the Sultanate period, administrative institutions emerged at different levels - central, provincial and local.

Let us now examine various components of the administrative system in detail.

12.2 ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM

During the Sultanate period the administrative apparatus was headed by the Sultan who was helped by various nobles. There were various other offices along with the office of the Sultan. Theoretically, there was a council of Ministers *Majlis-i-Khalwat* to assist the Sultan.

(i) The Sultan

The Sultan was the central figure in the administrative set up. He was the head of the civil administration and Supreme Commander of the army. He made all the appointments and promotions. He also had the right to remove anybody from the service. He had absolute power in his hand. He was also the head of the Judiciary. He used to confer titles and honours upon people. Theoretically the Sultan had an exalted position but in actual practice different Sultans enjoyed varying power. The position of the Sultan was always under pressure from the powerful group of nobility and Ulema. Sultans of Delhi, particularly the powerful Sultans, adopted various strategies to keep these groups under control. Balban kept the nobles firmly under his control. Thus the personality of the Sultan played a significant role in the administrative structure of the Sultanate. Under the capable and strong Sultans, the administration and the administrative structure functioned well but under the inefficient and weak ruler the same was under pressure.

(ii) Nobility

The nobles were the most important functionaries of the state and enjoyed high social status. In the initial stage they were those commanders who came with the victorious army. Over a period of time their descendants formed the main strength and some Indian groups also emerged. The position and power of the nobility varied from time to time as has been mentioned above. Nobles, particularly those who were based at Delhi, emerged as a very powerful group and at times even played a role in the selection of the sultan.



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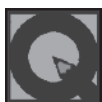
The nobility was not a homogeneous class. There were different groups within the nobility and often there were inter group clashes and rivalries. The clash between Turkish and Tajik nobles started during the time of Iltutmish and became intense after his death. The group of *chahalgan* (group of 40 nobles), which was created by Iltutmish, also emerged very powerful.

Balban was the first Sultan to bring the nobility firmly under his control (interestingly, he had been a part of *chahalgan* earlier). Qutubuddin Aibak and Iltutmish had considered the nobles at par with themselves. Balban maintained distance from the nobility and enforced strict code of conduct for himself and for the nobility. No loose talk or laughter was allowed in the court. He also emphasized on high blood and made it a criteria for occupying high positions and offices.

With the expansion of the Delhi Sultanate there were also attempts on the part of different sections of the society to join the nobility. Initially it was the preserve of the Turks only. During the rule of the Khalji and Tughlaks the doors of the nobility were opened to people of diverse backgrounds. The low caste people, both Hindus and Muslims, joined the nobility and could rise to high positions especially under Muhammad Bin Tughlaq. During the Lodi period the Afghan concept of equality became important when the Sultan was considered “first among equals”. Thus the nobles enjoyed equal status with the Sultan. Some of the Lodi Sultans like Sikandar Lodi and Ibrahim Lodi found this uncomfortable and tried to bring the nobles under their control. The nobles resisted this which resulted in the trouble for both the Sultans.

(iii) Ulema

The religious intellectual group of Muslims was collectively referred as Ulema. People of this group managed religious matters and interpreted religious regulations for Sultan. They were also in charge of judicial matters and worked as Qazis at various levels. It was quite influential group and commanded respect of Sultan and nobility. They also had influence among Muslim masses. This group used to pressurize the sultan to run the Sultanate as per the religious laws of Islam. The Sultan and nobles generally tried to run the administrative affairs as per the need of state rather than religious laws. Sultan like Alauddin Khalji could ignore the opinions of Ulema on a number of issues but some followed their line.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 12.1**

1. What was *Chahalgan* and who created it .

2. Who was the first Sultan to bring the nobility firmly under the control of the Sultan for the first time?

3. What was the position of the Sultan vis-à-vis the nobility according to the Afghan concept of sovereignty?

4. Who were Ulema ?



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12.3 CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION

As already mentioned the administrative system was headed by the Sultan. There were a number of departments which were assigned different responsibilities. These departments were managed by influential nobles. We will provide a brief account of a few departments.

(i) Wizarat

After Sultan, the most important office was the *Diwan-i-Wizarat*, headed by the wazir. It was a key position in the royal court and his role was of a general supervisor over all departments, though he was one of the four important departmental heads. He was the chief advisor to the Sultan. The main functions of the wazir were to look after the financial organization of the State, give advice to the Sultan, and on occasions to lead military expeditions at Sultan's behest. He also supervised the payment to the army. The wizarat or the office of wazir also kept a check on land revenue collections, maintained a record of all the income and expenditure incurred by the state and thus controlled or recorded the salaries of all royal servants, handled the charitable donations such as Waqfs, Inams etc. Further, the Mints, the intelligence departments, the royal buildings and other bodies affiliated to the royal court were supervised by the *wizarat*. The wazir had direct access to the Sultan and it was on his wisdom, sincerity and loyalty that the position of the Sultan depended greatly.

