
Chapter – 06 History

Colonialism and the City: The Story of an Imperial Capital

- **What Happened to Cities Under Colonial Rule:**

- (i) In most part of the Western world modern cities emerged with industrialization.
- (ii) In the late 18th century, Calcutta, Bombay and Madras rose in importance as Presidency cities.
- (iii) De-urbanisation took place in many cities in 19th century and those cities were Machipatnam, Surat and Seringapatam.

- **How many 'Delhis' before New Delhi:**

- (i) Delhi has been the capital for more than a 1,000 years, although with some gaps.
- (ii) Shah Jahan built the most splendid capital of all, Shahjahanabad had begun in 1639.
- (iii) During Shah Jahan's time Delhi was an important centre of Sufi culture.
- (iv) There were sharp divisions between the rich and the poor.

- **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.

- **Demolishing a Past:**

- (i) In Delhi especially in the first half of the 19th century, the British lived along with the wealthier Indians in the Walled city.
- (ii) The British learned to enjoy Urdu Persian culture and poetry and participated in local festivals.
- (iii) The British wanted Delhi to forget its Mughal past. The areas around the Fort were completely cleared of gardens, pavilions and mosques.
- (iv) In 1870s the Western walls of Shahjahanabad were broken to establish the railway and to allow the city to expand beyond the walls.

- **Planning a New Capital:**

- (i) 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.
- (ii) 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.
- (iii) Edward Lutyens and Herbert Baker-architects were called on to design New Delhi and its buildings

- **Life in the Time of Partition:**

- (i) The partition of India in 1947 led to a massive transfer of populations on both sides of the new border.
 - (ii) Days after Indian Independence and partition, fierce rioting began.
 - (iii) Over two-thirds of the Delhi Muslims migrated almost 44,000 homes were abandoned.
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- (iv) Partitions changed the lives and occupations of new migrants.
 - (v) The large migration from Punjab changed the social milieu of Delhi.
 - **Inside the Old City:**
 - (i) 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.
 - (ii) At the end of 19th century the Shahjahani drains were closed; a new system of open surface drains was introduced.
 - **The Decline of Havelis:**
 - (i) The Mughal aristocracy in the 17th and 18th centuries lived in grand mansions called havelis.
 - (ii) Havelis had large walled compounds with mansions, courtyards and fountains and many families housed in it.
 - (iii) 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 Municipality:**
 - (i) 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.
 - (ii) The poor conditions in the walled city, did not stop it from expanding.
 - (iii) In 1888 an extension scheme called the Lahore Gate improvement Scheme was planned by Robert Clarke for the Walled city residents.
 - (iv) The Delhi Improvement Trust was set up in 1936, and it built areas like Darya Ganj South for wealthy Indians.
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