Chapter – I

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The theory of State in India during the ancient and medieval periods centred around the institution of monarchy. Since political ideas and functions of the state revolved around the monarch, philosophers have emphasised the significance of this institution but at the same time the concept that the state under an absolute monarchy requires the assistance of several brains is also well established. No despotic ruler, however efficient, can successfully perform the multitudinous duties of the government single handedly. He must have efficient and devoted men around him, whom he can trust, to run the work of administration.

Under the Medieval state the highest official to assist the ruler was the Wazir. The institution of Wizarat that occupied a central place, in medieval administration was the most interesting non-Arabic institution incorporated in the Islamic polity. The Omyyads following the old Arabian practice did not adopt the institution of Wizarat. But the foundation of Abbasid dynasty in 750 A.D. led to the destruction of the supremacy of the Arabs in the East. With rise of Abbasids began the age of speculation since it was under them that the foreign influence began to affect the entire social and political conditions of the Caliphate.

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1 “Without a wise Wazir Kingship is in vain” Ziauddin Barani, Fatwa-i-Jahandari, trans. and ed. by Muhammad Habib and Dr. Afser Khan as The Political Theory of the Sultanat of Delhi, Kitab Mahal, Allahabad, 1960, p. 10.
After the assumptions of power by the Abbasids, non Arabs began to be admitted to high offices of the state putting into effect the democratic principle of equality among the muslims. Owing to their close association with the Persians and their political thought the Abbasids adopted the Persian institution of Wizarat. It was under them that the laws of the Wazirat which were earlier unsettled became fixed and the Wazir came to be called Wazir having hitherto been secretary (Katib) or Counsellor (Mushir). Gradually, under their patronage, the Wazir also became the most influential official in the state and eclipsed the power of the Khalifa.¹

The word Wazir finds mention in the Quran, it could be possible that the Prophet referred to it in his Hadith but one cannot be sure of the historical significance of the Hadith as they were collected under Abbasid period when the forging of such statements could be politically motivated. Even if not so, it is nevertheless certain that the term Wazir as used by Prophet Mohammad or Abu Bakr did not have the same connotation as its Persian counterpart.

Mansur, the greatest of Abbasid rulers set up a governmental structure modelled on the Sassanid pattern.² He was the first to introduce the institution of Wazirship.³ The Wazir in the early days

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³ The Khalifa appointed an assistant whose concern was primarily with the affairs of the pen, i.e. with civil government. The vizierate was developed by Arab Muslims, Sassanian tradition only shaping some of its paraphernalia. Gustav E. Von Grunebaum, Medieval Islam A study in Cultural Orientation, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London, 1953, p. 159; This has also been proved conclusively by S.D. Goitein, “The Origin of the Vizierate and its True Character”, Islamic Culture, Vol. XVI, 1942, pp. 255-63.
stood next to the Khalifa and acted as his alter ego but when the Khalifas threw themselves into the debaucheries of their harems they gradually grew in power to acquire almost complete authority over all governmental departments. Despite the power enjoyed by the early Wazirs of the Abbasids, Wizarat was not a bed of roses and often the Wazirs met with a miserable end. Since Abbasids were fierce and ruthless they did not hesitate to kill ministers merely on the basis of suspicion. This attitude made the office of Wazir a perilous one.1

Under the later Abbasids, the Wazir was the Prime Minister and received the title of Al Sadr-ul-Azam or Al Wazir-ul-Azam2. Khalid Barmak of the famous Persian family of Barmesides was the first incumbent of the office. Henceforth, the Wazir was often all powerful, appointing and dismissing governors and judges, theoretically of course with the consent of the Khalifa and even transmitting his own office according to principles of heredity.3

There are a number of views regarding the etymology of the term Wazir, defined broadly as the principal minister in a Mohammaden country. There are three opinions regarding its origin. The first derives it from Wizr a "burden" because the Wazir bears the burden of state; the second from "Wazar" a "refuge" because the ruler has recourse to the counsels of the Wazir; and the third from "azr", the back or strength because the ruler is

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1 Abu Muslim Khurasani was murdered by Al Mansur (754-755 A.D.) His successor Abul Jahm was poisoned by his master. K.D. Bhargava, A Survey of Islamic Culture and Institutions, p. 34.
strengthened by his Wazir as the human frame is by the back\textsuperscript{1}. The derivation may have also been from the word Vichir\textsuperscript{2} (from Vichira, to decide). The World University Encyclopaedia defines Vizier or Vizir as a title given to high officials in some Mohammedan countries. The term was first used as the title for the Prime Minister and was conferred by Amulath I on general Timurlash in 1386.\textsuperscript{3} The Encyclopaedia Britanica defines Vizier, literally as 'burden bearer' or 'helper', originally the chief minister or representative of the Abbasid Caliph.\textsuperscript{4}

