



## Unit - 7

# Urban changes during the British period



## Learning Objectives

- ▶ Understand the growth and development of towns in ancient and medieval - periods
- ▶ Analyse the nature and feature of urbanization under the British period
- ▶ Learn about the emergence of new urban centres such as Cantonments, hill stations and port cities
- ▶ Trace the origin and growth of Madras (Chennai)



## Introduction

The evolution of towns (urban settlements) has occurred in different ways and in different stages. Towns flourished since pre-historic times in India. Towns in India can be classified into ancient towns, medieval towns and modern towns.

## Ancient Towns

In ancient times, towns emerged in and around of residential places of kings and its location easily accessible to sea and rivers for trade. Most of them developed as administrative, religious and cultural centres. Harappa, Mohenjadar, Varanasi, Allahabad and Madurai are well-known ancient towns.

## Medieval towns

During medieval times most of the towns developed as headquarters of principalities and kingdoms. They functioned either fort city or port city. Important among them are Delhi, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Lucknow, Agra and Nagpur.

## Modern towns

With the arrival of Europeans brought about new changes in the development of towns. They first developed some coastal towns such as Surat, Daman, Goa and Pondicherry. The British after consolidated their power in India developed three main cities - Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkatta as the administrative headquarters and trading centres. With the extension of domination they developed new towns, depending on its location, purpose and resources. The newly developed towns are known differently as hill towns, industrial towns, court towns, railway station towns, cantonments and administrative towns.

## Unique features of urbanisation under the British

### I. De-industrialisation

In the beginning of eighteenth century, the policies of the British proved harmful to the process of urbanisation. Later, the economic policies followed by the British led to the rapid transformation of India's economy into a colonial economy and development of cities.



With the help of one-way free trade predominance of British, Indian manufacturing industries were destroyed. The effect of this wholesale destruction of the Indian manufacturing industries, led to the ruin of the millions of artisans and craftsman. There was a sudden collapse of the urban handicrafts industry which had for centuries made India's name in the markets of the entire civilised world.

Towns and cities long famed for their specialized products gazed continually shrinking market. As a result, old populous manufacturing towns such as Dacca, Murshidabad, Surat and Lucknow lost their previous importance. The entire industrial structure crashed down under stiff competition of imported goods.

The traditional industrial base of Indian cities, made by the indigenous handicraft production was destroyed by Industrial revolution. The high import duties and other restrictions imposed on the import of Indian goods into Britain and Europe led to the decline of Indian industries. Thus, India became the agricultural colony of Britain.

## II. De-urbanisation

The transformation of India's economy into a colonial one – a market for the manufactures and source for the supply of the raw materials to her industries hit hard the industrial and commercial base of a number of towns.

The gradual erosion of king's power led to the demise of towns associated with their rule. Agra once an imperial city in the first quarter of 19th century was surrounded by extensive ruins all around. The native rulers lost their kingdom to the British by means of various policies of the colonial power.

Another factor which contributed to the decline of the urban centres of the pre-British period was the introduction of the network of railroads in India since 1853. The introduction of the railways resulted in the diversion of trade routes and every railway station became a point of export of

raw materials. The railways enabled British manufactures to reach every nook and corner of the country and uprooted the traditional industries in the villages of the country.

## III. The Growth of New Urban Centres

British developed new centres of trade like Calcutta, Madras and Bombay on the eastern and western coastal areas. Madras (1639) Bombay (1661) and Calcutta (1690), cities which the British largely created and fortified. All those were earlier fishing and weaving villages. Here they built their homes, shops and churches as well as their commercial and administrative headquarters.

