

Work, Life and Leisure

Discuss

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1. Can you think of appropriate examples from Indian history for each of these categories: a religious centre, a market town, a regional capital, a metropolis? Find out about the history of any one of them.

Ans. Religious centre: Nalanda Market town: Surat
Regional capital: Pataliputra
Metropolis: Delhi
History of one of these towns / cities: Do it yourself.

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1. Imagine that you are a newspaper reporter writing a piece on the changes you see in London in 1811. What problems are you likely to write about? Who would have gained from the changes?

Ans. The problems I would write about will include the following Shortage of housing. The landlords of premises would gain from this by increasing their rents. A large number of migrants were employed in the dockyard and industries at low salaries. The politicians would gain, as they could organize unions to become more powerful. Due to underemployment and unemployment, there was an increase in crimes like pick-pocketing, theft, rioting, etc. The criminals would gain from this. The Police would also gain as they would be given more power and authority to crack down on criminals. Many migrant women were employed as domestic servants at very low wages. The rich people would gain from this.

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1. In many cities of India today, there are moves to clear away the slums where poor people live. Discuss whether or not it is the responsibility of the government to make arrangements for houses for these people.

Ans. Yes, it is definitely the social responsibility of the government to make arrangements for housing for these people, although some part of the cost of the houses should be charged from them, otherwise they will not be involved in the scheme initiated by government. The slums should be cleared because they lack sanitation, they are the starting point for epidemic diseases, and they also constitute a fire hazard. The slum areas also are an area where crime proliferates, and to reduce this, they should be cleared and the poor housed properly elsewhere.

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1. Imagine you are investigating the conditions in which the London poor lived. Write a note discussing all the dangers to public health which were created by these conditions.

Ans. The poor people of London are living in conditions which pose many dangers to public health including the following Many of the poor live together in one room tenements which are not properly ventilated. This can cause infectious diseases to spread rapidly. The slums constitute a fire hazard. Pollution is very high due to lack of open spaces or gardens.

1. Read Source B carefully. What are the common features of city life that the authors note? What are the contradictory experiences they point to?

Source B

Contradictory Experiences of Cities Kali Prasanna Singh wrote a satire in Bengali describing an evening scene in the Indian part of Calcutta around 1862:

Gradually the darkness thickens. At this time, thanks to English shoes, striped Santipur scarfs [sic] and Simla dhuties, you can't tell high from low. Groups of fast young men, with peals of laughter and plenty of English talk are knocking at this door and that. They left home when they saw the lamps lighted in the evening and will return when the flourmills begin to work ... Some cover their faces with scarfs [sic] and think that no one recognizes them. It is the evening of... a Saturday and the city is unusually crowded. *Hutam Pyancher Naksha*, a collection of short sketches on urban life in Calcutta, 1862. Translated by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay.

In 1899, G.G. Agarkar wrote about Bombay:

'The enormous expanse of Bombay city; its great and palatial private and governmental mansions; broad streets which accommodate up to six carriages abreast... the struggle to enter the merchants lanes; the frequent troublesome noise of passenger and goods trains whistles and wheels; the wearisome bargaining in every market, by customers who wander from place to place making enquiries with silver and notes in their pockets to buy a variety of commodities; the throngs of thousands of boats visible in the harbour... the more or less rushed pace of official and private employees going to work, checking their watches ... The clouds of black smoke emitted by factory chimneys and the noise of large machines in the innards of buildings ... Men and women with and without families belonging to every caste and rank travelling in carriages or horseback or on foot, to take the air and enjoy a drive along the sea shore in the slanting rays of the sun as it descends on the horizon ...'

G.G. Agarkar, 'The Obverse Side of British Rule or our Dire Poverty'

Ans. Common Features

- (i) Both the cities are highly crowded and the pace of life is rushed.
- (ii) Colonial influences are visible on the people's clothing, conversation and leisure activities.

Contradictory Experiences

- (i) In Kolkata, there is a distinction between private life and public life the young men dress in Western style and enjoy the night life, but do not want to be recognized. This is not there in Mumbai.
- (ii) In Kolkata, caste/class differences are not visible due to common Western dress while in Mumbai they are not there due to the work culture.