The elementary political principle that one cannot govern a kingdom single handedly was also recognised by the Hindu state in North India that generally had a council of eight ministers and political thinkers of the age considered it inseparable from monarchy. The number of ministers however varied in practice and in theory.\textsuperscript{5} Manu advocated the number of ministers as twelve and Brihaspati suggested sixteen. Kautilya remarked, "sovereignty is possible only with assistance, a single wheel will never function, hence the king shall employ ministers and hear their opinion".\textsuperscript{6} As regards the number of members in the king's council, Kautilya holds that it shall consist of as many as the needs of the empire require (yathasamarth yam) and that these ministers are to enforce

\begin{enumerate}
\item K.D. Bhargava, \textit{A Survey of Islamic Culture and Institutions}, p. 42.
\item \textit{Encyclopaedia Britanica, A New Survey of Universal Knowledge}, Encyclopaedia Britanica Ltd, Chicago, 1950, Vol. XXIII, p. 228. The office of the Wazir began in the early Abbasid period and appears to have been inherited from Sassanian Empire of Persia.
\item Beni Prasad, \textit{Theory of Government in Ancient India}, p. 125.
\item Chanakya’s \textit{Arthashastra}, Eng. trans. R. Shamashastri (Mysore, 1956) p. 43.
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strict obedience to orders. (niyogasam padam).¹

Under the Muslim monarchies the term used for council or body of ministers was Wizarat, but the idea of Wizarat under them was primarily of one Wazir and Muslim jurists have dealt with this problem from this standpoint. Islamic polity regards Wizarat as the mother of governmental functions and royal ranks, hence Wizarat was the most important administrative institution of medieval governments. The Wazir's importance is well described in the Arab adage, “The bravest of men require arms and the wisest kings need ministers.”² Timur compared a government devoid of the above to a foolish man “who erreth in all that he sayeth and doeth whose actions and words bring forth no fruit but shame and repentance”.³ In the words of Al Fakhri “The Wazir is one who is intermediate between the king and his subjects, so there must be in his nature one aspect which accords with the nature of kings and another aspect which accords with the nature of the common folk so that he may deal with both classes in such a manner as to secure for himself their acceptance and affection”.⁴

The enormous powers enjoyed by the Wazir and the distinctive duties and privileges assigned to this office led political thinkers to attach great importance to this exalted office. According to Ziauddin Barani kingship without a Wazir is incomplete; there is and cannot be a greater source of pride and glory for a king than a

¹ Chanakya's Arthashastra, Eng. trans. R. Shamashastri, Mysore, 1956, p. 28
² Shihabuddin Ahmad bin Abd-ul-Wahhab, Nihavat-ul-arabfi funun-il-addab in, I.H. Qureshi, The Administration of Sultanate of Delhi, Janaki Parkashan, Patna, 1979, p. 76.
According to Humayun Shah, the ruler of the Bahmani kingdom, sovereignty and dominion could not attain the pinnacle of their height without the cooperation and help of a Wazir whose wise deliberations would result in promoting the welfare of the country and prosperity of the people.\(^2\)

The Wazir therefore, became over the years a channel through whom the king exercised his authority. Correspondingly, the qualifications which the Wazir was expected to possess were so varied that only a man of exceptional ability could fulfil them. Arab jurists, notably Al Mawardi, have described in detail the position enjoyed by the Wazir in the state. The office of the Wazir continued to flourish with royal authority since legally the Wizarat was supposed to be the lieutenancy of the Monarch or the Khalifa.

Al Mawardi and other Islamic jurists mention the existence of two kinds of Wizarat. The first category of Wazir, the Wazir-i-Tafwid was one to whom the Imam delegated all his authority. This kind of Wizarat enjoyed unlimited authority and could exercise the power and prerogatives of the sovereign with only a few restrictions. One of the reasons for its creation was laxity on the part of the Khalifa, who preferring luxury and ease, resigned the affairs of the state to a strong man and entrusted him with unlimited powers of executing the law, defending the land, and appointment and dismissal of officials.\(^3\) In this capacity, the Wazir, however, faced certain checks. The dismissal or transfer of an officer appointed by the sovereign lay outside his domain. Thus the Wazir-i-Tafwid

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\(^1\) Ziauddin Barani, Fatwa-i-Jahandari. Eng. trans. p. 11.
\(^3\) Phillip K. Hitti, History of the Arabs from Earliest times to the Present. p.318.
could exercise the rights of a sovereign with the sole exception of right to appoint his successor or representative to the Wizarat.

