

CHAPTER-12

COLONIAL CITIES

Urbanisation, Plannings and Architecture

Q1. How did prominent Indian merchants establish themselves in the colonial city ?

Ans. Prominent Indian merchant establish themselves in colonial city in different phases. They establish themselves in all the three metro colonial cities i.e., Madras (Chennai), Bombay (Mumbai) and Calcutta (Kolkata).

First of all these Indian merchants tried to establish their relation of the agents of the company. As there all colonial cities were trade centre and administrative official. Therefore the Indian merchants could easily get establish their relation with the Europeans. These cities were having different types of comforts such as modern hotels, restaurant, lodging, boarding, transport facilities, roadways and shipping.

Later on Bombay become a major trade centre of opium with China. Prominent Indian merchant played active role in collecting opium from different places of Rajasthan and Malwa. They use to bring opium on the back of horses, ponies, camels by road transport etc. They use to earn a lot of money as middle man between farmers and companies agents and officials. Not only East India Company but some of the government official and later on other European also participated in illegal trade of opium. The Indian prominent merchant become

very rich. They constructed big building in all big cities of colonial period.

As the industrial revolution in England started and expanded. These colonial cities became entry point for British manufacture goods and for the export of Indian raw materials (which was to be used in large scale industries and factories of England). The prominent Indian merchant also participated in their trade activities.

The introduction of railways in 1853 meant a change in the fortunes of towns. Economic activity gradually shifted away from traditional towns which were located along old routes and rivers. Every railway station became a collection depot for raw materials and a distribution point for imported goods. For instance, Mirzapur on the Ganges, which specialized in collecting cotton goods from the Deccan, declined when a railway link was made to Bombay. With the expansion of the railway network, railway workshops and railways colonies were established. Railway towns like Jamalpur, Waltair and Bareilly developed.

The Indian merchants included the people of different communities and castes such as Parsi, Marwari, Konkani, Arabs, Gujarati, Banias, Boras and Jews. Some of the members of this community invested money in modern big industry, shipping and Airlines also. They donated money for construction of inns, wells, tanks, temples, Mosque, Churches and other places of religion and worship.

Q2. To what extent are census data useful in reconstruction patterns of urbanization in the colonial context ?

Ans. Census data are very useful in reconstructing pattern of urbanization in the colonial context.

- (i) We knew that every colonial government believe in colour and racial discrimination. The census data provide us the total number of the people in this way these data are useful of know exact number of population as well as the total population of white and blacks.
- (ii) After knowing the number and exact population of white and blacks. It becomes easier to prepare town, planning, design its formation, provision for future expansion, keeping in view living standards, needs and style of the whites as well as of the blacks. These data also tell us upto what extent total number of people or total population had been effected adversely by the fearful or deadly diseases.
- (iii) Census data provide us complete information about total number of different communities, their language, their works and means of livelihood as well as about their caste and religion also.
- (iv) The growth of cities was mentioned through regular head counts. By the mid nineteenth century several local censuses had been carried out in different regions. The first all-India census was attempted in 1872. Thereafter, from 1881, decadal (conducted every ten years) census become a regular feature. This collection of data is an invaluable source for studying urbanization in India.
- (v) When we look at these reports it appears that we have heard data to measure historical change. The endless pages of tables on disease and death, or the enumeration of people according their age, sex, caste and occupation, provide a vast mass of figures that creates an illusion of concrete sense. Historians have however, found that the figures can be misleading. Before we use these figures we need to understand who collected the data, and

why and how they were gathered. We also need to know what was measured and what was not.

Q3:- Assess the impact of health and defence needs on town planning in Colonial Calcutta.

Ans. In 1756, Sirajudula the Nawab of Bengal sacked the small fort which the British traders had built to house their goods. Consequently when Sirajudaula was defeated in the Battle of Plassey, the British built a new fort. Fort William could not be easily attacked.

Around Fort William, a vast open space was left which came to be known as the Maidan or garer-math. This was done so there would be no obstructions to a straight line of fire from the Fort against an advancing enemy army. Soon the British began to move out of the Fort and build residences along the periphery of the Maidan. This was how the English Settlement in Calcutta started taking shape. The vast open space around the Fort became Calcutta's first significant town planning measure.

Lord Wellesley was concerned about the conditions that existed in the Indian part of the city the filth, overcrowding and the poor drainage. He wrote a minute (an administrative order) in 1803 on the need for town planning and set up various committees for this purpose.

It was believed that creating open places in the city would make the city healthier. Consequently many bazaars, ghats, burial ground and tanneries were cleared or removed.

After Wellesley's departure, the Lottery Committee carried on with the work of Town Planning. In its drive to make the Indian areas cleaner, the committee cleared the riverbank of encroachment and pushed the poor to the outskirts of Calcutta.

The outbreak of cholera and plague epidemics in the 19th century gave a further impetus to town planning. The government believed that there was a direct link between living conditions and the spread of disease. Densely built up areas were regarded as insanitary as it obstructed sunlight and circulation of air.

Read the following passage carefully. Answer all the questions given after it.

Escaping to the country side. (Page No. 3/8 Part III)

This is how the famous poet Mirza Ghalib described what the people of Delhi did when the British forces occupied the city in 1857.

Limiting the enemy and driving him before them, the vectors (i.e. the British) overran the city in all direction. All whom they found in street they cut down.

For two to three days every road in the city from the Kashmiri gate to Chandni Chowk, was a battle field. Three gates, the Ajmeri, the Turocaman and the Delhi were still held by the rebels at the naked spectacle of this vengeful wrath and malevolent hatred the colour fled from men's faces and a vast concourse of men and women.... took to precipitate flight through these three gates. Seeking the little villages and shrewdness outside the city, they drew breath to wait until such time as might favour their return.

Passage Based Questions

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| Ques No. 1 Who was Mirza Ghalib? | 1 |
| Ques No.2 What has been described by Ghalib about the people of Delhi when the British forces occupied the city in 1857? | 3 |
| Ques. No.3 Describe the Role of the 'British forces, just after occupying the city? | 2 |
| Ques No.4 Write the names of all historical gates mention in the above passage? | 2 |

ANSWERS

Ans .1 Mirza Ghalib was a famous Urdu Poet of Delhi in 19th Century.

Ans 2. (a) The People of Delhi were driven by the vectors (i.e the British). Some rebels faced the British forces for two or three days. They kept under their control the gates of Delhi- the Ajmeri gate, the Turocaman gate and the Delhi gate.

(b) All the naked spectacle of the vengeful wrath and malevolent hatred the colour fled from men's face.

(c) A vast concourse of men and women of Delhi took to percipate flight through different gates of the city.

(d) Seeking the little villages and shrines outside the city, the people of Delhi drew breathe to wait until such time as might favour their return.

Ans 3 (i) Smiting the Mughal forces, other rebellious troops and the people of Delhi the British troops occupied most parts of the city in last days of the meeting of 1857, the forces engaged themselves in overrunning the city in all direction.

(ii) All whom they found in the street they cut down. For two or three days every road in the city from the Kashmiri Gate to Chandni Chowk was a battlefield, after three days most of the rebels were forced to send way to seek shelters in little villages and shrines.