Lesson 12

Administrative System and Institution

Summary

With the establishment of the Delhi sultanate a new ruling class emerged in India which introduced certain innovations in the administrative system. Some of these underwent changes and a few new ones got introduced after the coming of the Mughals. These along with others of Indian origin led to the consolidation of the Sultanate and Mughal empire. In this lesson you will read about the continuity and changes in the administrative structure and some important institutions.

EVOLUTION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTUREUNDER DELHI SULTANATE

- Administrative structures and institutions introduced in India were influenced by the Mongols and Seljukids

- Administrative institutions emerged at different levels - central, provincial and local.

- Administrative apparatus was headed by the Sultan who was helped by various nobles.

- There was a council of Ministers *Majlis-i-Khalwat* to assist the Sultan.

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION

Wizarat

- After Sultan, the most important office was the *Diwan-i-Wizarat,* headed by the wazir.
- 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.
- 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
- The Mints, the intelligence departments, the royal buildings were supervised by the *wizarat*.

Diwan-i-Arz

- This department was set up to look after the military organization of the empire. It was headed by *Ariz-i-Mumalik.*

Diwan-i-Insha

- 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.
- The *Barid-i-Mumalik* was the head of the state news gathering and dealt with intelligence.

- Apart from barids, another set of reporters also existed who were known as *Munihiyan.*

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 also appointed the *qazis* (judges) and approved various charitable grants like *waqf, wazifa, Idrar*, etc.

Other Departments

- *Wakil-i-dar* looked after the royal household and managed the personal services of the Sultan.

- *Amir-i-Hajib* looked after the royal ceremonies.
- *Sar-i-Jandar* looked after the royal body guards.
- *Amir-i-Akhur* looked after the establishment of horses
- *Shahnah-i-fil* looked after the establishment of elephants.
- *Amir-i-Majlis* looked after the arrangement of meetings and special ceremonies.
- The *Mutasarrif* was responsible for the accounts and acted as immediate supervisors in various departments.

PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION AND IQTA SYSTEM

- The provinces were placed under the charge of the Governors who were responsible for the overall administration of the area
- During the 14th century the provinces were partitioned into *Shiqs* for administrative convenience.
- The *shiqs* were administered by the *Shiqdar.*
- Faujdar *was another officer along with* **Shiqdar** *at the provincial level.*
- The *Shiqdar* assisted the governor in the maintenance of law and order and provided military assistance
- ʻThe *Kotwals* were placed under the Faujdar.

- The other important officers at the provincial level were *Barids* and *Sahib-i-Diwan*

IQTA SYSTEM

- 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*.
- 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.

LOCAL ADMINISTRATION

- The village was the smallest unit of administration.

- The main village functionaries were *khut, Muqaddam* and *Patwari.*

- A number of villages formed the Pargana. .

- The important Pargana officials were *Chaudhary, Amil* (revenue collector) and *Karkun* (accountant)

MARKET REFORMS OF ALAUDDIN KHALJI

- Market reforms were oriented towards administrative and military necessities
- Alauddin fixed the prices of all commodities from grain to cloth, slaves, cattles etc.
- Alauddin also set up three markets- Mandi, Sarai-i- adl and the third for the horses, slaves and cattle.
- An officer *(Shehna)* was in charge of the market to see that no one violates the royal orders.

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE UNDER THE MUGHALS

PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION
- The Mughal empire was divided into twelve provinces or subas by Akbar.
- Each suba was placed under a *Subedar* or provincial governor
- The head of the revenue department in the suba was the *Diwan*
- The *Bakshi* in the province performed the same functions as were performed by *Mir Bakshi* at the centre.
- The representative of the central Sadr (Sadr-us sudur) at the provincial level was called *Sadr.*
- Darogai-i-Dak was responsible for maintaining the communication channel

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.*
- Faujdari was an administrative division whereas *Sarkar* was a territorial and revenue division.
- The *amalguzar* or *amil* was the revenue collector
- At the level of Pragana, the *Shiqdar* was the executive officer.

- He assisted the *amils* in the task of revenue collection.
- The *quanungo* kept all the records of land in the pargana.
- The *Muqaddam* was the village head man and the Patwari looked after the village revenue records
- The forts were placed under an officer called *Qiladar.*
- The *Kotwals* were in charge of law and order.
- The governor of the port was called *Mutasaddi*

MUGHAL ADMINISTRATIVE INSTITUTIONS
Mansab System
- 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
- 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.

JagirSystem

- 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.
- Under the Mughals, the areas assigned were generally called *Jagir* and its holders *Jagirdars.*
- The *Jagirdars* were allowed to collect only authorized revenue in accordance with the imperial regulations.

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE UNDER THE MARATHAS

Central Administration

- The administration was divided into eight departments headed by ministers who are sometimes called *Ashta pradhan.*
- The eight ministers were (1) *Peshwa* who looked after the finances and general administration. (2) *Sari-Naubat* who was the Senapati. (3) *Majumdar* looked after the accounts. (4) *Waqainavis* 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.

Provincial and Local Administration

- The provinces were known as *Prants.*
- The *Prants* were under the charge of *subedar.*
- Smaller than prant were *Tarfs* which were headed by a *havaldar.*
- Then there were *Mauzas* or villages which were the lowest unit of administration.
- *Kulkarni Patil ,Deshpande, faujdar and kotwal were the other officers.*

Evaluate yourself

Q. Differentiate between Mansab and Jagir system.
Q. List the department of Maratha administration with their functions.
Q. Explain Iqta system.