As compared to the Wazir-i-Tafwid, the powers of the second category of Wazir, that of Wazir-i-Tanfiz, or Wazir with limited power, were not so extensive. Rather they were restricted in the sense that it was not within the competence of the Wazir-i-Tanfiz to initiate a policy so as to do anything on his own responsibility. Although his hands were not so bound in revenue matters, he was not competent to make peace or declare war, appoint or dismiss officials or order expenditure from the public treasury, i.e. it was limited to the exercise of functions given to it by the head of the state. The importance of the Wazir-i-Tanfiz, lies in its being the channel through which all measures, reports and appointments received authentic and legal character. It bears a close and striking resemblance to the practice of counter signatures of the minister on important state documents under a constitutional government.

Unlike the Wazir-i-Tafwid, the Wazir-i-Tanfiz could only confer appointments of governors or other high officials with royal assent, and had no authority to take decisions and give necessary instructions. Even so the Wazir with limited powers could exercise considerable influence upon the Khalifa as all commands and ordinances of the Khalifa passed through his hands; they were drawn and given their official character by him. His position, was however, not easy to hold, since it required a vast knowledge of administration, taxation, public and private laws. Instances are on

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1 "The limited Wazir took no initiative but confined his duties to the execution of the Caliph's orders and the following of his instructions". Phillip K. Hitti. The History of the Arabs from Earliest times to the Present, p.314.
2 K.D. Bhargava, A Survey of Islamic Culture and Institutions, p. 38.
record of the Wazirs losing their post by reason of their incapacity.\footnote{Khuda Baksh, \textit{Essays, Indian and Islamic}, p.224.}

Under both these categories, the \textit{Wazir} enjoyed the status of a joint ruler and his authority was more effective than that of the king because the affairs of the state were consigned to him and for that reason the \textit{Wazir} always occupied an elevated position. Even if the king was shrewd, experienced, powerful and dominating, he could not do without a capable, discrete, just, learned, experienced and Godfearing \textit{Wazir} – just as the body is lifeless without a soul, similarly a government without a \textit{Wazir} could not be stable and flourishing.\footnote{Yusuf Hussain, \textit{Indo Muslim Polity}, pp. 228-229.}

In view of his duties and responsibilities and nearness to the king, the \textit{Wazir} of either category had to be a shrewd politician, although limited \textit{Wizarat} suited the needs of medieval political constitutions better than the unlimited \textit{Wizarat}.\footnote{Jagdish Narayan Sarkar, \textit{Mughal Polity}, Idarah-i-Adabiyat i-Delli, New Delhi, 1984, p.104.} Early Muslim scholars and theologians have produced enormous literature on the \textit{Wazir}, his qualifications, his duties and responsibilities. Much has also been written on how a \textit{Wazir} should conduct himself at the court and his relation with the king, the Ulema and the general public. Since a \textit{Wazir} enjoyed unique privileges and was expected to perform multitudinous duties he was required to possess correspondingly distinctive qualities. As the head of the entire machinery of government, where no branch of administration was outside his purview he had to be a man of encyclopaedic knowledge, culture and refined taste.
The Adab ul Mulk gives the normal functions of the Wazir in the following lines:

"The Kings know well how to lead expeditions, conquer countries, give rewards and shine in the assembly or battlefield, but it is in the domain of the Wazir to make a country prosperous, to accumulate treasurers, to appoint officials, to ask for accounts, to arrange the stock taking of the commodities in the Karkhanas ..... to keep the people satisfied, to look after men of piety and of fame and to give them stipends, to provide for the learned, to administer the affairs of the people, to organise the offices and look after their efficiency, in short to transact state business ....."\(^1\)

A modern assessment of the duties of the Wazir expect him to be dignified, purehearted, an executor of orders, of noble disposition, extremely liberal, of honest judgement, truthful, brave, practical, fluent in speech, Godfearing and easily accessible, a jurist, and a good military general. If the Wazir of a kingdom possessed these qualities, there would not be disorder and disaffection in the country even if the king was weak. \(^2\) Whereas the loyalties of the Wazir could lead the kingdom to glory, his treachery could make the sovereign pay too high a price has been evident in Persia from as early as Alexander’s invasion of the empire.\(^3\) There are examples of this in the Sultanat period as well

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\(^3\) It is well known that Alexander killed Darius with the help of the latter’s Wazir with whom he had a secret pact. When Darius was slain Alexander said, "the negligence of the Amir and the treachery of the Wazir have taken away his kingship" Nizam-ul-Mulk, *Sivasatnama, Rules for Kings*, Eng. trans, Hubert Darke, Kegal Paul, London, 1978, p. 31.
as the post-Aurangzeb period.

