

---

# UNIT 16. ADMINISTRATION OF THE SULTANATE

---

## Structure

- 16.0 Objectives
- 16.1 Introduction
- 16.2 The Caliphate and the Delhi Sultanate
- 16.3 The Nature of the Delhi Sultanate
- 16.4 Central Administration
  - 16.4.1 The Sultan
  - 16.4.2 The *Wizarat*
  - 16.4.3 *Diwan-i arz*
  - 16.4.4 Other Departments
  - 16.4.5 Slaves and *Karkhanas*
- 16.5 Revenue Administration
- 16.6 *Iqta* System and Provincial Administration
  - 16.6.1 *Iqta* System
  - 16.6.2 Provincial and Local Administration
- 16.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 16.8 Key Words
- 16.9 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

---

## 16.0 OBJECTIVES

---

In the last Block (4) you have studied the territorial expansion and the process of the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate. In this Unit, the focus of our study will be on the administrative set up of the Delhi Sultanate. We will take note of the following aspects :

- the contacts that were maintained with the Caliphate,
- the nature of the state,
- the different departments at the central and provincial level,
- the main officials who were involved in the administration, and
- the manner in which the control was exercised.

---

## 16.1 INTRODUCTION

---

You have already studied in Block 4 how in 1206 Qutbuddin Aibak laid the foundation of an independent Sultanate at Delhi and a beginning was made in severing links with Central Asia. We have also dealt with the territorial expansion under the Sultans. In this Unit, our focus would be on the consolidation of the Sultanate. This Unit introduces you to the central and provincial administrative system, the revenue administration and the nature of the Delhi Sultanate.

---

## 16.2 THE CALIPHATE AND THE DELHI SULTANATE

---

The institution of the Caliphate came into existence after the death of Prophet Muhammad when Abu Bakr became the new head (*Khalifa*) of the Muslim community (*Umma* or *Ummat*). Originally, there existed some elements of elective principle in the matter of succession, a practice not much different from the previous tribal traditions.

In the Islamic world, the Caliph was regarded as the guardian of religion and the upholder of political order. He was the leader of the entire community. After the

period of the first four "pious Caliphs" (Abu Bakr, Umar, Usman and Ali) dynastic rule became the norm when the Umayyads took over the Caliphate in 661 A.D. from their base at Damascus in Syria. After the fall of the Umayyad Caliphate the Abbasids came to power in the mid-eighth century as Caliphs at Baghdad. However, with the decline of central authority, the centralised institution of Caliphate (*Khilafat*) broke into three centres of power based in Spain (under the rule of a branch of the Umayyad Caliphs), Egypt (under the Fatimids) and the older one at Baghdad — each claiming the exclusive loyalty of the Muslims. Nearer home, towards the north-west, many minor dynasties carved out small states, one of which was based at Ghazna (Ghazni). The significant point to remember is that, theoretically, no Muslim could have set up an "independent" state, big or small, without procuring the permission from the Caliph, else its legitimacy could become suspect amongst the Muslims. And, yet, all this was nothing more than a formality which could be dispensed with impunity.

The recognition of a Caliph by the Delhi Sultans seen in the granting of robes of honour, letter of investiture, bestowing of titles, having the name of the Caliph inscribed on coins and reading of *khutba* in Friday prayer in his name symbolized an acceptance and a link with the Islamic world, though in reality it only meant an acceptance of a situation whereby a ruler had already placed himself in power. The Sultans of Delhi maintained the fiction of the acceptance of the position of the Caliph. Under the Saiyyids (1414-1451) and the Lodis (1451-1526 A.D.), the legends on the coins continued in the sense of a tradition being maintained but it was purely a nominal allegiance. In actual effect, the Caliphate, weakened and far removed as it was, had little direct rôle to play in the Delhi Sultanate.

#### Check Your Progress 1

1) What was the position of the Caliph?

.....

.....

.....

2) Who were the four "pious Caliphs"?

.....

.....

.....

3) Name the three centres of the Caliphate.

.....

.....

.....

4) What were the symbols of allegiance maintained by the Delhi Sultans with respect to the Caliphate?

.....

.....

.....

### 16.3 THE NATURE OF THE DELHI SULTANATE

The early Muslim Turkish State established itself in north India by virtue of conquests. Since the Turks were far fewer in number than the indigenous population over whom they sought to govern and since they also lacked resources, they, of necessity, had to control the resources of the country. This had an important bearing on the nature of the Turkish State.

