

Colonialism and the city- The story of an Imperial Capital.

Q1. Why did the port cities of Surat and Machlipatnam decline by the late 18th Century?

Ans. In late 18th century Calcutta, Bombay and Madras new centre’s of administration emerged.

Q2. Mention the presidency cities of the British in 18th century.

Ans. In late 18th century, Calcutta, Bombay and Madras this cities were used for administrative purpose.

Q3. What is urbanization?

Ans. When more and more people begin to reside in towns and cities leaving their villages, is called urbanization.

Q4. What is de – urbanization?

Ans. Earlier centres of regional power collapsed when local rulers were defeated by the British and new centres of administration emerged. This process is often described as de – urbanization.

Q5. When was Delhi established as the capital of British India? Ans. The historic imperial city of Delhi became a dusty provincial town in the 19th century before it was rebuilt as the capital of British India after 1912.

Q6. Why is the period from 1830 to 1857 known as the period of Delhi renaissance?

• Literally, rebirth of art and learning. It is a term often used to describe a time when there is great creative activity.

• Before 1857, developments in Delhi were somewhat different from those in other colonial cities. In Madras, Bombay or Calcutta, the living spaces if Indians and the British were sharply separated.

• Indians lived in the “black” areas while the British lived in well-laid out “white” areas. In Delhi, especially in the first half of the nineteenth century the British lived along with the wealthier Indians in the walled city.

• The British learned to enjoy Urdu/ Persian culture and poetry and participated in local festivals.

• The establishment of the Delhi College in 1792 led to a great intellectual flowering in the sciences as well as humanities, largely in the Urdu language.

• Many refer to the period from 1830 to 1857 as a period of the Delhi renaissance.

Q7. How did the British change Delhi after the revolt of 1857?

¬ The British wanted Delhi to forget its Mughal past.

¬ The area around the Fort was completely cleared of gardens, pavilions and mosques (though temples were left intact).

¬ The British wanted a clear ground for security reasons. Mosques in particular were either destroyed or put to other uses.

¬ For instance the Zinatal- Masjid was converted into a bakery. No worship was allowed in the Jama Masjid for five years.

¬ One –third of the city was demolished, and its canal was filled up. In the 1870s’, the western walls of Shahjahanavab were broken to establish the railway and to allow the city to expand beyond the walls

¬ The British now began living in the sprawling civil lines area that came up in the north, away from the Indians in the walled city. The Delhi College was turned into a school, and shut down in 1877.

Q8. Why the British did chose to hold a grand Darbar in Delhi although it was not the capital?

¬ On 1877, Victory Lytton organized a Darbar to acknowledge Queen Victoria as the Empress of India. Calcutta was still the capital of British India, but the grand Darbar was being held in Delhi.

¬ During the revolt, the British had realised that the Mughal emperor was still important to the people and they saw him as their leader.

¬ It was therefore important to celebrate British pomp and show in the city the Mughal emperors had earlier ruled, and the place which had turned into a rebel stronghold in 1857.

Q9. How did the partition affect life of Delhi?

• The Partition of India in 1947 led to a massive transfer of population on both sides of the new border. As a result, the population of Delhi swelled, the kinds of jobs people did changed and the culture of the city because different.

• Days after Indian independence and Partition, fierce rioting began thousands of people in Delhi were killed and their homes looted and burned. As streams of Muslims left Delhi for Pakistan, their place was taken by equally large numbers of Sikh and Hindu refugees from Pakistan.

• Refugee roomed the streets of Shajahanabad, searching for empty homes to occupy. At times they forced Muslims to leave or sell their properties. Over two – third of the Delhi Muslims migrated almost 44,000 homes were abandoned. Terrorised Muslims lived in makeshift camps till they could leave for Pakistan.

• At the same time, Delhi became a city of refugees. Most of these migrants were from Punjab. They stayed in campus, schools, military barracks and gardens, hoping to build new homes. Some got the opportunity to occupy residences that had been vacated; others were housed in refugee colonies. New colonies such as Lajpat Nagar and Tilak Nagar came up at this time. Shops and stalls were set up to cater to the demands of the Mizrants; schools and colleges were also opened.

• The skills and occupations of the refugees were quite different from those of the people they replaced.

• Many of the Muslims who went to Pakistan were artisans, pitty traders and labourers.

• The new migrants coming to Delhi were rural landlords, lawyers, teachers, traders and small shopkeepers. Partition changed their lives and their occupations. They had to take up new jobs as hawkers, vendors’ carpenters and ironsmiths. Many, however prospered in their new business.

Q10. How did old city of Delhi change under British rule?

¬ New Delhi was constructed as a 10-square-mile city on Raisina Hill, south of the existing city. Two architects, Edward Lutyens and Herbert Baker, were called on to design New Delhi and its buildings.

¬ The government complex in New Delhi consisted of a two-mile avenue, Kingsway (now Rajpath), that led to the Viceroy’s Palace (now RashtrapatiBhavan), with the Secretariat buildings.

¬ The features of these government buildings were borrowed from India’s imperial history, but the overall look was Classical Greece (fifth century BCE).

¬ For instance, the central dome of the Viceroy’s Palace was copied from the Buddhist stupa at Sanchi, and the red sandstone and carved screens or jails were borrowed from Mughal architecture. But the new buildings had to assert British importance: that is why the architect made sure that the Viceroy’s Palace was higher than Shah Jahan’s Jama Masjid.