Keeping this in view, Muslim jurists have laid down some maxims for his guidance. The most useful advice is given in the following maxim which throws light on the position of the Wazir. “He (the Wazir) should be attentive to the king so that he may be exalted. He should be friendly with the members of the government so that he may not fall from office. He should be kind to the subjects so that they may become attached to him and not be carried away by his enemies”.

The Wazir should realize the importance of his office for no work is more perilous than ministership for it entails the looking after of the king and the subjects. A Wazir who is a counsellor of the king and whose integrity is unquestionable and actions based on fear of God and love of mankind should rest assured that he will never be over-shadowed by his foes and will never incur the anger of the king.

When the Wazir who is well versed in the art of government, performs all these duties, the king should adopt a forgiving attitude towards him and not penalise him over petty issues. The Wazir should be allowed the privilege of calling upon the king whenever he desires, otherwise it will result in confusion. The king should not lend a ear to the words of backbiters and his enemies and he

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3 The very nature of the Wazirs office demanded that the ruler should cooperate with him and maintain his dignity. Qabusnamah, p. 168. cited in Qureshi, The Administration of the Sultanat of Delhi, p. 81.
should not keep his secrets from the Wazir.¹ The government could never be carried on if there was a palpable difference of opinion between the sovereign and the Wazir; whenever the Wazir was distrusted and yet kept in office, the result was disorganization of the administration.² A Persian king once asked the chief Mu'bad (Zoroastrian priest) “In what lies the well being of kings?” He replied, “It lies in the Wazirs who are supporters of the king” If the Wazirs are well wishers and benefactors, the affairs of the kingdom will be straight but if they are wicked the affairs of the empire and the people will be doomed.³

Al Mawardi is considered to be the first Muslim jurist who expressed the view that non-Muslims could be appointed to the Wizarat of the second category because in his case knowledge of law and theology could be done away with. Ibn Khaldun was opposed to Al Mawardi’s views but his objections are based on political rather than religious grounds, but in practice non-Muslims were appointed to the Wizarat even in Egypt.⁴

The character of the Wizarat varied from time to time

¹ Monarchs have seldom failed to support Wazirs in enforcing discipline or recalcitrant nobles or subordinate even when the offenders were royal favourites e.g. Masud and Abul Qasim Kathir, Baihaqi, Tarikh-i-Baihaqi. Bib. Ind. Calcutta, p. 447-448. Firoz Shah and Ainul-Mulk Afif, Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi, Elliot and Downson, Vol. III, p. 337; Agha Mahdi Hussain, Tughluq Dynasty. S.Chand and Co., New Delhi, 1976, p. 639; R.C. Jauhri, Medieval India in transition Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi. A first hand Account Sundeep Prakashan, New Delhi, 2001. pp. 228-229.

² Abu Riya’s elevation and usurpation of the Wazir’s power under Firuz Shah; Afif, Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi, Eng. trans. Elliot and Dowson Vol. III, p. 281.

³ Nizam-ul-Mulk, Siyasat Nama. Eng. trans. p. 23. It is also necessary to enquire into the affairs of the Wazirs to see if they are fulfilling their functions properly or not. The good or ill of the king and the kingdom depends on the Wazir. When the Wazir is of good character and sound judgement the kingdom is prosperous but when the Wazir is bad, irreparable harm is done to the kingdom.

depending upon the behaviour of the Wazir himself, the reaction of
the sultans and the social milieu of empire. Its character and
mode of functions as well as the status and role of the incumbents
offers a varying picture in different reigns.

The Turks came to India with a considerable experience of the
working of the institution of Wizarat. However its development
during the period of the Sultanat, the extension and curtailment of
his influence and power was determined by the political and
administrative exigencies rather than by juristic views or tradition
but the high importance of the office is proved by its historical
continuity.

Under an independent empire of Ghazni, where the ministers
exercised enormous power, the Wazir became the most important
man in the kingdom next only to the monarch. The first known
Wazir of Mahmud of Ghazni was Abul Abbas Fazl Bin Ahmed, who
held office for ten years. Mahmud of Ghazni did not hesitate to
entrust to his charge, “The affairs of the realm and the
administration of the army” as he was an expert in the art of
government and managed the affairs of the expanding empire with
great tact and ability.

