

Class 12 History Notes Chapter 12 Colonial Cities Urbanisation, Planning and Architecture

- With the decline to the Mughal Empire in the 18th century, many old lords lost their importance.
- 18th century marks the emergences of many new kingdoms like Lucknow, Hyderabad, Poona, Baroda, Nagpur, etc,
- The port towns/cities swat, Masulipatnam, and Dhaka which developed in the 17th century declined during the mid 18th century with the emergence of new cities like Madras, Calcutta and Bombay.
- The colonial rule was based on many kinds of data and compilation of information. Its purpose was to keep an eye on the city life and trading activities so the statistical data, maps, census and official records of municipalities were prepared.
- The survey of India was constituted in 1878 to prepare the survey map of India.
- Railway was introduced in India in 1853. The introduction of railway brought many changes in the life of urban life.
- In the 19th century East India Company established many stations likes, Shimla, Mount Abu and Darjeeling. These hill stations were set up for stationing army, for guarding frontiers and for launching invasion against enemy.
- In 1864, the Viceray John Lahilence, officially shifted his capital at 'Shimla' and the official residence of the commander-in-chief was also set up in Shimla.
- The social life of new cities was bewildering. It had rich and poorest of the poor people.
- The development in the means of the transportation brought many new changes in the social life of the people.
- The importance of middle class began to increase in new cities. Here, they got many new job opportunities which brought a great change in their perception and outlook.
- New identities and new social groups came into existence in these towns.
- Many new changes occurred in the life of the people. Important changes were witnessed in the lives of the woman living in the cities. Here they got many new opportunities of job, which brought new changes in their perception and outlook.
- The British East India company had first set up its trading activities in Surat.
- The Buildings and architectural style threw an invaluable light at many things and provided us an important information about the ideal building.
- These buildings also explain the perspective and viewpoints of those who constructed these building.
- Architectural style do not represent and reflect the prevalent taste. It moulded tastes, popularised styles, shapes, contours of cultures.

Company agents initially settled in the Madras, Calcutta and Bombay which were originally fishing and weaving villages. They gradually developed these villages into the cities. These cities had the mark of colonial government institutions which were set up to regulate economic activity and demonstrate the authority of new rule.

Towns and Cities in Pre-colonial Times:

Towns and cities before the advent of the British can be discussed under the following heads

Nature of Towns:

- Towns represent unique form of economic activities and cultures. In town ruler administrator, artisans, inansabdars and jagirdars, traders, etc were living. Towns were surrounded by the fortified wall and thrived on the surplus and taxes derived from agriculture.
- Peasants from the countryside came to the town for pilgrimage or selling their produce during the lime of famine etc. There are also evidences of people going to village to sell their goods, crafts etc. People migrated to villages when towns were attacked.
- The presence of emperor, nobels and other affluent powerful persons in town and centres meant that a wide variety of service had to be provided and these towns were seat of power from where administration of empire works. In the medieval times, Delhi, Agra, Lahore, Madurai and Kanchipuram etc were famous, towns and cities.

Changes in the 18th Century:

- In the 18th century with decline of Mughal empire, old towns also lost their grandeur and new towns like Lucknow, Hyderabad, Seringpatnam, Pune, Nagpur, Baroda, Tanjore, etc were developed and these towns were seat of local authority. Traders, artisans, administrators and mercenaries migrated from old Mughal centres to these towns in search of work and patronage. Many new qasbah (small town in the country side) and garij (small fixed market) came into existence, but effect of political decentralisation were uneven (Puducherry).
- European commercial companies had set up their base in different towns, e.g., Portuguese in Panji, Dutch in Masulipatnam, British in Madras and French in Pondicherry.
- With expansion in commercial activity towns grew further, gradually by the end of 18th century land-based empires in Asia were replaced by the powerful sea-based European empires. Forces of international trade, mercantilism and capitalism defined the nature of society.
- As British took over political control in India from 1757, trade of East India Company expanded and colonial port cities like Bombay, Calcutta and Madras emerged as economic and political power.

Development of Town and Cities in Colonial Times:

A number of records and data were collected by the British as well as Indian officials which provide information about the colonial cities. However, according to historians, the figures can be misleading, some may have correct information and some may have ambiguity.

Colonial Records of Urban History:

- British government kept detailed records, carried regular survey, gathered statistical data and published official records of their trading activities to regulate their commercial affairs. British also started mapping as they believed maps help in understanding landscape topography, planning development, maintaining security and to gauge possibilities of commercial activities.
- British government from late nineteenth century started giving responsibilities to elect Indian representatives to administrate basic services to towns and it started a systematic annual collection of municipal taxes.
- First all-India census was carried in 1872 and after 1881 it was carried decennial (conducted every ten years). But the data record generated and kept by British government cannot be trusted blindly as it has ambiguities. People during that time gave evasive answers to officials due to suspicion and fear.
- Many times false information were given by the locals about mortality, disease, illness. Always these were not reported. Sometimes the reports and records kept by British government was also biased. However, inspite of ambiguity and biasness, these records and data helped in studying about colonial cities.