In a theoretical and formal sense, the Delhi Sultans recognized the supremacy of the Islamic law (*shariah*) and tried to prevent its open violation. But they had to supplement it by framing secular regulations (*zawabit*), too. A point of view is that the Turkish State was a theocracy; in practice, however, it was the product of expediency and necessity wherein the needs of the young state assumed paramount importance. The contemporary historian Ziauddin Barani distinguished between *jahandari* ("secular") and *dindari* ("religious") and accepted the inevitability of some secular features, because of the contingent situations coming up. Thus, the needs of the emergent State shaped many policies and practices not always consistent with Islamic fundamentalism. For example, during the reign of Sultan Iltutmish (1211-1236), a sectarian group (*shafai*) of Muslim divines approached the Sultan and asked him to enforce the Islamic law strictly, that is, giving the Hindus the option of Islam or Death. On behalf of the Sultan, the *wazir*, Junaidi, replied that this could not be done for the moment as the Muslims were like salt in a dish of food. Barani records a conversation that Sultan Alauddin Khalji had with one of his leading theologians, Qazi Mughisuddin, over the question of appropriation of booty. While the Qazi pointed out the legalistic position which prevented the Sultan from taking the major share of the booty, the Sultan is said to have emphasized that he acted according to the needs of the State which were paramount. These instances show that, in practice, the Turkish State was not theocratic but evolved according to its special needs and circumstances despite the fact that the main ruling class professed Islam.

## 16.4 CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION

The central administrative machinery of the Sultanate consisted of the nobles controlling various offices with the Sultan at the helm of affairs.

### 16.4.1 The Sultan

In the early Islamic world, there was no sanction for the position of the Sultan. With the disintegration of the Caliphate, the Sultan began to appear in the sense of a powerful ruler—an independent sovereign of a certain territory.

The Delhi Sultans could make civil and political regulations for public welfare. *Khutba* and *sikka* were recognised as important attributes of sovereignty. The *khutba* was the formal sermon following the congregational prayer on Fridays wherein the name of the Sultan was mentioned as the head of the community. Coinage was the ruler's prerogative: his name was inscribed on the coins (*sikka*).

The Sultanate witnessed a rapid rise and fall of dynasties. The Sultan, or a contender to the throne, could only keep himself in power with the support of the nobles who were themselves divided into numerous groups. Barani says that Balban stressed the special position of the Sultan as 'shadow of God' (*zill al Allah*) on earth. Balban emphasized courtly splendour decorum and etiquette. He also believed in severe exemplary punishments even to the nobles. All this bore relevance to a situation where the throne was never safe from the ambitions of the nobles, many of whom felt that they had an equal right to rule.

There were many officials to look after the royal household. The *wakil-i-dar* looked after the entire household and disbursed salaries to the Sultan's personal staff. The *amir-i-hajib* functioned as the master of ceremonies at the court. All petitions to the Sultan were submitted through the latter. There were other minor officials also.

### 16.4.2 The Wizarat (Finance)

The *wazir*, as the head of the *diwan-i wizarat*, was the most important figure in the central administration. Though he was one of the four important departmental heads, he exercised a general supervisory authority over others. The *wizarat* organised the collection of revenue, exercised control over expenditure, kept accounts, disbursed salaries and allotted revenue assignments (*iqta*) at Sultan's order.

There were several officials who helped the *wizarat* such as the *mushrif-i mumalik* or the accountant-general and the *mustaufi-i mumalik* or the auditor-general. During

the reign of Alauddin Khalji, the *diwan-i mustakhraj* was made responsible for the collection of arrears of revenue.

### 16.4.3 The *Diwan-i Arz*

The *diwan-i arz* or military department was headed by the *ariz-i mumalik*. He was responsible for the administration of military affairs. He inspected the troops maintained by the *iqta*-holders. He also supervised the commissariat duties (supply and transport) of the Sultan's army. During the reign of Alauddin Khalji, some measures were introduced to maintain a check on recruitment and quality. He ordered a descriptive roll (*huliya*) of every soldier to be kept and also ordered the branding (*dagh*) of horses to be done so that horses of poor quality were not brought by the *amirs* or *iqta*-holders to the muster. It seems that the branding of horses was strictly maintained till the reign of Muhammad Tughluq.

