

## HISTORY

### CHAPTER -6. TOWNS, TRADERS AND CRAFTSPERSONS

#### **TOWNS EMERGED DURING MEDIEVAL PERIOD**

- **COURT TOWNS:** Some of the important court towns were Lahore, Agra, Fatehpur Sikri and Delhi. Fatehpur Sikri was the new capital founded by Akbar. Delhi was known as Shahjahanabad and built by Shah Jahan in 1639.

- **PORT AND TRADING TOWNS:** Some towns developed as ports due to their proximity to the sea shore. Some major ports were Cambay, Surat, Broach, Masulipatnam, Nagapatinam, etc.

- **ADMINISTRATIVE TOWNS:** Some towns were capital cities. They were centres of administration. Thanjavur and Uraiyur were important centres.

- **TEMPLE TOWNS AND PILGRIMAGE CENTRES:** Temple towns were important centres of urbanisation and led to development of cities, economy and society.

#### **How important was Bronze?**

- Bronze is an alloy composed of copper and tin. Chola rulers used this metal to make statues through the 'lost wax' technique.

#### **Emergence of small towns**

- From the 8<sup>th</sup> century onwards, small towns emerged in India. They emerged from large villages. They had a 'mandapika' where villagers sold their produce.
- Likewise, there were market streets, called 'hatta' full of shops.
- Many villagers came to buy local articles and sell products like horses, camphor, saffron, betel nut, spices, salt etc.
- Normally a samanta was appointed who fortified the palaces and gave the right to collect taxes from traders, artisans, etc.

#### **Trading groups**

- Many kinds of traders existed. Trader travelled in caravans by forming guilds. Trade was done on a regular basis within the peninsula and with South-east Asia and China.
- Some other important traders were the Chettiars, Marwari, Banjaras, Baniyas, Muslim Bohars, etc.

#### **Crafts in town**

- Craft work was famous by the name of Bidri in the region. The goldsmith, bronzesmith, blacksmith, masons and carpenters were together called as the 'panchallas' or 'Vishwakarma'. some other crafts were cotton cleaning, spinning and dyeing.

### **Hampi an important town**

- Hampi, a famous town in Krishna-Tungabhadra region was founded in 1336 in the Vijayanagar empire.
- The technique of interlocking was used and no mortar or cement was used to wedge walls.
- The arches, domes and pillared halls had niches for holding sculptures.
- They even had well-planned orchard and pleasure garden with motif containing sculptures of lotus and corbels.

### **Masulipatnam**

- The town Masulipatnam or Machilipatnam(meaning fish port town) was located on the delta of the Krishna river.
- In 17<sup>th</sup> century, the town was an important centre of activity.
- The port of Masulipatnam was constructed by the Dutch. William Methwold, a factor of British East India Company described Masulipatnam as a small and unwallled town.

### **Surat a port town**

- People from different lands visit Surat because it was the emporium of western trade.
- It was the gateway for trade with Asia via the Gulf of Ormuz.
- There were several retailers and wholesale shops selling cotton textiles.
- The gold lace borders were very famous in Surat and had a market in West Asia, Africa and Europe.

### **Thanjavur an administrative town**

- Thanjavur was the capital of Cholas located on the banks of Kaveri river.
- King Rajaraja Chola got the famous Rajarajeshwara temple built in Thanjavur.
- The town had bustling towns.
- The Saliya weavers from thanjavur and Uraiur used to produce fine quality cloth for temple festival, king and nobility dresses, and coarse cotton for the masses.

### **QUESTIONS**

1. Name the towns that developed in medieval period.

2. Why did people from distant lands visit Surat?
3. Describe the rise of administrative towns in India.
4. How did Masulipatnam become an important town?
5. Name the Italian traveller who visited Vijayanagar.
6. 'Hampi is known for its architectural beauty'. Describe it in detail.

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