There were several other departments which worked under the *wizarat*. They were entrusted with specific functions. These included *Mustaufi-i-Mumalik* (Auditor General), *Mushrif-i-Mumalik* (Accountant General), *Majmuadar* (Keeper of loans and balances from treasury). Later some other offices were brought under the supervision of the Wizarat like *Diwan-i-Waqoof* (to supervise expenditure), *Diwan-i-Mustakharaj* (to look into the arrears of revenue payments), *Diwan-i-Amir Kohi* (to bring uncultivated land into cultivation through state support).

(ii) Diwan-i-Arz

This department was set up to look after the military organization of the empire. It was headed by *Ariz-i-Mumalik*. He was responsible for the administration of military affairs. He maintained royal contingent, recruited the soldiers, ensured the discipline and fitness of the army, inspected the troops maintained by the Iqta-holders, examined the horses and branded them with the royal insignia. During times of war, the ariz arranged military provisions, transportation and administered the army at war, provided constant supplies and was the custodian of the war booty. Alauddin Khalji introduced the system of *Dagh* (branding) and *huliya* (description) and cash payment to the soldiers in order to strengthen his control over the army. The contingent stationed at Delhi was called *hasham-i-qalb* and Provincial contingents were called *hasham-i-atraf*.

(iii) Diwan-i-Insha

This department looked after the state correspondence. It was headed by *Dabir-i-Khas*. He drafted and despatched royal orders and received reports from various officers. The Dabir was the formal channel of communication between the centre and other regions of the empire. He was also a sort of private secretary of the Sultan and was responsible for writing the farmans.

The *Barid-i-Mumalik* was the head of the state news gathering and dealt with intelligence. He had to keep information of all that was happening in the Sultanate. At local level there were *barids* who used to send regular news concerning the matters



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of the state to the central office. Apart from barids, another set of reporters also existed who were known as *Munihiyan*.

(iv) Diwan-i-Rasalat

This department dealt with the administration of Justice. It was headed by *Sadr-us-Sadr* who was also the *qazi-i-mumalik*. He was the highest religious officer and took care of ecclesiastical affairs. He also appointed the *qazis* (judges) and approved various charitable grants like *waqf*, *wazifa*, *Idrar*, etc.

The Sultan was the highest court of appeal in both civil and criminal matters. Next to him was *Qazi-i-mumalik*. The *Muhtasibs* (Public Censors) assisted the judicial department. Their main task was to see that there was no public infringement of the tenets of Islam. He was also to supervise and enforce the public morals and conduct.

(v) Other Departments

Apart from these, there were a number of smaller departments at the centre which helped in the everyday administration of the empire. *Wakil-i-dar* looked after the royal household and managed the personal services of the Sultan. *Amir-i-Hajib* looked after the royal ceremonies. He used to act as an intermediary between the Sultan and subordinate officials and between Sultan and the public. *Sar-i-Jandar* looked after the royal body guards. *Amir-i-Akhur* looked after the establishment of horses and *Shahnah-i-fil* looked after the establishment of elephants. *Amir-i-Majlis* looked after the arrangement of meetings and special ceremonies. The Royal workshops (Karkhanas) played an important role in the administrative system of the Sultanate. The needs of the royal household were met through Karkhanas. The Karkhanas were of two types - (i) Manufactories (ii) Store House. Under Feroz Tughlaq, there were as many as 36 Karkhanas. Each Karkhana was supervised by a noble who had the rank of a Malik or a Khan. The *Mutasarrif* was responsible for the accounts and acted as immediate supervisors in various departments.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 12.2**

1. Mention two departments that worked under the Wizarat.

2. What practices did Alauddin Khalji introduce in the army?

3. Which department dealt with the administration of Justice and who headed it?

12.4 PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION AND IQTA SYSTEM

The administration in the areas that were outside the core political area was carried out in a number of ways. It depended on the degree of political control which was exercised over the areas. The territorial expansion and consolidation of the sultanate was a process which continued throughout the 13th and 14th centuries. Some of the newly conquered areas were brought directly under the control of the Sultanate and some other areas remained semi autonomous. Thus different Control mechanisms were adopted by the Sultan for these areas. In the areas that were loosely affiliated to the Sultanate, a few officials were appointed by the Centre as a symbol of imperial presence but everyday administration remained in local hands. The interest of the centre in these areas was mostly economic, i.e. the collection of the revenue.



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The provinces were placed under the charge of the Governors who were responsible for the overall administration of the area. This involved ensuring the collection of revenue, maintaining law and order and keeping rebellious elements under control. He was a deputy of the Sultan in his area. Since the officials were frequently transferred and not familiar with the areas, they were generally dependent on local officials to perform their duties. The collection of the revenue was not possible without the help of the local officials. Thus the governor and the local power blocs worked in close association with each other. At times the combination created problems for the Sultan as the governors used to become powerful with the help provided by the local rulers and rise in rebellion against the Sultan. During the 14th century the provinces were partitioned into *Shiqs* for administrative convenience. The *shiqs* were administered by the *Shiqdar*. Subsequently the *Shiqs* got transformed into *Sarkar* during the Afghan period. *Faujdar* was another officer along with *Shiqdar* at the provincial level. Their duties are not clearly articulated, and often the role of the two seem to overlap. The *Shiqdar* assisted the governor in the maintenance of law and order and provided military assistance. He also supervised the functioning of the smaller administrative units. The duties of the *Faujdar* were similar to the *Shiqdar*. The *Kotwals* were placed under the *Faujdar*.

