Medieval History · GS - I

What were the major technological changes introduced during the Sultanate period? How did those technological changes influence the Indian society?

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2023	GS - I	Medieval History

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Examine technological changes in agriculture, irrigation, textiles, construction, transport and warfare; link them with increased productivity, urbanisation, craft production and state power; assess both material transformation and changes in social and economic organisation.

Model Answer

Introduction

The Delhi Sultanate period witnessed the introduction, adaptation and wider diffusion of several technologies through interactions between India, Central Asia and the Islamic world. These innovations affected agriculture, crafts, architecture, warfare and everyday economic life.

Body

Major Technological Changes

Agriculture and irrigation:

The use and expansion of technologies such as the **Persian wheel** improved groundwater irrigation. Better irrigation contributed to agricultural expansion in suitable regions.

Textile technology:

The **spinning wheel (charkha)** increased the efficiency of yarn production. Improvements in textile production strengthened India's important textile economy.

Construction technology:

The wider use of the **arch, dome and vault**, along with improved masonry techniques, transformed architecture. Structures such as mosques, tombs and forts demonstrated these technological adaptations.

Military technology:

Improved use of **horse-based warfare, metal armour and military equipment** strengthened the effectiveness of Sultanate armies.

Paper and knowledge transmission:

The wider use of paper supported administrative record-keeping, scholarship and literary activity.

Impact on Indian Society

Agricultural expansion: Improved irrigation supported cultivation and rural production.

Urbanisation: Increased craft production and administrative activity encouraged the growth of towns and commercial centres.

Growth of crafts: Textile and construction technologies generated specialised occupational groups and expanded artisanal production.

Administrative development: Paper facilitated documentation, taxation and state administration.

Cultural synthesis: Technologies were not simply imported; they were adapted to Indian conditions, contributing to a distinctive Indo-Islamic material culture.

Social differentiation: Expansion of crafts and urban markets strengthened occupational specialisation and commercial groups.

Conclusion

The technological changes of the Sultanate period contributed to **agricultural intensification, urban growth, craft development and architectural transformation**. Their significance lay not merely in individual inventions but in their adaptation to existing Indian knowledge and their incorporation into a changing socio-economic system.