1. Look at Fig. 20. What kinds of people do you think used this mode of transport? Compare it with the pictures of the horse-drawn tram (Fig. 22) and the electric tram. Notice the inversion of the numbers involved: the horse drawn tram or electric tram needed only one operator while a single traveler required several people. Fig. 20. Scene by Robert Grindlay of Bombay, 1826.

A number of palanquins are being carried across the square.

Fig. 22. Colaba Causeway, late nineteenth century.

Notice that the trams are being drawn by horses. You can see stables for horses on the left and the Tram Company's offices in the background.

Ans. The palanquins were used by the rich people, big businessmen and their wives and also by the families of the Europeans. These reflected a traditional and exclusive method of transportation. The trams were used by the middle class workers and the poor, as here many people could travel together in one tram over a long distance, requiring only one operator to drive it. In contrast, the palanquin required at least four persons to carry it, usually with only one passenger in it.

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1. Imagine that you are a young person living in a chawl. Describe one day in your life.

Ans. I am living along with many other young factory labourers in this small chawl and life is miserable. This morning before we started for work, the landlord came and started demanding the overdue rent. Last night, I could not sleep due to the poor ventilation in the room. The common toilet at the end of the passage in front of our room is meant to be used by residents of 14 rooms and so we waste a lot of time in queuing up for using the toilet. When I return from work in the evening, I have some time to play in the open ground in front of the chawl, like other children and young persons. This is the only enjoyable part of life in our chawl. We watch some performers showing off their art and we contribute some small amounts of money and give it to them for enjoying their performance. Afterwards, I sit with my roommates for discussions about how the day went and exchange all the news. Then we get down to cooking dinner and eat it together before we go off to sleep.

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1. Read Source D. What does the poem communicate about the opportunities and experience for each new generation?

Source D

The Many Sides of Bombay

My father came down the Sahyadris
A quilt over his shoulder
He stood at your doorstep
With nothing but his labour
.....
I carried a tiffin box
To the mill since childhood
I was cast the way
A smith forges a hammer
I learned my ropes
Working on a loom
Learnt on occasion
To go on strike
My father withered away toiling
So will I, and will my little ones
Perhaps they too face such sad nights
Wrapped in coils of darkness
Excerpted from the poem Maze Vidyapeeth (1975) by Narayan Surve

The verses of this poem are a stark contrast to the glittering world of films, pointing to the endless toil which new migrants encounter in the city.

Ans. The poem communicates the endless toil that migrants have to go through when they come to the city. They sell their labour while living in very difficult conditions. It talks about one such worker who worked as a

labourer all his life and now his child is also working as a labourer. He knows that like his father and himself, his child will also work in the same conditions, and also his child's child. He had come to the city with the hope of many opportunities for improvement in his life, but his experience has been otherwise. The poem depicts the misery and alienation of migrant labour and the lack of opportunities available to them for development.

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1. **Compare the examples of the work done by Baron Haussmann in Paris and Lee Kuan Yew, almost a hundred years later, in Singapore.**

Discuss if physical comfort and beauty in the city can be introduced only by controlling social and private life. In your opinion, is this a good enough reason for the government to make rules about the way in which people should live their personal lives?

Ans. Comparison Both Haussman and Yew planned to make life more livable in the two cities, but the methods adopted were different, partly due to the different times that they operated in. While Hausmann's Paris had no place for the common man (350,000 people were displaced from the centre of Paris), Yew ensured that physical beauty was not given precedence over the living rights of the people.

He controlled the social life of the people and ensured uniformity of economic processes for all. Hausmann's approach was to give civic amenities to the rich at the cost of others.

Discussion Yes, I agree that government should make rules that govern the way people should live their lives, because one person's way of living life will affect all others who are in contact with him. People who do not have a civic sense and do not take responsibility in this regard need to be trained for this. This method of rebuilding cities will alter the lives of citizens so that they can really have a better life.

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1. **Write out a notice from the Bengal Smoke Nuisance. Commission to the owner of a factory pointing out the dangers and harmful effects of industrial smoke.**

Ans. Calcutta
To,

21 May, 1920

The Manager,
XYZ Factory Ltd,
Calcutta

Sub. Notice regarding excessive emission of smoke from your factory

Dear Sir,

This is to bring to your notice that your factory has been releasing excessive smoke in the atmosphere, which is not within the permissible limits. This causes the following harmful effects

(a) It causes air pollution in the area around the factory, where a large number of people are living.

