



**THE DEURBANISATION OF INDIA:** The process of people moving back from urban to rural areas is called ruralisation or deurbanisation, and is normally a reflection of decline of the economy.

▪ **‘Why was there deurbanisation in colonial India?’**

▪ The Industrial Revolution resulted in a growing demand for raw materials for factories in Europe. The factories, in turn, required large markets for the finished products. The supply of raw cotton to the mills of Manchester, the textile hub of Britain, was hard hit when the Civil War broke out in North America between 1861 and 1863.

▪ Laws were also introduced in Britain, banning the import of finished textiles from India.

▪ Cloth from Manchester flooded the international market, where goods from Bengal had once dominated. India became a source of cheap raw material for British mills, and market for its finished goods.

▪ **THE GROWTH OF NEW URBAN CENTRES:** In the course of time, new urban centres came up in India. Unlike the ancient and medieval towns these new centres did not evolve overtime in response to the socio-economic needs of the region. They were established as a result of policy decisions of the European trading countries and their respective government.

▪ **Ports:** The first urban settlements of the European colonists in India were ports, For example, Madras, Calcutta and Bombay. This was because the colonists were primarily traders and by then almost all the trade with Europe and the rest of Asia took place over the seas.

▪ **Panned cities:** Then there were the planned cities which came up in the interior of India, like New Delhi. They were built to serve a particular function, and were centrally located. For example, New Delhi was built to serve as the new capital of British India because it was central and easily accessible from all parts of the Empire.

▪ **Hill stations:** The British also developed several hill towns like Shimla, Darjeeling, Ooty and Dehra Dun. These came to be called ‘hill stations’. The British retreated to these hill stations each summer to escape the heat of the plains. Shimla served as the summer capital of the British Empire.

▪ **Features of the new urban centres**

▪ Many of the new urban centres like Calcutta and Madras developed around forts.

▪ The new cities had broad roads and large and imposing public buildings like government offices, public libraries, museums and town halls They also had parks, markets and clock towers.

▪ Most of the British in India lived outside the old walled town where the Indians lived. The areas where the Indians lived were generally crowded and conditions were often unhygienic, with few civic amenities.

▪ The part of the city where the British lived was generally divided into the civil lines and the military cantonment.

▪ **THE CREATION OF MUNICIPALITIES**

▪ As the cities grew in size, the British felt the need to introduce an effective system of urban administration. They created municipalities for this purpose.

▪ A municipality was a body of elected members that was responsible for the maintenance of sanitation and public health, and the provision of civil amenities like roads, electricity and piped drinking water.



- One of the main reasons for the creation of the municipalities was the lack of funds faced by the British government in India.
- The current structure of municipal bodies is based Lord Ripon's resolution on local self-government that was adopted in 1882. Ripon is, therefore, seen as the father of local administration in India.
- Ripon's resolution stressed the need to develop network of local bodies across the country, and need to involve local people in the management of their own affairs. The municipality was headed the mayor.
- However, the Indian members of municipalities were often divided along caste and communal lines, with people putting their religion and caste above the wellbeing of the community.

### **CITIES AS CENTRES OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION**

- Some of the most enduring systems established by the British in India include the railways and the post and telegraph system.
- Many of the big cities of the time also served as railway junctions, that is, points where railway lines from various places met.
- Many relatively unknown places grew into towns or cities because they were important railway junctions (modern Vishakhapatnam), Ambala Cantonment, Tundla and Vijayawada were important railway junctions around cities developed.
- Many of the important junctions also had railway colonies beside the station, where railway officials stayed.
- The cities also served as nerve centres for the post and telegraph services introduced by the British government. Cities and towns had large post and telegraph offices. If a telegram had to be sent from Delhi to a village near Calcutta, it would first be relayed by the post and telegraph office in Delhi to the one in Calcutta. From Calcutta, a postman would take the telegram to the village concerned.
- Thus, colonial cities served functions which were different from those performed by the cities and towns of ancient and medieval India.