The next Wazir Abul Qasim Bin Hasan Al Maimandi was a

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1 J.N. Choudhari, “The Administration of the Delhi Empire in the pre-Mughal
3 Khwandamir, Dastur-ul-Wuzara, Eng. trans. Elliot and Dowson, Vol. II p. 120,
Muhammd Nazim, Life an Times of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna, Munshiram
4 Sultan Mohmud observed that Ahmad was an experienced and well qualified
minister. Jami-ul-Hikayat of Muhammad ufi. Anecdote of Sultan Mahmud, Elliot
and Dowson, Vol. I, p. 185.
foster brother of Sultan Mahmud. He was a great scholar with vast experience in the work of administration and enjoyed perfect confidence of the sovereign for eighteen years. He was a foster brother of Sultan Mahmud and had been brought up with him. He held important posts of Sahib-i-Diwani-Khurasan, Mustawfi-i-Mamalik and Amil of important provinces before this elevation to the Wizarat. Maimandi was a scholar of great reputation and some of his official endorsements became proverbs for their terseness. However, long enjoyment of power made him arrogant and did no care to humour the nobles with the result that many of them became his enemies and conspired to bring about his fall.

The position of the Wazir depended to a great extent on the consent of the nobility. Although it was impossible to serve the state honestly as well as keep the nobility happy, the Wazir under the Ghaznavidis had to keep his colleagues in good humour. Even the Sultan had to show regard to their consent and their opposition at times led him to dismiss his Wazir.

Mahmud of Ghazni is credited with having introduced the novel practice of asking his ministers to suggest the name of some men who they thought fit to hold the office of the Wazir. Ali Hasan Muhammad bin Abbas commonly called Hasanak was appointed by this procedure and continued in office till Mahmud's death. However, he was removed by Mahmud's successor Masud as he spoke against him during his Wazirship. The practice of inviting nominees was adopted by Masud and his successors and the Wazir under them continued to exercise complete revenue and financial

1 Khwandamir, Dastur-ul-Wuzara, Eng trans. Elliot and Dowson, Vol. II p. 121.
powers in central government and controlled the administration of the provinces as well.\(^1\) He also exercised control over the accountants, writers, auditors, treasurers, slaves — infact on everything that was required for the dignity of the crown.\(^2\)

The *Wizarat* under the early rulers of Ghazni was unique. The election by the elite of the officials of a panel from which the Sultan was to select one as his *Wazir* was the most useful contribution to the system of government that was then in vogue. No ruler, not even the great Mughals ever thought of adopting such a wise course of action, infact they regarded it as an encroachment on their prerogative. Another significant aspect was the importance attached to this office by the *Wazirs* themselves. Masud’s *Wazir* Khwaja Ahmad refused to accept the office until his powers had been clearly defined.\(^3\) The institution would have been strengthened had this practice been followed by other rulers.

Despite the power and status enjoyed by the *Wazir*, his position was very precarious and beset with dangers. He was invariably the scapegoat of the Sultan’s wrath at the failure of his schemes. Moreover, being the buffer between the Sultan and his nobility, he had to bear the whims of the former and hatred of the latter.\(^4\) The *Wizarat* lost most of its prestige under the later Ghaznavids due to absence of any outstanding individual holding the post.

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\(^1\) One of the main duties of the Wazir was to select competent persons to act as provincial Wazirs who could act as his representatives. Syed Jabir Raza, ‘Ghaznavid Origins of the Administrative Institutions of the Delhi Sultanat” *P.I.H.C.*, 1992, p. 233.


With the formation of the Sultanat in Hindustan, the administrative machinery was reorganized and a strong central government in which the Wazir was the highest official was set up. Although Nasiruddin Qubacha, Tajuddin Yaldoz and Qutubuddin Aibek had appointed Wazirs, the office came into prominence in Iltutmish's time who is considered to be the real founder of Islamic sovereignty in India. Although the Sultans of Delhi were called autocrats the limitations on their authority, namely, the pulls and pressures of the influential nobility apart from others acted as a substantial check on their authority.

The two important Wazirs under Iltutmish were: Nizamuddin Junaidi, styled as Nizam-ul-Mulk; and Fakhrul Mulk Isami. Although it was not decided whether the Wazir was to perform civil or military duties, the preference for men of experience over those with physical energy is clear. However, the Wazirs under Iltutmish were known to have commanded armies.