(b) The grass and vegetables being grown by people in the area are becoming black due to the smoke and we have received many complaints from the residents in your area.

(c) This smoke is causing many respiratory diseases among the people in your area.

You are therefore directed to make proper arrangements to reduce this smoke emission immediately so that it is reduced significantly within 14 days of the issue of this notice. Kindly confirm your compliance in this regard. Any non-compliance to this notice will make you liable to penal action as per the laws.

Yours faithfully,

Sd/-

(Commissioner)

Bengal Smoke Nuisance Commission

Exercises – Write in brief

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- 1. Give two reasons why the population of London expanded from the middle of the eighteenth century?**

Ans. Two reasons why the population of London expanded from the middle of the eighteenth century are

 - (i) The city of London was a magnet for the migrant populations due to the job opportunities provided by its dockyards and industries. People from the regions around London migrated to the city for employment in the dockyard and the industries. So, the population of London kept expanding through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.
 - (ii) During the First World War, London began manufacturing motor cars and electrical goods. This increased the number of large factories, which in turn increased the number of people coming to the city in search of work.
- 2. What were the changes in the kind of work available to women in London between the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries? Explain the factors which led to this change.**

Ans.

 - (i) In the 18th and 19th centuries, a large number of women were employed in the factories because during that period, most of the production activities were carried out with the help of the family.
 - (ii) With technological developments, women gradually lost their industrial jobs and were forced to work within households. According to the 1861 Census, about a quarter million women worked as domestic servants in London, most of them were from migrant families.
 - (iii) However, in the 20th century, women again started getting employed in wartime industries and offices because most of the male citizens were fighting at the front.
 - (iv) Many women increased their family income by taking lodgers or paying guests. Some earned their living through tailoring, washing or matchbox making.
- 3. How does the existence of a large urban population affect each of the following? Illustrate with historical examples,**

 - (a) A private landlord.**
 - (b) A Police Superintendent in charge of law and order.**
 - (c) A leader of a political party.**

Ans.

 - (a) The existence of a large urban population meant that there would be many people requiring a place to stay. The increased demand for places to stay was profitable for private landlords who could rent out rooms at high rates. In nineteenth century London, individual landlords profited by this trend of migration in search of jobs by people from the countryside.
 - (b) The existence of a large urban population will cause more crimes, social conflict and rebellion. Police are responsible for maintaining law and order. Hence, a Police Superintendent would definitely have increased work on his/her hands. In nineteenth century London, policemen had a tough time controlling crime during the migrant influx. In the 1870s, there were 20,000 criminals living in London. The job of a policeman was made more complex in hunting down pick-pockets, thieves, cheats and tricksters, as their numbers kept on increasing.
 - (c) The existence of a large urban population causes many social problems, such as problems of housing, food, water, etc. These issues become political issues when they are taken up by political parties. A political party and its leaders can mobilize the masses to support them in these political causes. This was the case in 19th century London also and so the politicians became very active.

4. Give explanations for the following

(a) Why did the well off Londoners supported the need to build housing for the poor in the nineteenth century?

(b) Why a number of Bombay films were about the lives of migrations?

(c) What led to the major expansion of Bombay's population in the mid-nineteenth century?

Ans. (a) Well-off Londoners supported the need to build housing for the poor in the nineteenth century for the following reasons

- One-room houses in which the poor lived were seen as the breeding ground of diseases, and hence, a threat to public health. They did not have proper sanitation.
- They were thought of as fire hazards because they were over-crowded and badly ventilated.
- There was a widespread fear of social disorder, especially after the 1917 Russian Revolution.

So, housing schemes were undertaken to avoid a rebellion by the poor, which was supported by the well-off people.

(b) After the British administration replaced Surat with Bombay as its principal Western port, there was a consequent increase in trade and industries, leading to a great influx of people. Thus, migrants were (and still are) an important facet of Bombay. Most of the people in the film industry were migrants themselves from Punjab, Gujarat, Madras, Calcutta and other areas of India. They wanted to portray the plight of this class of people through films. Thus, a number of Bombay films were about the lives of migrants.