The other important officers at the provincial level were *Barids* (intelligence officer and reporter) and *Sahib-i-Diwan* (who maintained the financial accounts of the provincial income and expenditure).

12.5 IQTA SYSTEM

The institution of the *Iqta* had been in force in early Islamic world as a form of reward for services to the state. In the caliphate administration it was used to pay civil and military officers. After the establishment of the Sultanate *iqta* system was introduced by the Sultans. To begin with the army commanders and nobles were given territories to administer and collect the revenue. The territories thus assigned were called *iqta* and their holders as *iqtadar or muqti*.

In essence this was a system of payment to the officers and maintenance of army by them. Gradually rules and regulations were laid down to organize the whole system. Through the years it became the main instrument of administrating the Sultanate. Further the sultans could get a large share of the surplus production from different parts of the vast territories through this system.

From the 14th century we hear of *Walis* or *muqtis* who are commanders of military and administrative tracts called *Iqta*. Their exact powers varied according to circumstances. In due course the *muqti* was given complete charge of the administration of the *iqta* which included the task of maintaining an army. The *muqti* was to help the sultan with his army in case of need. He was expected to maintain the army and meet his own expenses with the revenue collected. From the time of Balban the *muqti* was expected to send the balance (*fawazil*) of the income to the centre after meeting his and the army's expenses. This means that the central revenue department had made an assessment of the expected income of the *Iqta*, the cost of the maintenance of the army and the *muqti*'s own expenses. This process became even more strict during the time of Alauddhin Khalji. As the central control grew, the control over *muqti*'s administration also increased. The *Khwaja* (probably same as *Sahib-i-Diwan*) was appointed to keep a record of the income of the *Iqtas*. It was on the basis of this record that the Sultan used to make his revenue demands. A *barid*



or intelligence officer was also appointed to keep the Sultan informed. During the reign of Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq a number of governors were appointed on revenue sharing terms where they were to give a fixed sum to the state. During the time of Feroze Shah Tughlaq the control of state over iqtas was diluted when iqtas became hereditary.

12.6 LOCAL ADMINISTRATION

The village was the smallest unit of administration. The functioning and administration of the village remained more or less the same as it had existed in pre Turkish times. The main village functionaries were *khut*, *Muqaddam* and *Patwari*. They worked in close coordination with the muqti in the collection of revenue and in maintaining law and order etc. A number of villages formed the Pargana. The important Pargana officials were *Chaudhary*, *Amil* (revenue collector) and *Karkun* (accountant). Village and pargana were independent units of administration, and yet there were inter related areas. In certain cases the province had a local ruler (*Rai*, *Rana*, *Rawat*, *Raja*) who helped the governor in his duties. In such cases the local rulers were recognised as subordinates of the Sultan.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 12.3

1. Name three officials at the level of pargana.

2. Mention some of the administrative units of the Sultanate period.

3. Mention a few important village functionaries.

4. What was *Fawazil*?

12.7 MARKET REFORMS OF ALAUDDIN KHALJI

The market reforms of Alauddin Khalji were oriented towards administrative and military necessities. Medieval rulers believed that necessities of life, especially food grains, should be available to the city folk at reasonable prices. But few rulers had been able to control the prices for any length of time. Alauddin Khalji was more or less the first ruler who looked at the problem of price control, in a systematic manner and was able to maintain stable prices for a considerable period. It has been pointed out that Alauddin Khalji instituted the market control because after the mongol siege of Delhi, he wanted to recruit a large army. All his treasures would have soon exhausted if he was to spend huge resources on army. With low prices the sultan could recruit a large army with low expenses. Whatever may be the reason for the market reforms, elaborate administrative arrangements were made to ensure that the market control was followed strictly.

Alauddin fixed the prices of all commodities from grain to cloth, slaves, cattles etc. He also set up three markets at Delhi, the first for food grains, the second for cloth of all kinds and for expensive items such as sugar, ghee, oil, dry fruits etc. and the third for the horses, slaves and cattle. For controlling the food prices, Alauddin tried to control not only the supply of food grains from the villages, and its transportation to the city by the grain merchants, but also its proper distribution to the citizens. A number of measures were taken to see that prices laid



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down by the Sultan were strictly observed. An officer (*Shehna*) was in charge of the market to see that no one violates the royal orders. Barids (intelligence officers) and *munhiyan* (secret spies) were also appointed. Alauddin also tried to ensure that there were sufficient stocks of food-grains with the government so that the traders did not hike up prices by creating an artificial scarcity, or indulge in profiteering. Granaries were set up in Delhi and Chhain (Rajasthan). The *Banjaras* or *Karwaniyan* who transported the food grains from the country side to the city were asked to form themselves in a body. They were to settle on the banks of Yamuna with their families. An official (*Shehna*) was appointed to oversee them. To ensure the regular supply of food grains to the Banjaras, a number of regulations were made. All the food grains were to be brought to the market (*mandis*) and sold only at official prices.

