

Colonial Cities Urbanisation, Planning and Architecture

NCERT TEXTBOOK QUESTIONS SOLVED

1. To what extent are census data useful in reconstructing patterns of urbanisation in the colonial context? (or)

“A careful study of census reveals some fascinating trends of urbanisation in 19th century.”

Support the statement with facts.

Ans. A careful study of the data collected through the census provides us a lot of information in understanding the trend of urbanisation. It can be examined as under:

- (a) The process of urbanisation was sluggish in India after 1800.
- (b) In the nineteenth century and in first two decades of the twentieth century the proportion of the urban population was very low and stagnant.
- (c) Which recorded between 1900 and 1940, A 13% increase in the urban population which recorded between whereas during the same period, there was an overall 10% increase in the population of the whole country.
- (d) The data, thus, collected helps us in the enumeration of people according to their age, sex, caste, religion, occupation, etc.

2. What do the terms “White” and “Black” Town signify?

Ans. The British had white skin as they were often described ‘white’ and they considered themselves as superior to others. On the other hand, the blacks had brown or black skin. So they were known as the ‘black’. The White signified their superiority over the black due to the colour of their skin. The British symbolised the Black areas full of chaos and anarchy, filth and disease and on the other hand, the white areas stood for cleanliness and hygiene. In Black areas, epidemics like cholera and plague often broke out. So the British took stringent measures to ensure sanitation and public health to prevent diseases of the Black areas. They ensured underground piped water supply and introduced sewerage and drainage system in White areas. Thus, we can say, the White Towns were those parts of the colonial towns where

the White people lived. These towns had wide roads, barracks, churches, parade ground, big bungalows and gardens, symbolised settled city life, whereas the Indian lived in Black Towns, were said to be unorganised and a source of filth and disease.

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

Ans. The prominent Indian merchants and traders settled in colonial cities like Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. They served as agents or middlemen for the British and lived traditionally built courtyard houses in the Black Town. They centred over large tracts of land in these cities and heavily made investments for the future. They wanted to impress their British masters or colonial ruler or white people living in white towns by giving lavish parties during festivals seasons and built temples to establish their supremacy and prestige in society.

4. Examine how concerns of defence and health gave shape to Calcutta.

Ans. Sirajudaula, the Nawab of Bengal in 1756, sacked the small fort from Britisher. In this fort 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 which could not be easily attacked. Around this a vast open space was left. This open space ' was called the Maidan or garermath. This was done for security reasons, because there would be no obstructions to a straight time of fire from the Fort against an advancing enemy army. Soon the British began to move out of the Fort. They built residences along the periphery of the Maidan. This indicates that how the English Settlement in Calcutta began to take shape. The vast open space around the Fort William became the significant town planning measure in Calcutta (Now Kolkata).

Lord Wellesley was more concerned about the conditions that existed in the cities. Cities were overcrowded, and had no sanitation facilities. He issued an administrative order in 1803 on the need for town planning and set up various committees for this purpose open places in the city would make the city healthier. As a result of this, 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 Calcutta.

5. What are the different colonial architectural styles which can be seen in Bombay city?

Ans. In the past, buildings were at odds with the traditional Indian buildings. Gradually, Indians too got used to European architecture and made it their own. The British in turn adapted some Indian styles to suit their needs. One example is the bungalow which was used by government officers in Bombay. The colonial bungalow was set on extensive grounds which ensured privacy. The traditional pitched roof and surrounding veranda kept the bungalow cool in summer months. These bungalows can still be seen in the city. Other than that traditional styles of decoration and building exist. The lack of space in the city and crowding led to a type of building unique to Bombay, the chawl.

6. How were urban centres transformed during the eighteenth century?

Ans. (i) The disintegration of the Mughal empire after the death of Aurangzeb paved the way of emergence of powerful regional powers. The capital cities of these regional kingdom like Lucknow, Poona, Nagpur and Barda now become important. Taking the advantage of this opportunity many nobles and officials created new urban settlements such as the qasbah and ganj.

(ii) The European companies too had set up their bases in different parts of India during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For example the Portugues (in Panaji in 1570) and the British in Madras in 1639. With the expansion in commercial activity, towns began to emerge as trading centres.

(iii) From the mid-eighteenth century trading. Centres like Surat and Dhakha which had grown in the seventeenth century now began to decline as trade shifted to other places. When the



British acquired Bengal and the East India Company's trade hereafter expanded the colonial port cities like Madras and Calcutta. These new port cities began to emerge as the new economic capitals.

(iv) In these newly developed cities many new buildings were built and new occupations developed. People flocked to these cities in large numbers. By the nineteenth century these newly developed cities became the biggest cities in India.

7. What were the new kinds of public places that emerged in the colonial city? What functions did they serve?

Ans. The Indians found the new colonial cities as bewildering. They were surprised by the new transport facilities available here. The means of transport facilities which included horse-drawn carriages, tram and buses. Enabled the people to live at far away places from the city centre. Now they lived at some other places and served at some other places.

Emergence of new public places: The new colonial cities far away place witnessed new public places such as the theatres, cinema-halls, gardens, public parks, etc. Besides these were clubs and Garden Houses.

Functions: These newly created public places were very exciting. They were an important source of entertainment and helped increasing social interaction. The people were able to express their opinions on society and government. They could also question the practice of social customs.

8. What were the concerns that influenced town planning in the nineteenth century?

Ans. (i) Two concerns which influenced the town planning in the nineteenth century were defence and health.

(ii) In many towns British built forts to protect their factories. Around the fort a vast open space was left open. This vast space was known as the Maidan.

(iii) It was done so that there would be no obstructions to a straight line of fire from the Fort against an advancing enemy.

(iv) Attempts were also made to improve the sanitation and cleanliness by creating open spaces in the city.

(v) For this purpose, in Calcutta many bazaars, ghats and burial grounds were cleared.

9. To what extent were social relations transformed in the new cities?

Ans. (i) There was a big contrast between extreme wealth and poverty in the new cities. New means of transport facilities such as horse-drawn carriages, trams, buses, etc. made travelling from home to work an interesting experience.

(ii) Creation of public places like theatres public parks and cinema halls provided new forms of entertainment and social interaction.

(iii) New social groups were formed people of all classes started to migrate to the cities. With an increased demand for lawyers and engineers the "middle class" increased. Debate and discussion became popular and established social norms and practices were questioned.

(iv) Cities also offered new opportunities for women. They chose new professions in the city as factory workers, teachers, film actresses, etc. for a long time so women remained objects of social censure.

10. On an outline map of India, trace the major rivers and hill ranges. Plot ten cities mentioned in the chapter, including Bombay, Calcutta and Madras, and prepare a brief note on why the importance of any two cities that you have marked (one colonial and one pre-colonial) changed in the nineteenth century.

Ans. Rivers are Ravi, Satluj, Ganga, Yamuna, Beas, Kosi, Narmada, Godavari, Krishna, and Kaveri.

Major Hill ranges are the Himalayas, Aravali, Vindhyachal, Satpura, Karakoram.