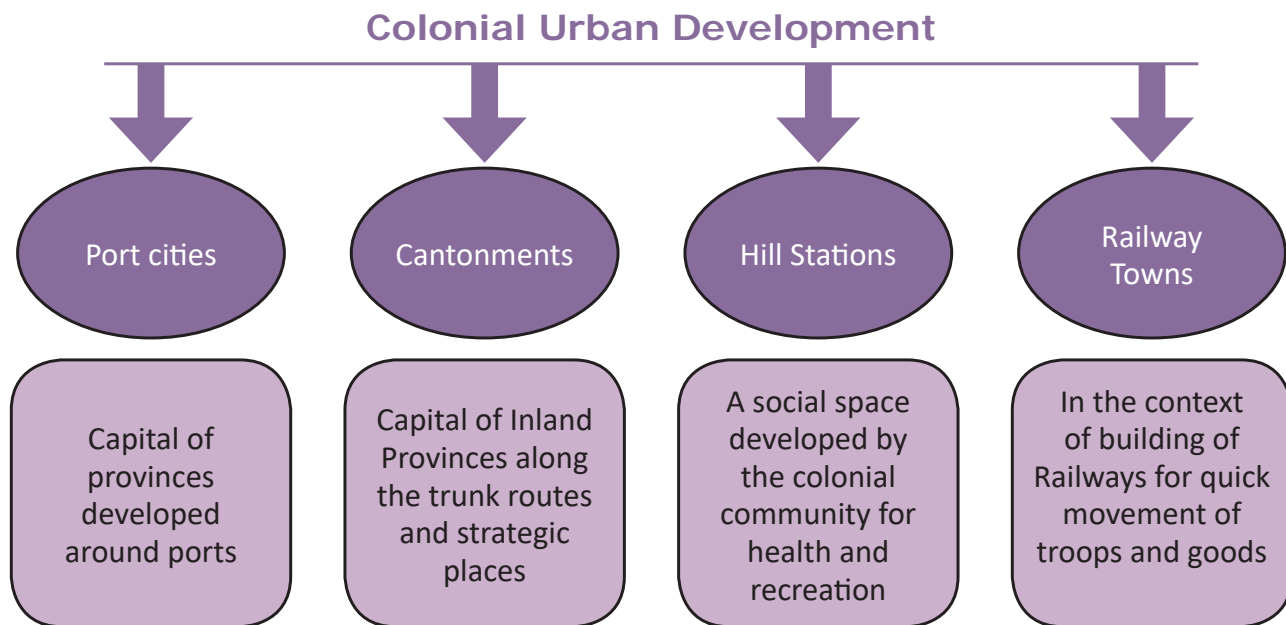
From the mid-eighteenth century, there was a new phase of change. As the British gradually acquired political control after the Battle of Plassey in 1757, and the trade of English East India company expanded.

A new trend of urbanisation began in the latter half of the nineteenth century as a result of the opening of Suez Canal, introduction of steam navigation, construction of railways, canals, harbours, growth of factory industries, coal mining, tea plantation, banking, shipping and insurance. Changes in the networks of trade were reflected in the development of urban centres.

An urban area is one that has a high population density engaged in occupations other than food production, living in a highly built environment.

### a. Port cities

The British arrived in India for trading. Madras, Calcutta and Bombay became the important ports. They played important role in trade. These cities became the prominent commercial areas with tall European – styled buildings. The English East India Company built its factories and fortified them for the protection for their settlement. Fort St. George in Madras and Fort William in Calcutta were the best examples.



**Fort William in Calcutta**

### **b. Cantonment towns**

The British occupied the Indian territory and political power by their military force. So they needed strong military camps and established the cantonments. The cantonments were thus an entirely new kind of urban centres. Army people began to live in these places and gradually they were grown up a city. For e.g. Kanpur, Lahore.

### **c. Hill stations**

Hill stations were distinctive features of colonial urban development. Although Hill stations were not unknown, prior to their founding by the British in India, they were few and had a small population and were often visited for specific purpose. For e.g. Srinagar was

a Mughal recreational centre, Kedarnath and Badrinath were Hindu religious Centres. The British coming from a cool temperate climate, found the Indian summer season inhospitable. So the cool climate of Indian hills was seen as protective and advantage. It protected the Europeans from hot weather and epidemics. So they built up the alternative capitals in cool areas, like Darjeeling was the alternative of Calcutta, Dehradun was the alternative of Delhi. Hill stations became strategic places for billeting troops, guarding frontiers and launching campaigns. Hill stations were developed both in North and South India, e.g. Simla, Nainital, Darjeeling, Ootacamund and Kodaikanal. Simla (Shimla) was founded during the Gurkha war (1814-16). Darjeeling was wrested from the rulers of Sikkim in 1835. These hill stations were also developed as Sanatoriums (places for soldiers for rest and recovery from illness). The introduction of railways made hill station more accessible.