The army consisted of troops maintained by nobles as well as the standing army (*hashm-i qalb*) of the Sultan. In the thirteenth century, the royal cavalry, in lieu of cash salary, was assigned the revenue of small villages in the vicinity of Delhi which Moreland calls "*small iqta*". Under Iltutmish, the number of such cavalry was about three thousand. Balban tried to do away with these assignments which led to much dissatisfaction. Alauddin Khalji was successful in doing so, and he started paying his soldiers in cash—a trooper was paid 238 *tanka* while one who brought an additional horse used to get 78 *tanka* more.

Feroz Tughluq gave up the practice of paying his royal soldiers in cash: instead, he gave them a paper called *ilaq* - a sort of draft on whose strength they could claim their salary from the Sultan's revenue officers of the *khalisa* ("Crown" or "reserve" land).

### 16.4.4 Other Departments

The *diwan-i insha'* looked after State correspondence. It was headed by *dahir-i mumalik*. This department dealt with all correspondence between the Sultan and other rulers, and between the Sultan and provincial governments. It issued *farmans* and received letters from subordinate officials.

The *barid-i mumalik* was the head of the State news-agency. He had to keep information of all that was happening in the Sultanate. The administrative sub-divisions had local *barids* who sent regular news — letters to the central office. The *barids* reported matters of state — wars, rebellions, local affairs, finances, the state of agriculture etc. Apart from the *barids*, another set of reporters existed who were known as *munhiyan*.

The *diwan-i risalat* was headed by the *sadr-us sudur*. He was the highest religious officer. He took care of the ecclesiastical affairs and appointed *qazis*. He approved various grants like *waqf* for religious and educational institutions, *wazifa* and *idrar* to the learned and the poor.

The Sultan headed the judiciary and was the final court of appeal in both civil and criminal matters. Next to him was the *qazi-ul mumalik* (or *qazi-ul quzzat*), the chief judge of the Sultanate. Often, the offices of the *sadr-us sudur* and *qazi-ul mumalik* were held by the same person. The chief *qazi* headed the legal system and heard appeals from the lower courts.

The *muhatsibs* (public censors) assisted the judicial department. Their task was to see that there was no public infringement of the tenets of Islam.

### 16.4.5 Slaves and *Karkhanas*

Slaves were an important feature of the royal household. Alauddin Khalji owned 50,000 slaves, while Feroz Tughluq is reputed to have had 1,80,000 slaves. During his reign, a separate department of slaves (*diwan-i bandagan*) was set up. The slaves were used for personal service and acted as body-guards (the latter numbering 40,000). Afif also records that a large number of Feroz's slaves (12,000) worked as artisans (*kasibs*). Barani describes a large slave market at Delhi, but by the first quarter of the 16th century there is no mention of slave markets.

The needs of the royal household were met through *karkhanas* which were broadly

(*kitabikhana*) was considered as *karkhana*. Under Feroz Tughluq, there were 36 *karkhanas*. Each *karkhana* was supervised by a noble who had the rank of a *malik* or *khan*, and a *mutasarrif* who was responsible for the accounts and acted as the immediate supervisor. A separate *diwan* or accounts office existed for the *karkhanas*.

The *karkhanas* manufactured articles for Imperial household as well as for military purposes. It is said that Muhammad Tughluq had employed about five hundred workers in gold brocade and four thousand weavers to manufacture cloth required by the court and for making robes of honour to be given in gift to the favoured ones. It must be remembered, however, that articles produced in the royal *karkhanas* were not commodities, i.e. not for sale in the market. Nobles, too, maintained their own *karkhanas* (for further details see Block 6).

#### ✓ Check Your Progress 2

1) Examine the nature of Turkish state under Delhi Sultans.

.....

.....

.....

2) Outline the main functions of the *diwan-i wizarat*.

.....

.....

.....

3) Write a note on *karkhanas*.

.....

.....

.....

4) Mark ( ✓ ) the right answer : *Khutba* was:

- a) the right to coin money
- b) a robe of honour
- c) the recital of sermon after the congregational Friday prayer.

5) Who were the following :

- a) *mushrif-i mumalik* .....
- b) *ariz-i mumalik* .....
- c) *barid* .....
- d) *qazi-ul mumalik* .....

