

HISTORY

CHAPTER 6

COLONIALISM AND THE CITY THE STORY OF AN IMPERIAL CAPITAL

CITIES UNDER COLONIAL RULE

- **In the late 18th century, Calcutta, Bombay and Madras rose in importance as Presidency cities**
- **They became the centres of British power in the different regions of India**
- **Many towns manufacturing specialised goods declined due to drop in the demand**
- **Old trading centres and ports could not survive when the flow of trade moved to new centres**
- **Earlier centres of regional power collapsed when local rulers were defeated by the British and new centres of administration emerged**
- **The process is often described as de-urbanisation**
- **Cities such as machlipatnam, Surat and Seringapatam were de-urbanised during the 19th century**

- The old trading centres and administrative centres collapsed with the fall of regional powers and new centres emerged. This process was called as de-urbanisation
- Cities such as Surat, Seringapatam even Delhi lost their importance



SHAHJAHANABAD

- Most splendid capital of all was built by Shah Jahan
- He begun in 1639 and consisted of a fort-palace complex and the city adjoining it
- Red Fort made of red sandstone, contained the palace complex
- To its west lay the walled city with 14 gates
- The main streets of Chandni Chowk and Faiz Bazaar were broad enough for royal processions to pass
- A canal ran down the centre of Chandni Chowk
- Set amidst densely packed mohallas and several dozen bazaars, the Jama Masjid was among the largest and grandest mosque in India
- Delhi during Shah Jahan's time was also an important centre of Sufi-culture
- It had several dargahs, khanqahs, idgahs, open squares, winding lanes, quite cl-de-sacs and water channels
- Havelis or mansions were interspersed with the far more numerous mud houses of the poor







PLANNING A NEW CAPITAL

- The British were aware the symbolic importance of Delhi
- After 1857 many spectacular events were held in Delhi
- In 1877, Viceroy Lytton organised a grand Durbar to acknowledge Queen Victoria as the Empress of India
- In 1911, when King George V was crowned in England, a Durbar was held in Delhi to celebrate the occasion
- The decision to shift the capital of India from Calcutta to Delhi was announced at this Durbar
- New Delhi was constructed as 10 square-mile city on Raisina Hill
- Two architects Edward Lutyens and Herbert Baker were called on to design New Delhi and its buildings

Planning a new Capital





NEW DELHI

- It took nearly 20 years to build New Delhi
- The idea was to build a city that was a stark contrast to Shahjahanabad
- There were to be no crowded mohallas, no mazes of narrow bylanes
- In New Delhi, there were to be broad, straight streets lined with sprawling mansions set in the middle of a large compounds
- The architects wanted New Delhi to represent law and order
- The new city also had to be clean and healthy space
- The British saw overcrowded spaces as unhygienic and unhealthy, the source of disease
- It had to be green with trees and parks ensuring fresh air and adequate supply of oxygen

