

Ques- Briefly discuss the role played by Turk-i-Chihalgani in the history of the Delhi sultanate.

Answer: Iltutmish had established the Turk-I-Chihalgani to govern the Delhi Sultanate. But, it undermined Iltutmish's successors. Eventually, Balban had to dismantle this deep state.

In order to organize the administration of the infant Delhi Sultanate, Iltutmish had to create an elite cadre of officers whom he would appoint to important military-administrative positions. Being his slaves, they were supposed to remain to be loyal to him and streamline the iqta system, fine tune the central administration, control the countryside of strategic garrisons, etc. in contrast to *Muizzi* and *Qutbi* nobles who had not reconciled to Iltutmish's Sultanate. Therefore, he formed the 'Turk-e-Chihalgani'.

·Ziauddin Barani has left an insightful account of this period. During the reign of Iltutmish, owing to the presence of capable nobles and officials, the court of Iltutmish acquired somewhat greater stability. But, after his death, his Chihalgani got the upper hand.

·The Chihalgani started to act as a deep state and gradually destroyed those emirs that didn't toe the line. Moreover, every new Sultan had to appease them and protect their interest; else he could be removed just as easily.

·Balban, who had himself emerged from the Chihalgani, understood the danger they posed. Therefore, he banished or murdered most of them. But, in doing so, he also destroyed the real power of the Sultanate.

Thus, the Turk-i-Chihalgani gave some stability to the Sultanate but weakened the authority of Sultans.



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