

Chapter-06

Colonialism and the City: The Story of an Imperial Capital

What Happened to Cities Under Colonial Rule:

1. In most part of the Western world modern cities emerged with industrialization.
2. In the late 18th century, Calcutta, Bombay and Madras rose in importance as Presidency cities (centres of administration) .
3. De-urbanisation took place in many cities in 19th century and those cities were Machlipatnam, Surat and Seringapatam.
4. De-urbanisation occurred due to reduction of demand of goods, reduced trade and establishment of new centres of administration. .

How many 'Delhis' before New Delhi:

1. Delhi has been the capital for more than a 1,000 years, although with some gaps.
2. Shah Jahan built the most splendid capital of all, Shahjahanabad had begun in 1639.
3. During Shah Jahan's time Delhi was an important centre of Sufi culture.
4. There were sharp divisions between the rich and the poor.
5. Red fort and Jama Masjid were the two prominent buildings of Shahjahanabad surrounded by 14 gated wall.

The Making of New Delhi: In 1803, the British gained control of Delhi after defeating the Marathas and the modern Delhi developed after 1911 when it became the capital of British India. British tried to rule through Delhi as it had been the seat to administration since Medieval time period and people always saw it as the place of central authority.

Demolishing a Past:

1. In Delhi especially in the first half of the 19th century, the British lived along with the wealthier Indians in the Walled city.
2. The British learned to enjoy Urdu Persian culture and poetry and participated in local festivals.
3. The British wanted Delhi to forget its Mughal past. The areas around the Fort were

completely cleared of gardens, pavilions and mosques.

4. In 1870s the Western walls of Shahjahanabad were broken to establish the railway and to allow the city to expand beyond the walls.
5. Later British settled in civil lines in North Delhi.
6. Time period between 1830 to 1857 is also considered as Renaissance (rebirth of art and literature) period but after revolt of 1857, Delhi saw the destruction by British.
7. British tried to capture every symbol of Mughals administration and started using British culture and education to influence Indians.
8. Colleges were established and a new pattern of infrastructure was introduced.

Planning a New Capital:

1. After the revolt of 1857, many spectacular events were held there. In 1877, Viceroy Lytton organized a Durbar to acknowledge Queen Victoria as the Empress of India.
2. In 1911, when King George V was crowned in England, a Durbar was held in Delhi to celebrate the occasion and the decision was taken to shift the capital of India from Calcutta to Delhi.
3. Edward Lutyens and Herbert Baker-architects were called on to design New Delhi and its buildings.
4. British wanted to give importance to Delhi as a centre of power because it has always been as a centre of administration under various rulers and people still considered it as seat of rulers.
5. When the new capital was designed emphasis was given to Roman-Greek architecture and old Delhi was left to expand without any plan
6. A stark contrast was visible in between the old Delhi and new Delhi in terms of development and administration.

Life in the Time of Partition:

1. The partition of India in 1947 led to a massive transfer of populations on both sides of the new border.
2. Days after Indian Independence and partition, fierce rioting began.
3. Over two-thirds of the Delhi Muslims migrated almost 44,000 homes were abandoned.
4. Partitions changed the lives and occupations of new migrants.
5. The large migration from Punjab changed the social milieu of Delhi.

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6. Thousands of people were forced to leave their house and they were soon occupied by the emigrants.
 7. Houses were burnt. people were threatened and total scinario of living and survivals has been changed. People were forced to live in shanties and lived in camps in dirty situation.

Inside the Old City:

1. The excellent system of water supply and drainage was neglected in the 19th century. The system of wells also broke down and channels to remove household waste were damaged.
2. At the end of 19th century the Shahjahani drains were closed; a new system of open surface drains was introduced.
3. The city was left to expend in uneven manner and city grew unplanned.

The Decline of Havelis:

1. The Mughal aristocracy in the 17th and 18th centuries lived in grand mansions called havelis.
2. Havelis had large walled compounds with mansions, courtyards and fountains and many families housed in it.
3. Many of the Mughal amirs were unable to maintain these havelies under the conditions of British. As a result havelis began to be subdivided and sold. the street fronts also get converted in shops.
4. Havelis were soon occupied by emigrants and were subdivided. Soon, they lost their significant architecture and got converted into small and cojusted houses.

The Municipality:

1. The census of 1931 revealed that the walled city area was crowded with as many as 90 persons per acre, while New Delhi had only about three persons per acre.
2. The poor conditions in the walled city, did not stop it from expanding.
3. In 1888, an extension scheme called the 'Lahore Gate improvement Scheme' was planned by 'Robert Clarke' for the Walled city residents but it was not a success.
4. The Delhi Improvement Trust was set up in 1936, and it built areas like Darya Ganj South for wealthy Indians.

Difference between the old and new Delhi architecture:

1. Old city was very congested and no pattern of housing was seen; but New Delhi was constructed with wide roads and large dimensions.
2. Dirty roads and bad sewage conditions were hallmarks of old city but New Delhi saw a better planning of sewage and cleanliness.
3. There was no existence of parks, trees and gardens but in New Delhi source of fresh air and a peaceful life were given consideration.
4. No pattern of markets was present in old Delhi, instead in New Delhi a well developed pattern could be seen.
5. Buildings were old with haveli style and in New Delhi Rome and Greek style was followed.
6. Raisina Hill was chosen to establish the New Delhi as a symbol of supremacy.