### **MADRAS**

- In 1639, Francis Day and Andrew Cogan of the East India Company searched for a suitable place on the Coromandel Coast to set up a trading centre. They leased the village of Madraspatnam from the local ruler, Damarla Venkatapathy Nayak.
- Here they built a factory and a trading port. The fortified area came to be called Fort St George.
- The settlements around the fort where the British lived was called 'White Town', and the place where the Indians lived was called 'Black Town'.
- Madras became a naval base and the administrative centre of the British in South India.

### **BOMBAY**

- King Charles II of England leased Bombay to the East India Company, and later transferred it to them. The Company founded the modern city of Bombay, and moved their main holdings from Surat to Bombay.
- Through the 18th century, British power grew. Skilled workers and traders migrated to Bombay in search of better job.
- In 1853, the first passenger railway line in India was built between Bombay and Thane.



**CALCUTTA:** Murshidabad was the capital of Bengal Province till the time of Sirajudaula. As British power grew in India, so did the port town of Calcutta. It emerged in the late century as the political, economic, social, cultural centre of British power in India. They made Calcutta the capital of British India which continued till 1911, when they shifted to Delhi.

▪ Being the capital of British India, Calcutta had some of the finest buildings of that period—Howrah Bridge, Old Court House, High Court, the Great Eastern Hotel, Standard Chartered Bank, the Statesman building, Victoria Memorial etc.

**AGRICULTURE and COLONIALISM:** The English came as traders and became our masters. Slowly and gradually, they conquered India from South to East and then headed towards the North. They emerged as the supreme power in India.

▪ **Colonial Agrarian Policy and its Impact**

▪ Before the advent of the East India Company, the rural life in India was simple and self sufficient. The British brought many changes in the field of land revenue system, agriculture, trade, industry and administration to guard their own interest.

▪ As the British empire expanded, the amount of revenue was also increased. So much that land revenue became the biggest source of income for the Company.

▪ At this stage Land Revenue Settlements were introduced with an aim to legitimize the practice of economic exploitation. Therefore, the Zamindari System under the Permanent Settlement, was introduced in Bengal in 1793 by Lord Cornwallis.

▪ Large parts of South and West India were put under the Ryotwari system, whereas Punjab, North-West Provinces and Awadh came under Mahalwari system.

**ZAMINDARI SYSTEM:** Zamindari was made a hereditary right of the zamindars under the Permanent Settlement or the Zamindari Bandobast. They were made the owners of the land and were forced to pay 89% of the total revenue to the British government. Their own share was 11 %.

▪ The system gave birth to a new class of landlords called zamindars who had the power to evict any cultivator of the soil due to non-payment of revenue.

**RYOTWARI SYSTEM:** This system of land revenue was introduced by Thomas Munro in Madras in 1820. This system established a direct settlement between the government and the ryots, i.e. the cultivators. The revenue was directly collected from the cultivator and it was quite high.

**MAHALWARI SYSTEM:** It was introduced in 1822 in Gangetic Valley, North-West provinces, Central India and Punjab. In this system, a settlement was made collectively, with a group of villages called mahal. Since the land, the forests and the pastures belonged to the village community, the villages were jointly responsible for the payment of land revenue. It was levied on the produce of a mahal.

▪ The Mahalwari System proved to be a curse for the peasants in the form of impoverishment, eviction from land and exploitation at the hands of the moneylenders.

**Growth of Commercial Crops:** With strong footholds in South India, Bengal, Bihar and Odisha (the then Orissa), the East India Company wanted to collect maximum taxes to meet their military and administrative expenses.

▪ They also wanted to gain maximum profit. So, the company started using coercive methods to procure goods which were in great demand in Europe. The



agricultural raw material was purchased very low rates and sent to England. The finished goods were brought back to India and sold high prices to earn more profits. The Company forced the farmers to grow crops like indigo, cotton, raw silk, opium, pepper, tea, sugarcane, etc.

- Indigo, called neel in Hindi, was in great demand in the textile industries of Britain. The peasants, were forced to cultivate indigo plants to extract blue dye.
- The rising demand of sugar in the west, attracted many Europeans to set up sugar plantations in India. The farmers who produced gur (jaggery) for local requirement, were now forced to produce thickened sugarcane juice for the sugar factories and sell their produce at very low price.

