

Chapter 6: Towns, Traders And Craftspersons

Intext Questions:

Question 1: What would a traveller visiting a medieval town expect to find ?

Answer: A traveller visiting a medieval town is expected to find out what type of a town it is temple town, administrative centre, commercial town or a port town. etc.

Question 2: Why do you think people regarded Thanjavur as a great town?

Answer: Thanjavur was an example of temple town and was regarded as a great town:

1. It represented a pattern of urbanization and was central to the Chola economy.
2. It was the capital city on the delta of Kaveri with the most important temple Rajarajeshvara. It had tanks and wells for water supply and army barracks.
3. It had the mandapas or pavilions for royal court.
4. It had huge markets selling grains, spices, clothes and jewellery.
5. Many communities like the Sthapatis or sculpture makers, Saliya weavers related to temple activities lived here.
6. It was a great pilgrim town of the period.

Question 3:

Answer:

1. Through this technique the images of the lord were made exactly the same as it was carved out by the sculptor.
2. There was no need for the sculptor to make mental images.

Question 4: Make a list of towns in your district and try to classify these as 'administrative centres or as temple/pilgrim centres.

Answer: Our district is Muzaffarnagar

1. Administrative centres
 - Muzaffarnagar
 - Budhana
 - Jansath
 - Kairana
2. Temple centres
 - Shakumbra
 - Raipur
3. Pilgrim centre
 - Shukartal
4. Find out about your town in a similar way.

Question 5: Find out more about present-day taxes on markets; who collects these, how are they collected and what are they used for?

Answer: These days we pay many taxes on; property, houses, water, electricity, entertainment, road, import-export, license fee, VAT, etc.

1. These are collected by the agencies of the local, state and central government.
2. These are used for various public facilities provided by the governments and also for welfare work. These taxes help in the infrastructure development of the nation.

Question 6: As you can see, during this period there was a great circulation of people and goods. What impact do you think this would have had on the lives of people in towns and villages? Make a list of artisans living in towns.

Answer: The lives of the people in the towns were not settled. People moved from one place to another for business and trade.

1. List:

- Goldsmiths
- locksmiths
- Brass dealer
- Copperware milkers
- Weavers
- Potters.

Question 7: Why do you think the city was fortified?

Answer: The city was fortified to escape the threat of the invaders.

Question 8: Why did the English and the Dutch decide to establish settlements in Masulipatnam?

Answer: Because of port facilities and they can easily escape into the Sea with powerful navy strength when any threat happens to them. It had the convenience of the place where ships can anchor. It was a trade town connected to the hinterland. Due to all such reasons, the Dutch and the English decided to establish settlements in Masulipatnam.

IMAGINE:

Question: You are planning a journey from Surat to West Asia in the seventeenth century. What are the arrangements you will make?

Answer:

- We shall take textile goods with us.
- We must bring our native durable food.
- We must have a thought of adverse climate of a destination.
- We shall sail through Arabian sea.
- We shall visit PersianGulf countries, Saudi Arabia etc.

LET'S RECALL:

Question 1: Fill in the blanks:

1. The Rajarajeshvara temple was built in
2. Ajmer is associated with the Sufi saint
3. Hampi was the capital of theEmpire.
4. The Dutch established a settlement at inAndhra Pradesh.

Answer:

1. 1010 A.D.Thanjavur (Tamil Nadu)
2. Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti
3. Vijayanagara
4. Masulipatnam.

Question 2: State whether true or false:

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

Answer:

1. True
2. False; Since the merchants had to pass through many kingdoms and forests, they usually travelled in caravans and formed guilds to protect their interests.
3. False; Kabul was a major centre for trade in horses.
4. False; Surat Port is situated on the Western Coast of India.

Question 3: How was water supplied to the city of Thanjavur?

Answer: Thanjavur was situated near the perennial river Kaveri. It was from this river that water was supplied to the city. The water supply for the city came also from wells and tanks.

Question 4: Who lived in the “Black Towns” in cities such as Madras?

Answer: Merchants, artisans (such as weavers), native traders and craftsmen lived in “Black Towns” in the cities like Madras (during British rule).

LET'S UNDERSTAND:

Question 5: Why do you think towns grew around temples?