### **d. Railway towns**

Railway towns were also a type of urban settlements and were established in 1853 after the introduction of railways by the British. By the nature of railway transport, all the towns were located on the plains. Eg. Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkatta.



## Creation of Municipalities and Corporation

The development of local government in the British India may be traced in three distinct phases.

### a. First phase (1688-1882)

Municipal government in India has been in existence since 1688 with the formation of Madras Municipal Corporation with a Mayor. Sir Josiah Child, one of the Directors of the East India Company was responsible for the formation of the Corporation. The Charter Act of 1793, established Municipal administration in the three presidency towns. According to the provisions of the Act of 1850, municipalities were formed in North Western Frontier provinces, Oudh and Bombay. Lord Mayo's famous Resolution of 1870 intended to afford opportunities for the development of self-government.

### b. Second phase (1882-1920)

Ripon's Resolution on local Self – Government was a landmark in the history of local self-government. So Ripon is rightly regarded as the Father of Local Self – Government in India and his Resolution as the Magna–Carta of Local Self-Government.

### c. Third phase (1920-1950)

The Government of India Act of 1919 introduced Dyarchy in the provinces. The Government of India Act of 1935 introduced Provincial Autonomy. With the attainment of Independence in 1947 India had the unique opportunity of making and moulding local government to meet the needs of the free nation.

## Administration of the Presidency Towns

Towards the close of eighteenth century, a Parliamentary statute authorized the Governor General to appoint justices of the peace in these towns. After various trials a system of government was evolved for the three presidency towns which had the

essential features like a large corporation with elected members, a strong independent executive authority with adequate safeguards for checking accounts and statutory provision for the performance of essential duties such as sanitation and water supply and collection of revenue etc.

## Origin and Growth of Madras

The beginning of the city of Madras goes back to the earliest stages of British commercial enterprise in India. The English East India Company was started in 1600 A.D(C.E). Twelve years later, a Factory was set up at Surat on the West coast. Subsequently the search for textiles brought British merchants to have port on the east coast.

Presently Fort St. George is the power centre of Tamil Nadu State Government, extending across 172 sq. KM (66 sq. miles)

The English, after some efforts secured the privilege of building a factory at Masulipatnam. It was well protected from the monsoon winds. But then Masulipatnam was in the throes of a famine. In spite of every assurance of protection, English trade did not thrive at that place.

Then the English traders looked for a new site. Francis Day, the member of the Masulipatnam council and the chief of the Armagon Factory, made a voyage of exploration in 1637 with a view to choose a site for a new settlement. At last, he was given the offer to choose Madrasapatnam. Francis Day inspected the place and found it favourable to set up factory.

The official grant for the land was given by Damarla Venkatapathy Nayak, the deputy of the Raja of Chandragiri (12km west of Tirupathi). Damarla gave British a piece of land between Cooum river and the Egmore. In 1639 the deed was signed by English East India Company's Francis Day accompanied by his interpreter Beri Thimmappa and superior Andrew Cogan. By this Francis Day and



**Fort St. George**

Andrew Cogan (the chief of the Masulipatnam Factory), was granted permission to establish a factory – cum - trading post and a fort at Madrasapatnam in 1639. This fortified settlement came to be known as Fort St. George settlement. It is otherwise referred to as the White Town. While the nearby villages inhabited by local population was called as Black Town. Collectively the White Town and the Black Town were called Madras.

### **Madrasapatnam**

Damarla Venkatapathy gave the English the grant of Madrasapatnam. He was under the control of Venkatapathy Rayalu, the Rajah of Chandragiri. Venkatapathy was succeeded by Srirangarayalu in 1642. He issued a new grant to English in 1645 called Srirangarayapatnam. Venkatapathy desired that the name Chennapatnam should be given to the new Fort and settlement of the English after his father Chennappa Nayak. But the English preferred to call the two united towns by the name of Madrasapatnam.