The second market for cloth, dry fruits, ghee etc. was called *Sarai-i- adl*. All the clothes brought from different parts of the country and also from outside were to be stored and sold only in this market at government rates. To ensure an adequate supply of all the commodities, all the merchants were registered and a deed taken from them that they would bring the specified quantities of commodities to the *Sarai-i-adl* every year. The Merchants who, brought commodities from long distances including foreign countries were given advance money on the condition that they would not sell to any intermediaries. In cases of costly commodities an officer was to issue permits to amirs, maliks etc. for the purchase of these expensive commodities in accordance with their income. This was done to prevent any black marketing of these expensive products.

The third market dealt with horses, cattle and slaves. The supply of horses of good quality at fair prices was important for the army. Alauddin did away with the middleman or *dallal* who had become very powerful. It was decided that the government fixed the Quality and prices of the horses. Similarly, the prices of slave boys and girls and of cattle were also fixed. But these reforms didn't last long and after the death of Alauddin these reforms got lost.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 12.4

1. Who were the officials to look after market regulation ?

2. Name the places at which the granaries were set up by Alauddin Khalji.

3. Who were Banjaras?

12.8 ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE UNDER THE MUGHALS

The Mughals retained many features of the administrative system of the Sultanate and Shershah. Under Shershah the administrative units of Pargana (a group of villages), sarkar (a group of parganas) and groups of sarkars (some what like subas or province) were placed under specific offices. The Mughals formalized a new territorial unit called suba. Institutions of Jagir and Mansab system were also introduced by the Mughals. Thus change and continuity both marked the Mughal administrative structure which brought about a high degree of centralisation in the system.



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12.8.1 CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION

(i) *The Emperor*

The Emperor was the supreme head of the administration and controlled all military and judicial powers. All officers in Mughal administration owed their power and position to the Emperor. The Emperor had authority to appoint, promote, and remove officials at his pleasure. There was no pressure institutional or otherwise on the Emperor. For smooth functioning of the empire a few departments were created.

(ii) *Wakil and Wazir*

The institution of *Wizarat* (or *Wikalat* since both were used interchangeably) was present in some form during the Delhi Sultanate also. The position of Wazir had lost its pre-eminent position during the period of Afghan rulers in the Delhi Sultanate. The position of the wazir was revived under the Mughals. Babur's and Humayun's wazir enjoyed great powers. The period during which Bairam Khan (1556–60) was regent of Akbar, saw the rise of wakil-wazir with unlimited powers. Akbar in his determination to curb the powers of wazir later on took away the financial powers from him. This was a big jolt to wazir's power.

(iii) *Diwan-i-Kul*

Diwan-i Kul was the chief diwan. He was responsible for revenue and finances. Akbar had strengthened the office of diwan by entrusting the revenue powers to the diwan. The diwan used to inspect all transaction and payments in all departments and supervised the provincial diwans. The entire revenue collection and expenditure of the empire was under his charge. The diwans were to report about state finance to the Emperor on daily basis.



Fig 12.1 Royal Court



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(iv) *Mir Bakshi*

Mir Bakshi looked after all matters pertaining to the military administration. The orders of appointment of mansabdars and their salary papers were endorsed and passed by him. He kept a strict watch over proper maintenance of the sanctioned size of armed contingents and war equipage by the mansabdars. The new entrants seeking service were presented to the Emperor by the *Mir Bakshi*.

(v) *Sadr-us Sudur*

The *Sadr-us Sudur* was the head of the ecclesiastical department. His chief duty was to protect the laws of the *Shariat*. The office of the *Sadr* used to distribute allowances and stipends to the eligible persons and religious institutions. It made this office very lucrative during the first twenty-five years of Akbar's reign. The promulgation of Mahzar in 1580 restricted his authority. According to Mahzar Akbar's view was to prevail in case of conflicting views among religious scholars. This officer also regulated the matters of revenue free grants given for religious and charitable purposes. Later several restrictions were placed on the authority of the *Sadr* for award of revenue free grants also.

Muhtasibs (censors of public morals) were appointed to ensure the general observance of the rules of morality. He also used to examine weights and measures and enforce fair prices etc.

(vi) *Mir Saman*

The *Mir Saman* was the officer in-charge of the royal Karkhanas. He was responsible for all kinds of purchases and their storage for the royal household. He was also to supervise the manufacturing of different articles for the use of royal household.

12.8.2 PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION

The Mughal empire was divided into twelve provinces or subas by Akbar. These were Allhabad, Agra, Awadh, Ajmer, Ahmedabad, Bihar, Bengal, Delhi, Kabul, Lahore, Malwa and Multan. Later on Ahmednagar, Bearar and Khandesh were added. With the expansion of Mughal empire the number of provinces increased to twenty.

Each suba was placed under a *Subedar* or provincial governor who was directly appointed by the Emperor. The *subedar* was head of the province and responsible for maintenance of general law and order. He was to encourage agriculture, trade and commerce and take steps to enhance the revenue of the state. He was also to suppress rebellions and provide army for expeditions.