## 16.5 REVENUE ADMINISTRATION

What was the revenue system during the 13th century? We do not get a clear picture; even the exact magnitude of the revenue-demand under the Ilbarite rule is uncertain. Perhaps the old agrarian system continued to function with the difference that the composition of the supreme appropriators of the surplus produce at the centre had changed, that is, the Turkish ruling group had replaced the previous receivers of the land revenue. However, some reconstruction can be made by projecting back the account of Barani about the situation prevailing in this respect under Sultan Alaaddin Khalji's early rule. Briefly, we are told of three groups of rural istocracy—*khot*, *muqaddam*, and *chaudhuri*—who collected land revenue (*kharaj*) from the peasants on behalf of the state, and deposited the same with the officials of the *diwan-i wizarat*. For this service, they were allowed perquisites (*haqq-i khoti*) as remuneration by the state which consisted of being exempted from the revenue of a portion of land held by them. Also, they took something from the peasants as their share of the produce which Barani calls *qismat-i khoti*. Besides land revenue (*kharaj*), every cultivator had to pay house tax (*ghari*) and cattle or grazing tax (*charai*). Incidentally, the *chaudhuri* might not have been directly involved in the

collection of the revenue because, according to Ibn Battuta, he was the head of "hundred villages" (*pargana*): this inference is reinforced by the fact that Barani always employs terms like *haqq-i khosi* or *muqaddami*, but never *haqq-i chaudhrai*. W.H. Moreland, however, uses the term intermediaries for all the three groups; and we shall be doing the same henceforth.

What motivated Alauddin Khalji in introducing stern measures is explained by Barani in detail (see Block 6 Unit 20). In short, the intermediaries had become intractable—always in readiness for rebellion. The Sultan levelled the following main charges against them:

- a) They did not pay the revenue themselves on that portion of their land which was not exempted from assessment; rather they shifted their 'burden' onto the peasantry, that is, they realised additional levy from the peasants besides the fixed demand of the state in order to pay their own dues.
- b) They did not pay the grazing tax.
- c) The ill-gotten 'excess of wealth' had made them so arrogant that they flouted the orders of the revenue officials by not going to the revenue office even when summoned to render accounts.

As a result, the Sultan had to strike at their resources for economic and political reasons. The measures taken by him were as follows:

- i) The magnitude of the state demand was set at half the produce of the land. The land was to be measured (*masahai*), and the land revenue fixed on the yield of each unit of the area. The term used was *wafa-i biswa* (*wafa* = yield; *biswa* = 1/20th of a *bigha*). Most probably, it was levied separately on the holding of each individual cultivator.
- ii) The intermediaries and the peasants alike were to pay the same standard of the demand (50%) without any distinction, be they intermediaries or 'ordinary peasant' (*balahar*).
- iii) The perquisites of intermediaries were disallowed.
- iv) The grazing and the house tax were to be taken from the intermediaries also.

It can be seen, then, that one objective was to free the peasants from the illegal exactions of the intermediaries. That is exactly what Barani means when he says that the Sultan's policy was that the 'burden' (*bar*) of the 'strong' (*aqwiya*) should not fall on the 'weak' (*zuafa*). We know that this 50% demand was the highest in the agrarian history of India. On the other hand, though the peasants were protected now from the economic oppression of the intermediaries, the former had to pay a higher rate of taxation than they did earlier. Since the rate was uniform in a sense it was a regressive taxation. Thus the state gained at the cost of the intermediaries, leaving the peasants in the lurch.

Such peasants as were weak and without resources were completely made prostrate, and the rich peasants who had resources and means, turned rebels. Whole regions were devastated. Cultivation was totally abandoned. The peasants of distant regions, hearing of the ruin and destruction of the peasantry of the Doab, fearful that the same orders might be issued for them as for the latter, turned away from obedience and fled to the jungles. The two years that the Sultan was in Delhi (c. 1332—4), the country of the Doab, owing to the rigours of revenue-demand and the multiplicity of *abwab* (additional cesses), was devastated. The Hindus set fire to the grain heaps and burnt them, and drove away cattle from their homes. The Sultan ordered the *shiqdars* and *faujdars* (revenue collectors and commanders) to lay waste and plunder the country. They killed many *khosi* and *muqaddams*, and many they blinded. Those who escaped gathered bands and fled into jungles; and the country became ruined. The Sultan in those times went to the district of Baran (modern Bulandshahr), on a hunting expedition; he ordered that the entire district of Baran be plundered and laid waste. The Sultan himself plundered and laid waste from Kanauj to Dalmau. Whoever was captured was killed. Most (peasants) ran away and fled into the jungles. They (the Sultan's troops) surrounded the jungles and killed every one whom they found within the jungles.