### **Making of Chennai**

Chennai was once a group of villages set amidst palm fringed paddy fields until two English East India Company merchants visited there. Raja Mahal in Chandragiri palace, where Sir Francis Day of the East India Company was granted land in 1639 in order to set up factory which later came to be known as Madras. This first factory was completed on St. George's Day, 23 April 1640 and named Fort St. George. Day and Cogan

The first building to be seen on entering the Fort through the Sea Gate is the seat of the Government of Tamil Nadu. These impressive buildings built between 1694 and 1732 are said to be among the oldest surviving British Construction in India.

were jointly responsible for the construction of Fort St. George. This was the East India Company's principal settlement until 1774.

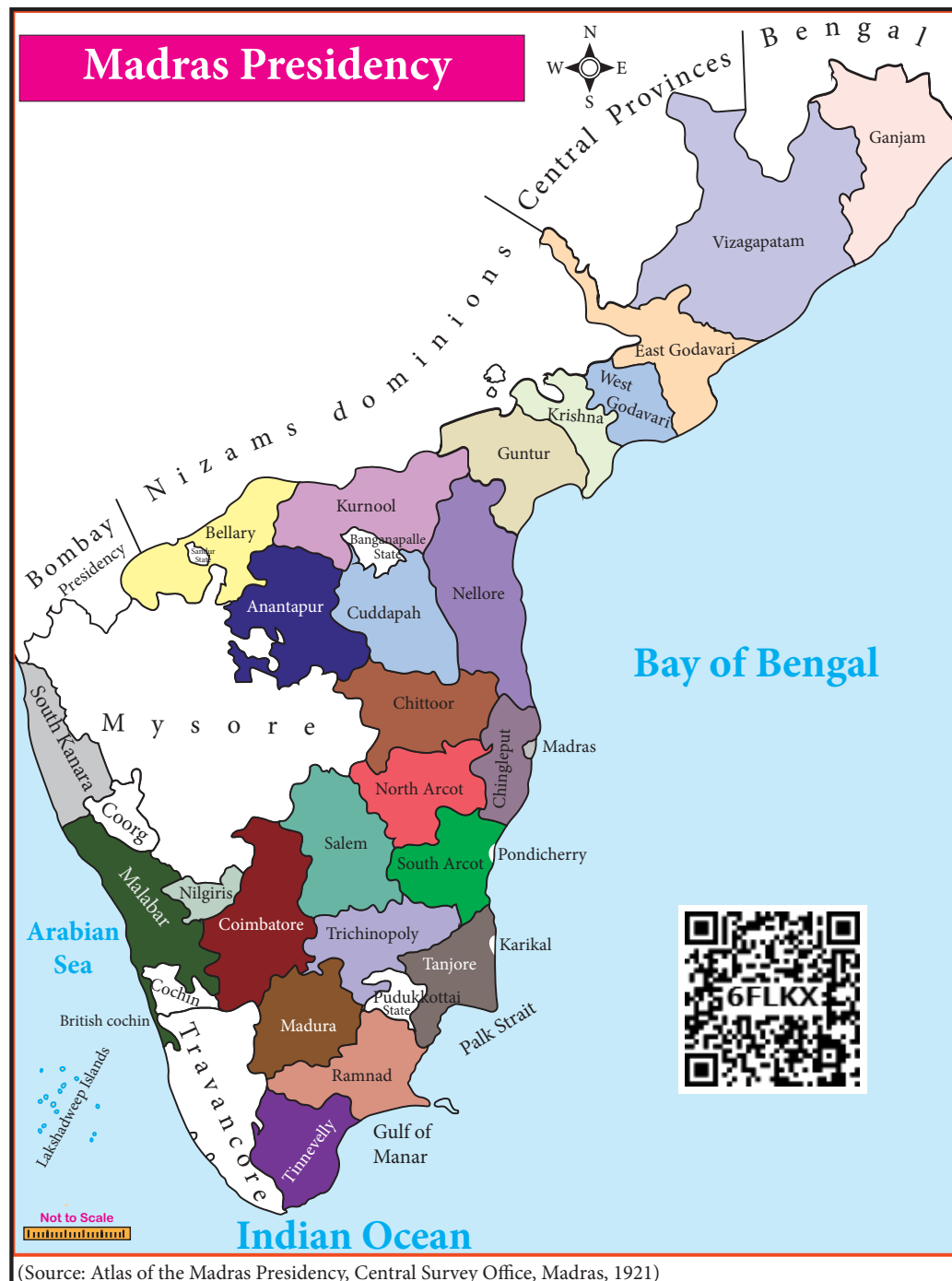
The Madras presidency was an administrative sub division which was referred to as the Madras province. The Madras presidency during the British regime covered a vast expanse of the southern part of India that encompasses modern day Tamil Nadu, the Lakshadweep Island, Northern Kerala, Rayalaseema, coastal Andhra, districts of Karnataka and various districts of southern Odisha.