The head of the revenue department in the suba was the *Diwan*. He was appointed by the Emperor and was an independent officer. He was to supervise the revenue collection in the suba and maintain accounts of all expenditures. He was also expected to increase the area under cultivation. In many cases advance loans (*taqavi*) were given to peasants through his office.

The *Bakshi* in the province performed the same functions as were performed by *Mir Bakshi* at the centre. He was appointed by the imperial court at the recommendations of the *Mir Bakshi*. He was responsible for checking and inspecting the horses and soldiers maintained by the mansabdars in the suba. He issued the paybills of both the mansabdars and the soldiers. Often his office was combined with *Waqainiqar*. In this capacity his duty was to inform the centre about the happenings in his province.

The representative of the central *Sadr* (*Sadr-us sudur*) at the provincial level was called *Sadr*. He was responsible for the welfare of those who were engaged in religious activities and learning. He also looked after the judicial department and in that capacity supervised the works of the *Qazis*.

There were some other officers also who were appointed at the provincial level. *Darogai-i-Dak* was responsible for maintaining the communication channel. He used to pass on letters to the court through the postal runners (*Merwars*). *Waqainavis* and *waqainigars* were appointed to provide reports directly to the Emperor.

12.8.3 LOCAL ADMINISTRATION

The provinces or subas were divided into Sarkars. The Sarkars were divided into Parganas. The village was the smallest unit of administration.

At the level of Sarkar, there were two important functionaries, the *faujdar* and the *Amalguzar*. The Faujdar was appointed by the imperial order. Sometimes within a Sarkar a number of Faujdars existed. At times, their jurisdiction spread over two Sarkars even if these belonged to two different subas. *Faujdari* was an administrative division whereas *Sarkar* was a territorial and revenue division. The primary duty of the faujdar was to safeguard the life and property of the residents of the areas under his Jurisdiction. He was to take care of law and order problem in his areas and assist in the timely collection of revenue whenever force was required.

The *amalguzar* or *amil* was the revenue collector. His duty was to assess and supervise the revenue collection. He was expected to increase the land under cultivation and induce the peasants to pay revenue willingly. He used to maintain all accounts and send the daily receipt and expenditure report to the provincial Diwan.

At the level of Pargana, the *Shiqdar* was the executive officer. He assisted the *amils* in the task of revenue collection. The *amils* looked after the revenue collection at the Pargana level. The *quanungo* kept all the records of land in the pargana. The *Kotwals* were appointed mainly in towns by the imperial government and were incharge of law and order. He was to maintain a register for keeping records of people coming and going out of the towns. The *Muqaddam* was the village head man and the *Patwari* looked after the village revenue records. The services of the Zamindars were utilized for the maintenance of law and order in their areas as well as in the collection of revenue. The forts were placed under an officer called *Qiladar*. He was incharge of the general administration of the fort and the areas assigned in Jagir to him.

The port administration was independent of the provincial authority. The governor of the port was called *Mutasaddi* who was directly appointed by the Emperor. The *Mutasaddi* collected taxes on merchandise and maintained a custom-house. He also supervised the mint house at the port.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 12.5

1. Why did Akbar curtail the power of wazir?

2. Who was *Mir Saman* ? What were his duties?

3. Who was *Mutasaddi* ? What were his duties ?

4. Who were the two important functionaries at the level of Sarkar?





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12.11 MUGHAL ADMINISTRATIVE INSTITUTIONS

(i) Mansab System

The mansab and Jagir system under the Mughals in India evolved through the time. Mansabdari was a unique system devised by the Mughals in India. The mansabdari system, evolved by Akbar with certain changes and modifications, was the basis of civil and military administrations under the Mughals. The word mansab means a place or position. The mansab awarded to an individual fixed both his status in the official hierarchy and also his salary. It also fixed the number of armed retainers the holders of mansab was to maintain. The system was formulated to streamline rank of the nobles, fix their salary and specify the number of cavalry to be maintained by them.

Under the mansab system ranks were expressed in numerical terms. Abul Fazl states that Akbar had established 66 grades of Mansabdars ranging from commanders of 10 horsemen to 10,000 horsemen, although only 33 grades have been mentioned by him. Initially a single number represented the rank, personal pay and the size of the contingent of the mansabdar. Later the rank of mansabdar came to be denoted by two numbers - *Zat and-Sawar*. The *Zat* denoted personal rank of an official and the *Sawar* indicated the size of contingents maintained by the mansabdars. Depending on the strength of contingent Mansabdars were placed in three categories. Let us take the example of a mansabdar who had a rank of 7000 *zat* and 7000 *sawar* (7000/7000). In the first *Zat* and *Sawar* ranks were equal (7000/7000). In the second, *Sawar* rank was lower than the *Zat* but stopped at half, or fifty percent, of the *Zat* rank (7000/4000). In the third, *Sawar* rank was lower than fifty percent of the *Zat* rank (7000/3000). Thus the *Sawar* rank was either equal or less than the *Zat*. Even if the *Sawar* rank was higher, the mansabdar's position in the official hierarchy would not be affected. It will be decided by the *Zat* rank. For example, a mansabdar with 4000 *Zat* and 2000 *Sawar* was higher in rank than a Mansabdar of 3000 *Zat* and 3000 *Sawar*.

