

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.