During the three decades that followed the death of Iltutmish in 1236 A.D., important changes occurred in the distribution of power within the Sultanat ruling class. Since his successors were weak the Wazir became powerful to ensure stability. Razia’s Wazir, Khwaja Muazzazzabuddin continued to exercise tremendous power.
under the two successors without the assistance of any military following.\(^1\)

An attempt to curb the power of the \textit{Wazir} was made by Bahram Shah who created the post of Naib-i-Mamlukat also known as Malik Naib but the position of the \textit{Wazir} remained unchanged. Infact, the decline in the Sultan's authority and the \textit{Wazir}'s dependence on military leaders made the \textit{Wizarat} synonymous with military leadership.

On his accession, Balban was astute enough to realize that the office of \textit{Wazir} was too significant to be left in the hands of ambitious men and kept all strings of administration in his hands, eclipsing the power of the \textit{Wazir}\(^2\). Balban’s \textit{Wazir} Khwaja Hasan was a titular \textit{Wazir} with limited powers due to his ignorance of financial affairs as well as the fact that the Ravati Arz (Muster Master) was made absolutely independent in his department.

Jalaluddin Khilji's assumption of royal authority marked a far reaching socio-political revolution. On account of the vast differences in the socio-political objectives of the Khiljis, and their predecessors on the throne of Delhi, the position of the \textit{Wazir} was bound to rise under the Khiljis. Jalaluddin Khilji appointed Khwaja Khatir, a wise and experienced man with great expertise as his first \textit{Wazir}\(^3\).

The tradition of combining civil and military functions in the office of the \textit{Wazir} which was interrupted in the reigns of Balban and Jalaluddin Khilji was revived by Alauddin Khilji. It was clear

\(^{1}\) Minhaj us Siraj, \textit{Tabaqat-i-Nasiri}, p. 648.
\(^{3}\) Ziauddin Barani, \textit{Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi} Elliot & Dowson, Vol. III, p. 162.
that even after a lapse of a century of establishment of Sultanat no line was drawn between civil and military functions. The selection and assignment of duties were determined by the personal preferences of the Sultan. Nuzrat Khan basically a militarist was appointed as Wazir by Allaudin Khilji and sent on most of his expeditions. Similarly, Malik Kafur’s elevation as Alauddin’s Naib and also his Wazir were largely due to his military successes rather than his administrative abilities. Military achievement became a necessary qualification for this office in view of the military character of the state and the threat of Mongol invasions, the rebellious Hindu chiefs and the treacherous Muslim nobility.

After Allaudin Khilji’s death, Malik Kafur became the most dominant figure who tried to eliminate Alauddin’s sons and nominated Shihabudin Umar, a six year old boy as his successor and became his regent. However, Mubarak Shah was successful in winning them to his side and got Malik Kafur killed, within thirty five days of Allaudin’s death. The tradition of Wizarat being in the hands of a military leader continued in the time of Allaudin’s successors. The appointment of Khusro Khan who being blinded by ambition murdered the Sultan Qutb-ud-din Mubarak Shah and usurped the throne shows the degradation that took place in the institution.

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1 Ziauddin Barani, Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi Elliot & Dowson, Vol. III, p. 169.
When Ghiasuddin Tughluq came to the throne, he developed a non-personal, constitutional arrangement for the organization of the state which minimised the arbitrary rule of the monarch. Sultan Ghiasuddin Tughluq is said to have elevated the Diwan-i-Wizarat relieving it from its undignified task of tyranny and exploitations that it had been performing under the Khaljis and had made it an instrument of his despotism. As the founder of the Tughluq Dynasty he weeded out undesirable elements and entrusted the office to men of reputation and character retrieving its prestige and popularity. Under him, three ex-Wazirs – Khwaja Khatir, Muhazzabuddin and Junaidi were given joint responsibility and consulted on all important matters. The senior most among them was given the title of Malik ul-Wuzara (Chief Minister) but the routine work was entrusted to his son-in-law Malik Shadi.¹

Under Muhammad bin Tughlaq, the Wizarat was offered to Khwaja Jahan who infused new life into the institution. He must have been a competent man for he held the post against all political and financial troubles of Muhammad's reign and continued till the end of his reign.

The successor of Khwaja Jahan to the Wizarat was his deputy Maqbul,² an illiterate low-caste Hindu from Gujrat who had embraced Islam at the hands of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya. Firuz Tughluq had great confidence in his Wazir and often left

¹ Agha Mahdi Hussain, Tughluq Dynasty, p. 61.
² Ziauddin Barani, Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi, p. 454, quoted in Agha Mahdi Hussain, Tughluq's Dynasty, p. 65. Referring to the position of Wazir in Firuz Tughluq's time Afif writes "If one wants to describe the work of Diwan-i-Wizarat one has to write a separate book", R.C. Jauhri, Medieval India in transition Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi, A First hand Account, p. 126.
administrative responsibilities on him. The **Wazir** was also the medium of contact between the Sultan and his officers and subjects. Firuz Tughluq's fondness for his invaluable **Wazir** is revealed from his extra allowances to him. Since Maqbul was a luxurious person, these endowments must have been a substantial sum, but the **Wazir** was worth his money.