Answer: The towns grew around temples due to the following reasons:

1. Temples were often central to the economy and society.
2. Rulers, who built temples, donated land and money to carry out elaborate rituals, feed pilgrims and priests, and celebrate festivals.
3. Pilgrims who flocked to the temples also made donations.
4. Temple authorities used their wealth to finance, trade and banking.
5. Gradually, a large number of priests, workers, artisans, traders, etc. settle near the temple to cater to its needs and those of the pilgrims.
6. In this way, towns got developed around temples.

Question 6: How important were craftsmen for the building and maintenance of temples?

Answer: Craftsmen played an important role in the building and maintenance of temples:

- The Vishwakarma community consisting of goldsmith, bronzesmiths, blacksmiths, masons, and carpenters were essential to the building of temples.
- Weavers such as the Saliyar or Kaikkolars were prosperous communities and they made ample donations to temples.
- 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.

Question 7: Why did people from distant lands visit Surat?

Answer:

1. Surat was the most important medieval port on the west coast of the Indian subcontinent.
2. It was the emporium of western trade during the Mughal period.
3. Surat was the gateway for trade with West Asia via the Gulf of Ormuz.
4. Surat has also been called the gate of Mecca because many pilgrim ships get to sail from here.
5. There were also several retail and wholesale shops selling cotton textiles.
6. Surat was famous for textiles with gold lace borders (zari). Due to all such reasons, many people from distant lands visited Surat.

Question 8: In what ways was craft production in cities like Kolkata different from that in cities like Thanjavur?

Answer: The craft production in cities like Calcutta was different from that in cities like Thanjavur in the following ways:

In Calcutta:

(i) Craftsmen were not free to sell their own crafts and textiles as they were controlled by the European companies.

(ii) They worked on a system of advances which meant that they had to weave cloth which was already promised to European agents.

(iii) They had to reproduce the designs supplied to them by the Company agents

In Thanjavur:

(i) Here the craftsmen were independent and were free to sell their own products.

(ii) They developed the crafts on interest and they were creative and specialized.

(iii) Their production focused on the needs of the temple and the pilgrims.

LET'S DISCUSS:

Question 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?

Answer: Comparison between Surat and Delhi

Surat	Delhi
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emporium during the Mughal period due to the production of various goods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It was also an emporium during the Mughal period.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gateway to West Asia due to the trade centre.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Basically administrative town.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cosmopolitan city.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cosmopolitan city.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Factories and warehouses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Factories and warehouses.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Known for cotton textiles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Known for business, trade, and commercial pursuits.

Question 10: What were the problems encountered by merchants? Do you think some of these problems persist today?

Answer: Some of the problems faced by the merchants were as under:

- They had to travel through forests and there was always the fear of robbers. Therefore, merchants travelled in caravans.
- Merchants such as Mulla Abdul Ghafur and Indian Virji Vora, who owned a large number of ships were subdued by the East India Company ships. Then, they have to work as agents of the company instead of running their own business.
- Yes, such problems do exist today.

LET'S DO:

Question 11: Find out more about the architecture of either Thanjavur or Hampi, and prepare a scrapbook illustrating temples and other buildings from these cities.

Answer: Hampi, is one of the oldest Architecture located in Southern India. It is located in Tamil Nadu, situated on the banks of river Tungabhadra. It was the capital of the vijayanagara empire in the 14th century. Accounts of the Persian and European, particularly Portuguese Traveller state that Hampi was a prosperous, wealthy and grand city. It has numerous temples, farms, markets etc. Hampi - vijayanagara was the world's second medieval era city after Beijing in 1500 CE.

It was probably India's richest city at that time and attracted traders from Persia and Portugal. It is designated to the UNESCO World heritage monuments located in 1987. This architecture comprises of thousands of different visitors every month.

Question 12: Find out about any present-day pilgrimage center. Why do you think people go there? What do they do there? Are there any shops in the area? If so, what is bought and sold there?

Answer: Present-day pilgrimage Centre: Haridwar.

1. People go to Haridwar to take bath in the holy Ganga.
2. They take bath in the Ganga river and worship it.
3. Yes, several shops are there.
4. Offerings are sold at these shops.
5. Prasad is the main article that people buy there.

Champpstreet