(c) In the mid-seventeenth century, Bombay became East India Company's principal Western port, replacing Surat. Later, by the end of the nineteenth century, it had become an important administrative as well as industrial centre. A large number of textile mills had started, which gave jobs to people. All through these years, the prospects for trade and commerce as well as employment kept increasing, leading to a major expansion of Bombay's population.

Discuss

1. What forms of entertainment came up in the 19th century England to provide leisure activities for the people?

Ans. (i) There had long been an annual 'London Season' for wealthy Britishers. In the late eighteenth century, several cultural events, such as the Opera, the theatre and the classical music performances were organized for an elite group of 300-400 families.

(ii) Pubs were the main areas for working classes to meet to have a drink, exchange news and sometimes also to organize for political action.

(iii) Music halls were popular among the lower classes and by the early twentieth century, cinema became the great mass entertainment for mixed audiences.

(iv) British industrial workers were increasingly encouraged to spend their holidays by the sea, so as to derive the benefits of the Sun and the bracing winds.

(v) Libraries, art galleries and museums were established in the nineteenth century.

2. Explain the social changes in London which led to the need for the underground railway? Why was the development of the underground criticized?

Ans. Social change which led to the need of the underground railway was mainly industrialization was the major factor responsible for urbanization in London. London continued to expand and its population multiplied fourfold. Due to this, city had extended beyond the range where people could walk to work. So, the planners realized the need for a means of public transport. The development of the Underground was criticized because

- The development of railway led to a massive displacement of the poor.

- To make approximately two miles of railway about 900 houses had to be destroyed.
- Many felt that the "iron monsters" added to the mess and unhealthiness of the city.

3. Explain what is meant by the Haussmanisation of Paris? To what extent would you support or oppose this form of development? Write a letter to the editor of a newspaper, to either support or oppose this, giving reasons for your view.

Ans. Haussmanisation of Paris In 1852, Napoleon III became the ruler of Paris and decided to rebuild Paris. The chief architect of the new Paris was Baron Haussmann. He designed straight, broad avenues or boulevards, and open spaces and transplanted full grown trees. The poor were evicted from the centre of Paris to reduce the possibility of political rebellion and to beautify the city. By 1870, about one-fifth of the streets of Paris were the creation of Haussmann. Policemen were employed, night patrols began and bus shelters and tap water introduced. This rebuilding of Paris is called 'Haussmanisation of Paris'. I will support this move because the 'Haussmanisation of Paris' had its benefits too. Public works employed nearly one in five working people. Haussmann's work was criticized by the wealthy and poor alike during his time, but Paris became a symbol of civic pride for the French and it became the nucleus of many new architectural, social and intellectual developments that influenced other parts of the world in the twentieth century.

Letter to the Editor of a Newspaper

Do it yourself, but base your letter on the facts given above.

4. To what extent does government regulations and new laws solve problems of pollution? Discuss one example each of the success and failure of legislation to change the quality of

(a) Public life

(b) Private life

Ans. Government laws can be effective to control the pollution in a city, provided they can be properly enforced. People find ways of getting around laws. So, apart from legislations, government also needs to carry out intensive public awareness programmes aimed at educating the public about the need and ways of controlling pollution and how they also have a stake in environmental governance.

Examples to show the success of legislation to change the quality of

(a) Public Life The Bengal Smoke Nuisance Commission was successful in controlling industrial smoke in colonial Calcutta.

(b) Private Life The British Government passed the Clean Air Act in 1956. This law was aimed at controlling domestic sources of smoke pollution by introducing the concept of smokeless zones. In these areas, smokeless fuels had to be burnt. As a result, air pollution in British cities was substantially reduced. Examples to show the failure of legislation to change the quality of.

(a) Public Life By the 1840s, British cities such as Derby, Leeds and Manchester had smoke control laws in place. However, these laws did not succeed much in controlling smoke emission. Since smoke was not easy to monitor or measure, it was easy for factory and steam engine owners to get away with small adjustments to their machinery, and this did nothing to reduce the amount of smoke significantly.

(b) Private Life During the colonial period, a huge population depended on dung and wood as fuel in their daily life. This was an important source of air pollution in Calcutta. Though successful in controlling industrial smoke, the Bengal Smoke Nuisance Commission found it difficult to control this domestic smoke.