1. Ziauddin Barani's account of the oppression of the peasantry during Alauddin Khalji's reign. English translation is from, *The Cambridge Economic History of India*, Vol. I, ed. Tapan Ray Chaudhuri and Irfan Habib, London, 1982, p. 64.

It is true that the intermediaries were eliminated from direct revenue collection, but they were still expected to maintain law and order in the countryside and help the revenue officials without any remuneration or perquisites. The state's direct relations with the peasants resulted in an expansion of revenue officials called variously *'ummāl*, *mutasarrif*, *mushrif*, *muhasilan*, *navisindagan*, etc. Soon, large scale corruption and embezzlements surfaced among the revenue officials for which they were ruthlessly punished by the *naib wazir*, Sharaf Qaini: about 8 to 10 thousand officials were imprisoned. The process for discovering the deceit was simple: the *bahi* or the ledger of the village *patwari* was meticulously scrutinised by the auditors. The *bahi* contained every payment, legal or illegal, made to the revenue collectors, and these payments were then compared with the receipts. Corruption occurred in spite of the fact that Alauddin Khalji had raised the salary of the revenue collectors.

Barani gives an indication of the extent of the area where these measures were operative: it was quite a large area, covering the heart of his empire. But Bihar, Awadh, Gujarat and parts of Malwa and Rajputana are not mentioned. At any rate, it must be borne in mind that these measures were largely meant for the *khalisa* ("crown" or "reserve" land). (Also see MAP at the end of the Block.)

As for the mode of payment, Moreland thinks that ordinarily payment in cash was the general practice during the 13th century, and it had become quite widely prevalent by the 14th century. However, Alauddin himself preferred collection in grain. He decreed that the whole revenue due from the *khalisa* in the *Doab* should be realized in kind, and only half the revenue due from Delhi (and its suburbs) in cash. The reason for his preference for collection in grain was not only to have a large reserve of grain stored at Delhi and other areas for contingencies (such as scarcity owing to drought or other factors), but also to utilize the storage as a lever for his price-fixation measures in the grain market.

Two important changes were introduced by Ghiyasuddin Tughluq:

- a) The intermediaries got back their *haqq-i khoti* (but not *qismat-i khoti*). They were also exempted from the house and cattle tax.
- b) the procedure of measurement (*masahat*) was to continue along with observation or "actual yield" (*bar hukm-hasil*).

As for Muhammad Tughluq, there is a confusion that he enhanced the rate of land tax beyond 50%. It is also thought that after the death of Alauddin Khalji, the rate was reduced by the Khalji rulers which was later raised to the previous level by Muhammad Tughluq. Both these views are incorrect: the rate fixed by Alauddin was never sought to be tampered. What Muhammad Tughluq actually did was to impose new cesses (*abwab*) as well as revive the older ones (for example, *charai* and *ghari* on the intermediaries). Apart from this, it seems that measurement alone was retained for assessment purpose. The matter aggravated when assessment in kind (grain) was carried out not on the principle of the "actual yield" but on the officially decreed yields (*wafa-i farmani*) for each unit of the measured area. Again, for payment in cash, commutation was not done according to the market prices but on the basis of the rates as "ordered by the Sultan" (*nirkh-i farmani*). And, then, as Barani says, all these taxes and cesses were to be realized *rigorously*. The area covered under these regulations was the *khalisa* land in the Doab. The result was obvious: an unprecedented rebellion of the peasants, led by the intermediaries, occurred which led to bloody confrontations. Feroz Shah claims to have abolished twenty three cesses including *charai* and *ghari*.

Another development that took place, especially under the Tughluqs, was the practice of revenue-farming, that is, the task of collecting the revenue of some areas was sometimes given to contractors who perhaps gave a lump sum in advance for the right of revenue collection for a certain period. Under Feroz Shah, 'water tax' (*haqq-i sharb*) was taken from those cultivators who irrigated their land from the water supplied from the canals constructed by the state. It must be pointed out that in case of bad harvest, the state tried to adjust the land tax, and also gave agricultural loans to the peasants called *sondhar* in Muhammad Tughluq's reign.

What was the total estimated revenue during any period of the Delhi Sultanate? No such attempt seems to have been made before the reign of Sultan Feroz Shah Tughluq. Afif tells us that at the order of this Sultan, Khwaja Hisamuddin Junaid

determined the *jama* (estimated revenue) of the kingdom according to the "rule of inspection" (*bar hukm mushahada*). It took six years to do this job, and the figure arrived at was six *kror* and seventy-five *lakhs tankas* (a silver coin; see Block 6) which continued to be valid for the entire reign of the Sultan. For further details on Revenue Administration during the fourteenth century see Moreland's Appendix 'C' "Some Forteenth Century Passages" in Block 6.