Trends of Change:

- Urban population of India remained stagnant during 1800s. In the forty years between 1900 and 1940 the urban population increased from about 10 percent of the total population to about 13 percent.
- Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay were became sprawling cities. They were entry and exit points of goods from the country. Smaller towns had little opportunity to grow. Few towns which were situated on the bank of river like Mirzapur (which specialised in collecting cotton and cotton goods from Deccan) were growing but with introduction of railways its development stopped.
- Expansion of railway led to the formation of railway workshops and railway colonies. Towns like Jamalpur, Waltair and Bareilly developed due to railways.

Towns: A Unique Identity:

Colonial towns reflects a number of features These were important in terms of economic, political and also cultural point of view, which showed a unique identity. They also tell how power was shifted from Indian rulers to the European elites.

Ports, Forts and Centra for Services:

- By 18th century Madras, Calcutta, Bombay, all had important ports and became the economic centre.
- Company built its factories and fortified these settlements for protection. Fort St. George in Madras, Fort Wiliam in Calcutta, and the fort in Bombay were famous settlement of that time.
- Indian traders, merchants, artisans who worked with the European merchant lived outside these forts in their own settlement. Settlement of European was called 'White Town' and settlement of Indians was known as 'Black Town'.

- Expansion of railways connected the hinterland to these port cities. So it became convenient to transport raw material and labour to the cities.
- In 19th century, there was expansion of cotton and jute mills in region of Bombay and Calcutta.
- There were only two proper industrial cities. Kanpur, which was specialised in leather, woollen and textiles and second city was Jamshedpur, which was specialised in steel. However, Industrial development was lagging behind in India due to discriminatory policies of the British.

A New Urban Milieu:

- Colonial cities reflected the mercantile culture of English. Political power and patronage shifted from Indian rulers to the merchants of the East India company.
- Indian traders, merchants, middlemen and interpreter who worked with company also enjoyed important place in cities.
- Ghats and docks were developed. Along the ports, godowns, mercantile office, insurance agencies, transport depots and banking developed. Racially exclusive clubs, racecourses and theatres were built for ruling elite.
- European merchants and agents lived in palatial house in white town while Indian merchants, middlemen, agents had traditional courtyard houses in Black town.
- The labouring poor provided service to European and Indian master as cook, palanquin bearer, coachmen, guard, porters and construction and dock worker. They lived in huts in different parts of the city.
- After revolt the British felt the need that town needed to be more secure of and better defended. So pastureland and agricultural fields around older town were cleared and new urban space called Civil Lines were set up and white people used to live in it. Cantonment were developed as safe enclaves and here Indian troops lived under European command.
- British considered black town as area characterised by chaos, anarchy, filth and disease.
- When epidemics of Cholera and Plague spread, they decided to take stringent measure for sanitation, public health, hygiene and cleanliness

The Development of Hill Stations:

- British Government started developing hill stations initially because of need of British army. Simla (present day Shimla) founded during Gurkha war (1815-16). Anglo-Maratha war led to development of Mount Abu (1818). Darjeeling was taken from the ruler of Sikkim in 1835.
- The temperate and cool climate of hills were seen as sanitarium (places where soldiers could be sent for rest and recovery from illness) because these areas were free from diseases like cholera, malaria, etc.
- Hilly regions and stations became attractive place for European rulers and other elites. During summer season, for recreation they visited these places regularly. Many houses, buildings, and Churches were designed according to European style.

- Later introduction of railway made these places more accessible and upper and middle class Indians like maharajas, lawyers and merchants also started visiting these places regularly.
- Hilly regions were also important regarding economy as tea plantation, coffee plantation flourished in the region.

Social Life in the New Cities:

- In cities life seemed always in a flux, there was a great inequality between rich and poor.
- New transport facilities like horse drawn carriage, trains, buses had been developed. People now started travelling, from home to work place using the new mode of transportation.
- Many public places were created, e.g. public parks, theatres, clubs, and cinema halls in 20th century. These places provided entertainment and opportunity for social interaction.
- People started migrating to cities. There were demands of clerks, teachers, lawyers, doctors, engineers and accountants. There were schools, colleges and libraries.
- A new public sphere of debate and discussion emerged. Social norms, customs and practices came to be questioned.
- They provided new opportunities for women. It provided women avenues to get out of their house and become more visible in public life.
- They entered new profession as teacher, theatre and film actress, domestic worker, factory worker, etc.
- Middle class women started to express themselves through the medium of autobiographies, journals and books.
- Conservatives feared these reforms, they feared breaking existing rule of society, and patriarchal order.
- Women who went out of the household had to face opposition and they became object of social censure in those years.
- In cities, there were a class of labourers or the working class. Poor came to cities looking for opportunity, few came to cities to live a new way of life and desire to see the new things.
- Life in cities were expensive, jobs were uncertain and sometimes migrants leave their family at native place to save money. Migrants also participated in the Tamashas (folk theatre) and Swangs (satires) and in that way they tried to integrate with the life of cities.