An important factor of the **Wizarat** in the Tughluq period was the appointment of Indian Muslims to the post. The **Wazir** in the Tughluq period maintained a gorgeous retinue but he was essentially a civilian. The military remained separate under the **Diwan-i-Arz**. Firuz Tughluq, used to say that Khan Jahan (Maqbul) was the real ruler of Delhi. Every order was communicated through him, every policy initiated with his advice but his powers were limited to his own department.

The most spectacular difference in the **Wizarat** under the Khaljis and the Tughluqs lay in the fact that the **Wazir's** under the Khaljis were essentially military officers (Malik Kafur, Khusro

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1 Shams-i-Siraj Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, ed., Vilayat Hussain, Bib Indica Calcutta, 1891, p. 399. There are several instances when Firuz Shah Tughluq left his capital with the Wazir as deputy of the sultan. The Khan-i-Jahan managed very well and there was no difficulty in the sultan's absence. R.C. Jauhri *Medieval India in Transition Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi, A First hand Account*, pp. 101, 124, 132.


4 The reigns of Government have been given into his hands. The whole country has been placed under him.

Dad ast Zamam –i-Mulk u ra,
Bispurda tamam-i-Mulk u ra.


5 Afif compares him with Aristotle, the Wazir of Alexander the great – King of Greece. Only these two in the history of the World were men of such honesty and high standing. R.C. Jauhri *Medieval India in Transition, Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi, A first Hand Account*, p 132.
Khan) whereas under the Tughulqs they did not command military power. The technical knowledge which the office now required made him essentially a man of the pen (sahib-i-qalam) as against a man of the sword (sahib-i-saif). Military efficiency ceased to be the necessary qualification for the post.

Another difference lay in the strength of their character. Unlike Khusro Khan who murdered the sultan to usurp the throne, Maqbul’s loyalty was not sullied by any rebellious action. After his death his son Jauna Shah was given the Wizarat with the title of Khan-i-Jahan. This was a rare instance of the post being given to the son after his father. Jauna Shah’s lavish patronage of architecture and literature added luster to the office of Wazir.

Under the weak successors of Firuz Tughluq the Wazir became powerful and involved themselves in court politics to assume greater power. Khwaja Jahan Sarvar-ul-Mulk, Wazir of Muhammad Shah enjoyed great power and influence and was successful in establishing Mahmud Shah a boy of ten years on the throne. Inspite of the political chaos he managed to retain his position as Wazir and ultimately succeeded in founding an independent empire in the East with Jaunpur as its capital. The

1 Afif, Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi. Elliot and Dowson, Vol. III, p. 371, R.C. Jauhri, in Medieval India in Transition, Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi, A first hand Account, says whenever Firuz Tughlug left on expeditions, Khan-i-Jahan was left to take care of Delhi as the Sultan’s deputy, pp. 101, 124, 131.
2 Khan-i-Jahan on account of his wisdom and dexterity was loved by all yet he never had the craving for the Sultanat, R.C. Jauhri Medieval India In transition, Tarikh-i- Firoz Shahi, A First Hand Account, p. 131.
3 Maqbul’s death in 1368-69 was mourned by all the people of Delhi as he had been a man of wisdom and sound policy, Ibid. p. 132.
4 The total number of mosques built by Khan-i-Jahan, Jauna Shah, was seven. The remains of his Bigampuri Masjid, Kalu Sarai masjid, Khirki Masjid and Kali Masjid are architecturally different from the mosques of Firuz Tughluq. Aafar Hussain, List of Muhammadan Hindu Monuments, Vol. II, Calcutta, p. 62.
last heard Wazir of Tughluqs was Tatar Khan, Wazir of Nuzrat Shah.\textsuperscript{1}