But there were exceptions to this rule particularly when the mansabdar was serving in a difficult terrain amidst the rebels. In such cases the state often increased the *Sawar* rank without altering the *Zat* rank. Some times *Sawar* rank was also increased for a temporary period to meet emergency situations.

Jahangir introduced a new provision in the *Sawar* rank. According to it a part of *Sawar* rank was termed *du-aspa sih-aspa* in case of select mansabdars. For this part additional payment at the same rate 8,000 dams per *Sawar* was sanctioned. Thus if the *Sawar* rank was 4000 out of which 1000 was *du-aspa sih-aspa*, salary for this *Sawar* was calculated as $3,000 \times 8,000 + (1,000 \times 8,000 \times 2) = 40,000,000$ dams. Without *du-aspa sih-aspa*, salary for the 4,000 *Sawar* would have stood at $(4,000 \times 8,000) = 32,000,000$ dams. Thus the mansabdar was to maintain double number of *Sawars* for the *du-aspa sih-aspa* category and was paid for it. Jahangir probably introduced this provision to promote nobles of his confidence and strengthen them militarily. By this provision he could increase the military strength of his nobles without effecting any change in their *Zat* rank. Any increase in their *Zat* rank would not only have led to jealousy among other nobles but also an additional burden on the treasury.

Shahjahan introduced the month-scale in the, mansabdari system to compensate the gap between *Jama* (estimated income) and *hasil* (actual realisation). The mansabaars were generally paid through revenue assignments Jagirs. The biggest problem was that calculation was made on the basis of the expected income (*Jama*) from the Jagir during one year. It was noticed that the actual revenue collection (*hasil*) always fell



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short of the estimated income. In such a situation, the mansabdar's salary were fixed by a method called month-scale. Thus, if a Jagir yielded only half of the Jama, it was called *Shashmaha* (six monthly), if it yielded only one fourth, it was called *Sihmaha* (three monthly). The month scale was applied to cash salaries also. There were deductions from the sanctioned pay also. During the reign of Shahjahan the mansabdars were allowed to maintain 1/5 to 1/3 of the sanctioned strength of the Sawar rank without any accompanying reduction in their claim on the maintenance amount for the Sawar rank.

Aurangzeb continued with all these changes and created an additional rank called *Mashrut* (conditional). This was an attempt to increase the sawar rank of the mansabdar temporarily. Aurangzeb added one another deduction called *Khurak-i-dawwab*, towards meeting the cost for feed of animals in the imperial stables.

(ii) Jagir System

The system of assignment of revenue of a particular territory to the nobles for their services to the state continued under the Mughals also. Under the Mughals, the areas assigned were generally called *Jagir* and its holders *Jagirdars*. The Jagirdari system was an integral part of the mansabdari system which developed under Akbar and underwent certain changes during the reign of his successors. During Akbar's period all the territory was broadly divided into two: *Khalisa* and *Jagir*. The revenue from the first went to imperial treasury, and that from Jagir was assigned to Jagirdars in lieu of their cash salary. Salary entitlements of mansabdars were calculated on the basis of their *Zat* and *Sawar* ranks. The salary was paid either in cash (in that case they were called *Naqdi*) or through the assignment of a *Jagir*, the latter being the preferable mode. In case the payment was made through the assignment of a *Jagir*, the office of the central *Diwan* would identify *parganas* the sum total of whose *Jama* was equal to the salary claim of the mansabdars. In case the recorded *Jama* was in excess of salary claim the assignee was required to deposit the balance with the central treasury. On the other hand, if it was less than the salary claim the short fall was paid from the treasury.

However, none of the assignments was permanent or hereditary. The Emperor could shift part or the entire *Jagir* from one part of the imperial territory to another at any time. The ratio between *Jagir* and *Khalisa* kept fluctuating during the Mughal rule. During Akbar's period *Khalisa* was only 5% of total revenue, under Jahangir it was 10%, under Shahjahan it fluctuated between 9 to 15%. In the latter part of Aurangzeb's reign there was a great pressure on the *Khalisa* as the number of claimants for *Jagir* increased with the increase in the number of mansabdars. The jagirdars were also transferred from one *Jagir* to another (but in certain cases they were allowed to keep their *Jagir* in one locality for longer period of time). The system of transfer checked the *Jagirdars* from developing local roots. At the same time, its disadvantage was that it discouraged the *Jagirdars* from taking long term measures for the development of their areas.

There were various types of *Jagirs*. *Tankha Jagirs* were given in lieu of salaries, *Mashrut Jagirs* were given on certain conditions, *Watan Jagirs* were assigned to Zamindar or rajas in their local dominions. *Altamgha Jagirs* were given to Muslim nobles in their family towns or place of birth. *Tankha Jagirs* were transferable every three to four years. *Watan Jagirs* were hereditary and non transferable. When a Zamindar was made a mansabdar, he was given *Tankha Jagir* apart from his *watan Jagir* at another place, if the salary of his rank was more than the income from his *watan Jagir*.