### Check Your Progress 3

1) What measures did Alauddin Khalji take to eliminate the intermediaries?

.....  
 .....  
 .....

2) Define the following :

- a) *Khalisa* .....
- b) *Kharaj* .....
- c) *Abwab* .....
- d) *Sondhar* .....

## 16.6 IQTA SYSTEM AND PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION

The territorial expansion and consolidation of the Sultanate was a process which continued throughout the 13th and 14th centuries. It involved varying kinds of control in terms of territories: those brought under direct administration and those which paid tribute and remained semi-autonomous. The expansion of the Sultanate and the difficulties involved in administering areas that were far away from the centre shaped different kinds of control.

### 16.6.1 *Iqta* System

The initial Turkish conquests in the early 13th century displaced many local chiefs (whom the contemporary sources refer to as *rai* and *rana*). In order to consolidate, the Turkish rulers made revenue assignments (*iqta*), in lieu of cash, to their nobles (*umara*). The assignees (known as *muqti* and *wali*) collected revenue from these areas, defrayed their own expenses, paid the troops maintained by them and sent the surplus (*jawazil*) to the centre. *Iqta* is an Arabic word and the institution had been in force in the early Islamic world as a form of reward for services to the State. It was used in the Caliphate administration as a way of financing operations and paying civil and military officers. The grant of *iqta* did not imply a right to the land nor was it hereditary though the holders of *iqta* tended to acquire hereditary rights in Feroz Tughluq's reign. These revenue assignments were transferable, the *iqta*-holder being transferred from one region to another every three or four years. Therefore, *iqta* should not be equated with the fief of medieval feudal Europe, which were hereditary and non-transferable. The assignments could be large (a whole province or a part). Assignments given to nobles carried administrative, military and revenue collecting responsibilities. Thus, provincial administration was headed by the *muqti* or *wali*. He had to maintain an army composed of horsemen and foot soldiers.

"They (the *muqtis*) should know that their right over the subjects is only to take the rightful amount of money or perquisite (*mal-i haqq*) in a peaceful manner... the life, property and the family of the subject should be immune from any harm, the *muqtis* have no right over them; if the subject desires to make a direct appeal to the Sultan, the *muqti* should not prevent him. Every *muqti* who violates these laws should be dismissed and punished... the *muqtis* and *walis* are so many superintendents over them as the king is superintendent over other *muqtis*... After three or four years, the *amils* and the *muqtis* should be transferred so that they may not be too strong"

2. A passage from Nizamul Mulk Tusi's *Siyasatname* on the rights of *muqtis*. English translation from A.B.M. Habibullah, *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India*, Allahabad, 1976 pp. 209-10.



## 16.6.2 Provincial and Local Administration

As the State became more settled and efforts were made for greater centralization, provincial administration also underwent a change. A separation between fiscal and military responsibilities started evolving. During the reign of Muhammad Tughluq, fiscal responsibilities were partially withdrawn from the *muqtis* or *walis* and placed under central officers. According to Ibn Battuta, the *iqta* of Amroha was placed under two officers, one called *amir* (possibly in charge of the army and administration) and the other as *wali-ul kharaj* (in charge of revenue collection). Muhammad Tughluq also ordered that the salary of the soldiers maintained by *iqta*-holders be paid by the *diwan-i wizarat* to prevent fraud by the officers.

Greater control also came to be exercised over fiscal matters. The *diwan's* office, at the centre, received and examined detailed statements regarding income and expenditure in the provinces. It supervised the work of the revenue officials in the provinces. The provinces had a *sahib-i diwan*, whose office kept books of account and submitted information to the centre. It was assisted by officials like *mutasarrifs*. The entire lower revenue staff was called *karkun*.

By the end of the thirteenth century, contemporary sources refer to an administrative division, known as *shiqq*. We do not have adequate information about the exact nature of *shiqq*. However, by the time of Sher Shah (1540-1545 A.D.) *shiqq* had emerged as a well-defined administrative unit, known as *sarkar*. Administrative officials, mentioned with respect to *shiqq*, were *shiqqdar* and *faujdar*. The demarcation of their duties is not very clear.