After the departure of Timur, chaos and disorder prevailed over a large part of North India. The first Sayyid ruler Khizr Khan who called himself a representative of Timur in India employed his Wazir Malik Tuhfa-Taj-ul-Mulk, mainly on military duties. Since he did not lay much emphasis on the paraphernalia of royalty the Wizarat was also not given much importance. Under Mubarak Shah, Khizr Khan's successor, it became clear that the Wazir could not perform efficiently as a commander, finance minister and auditor general. Therefore, the Sultan appointed an Ashraf to assist him in the finance department.\textsuperscript{2} Therefore unlike the period of the Tughluqs, under the Sayyids the civil character of the Wazir was smothered but he continued to supervise financial matters. The conditions in the medieval times were quite uncertain; if the Wazir became very powerful, he became an object of hatred, if he was weak, the whole administration was thrown into turmoil. Hamid Khan the last Wazir under the Sayyids enjoyed total powers whereas the ruler Alam Shah (1445-1450 A.D.) was a puppet. Infact, it was Hamid Khan who contributed towards the establishment of the Afghan Empire in India as Bahlul Lodhi established his control over Delhi after entering into an agreement with Hamid Khan who enjoyed the position of a virtual King maker.\textsuperscript{3} However in a coup de'etat with a thousand armed men

\textsuperscript{1} Agha Mahdi Hussain, \textit{Tughlaq Dynasty}, p. 457; R.C. Majumdar, ed., \textit{The Delhi Sultanat}, p. 69.
\textsuperscript{2} Yahya-bin-Ahmad Sirhindi, \textit{Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi}, Elliot & Dowson, Vol. II, p. 111.
\textsuperscript{3} Abdul Halim, \textit{History of the Lodhi Sultans of Delhi and Agra}, Idarah-i-Adabiyat-i-Delli, New Delhi, 1974, pp. 15-16.
Bahlol got rid of Hamid Khan and assumed the throne in 1451 AD. Since the Lodhis established a democratic government, they had little love for the paraphernalia of the Turkish monarchy and ruled with the help of tribal Chiefs.

There is no mention of a Wazir in the time of Bahlul Lodhi. In the decentralized system of administration introduced by Bahlul there was hardly any room for a Wazir who was by tradition the custodian of central authority in the sphere of finance. The second Sultan Sikander Lodhi had a different view regarding the administrative set-up and appointed Mian Bhuva a learned man to the office of the Wazir. This Wazir holds an important place for his contribution to the medical sciences. It was at his instance that some able physicians compiled a highly authoritative work entitled 'Tibb-i-Sikander Shah' or 'Maha Ayuraidhik'. Mian Bhua held this post in the early years of Ibrahim Lodhi's reign and worked with full dedication. He had a sound knowledge of finance for he believed, "The monarch accumulates treasure as a matter of policy and spends it on proper objects. It is not desirable that the money should be spent without good reason" Later the Wizarat was transferred to his son. Although Sikandar Lodhi and Ibrahim Lodhi were more careful than the founder of the dynasty about the prerogatives of monarchy and appointed Wazirs, but considering the basically unaltered position of the Afghan oligarchy they could

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1 Ahmed Yadgar, *Tarikh-i-Salatin-i-Afghana*, Elliot and Dowson, Vol. III, p. 5
not exercise control over public administration which had been the primary attribute of their office under previous rulers.

The Wazir remained a non-entity during the second Afghan Empire set up in 1540 A.D.. Not that Sher Shah was inspired by the same motives as Bahlul but his experience of the nobility of the Mughal court was not a very pleasant one. He used to say:

"The corruption of ministers of contemporary princes was the means of my acquiring the worldly kingdom I possess. A king should not have corrupt Vakils or Wazirs, for a receiver of bribes is dependent on the giver of bribes and one who is dependent is unfit for the office of Wazir ...." ¹

The only reference to the Wizarat in the time of the Surs is found when Adil Shah was appointed to that post.² But later he found Hemu the ablest and according to some contemporary sources he made him the Prime Minister. This was the greatest development that occurred in the institution of Wizarat. Hemu was the first Hindu who, without changing his religion, rose to the position of Wazir and justified his appointment.

The practical elimination of the Wazir during the Afghan rule had its advantages and disadvantages. The chief advantage being that it led to the recovery of the power and splendour of the crown. It also curtailed intrigues, frauds and pretentions that had undermined the vitality of the government. But it had one

drawback, the check (i.e., the Wazir) on the autocratic tendencies of the sultan being reduced, the government became more inclined towards autocracy. The policy adopted by the Afghans was defective in the sense that it was entirely in the interest of the crown whereas for the sake of good governance it was important that the Wazir should not be totally eclipsed. Moreover, the Wazir acted as a buffer between the people and the crown.

As long as the ambitions of the Wazir who happened to be the strength behind the crown were kept in check, there was no danger to sovereignty and on the successful handling of this issue depended the success of monarchy.