**Condition of the Farmers:** Already suffering from natural calamities like floods, droughts, famines and over-burdened with high taxes, repayment of loans, debts and high rate of interests, the Indian farmers were leading a life of misery, poverty and frustration. As a result, many peasants, who failed to pay the land revenue lost their land and became landless labourers.

**Revolts by Farmers:** Whenever atrocities, repression and exploitation reach beyond a certain limit, there is a mass outburst in the form of revolt or rebellion. Some of injustices to farmers are:

1. Land Revenue Settlements and their administration.
2. Economic exploitation, especially of the rural masses.
3. Long standing loans and indebtedness.
4. Eviction of peasants from misery of landless labourers.

▪ It was only in 1930 that the organisation of Kisan Sabhas started supporting the cause of the peasants.

▪ **Colonialism and Tribal Societies:** the next target of British greeders was the tribals of India, who lived in deep forests and led a life of self-sufficiency. Their traditional economy was built around forests. They firmly believed that the forests belonged to them and they belonged to the forest.

▪ **Impact on the Tribal Life:** Almost every tribe had a tribal chief. But under the British rule, the chiefs lost all power and were forced to follow the laws made by the British officers in India. The Britishers did not want shifting cultivation because it was difficult to control. But the tribals forced the Britishers to allow them to continue shifting cultivation.

▪ Many tribals had to move to other areas in search livelihood. This created a shortage of labourers to cut trees for the railway sleepers and to transport logs.

▪ During the nineteenth century, when the demand for the forest produce increased, they went to the tribals and offered them cash loans.

▪ When the demand for Indian silk increased, efforts were made encourage silk production.

▪ The traders approached the growers. They gave them cash loans and collected cocoons from them. He just paid 3/- for one thousand cocoons and then sold them at five time more.

▪ A large number of tribals were recruited through contractors to work in the tea plantations in far off areas of Assam. They were paid low wages and were not allowed to go back home.

**Tribal Revolts:** revolt by Khasis, who lived in the Khasi hills of north-west Assam, took place in 1829. The construction of a road through their land united many Khasi chiefs against the English under the leadership of Bar Manik and Tirut Singh.



- In 1895, Birsa Munda, a young boy, emerged as hero of tribals. He urged them to work on their land to earn their living. This would end all their sufferings.
  - As the Birsa movement spread, the popularity of Birsa Munda also increased. He told his people that land policies of the British were destroying their traditional land system.
  - Birsa was jailed for two years but on his release, he instigated the tribals to attack zamindars. He raised the white flag as a symbol of Birsa Raj.
- Colonialism and Crafts and Industries:** Agriculture was the main occupation, there was no dearth of handicrafts, calico, muslin, wool and silk products. Metal works of iron, steel, copper, brass, gold and silver were also in great demand.
- In the seventeenth century, trade with European nations was in favour of India as we exported large quantities of fine cotton, silk fabrics, spices, indigo, drugs, precious stones and handicrafts.
  - Unfortunately, the Company's policy destroyed crafts, cottage industries and artisanship of India. Changes in the British trade policy forced the Indian craftsmen and artisans to give up their traditional livelihood. No doubt, the industrial revolution (1760-1830) in Britain and other European countries was also one of the reasons responsible for de-industrialisation of India.
  - All these factors started the process of ruining the traditional handicrafts and the decline in the national income of India.

- Modern Industries of India:** The impact of our national movement for freedom and international developments open the gates of modern industries in India. For example, tea became the biggest plantation industry in Assam, Bengal and South India. So much so that Indian tea topped the world market and England became its biggest buyer. The other plantation industries were coffee, cinchona and rubber.
- Industries like cotton, jute, iron and steel developed at a fast rate.
  - For example, with the expansion of railways, the demand for coal, iron and steel increased.
  - It was because of farsightedness and determination of Jamshed Ji Tata that world class famous company like Tata Iron and Steel Company came up.
  - With the passage of time, the cement, chemical and sugar industries also developed.