Dalhousie Square in Calcutta and Fort St. George in Madras were close to the central commercial area and had massive buildings which were British variants of Roman styles.

After independence in 1947 the Madras presidency became the state of Madras and the other regions that were a part of the erstwhile presidency were constituted in separate states of Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Mysore under the States Reorganisation Act, 1956. Later on in 1969 the State of Madras was rechristened as Tamil Nadu. On 17th July 1996, Madras was officially renamed as Chennai.

### **Bombay**

Bombay was initially seven islands. It was under the control of the Portuguese from 1534 onwards. Portuguese king gave it as a dowry to Charles II of England when he married the former's sister in 1661. King leased it to the East India Company. The city of Bombay began to grow when the East India Company started using Bombay as its main port in Western India. In 1687, the English East India Company



(Source: Atlas of the Madras Presidency, Central Survey Office, Madras, 1921)

transferred its headquarters from Surat to Bombay.

### Calcutta

In 1690, the English merchants founded a settlement at Sutanuti. In 1698, they secured Zamindari rights over Sutanuti, Calcutta and Gobindpur. The company established Fort William in Calcutta. Calcutta became Presidency with a Governor and Council to manage its affairs.

### Conclusion

The British empire gradually consolidated and established an elaborate spatial structure of administration with an imperial capital, provincial capitals and district headquarters. The new rulers brought new officials, new institutions and new structure to these towns with a kacheri, cantonment, police station, jail treasury. Public garden, post office, schools, dispensary and above all a municipal committee.

Thus in course of time, administrative headquarters emerged as the most important towns and cities of the country. For example, by the beginning of 20th century, Calcutta, Bombay and Madras had become the leading administrative commercial and industrial cities of India. These cities became the central commercial area with buildings of European style. Sub urban railways, tram car and city buses gave the colonial cities a new look and status.

### Recap

- The evolution of urban settlements has occurred in different ways and in different stages.

- In ancient times towns emerged around king's palaces. During medieval times the towns functioned either fort city or port city.
- With the extension of domination British developed new towns depending on its location, purpose and resources.
- In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century Calcutta, Bombay and Madras rose as Presidency cities.
- Chennai was once a group of villages. Sir Francis Day of the East India Company was granted land in 1639 to setup factory which later came to be known as Chennai.
- On 17<sup>th</sup> July 1996, Madras was officially renamed as Chennai.

### GLOSSARY

Cantonment	a military station in british India	இராணுவ முகாம்
Urbanisation	the process of making an area more urban	நகரமயமாதல்
Municipality	a town or district that has local government	நகராட்சி
Dyarchy	government by two independent authorities	இரட்டையாட்சி
Rechristened	give a new name to	பெயரிடப்பட்டது
Treasury	a place or building where treasure is stored	கருவூலம்



### Evaluation

#### I Choose the correct answer

- Ancient towns are
  - Harappa and Mohenjodaro
  - Delhi and Hyderabad
  - Bombay and Calcutta
  - None of the above
- Coastal towns developed by the British were
  - Surat
  - Goa
  - Bombay
  - All of these