Settlement and Segregation in Madras:

- Company first set up its centre at Surat and then tried to occupy east coast. British and French were engaged in Battle in South India, but with defeat of France in 1761, Madras became secure and started to grow as commercial centre.
- Fort St. George became the important centre where Europeans lived and it was reserved for English men.
- Officials were not permitted to marry Indians. However, other than English Dutch, Portuguese were allowed to live in the fort as they were European and Christian.

- Development of Madras was done according to the need of whites. Black town, settlement of Indians, earlier it was outside the fort but later it was shifted.
- New Black town resembled traditional Indian town with living quarter around temple and bazaar. There were caste specific neighbourhoods.
- Madras was developed by incorporating many nearby villages. City of Madras provided numerous opportunities for local communities.
- Different communities perform their specific job in the Madras city, people of different communities started competing for British Government job.
- Transport system gradually started to develop. Urbanisation of Madras meant areas between the villages were brought within the city.

Town Planning in Calcutta:

- Town planning required preparation of a layout of entire urban space and urban land use.
- City of Calcutta had been developed from three villages called Sutanati, Kolkata and Govindpur. The company cleared a site of Govindpur village for building a fort there.
- Town planning in Calcutta gradually spread from Fort William to other parts. Lord Wellesley played very important role in town planning of Calcutta. Further work of town planning was carried by Lottery committee with the help of government. Funds for town planning were raised by Lotteries.
- Committee made a new map for Calcutta, made roads in the city and cleared riverbank of encroachment. Many huts 'bustis' and poors were displaced to make Calcutta cleaner and disease free and these people were shifted to outskirts of Calcutta.
- Frequent fires in the city led to making of stricter building regulation. Thatched roof were banned and tiled roofs were made mandatory.
- By the late nineteenth century official intervention in the city became more stringent.
- British removed more huts and developed British portion of town at the expense of other areas.
- These policies further deepened the racial divide of white town and black town and new division of healthy and unhealthy further rised. Gradually public protest against these policies
- strengthened anti-imperialistic feeling and nationalism among Indians.
- British wanted the cities like Bombay, Calcutta and Madras to represent the grandeur and authority of the British Empire. Town planning were aimed to represent their meticulous and rational planning and execution alongwith Western aesthetic ideas.

Architecture in Bombay:

- Although, government building primarily serving functional needs like defence, administration and commerce but they often meant to showcase ideas of nationalism, religious glory and power.

- Bombay has initially seven islands, later it become commercial capital of colonial India and also a centre of international trade.
- Bombay port led to the development of Malwa, Sind and Rajasthan and many Indian merchants also become rich.
- Bombay led to development of Indian capitalist class which came from diverse communities like Parsi, Marwari, Konkani, Muslim, Gujarati, Bania, Bohra, Jew and Armenian.
- Increased demand of cotton, during the time of American civil war and opening of Suez Canal in 1869 led to further economic development of Bombay.
- Bombay was declared one of the most important city of India. Indian merchants in Bombay started investing in cotton mills and in building activities.
- Many new buildings were built but they were built in European style. It was thought that it would:
 - give familiar landscape in alien country to European, thus to feel at home in the colony.
 - give them a symbol of superiority, authority and power.
 - help in creating distinction between Indian subjects and colonial masters.
- For public building, three broad architectural styles were used. These included neo-classical, neo-Gothic and Indo-Saracenic styles.

Building and Architectural Styles:

- Architecture reflected the aesthetic idea prevalent at that time, building also expressed vision of those who build them. Architectural styles also mould taste, popularise styles and shape the contours of culture.
- From the late nineteenth century, regional and national tastes were developed to counter colonial ideal. Style has changed and developed through wider processes of cultural conflict.

Class 12 History Notes Chapter 12 Important Terms:

- Kasbah: A small town in the countryside.
- Ganj: Small size fixed market.
- Census: Counting of population
- White Towns: Towns where only European could live.
- Black Towns: Towns where only Indian could live.
- Civil lines: Urban areas where only white people could settle and live.
- Pet: A Tamil word, which means settlement.
- Purim: A Tamil word stands for a village.
- Dubhasia: Those people who speak English as well as local language.
- Vellars: A local rural community in Madras.
- Garermath: The east India company built the Fort William in Calcutta. From the prospective of its security, a vast open space was left around it. It was locally known as a garer math or maiden.

Time line:

- 1688 – Bombay was handed over to East India company by the Butanes Empire.
- 1673 – French established trading centre at Pondichhery.
- 1757 – Battle of Placey
- 1798 – Lord Welleseley appointed as the 1st General of Bangal
- 1807 – Lottery commission was setup at Calcutta.
- 1814 -16 – Shimla was established.
- 1836 – That shed huts were banned in Calcutta.
- 1872 – Attempts were made for 1st census.
- 1878 – Organisation of survey of India
- 1881 – Madras harbour was completed.
- 1896 – Plague began to spread in India cities.
- 1911 – British transfer their capital from Calcutta to Delhi.