The *Jagirdars* were allowed to collect only authorized revenue in accordance with the imperial regulations. The jagirdars employed their own officials like *amil* etc. The imperial office kept watch on the *Jagirdars*. The *Diwan* of the *suba* was supposed



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INTEXT QUESTIONS 12.6

1. Who introduced the Mansabdari system? Why was this system formulated ?

2. What is *Zat* and *Sawar*?

3. What changes did Aurangzeb make in the Mansabdari system ?

4. What is the *Jagir* system?

12.10 ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE UNDER THE MARATHAS

The rise of the Maratha power was a significant phenomenon in the history of the Deccan. The administrative system of the Marathas was very much influenced by the administrative system of the Mughals and the Deccani states.

(i) Central Administration

The king was at the helm of the affairs. The administration was divided into eight departments headed by ministers who are some times called *Ashta pradhan*. The eight ministers were (1) *Peshwa* who looked after the finances and general administration. (2) *Sar-i-Naubat* who was the Senapati. (3) *Majumdar* looked after the accounts. (4) *Waqai navis* looked after the intelligence, post and household affairs (5) *Surnavis* or *Chitnis* looked after official correspondence (6) *Dabir* looked after foreign affairs (7) *Nyayadhish* looked after justice and (8) *Pandit Rao* looked after ecclesiastical affairs.

The *ashtapradhan* was not a creation of Shivaji. Many of these officers like *Peshwa*, *Majumdar*, *Waqai navis*, *Dabir* and *Surnavis* had existed under the Deccani rulers also. All the members of the *ashta pradhan* except *Pandit Rao* and *Nyayadhish* were asked to lead military campaigns. Under Shivaji these offices were neither hereditary nor permanent. They held the office at the pleasure of the king. They were also frequently transferred. Each of the *ashta pradhan* was assisted by eight assistants *diwan*, *Majumdar*, *Fadnis*, *Sabnis*; *Karkhanis*, *Chitnis*, *Jamadar* and *Potnis*.

Chitnis dealt with all diplomatic correspondences and wrote all royal letters. The *Fadnis* used to respond to the letters of commanders of the forts. The *potnis* looked after the income and expenditure of the royal treasury.

(ii) Provincial and Local Administration

The provincial administration was also organized on the Deccani and Mughal system. All the provincial units were already existing under the Deccani rulers. Shivaji reorganized and in certain cases renamed them. The provinces were known as *Prants*. The *Prants* were under the charge of *subedar*. Over a number of *Subedar* there were *Sarsubedar* to control and supervise the work of *subedar*. Smaller than *prant* were *Tarfs* which were headed by a *havaladar*. Then there were *Mauzas* or villages which were the lowest unit of administration. At the level of village, *Kulkarni* used to keep

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accounts and maintained records while *Patil* had legal and policing power. At the level of Pargana, *Deshpande* used to keep account and maintain records while *Deshmukh* had legal and policing powers. The Police officer in rural area was called *Faujdar* and in urban area was called *Kotwal*. The Maratha polity did not have unified civilian-cum-military rank. Under the Marathas performance based Brahmin elites manned the central bureaucracy and the local administration. In this capacity they were called *Kamvishdar* who enjoyed wide powers of tax assessment and collection. They adjudicated cases, provided information about local conditions and kept records. Later on, the British District collector was modelled on this Maratha officer only.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 12.7**

1. List the titles of *ashta pradhan*?

2. Who influenced the administrative system of the Marathas?

3. Which was the lowest unit of administration under the Maratha administration?

**WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT**

You have seen that with the establishment of Delhi Sultanate, new ruling class and some new administrative institutions emerged. The administrative institutions were of mix origin i.e., Arab and Central Asian origin and Indian origin. During the Mughal period some of the institution of the Sultanate period underwent some changes and some new were created. The administration system and institutions contributed in the consolidation of the Sultanate and Mughal empire. The administrative system was also utilized by the rulers to create social harmony in the society. This was done by including more and more sections of the society in the administrative apparatus. Due to the large extent of the empire the administrative system emerged at three levels i.e. central, provincial and local. The local level administration was left mainly in the hands of village headmen etc. At provincial level, the administration was carried out through the institution of *Iqta* during the sultanate period and through the institution of *mansab* and *jagir* during the Mughal period. At the central level the sultan or the emperor had his own system of administration and there were many officers to assist him. There were also various departments to look after certain functions. The rulers at times were challenged by the nobility and the Ulema who tried to exert pressure on them. The administrative system and institutions functioned well under strong and capable ruler but the same were under pressure under weak rulers. The Maratha administrative system developed along the lines of the Mughal and Deccani states.

**TERMINAL QUESTIONS**

1. How did the administrative structure evolve during the Delhi Sultanate ?
2. Discuss the composition of the nobility during the Delhi Sultanate.
3. Mention the functioning of *wizarat* during the period of Delhi Sultanate.



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4. Trace the evolution of the *Iqta* system under the sultanate.
5. Discuss the functioning of the local administration under the sultanate.
6. Discuss the market reforms of Alauddin Khalji. What measures did he take to implement it?
7. Mention duties of *Diwan-i-kul* and *Mir-Bakshi* during the Mughal period.
8. Discuss the functioning of the local administration under the Mughals.
9. Trace the evolution of the mansabdari system from Akbar to Aurangzeb.
10. Describe the main features of the Jagirdari system.
11. Discuss the main features of the Maratha administration.



ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

12.1

1. Chahalgan was group of 40 nobles. It was created by Iltutmish
2. Balban
3. The Sultan's position was "first among equals".
4. Ulema were religious intellectual group of Muslims who managed religious matters and interpreted religious regulations.

12.2

1. *Mustaufi –i–Mumalik, Mushrif-i-Mumalik*
2. *Dagh* and *Huliya*
3. *Diwan-i-Rasalat, Sadr-us-Sadr.*

12.3

1. *Shiqdar, Faujdar, Kotwal* etc.
2. *Pargana, Shiq, Sarkar* etc.
3. *Khut, Muquaddam, Patwari,*
4. *Fawazil* was the balance of the revenue income which the *muqti* was to send to the Sultan after meeting his and his army's expenses.

12.4

1. *Shehna, Badris, Munihiyan* etc.
2. Delhi and Chhain (Rajasthan)
3. The Banjaras used to transport food grains from the countryside to the city. During time of Alauddin Khalji they formed themselves in a body and settled on the banks of Yamuna

12.5

1. Akbar wanted to curb the powers of *wazir* as his *wazir* Bairam Khan had become very powerful. Akbar took away the financial powers from the *wazir*.



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2. *Mir Saman* was the officer-in charge of the royal Karkhana. He was responsible for all kinds of purchases and their storage for the royal house hold. He also supervised manufacture of different articles.
3. The *Mutasaddi* was the governor of the port. He collected taxes on merchandise and maintained a custom house. He also supervised the mint house at the port.
4. *Faujdar* and *Amalguzar*.

12.6

1. Akbar introduced the Mansabdari system. It was formulated to streamline the rank of the nobles and to fix their salary and specify the number of cavalry to be maintained by them.
2. The *Zat* denoted personal rank of an official and the *Sawar* indicated the size of contingents maintained by the mansabdar.
3. Aurangzeb created an additional rank in the Mansab system called *Mashrut* (conditional). He added one another deduction called *Khurak-i-dawwab*, towards meeting the cost for feed of animals in the imperial stables.
4. See section 12.9 (ii)

12.7

1. See under central administration of Marathas.
2. The administrative system of the Marathas was influenced by the Mughal and the Deccani states.
3. Mauzas or villages were the lowest unit of administration under the Maratha administration.

HINTS TO TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Refer to Para 1 and 2 of 12.1
2. Refer to Para ,12.2 (ii)
3. Refer to 12.3(i)
4. Refer to 12.5
5. Refer to 12.6
6. Refer to 12.7
7. Refer to 12.8 (iii) and (iv)
8. Refer to 12.8.3
9. Refer to 12.9(i)
10. Refer to 12.9 (ii)
11. Refer to 12.10

GLOSSARY

<i>Ulema</i>	–	Muslim intellectuals who specialized in religious learning, plural of Alim.
<i>Chahalgan</i>	–	A group of 40 nobles created by Iltutmish



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<i>Diwan-i-wizarat</i>	–	The most important office of the Sultanate period, headed by a <i>wazir</i> .
<i>Diwan-i- Arj</i>	–	The department which looked after the military organization, headed by <i>Ariz-i-Mumalik</i> .
<i>Dagh</i>	–	System of branding of horses and animals.
<i>Huliya</i>	–	Descriptive roll of the soldiers.
<i>Diwan-i-Insha</i>	–	The department which looked after the state correspondence, headed by <i>Dabir-i-Khas</i> .
<i>Diwan-i-Rasalat</i>	–	The department which dealt with the administration of Justice, headed by <i>Sadr-us-Sudur</i> .
<i>Muhtasibs</i>	–	An officer appointed to maintain regulations.
<i>Karkhanas</i>	–	Royal factories or enterprises for producing or collecting commodities required by the state.
<i>Iqta</i>	–	Grant of revenues of a territory or village.
<i>Muqaddam</i>	–	Village headman, literally the first or senior man.
<i>Rai</i>	–	A Hindu Chief, usually having his own territory and army.
<i>Mansab</i>	–	Military rank conferred by the Mughal government which fixed the status and the Salary of an individual.
<i>Jagir</i>	–	A piece of land assigned to a government officer by the state.
<i>Banjara</i>	–	Grain and Cattle merchant; name of an itinerant tribe.
<i>Dallal</i>	–	Broker
<i>Amil, Amalguzar</i>	–	Revenue Collector
<i>Khalisa land</i>	–	Land held and managed directly by the state.
<i>Mahzar</i>	–	A declaration signed by ulema by which Akbar's view was to prevail in case of conflicting views among religious scholars.
<i>Fawazil</i>	–	Surplus amount
<i>Idrar</i>	–	Revenue free land grant
<i>Muqti or wali</i>	–	Iqta holder or governor
<i>Mushrif</i>	–	Revenue officer
<i>Mutasarriff</i>	–	Auditor
<i>Waqf</i>	–	Grant assigned for the maintenance of religious institutions.
<i>Wazifa</i>	–	Stipend