

## Lesson at a Glance

- There were three **types of medieval towns**—a temple town, an administrative centre, and a commercial town or a port town.
- **Thanjavur**, the capital of the Cholas a thousand years ago, emerged as an administrative centre as well as a temple town.
- The perennial river Kaveri flows near this beautiful town. The famous Rajarajeshvara temple built by King Rajaraja Chola, lies here.
- As Thanjavur was an administrative centre, Kings held courts in the **mandapas**, which were parts of palaces, issuing orders to their subordinates.
- **Temple towns** represent a very important pattern of urbanisation, the process by which cities develop.
- Rulers built temples to demonstrate their devotion to various deities.
- Important temple towns were Bhilashvamin in Madhya Pradesh, Somnath in Gujarat, Kanchipuram and Madurai in Tamil Nadu and Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh.
- Pilgrimage centres also developed into townships. *Examples*—Vrindavan in Uttar Pradesh and Tiruvannamalai in Tamil Nadu.
- Small towns emerged from large villages. They usually had a *mandapika* or *mandi* of later times to which nearly villages brought their produce to sell. They also had market streets called *hatta* or *haat* of later times lined with shops.
- Different kinds of artisans such as potters, oil pressers, sugar makers, toddy makers, smiths, etc. also lived in these towns.
- There were many kinds of traders. They usually travelled in caravans and formed guilds to protect their interests.
- There were also communities like the Chettiers and the Marwari Oswal. Gujarati traders traded extensively with the ports of the Red Sea, Persian Gulf, East Africa, South-east Asia and China.
- Indian spices such as pepper, cinnamon, nutmeg, etc. became very popular in the European homes. Indian cotton cloth was also in great demand. This eventually drew European traders to India.
- The craftspersons of Bidar were very famous. Their inlay work in copper and silver came to be known as Bidri.

- The Panchalas or Vishwakarma community, consisting of goldsmiths, bronzesmiths, blacksmiths, masons and carpenters contributed a lot in the building of temples.
- The weavers such as the Saliyar or Kaikkolars also donated to temples.
- Hampi was the capital of the Vijayanagara Empire. The architecture of Hampi was distinctive. It bustled with commercial and cultural activities during the 15-16th centuries.
- Moors, Chettis and agents of European traders thronged the markets of Hampi.
- Temples were the **hub of cultural activities**.
- Hampi fell into ruin following the defeat of Vijayanagara in 1565 by the Deccani Sultans.
- Surat in Gujarat was an **cosmopolitan city**. People of all castes and creeds lived there.
- The textiles of Surat were famous for their gold lace borders known as *zari* and had a market in west Asia, Africa and Europe.
- The Kathiawad *seths* or *mahajans* had huge banking houses at Surat. The Surat *hundis* were honoured in the far-off markets of Cairo in Egypt, Basra in Iraq and Antwerp in Belgium.
- Surat began to decline towards the end of the 17th century.
- The town of Masulipatnam was a centre of intense activity in the 17th century. As it became the most important port on the Andhra coast both the Dutch and English East India Companies attempted to control it.
- The Qutb Shahi rulers of Golconda decided to prevent the attempts of the various East India Companies. As a result fierce competition among various trading groups made the city populous and prosperous. However, Golconda was annexed by Aurangzeb in 1686-1687.
- This caused the European Companies to look for the alternatives. The Company traders moved to Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. This caused the decline of Masulipatnam in the 18th century.
- **The English** emerged as the **most successful commercial and political power** in the subcontinent.
- Indian textiles were in great demand in Europe and west Asia. More and more people began to engage themselves in the crafts of spinning, weaving, bleaching, dyeing, etc. But the craftspersons

- were no more independent. They now began to work on a system of advances which meant that they had to weave cloth which was already promised to European agents.
- Bombay, Calcutta and Madras became important cities in the 18th century.
  - The Europeans established Black Towns in these new cities and merchants and artisans were made to move there.
  - The 'white' rulers occupied the superior residences of Fort St George in Madras or Fort St William in Calcutta.

### ■ TEXTBOOK QUESTIONS SOLVED ■

#### Let's Recall

**Q. 1.** Fill in the blanks:

- The Rajarajeshvara temple was built in .....
- Ajmer is associated with the Sufi saint .....
- Hampi was the capital of the ..... Empire.
- The Dutch established a settlement at ..... in Andhra Pradesh.

- Ans.** (a) early 11th century  
 (b) Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti  
 (c) Vijayanagara  
 (d) Masulipatnam

**Q. 2.** State whether true or false:

- We know the name of the architect of the Rajarajeshvara temple from an inscription.
- Merchants preferred to travel individually rather than in caravans.
- Kabul was a major centre for trade in elephants.
- Surat was an important trading port on the Bay of Bengal.

- Ans.** (a)—T, (b)—F, (c)—F, (d)—F.

**Q. 3.** How was water supplied to the city of Thanjavur?

- Ans.** Water supply for the city of Thanjavur came from wells and tanks.

**Q. 4.** Who lived in the 'Black Towns' in cities such as Madras?

- Ans.** Merchants, artisans (such as weavers), native traders and craftsmen lived in the 'Black Towns'.

#### Let's Understand

**Q. 5.** Why do you think towns grew around temples?

- Ans.** The following factors are responsible for the growth of towns around temples :

(a) A large number of priests, workers, artisans, traders, etc. settled near the temple.

(b) They catered to the various needs of the people as well as of pilgrims who flocked to the temples. By and by towns grew, which came to be known as temple towns.

**Q. 6.** How important were craftsmen for the building and maintenance of temples?

- Ans.** Craftsmen played an important role in the building and maintenance of temples :

(i) The Vishwakarma community consisting of goldsmith, bronzesmiths, blacksmiths, masons and carpenters were essential to the building of temples.

(ii) Weavers such as the Saliyar or Kaikkolars were prosperous communities and they made ample donations to temples.

(iii) The craftsmen of Bidar were skilled in their inlay work in copper and silver. They were also important for the building and maintenance of temples in their own way.

**Q. 7.** Why did people from distant lands visit Surat?

- Ans.** People from distant lands visited Surat because of the following reasons:

(i) Surat was the gateway for trade with West Asia via the Gulf of Ormuz.

(ii) Surat has also been called the gate to Mecca because many pilgrim ships set sail from here.

(iii) There was a big market for cotton textiles. One could find several retail and wholesale shops selling cotton textiles.

(iv) The textiles of Surat were famous for their gold lace borders, i.e. zari and had a market in West Asia, Africa and Europe.

(v) There were ample rest-houses for the visitors. Magnificent buildings and innumerable pleasure parks attracted people of far-off places.

**Q. 8.** *In what ways was craft production in cities like Calcutta different from that in cities like Thanjavur?*

**Ans.** The craft production in Thanjavur was in form of inlay work in copper and silver while in Calcutta it was in the form of cotton textiles, jute textiles and silk textiles.

### Let's Discuss

**Q. 9.** *Compare any one of the cities described in this chapter with a town or a village with which you are familiar. Do you notice any similarities or differences?*

**Ans.** Attempt yourself.