According to Ibn Battuta, *chaudhuri* was the head of hundred villages. This was the nucleus of the administrative unit later called *pargana*. The village was the smallest unit of administration. The functioning and administration of the village remained basically the same as it had existed in pre-Turkish times. The main village functionaries were *khot*, *muqaddam* (headman) and *patwari* (see Unit 16.5). The judicial administration of the sub-division was patterned on that of the centre. Courts of the *qazi* and *sadr* functioned in the provinces. The *kotwal* maintained law and order. At the village level, the *panchayat* heard civil cases.

### Check Your Progress 4

- 1) Write a note on *iqta*.

.....

.....

.....

- 2) What were the functions of the *wali* or *muqti*?

.....

.....

.....

- 3) What steps were taken to curb the powers of the *muqti* in the 14th century?

.....

.....

.....

- 4) Define the following:

a) *shiqq*

b) *kotwal*

c) *patwari*

## 16.7 LET US SUM UP

We have seen how the Delhi Sultanate was shaped by its historical experience of being a part of the wider Islamic world and how it changed and evolved as a result of its needs and circumstances during the 13th century. We have studied the administrative framework of the Sultanate at the central and local levels. The need of maintaining a large army (for defence and expansion) and maintaining an administrative apparatus shaped many of its institutions, such as the *iqta*. Greater centralization brought about changes in the nature of administrative control.

## 16.8 KEY WORDS

<b>Abwab</b>	: Cesses
<b>Amir</b>	: Officer
<b>Bahi</b>	: Ledger/accounts books
<b>Balahar</b>	: Village menials/ordinary peasants
<b>Biswa</b>	: 1/20th part of a <i>bigha</i>
<b>Charai</b>	: Grazing-tax
<b>Chaudhuri</b>	: Head of Hundred villages or <i>pargana</i>
<b>Dagh</b>	: Branding (of horses)
<b>Diwan-i Wizarat</b>	: Finance Department
<b>Fawazil</b>	: Surplus amount
<b>Ghari</b>	: House-tax
<b>Hashm-i qalb</b>	: Central/royal cavalry
<b>Hasil</b>	: Actual revenue
<b>Idrar</b>	: Revenue-free land grant
<b>Itlaq</b>	: Draft, assignment order
<b>Jama</b>	: Estimated Revenue
<b>Khalisa</b>	: "Crown" ("reserve") land whose revenue was reserved for the Sultan's treasury
<b>Khot</b>	: Village official/revenue collector
<b>Khutba</b>	: A sermon recited in mosques on Fridays wherein the name of the ruler was included
<b>Masahat</b>	: Measurement
<b>Muhasillan</b>	: Revenue collectors
<b>Muqaddam</b>	: Village headman
<b>Muqti or Wali</b>	: <i>Iqta</i> -holder/governor
<b>Mushrif</b>	: Revenue officer
<b>Mutasarrif</b>	: Auditor
<b>Navisindagan</b>	: Clerk
<b>Nirkh-i farmani</b>	: Officially decreed prices
<b>Patwari</b>	: Village-accountant
<b>Qismat-i khoti and Haqq-i khoti</b>	: Perquisites
<b>Rais and Ranas</b>	: Chiefs
<b>Shariat</b>	: Islamic law
<b>Tanka</b>	: Silver coin
<b>Ummal</b>	: Plural of <i>amil</i> (revenue officer)

<b>Wafa-i farmani</b>	: Officially decreed yields
<b>Waqf</b>	: Grants assigned for the maintenance of religious institutions
<b>Wazifa</b>	: Stipend
<b>Zawabit</b>	: Regulations

## 16.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

### Check Your Progress 1

- 1) See Sec. 16.2
- 2) See Sec. 16.2
- 3) See Sec. 16.2
- 4) See Sec. 16.2

### Check Your Progress 2

- 1) See Sec. 16.3
- 2) See Sub-sec. 16.4.2
- 3) See Sub-sec. 16.4.5
- 4) a) ✗ b) ✗ c) ✓
- 5) See Sub-sec. 16.4.2, 16.4.3, 16.4.4

### Check Your Progress 3

- 1) See-Sec. 16.5
- 2) See Sec. 16.5

### Check Your Progress 4

- 1) See Sub-sec. 16.6.1
- 2) See Sub-sec. 16.6.1
- 3) See Sub-sec. 16.6.1
- 4) See Sub-sec. 16.6.2