- A new trend of urbanisation began in the latter half of 19<sup>th</sup> century as a result of
  - Opening of Suez Canal
  - Introduction of steam navigation
  - Construction of railways
  - All the above
- The British arrived India
  - for trading
  - for preaching their religion
  - for working
  - for ruling



5. Fort St. George was constructed by the British in  
a) Bombay                      b) Cuddalore  
c) Madras                      d) Calcutta
6. Which of the following port was the East India Company's principal settlement until 1774?  
a) Fort William              b) Fort St. David  
c) Fort St. George          d) None of these

### II Fill in the blanks

1. The network of railroads in India was introduced in \_\_\_\_\_.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ rightly regarded as the Father of Local Self - Government in India.
3. The Government of India Act of 1919 introduced \_\_\_\_\_ in the provinces.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ was responsible for the formation of the corporation.
5. Francis Day and Andrew Cogan got permission to establish a factory – cum trading post at madrasapatnam in \_\_\_\_\_.

### III Match the following

- |                     |                   |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Bombay           | Religious centres |
| 2. Cantonment towns | hill stations     |
| 3. kedarnath        | Ancient town      |
| 4. Darjeeling       | seven island      |
| 5. Madurai          | Kanpur            |

### IV State true or false

1. Towns flourished since pre-historic times in India.
2. British acquired political control after the Battle of Plassey.
3. Fort William is in Madras.
4. Army people began to live in cantonments.
5. Madras was officially renamed as Chennai in 1998.

### V. Choose the correct statement

1. **Assertion:** India became the agricultural colony of Britain.

**Reason:** The one-way free trade policy followed by British and the Industrial revolution destroyed Indian indigenous industries.

- a) A is correct and R is Wrong
  - b) A is wrong and R is Correct
  - c) A is correct and R explains A
  - d) A is correct and R does not explain A
2. Which of the following statement(s) is/are not true?
    - i) Srirangarayalu gave the English the grant of Madrasapatnam.
    - ii) Day and Cogan were jointly responsible for the construction of Fort St. George.
    - iii) In 1969 the state of Madras was rechristened as Tamil Nadu.
  - a) i only                      b) i and ii
  - c) ii and iii                d) iii only
3. **Assertion (A):** British built up their alternative capitals in hilly areas.  
**Reason (R):** They found the Indian summer inhospitable.
  - a) A is correct and R is Wrong
  - b) A is wrong and R is Correct
  - c) A is correct and R explains A
  - d) A is correct and R does not explain A

### VI Answer the following in one or two sentences

1. What is an urban area?
2. Hilly areas were distinctive features of colonial urban development. Why?
3. Name the three Presidency cities?
4. State any four reason for the new trend of urbanization in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
5. Write short note on Cantonment towns.

6. What were the regions covered in the Madras presidency during British regime?

### VII Answer the following in detail

1. Describe the colonial urban development.
2. Trace the origin and growth of Madras.
3. India became an agricultural colony of Britain. How?

### VIII Project and Activity

1. Make an album – ‘Making of Chennai’ (from early period till now)

2. Mark port cities, cantonment towns, hill stations on the outline map of India. (any four places from each)



### REFERENCE BOOKS

1. G. Venkatesan, *Development of Rural Local Self Government*, Rainbow Publications, Coimbatore, 1983.
2. Saroja Sundarajan, *Madras Presidency in Pre-Gandhian era; a historical perspective, 1884-1915*, Lalitha Publications, 1997.
3. *Atlas of the Madras Presidency*, Central Survey Office, Madras, 1921.
4. *India*, Dorling Kindersely Limited, London, 2002.



## ICT CORNER

### Urban changes during the British period

Through this activity you will visualize the historical atlas of the world



**Step – 1** Open the Browser and type the URL given below (or) Scan the QR Code.

**Step – 2** Click the play button in left side on the screen

**Step – 3** Scroll down to explore the pictorial map with descriptions

**Web URL:** <https://www.zum.de/whkmla/region/india/xpresbengal.html>



\*Pictures are indicatives only.

\*If browser requires, allow Flash Player or Java Script to load the pag