
Chapter – 6 History

Town, Traders and Craftspersons

- One of the most interesting aspects of the medieval period in the 17th century was the growth of urbanization.
 - The Arabs, Turkish and Afghans settled in many parts of the country leading to the evolution of towns and cities.
 - **Sources of Knowing About the History of this Period:**
 - (i) The sources of history are travelers' accounts.
 - (ii) Monserrate, Flitch, Thomas Roe, Domingo Paes, Nicolo Conti and Abdul Razzaq Samarqandi wrote about the life of this period.
 - **Court Towns:**
 - (i) Some of the important court towns were Lahore, Agra, Fatehpur Sikri and Delhi.
 - (ii) Fatehpur Sikri was the new capital founded by Akbar.
 - (iii) Delhi was known as Shahjahanabad and was built by Shah Jahan in 1639.
 - **Port and Trading Towns:**
 - (i) Some towns developed as ports due to their proximity to the sea shore.
 - (ii) Some major ports were Cambay, Surat, Broach, Masulipatanam, Nagapattinam, etc.
 - **Administrative Towns:**
 - (i) Some towns were capital cities. They were centres of administration.
 - (ii) Thanjavur and Uraiyur were important centres.
 - **Temple Towns and Pilgrimage Centres:**
 - (i) Temple towns were important centres of urbanization and led to development of cities, economy and society.
 - (ii) Pilgrims gave huge donations to temples. This wealth was used by temple authorities to finance their trade and banking.
 - (iii) Some such important towns were Somnath, Madurai, Trupati, Vrindavan, Ajmer, etc.
 - **How important was Bronze:**
 - (i) Bronze is an alloy compound of copper and tin.
 - (ii) Chola rulers used this metal to make statues through the 'lost wax' technique.
 - **Emergence of Small Towns:**
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- (i) From the 8th century onwards, small towns emerged in India. They emerged from large villages. They had a 'mandapika' where villagers sold their produce.
 - (ii) Likewise, there were market streets, called 'hatta', full of shops.
 - (iii) Many villagers came to buy local articles and sell products like horses, camphor, saffron betel nut, spices, salt, etc.
 - (iv) Normally a Samanta was appointed who fortified the palaces and gave the right to collect taxes from traders, artisans, etc.

- **Name of Traders:**

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

- **Crafts in Towns:**

- (i) Craft work was famous by the name of Bidri in the region.
 - (ii) The goldsmith, bronzesmith, blacksmith, masons and carpenters were together called as the 'Panchalas' or 'Vishwakarma'.
 - (iii) Some other crafts were cotton cleaning, spinning and dyeing.
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