

## Meta data of E- Content

S.N.	AREA OF META DATA	
1.	Theme	Categories of Towns in Medieval India
2.	Subject	History
3.	Linkage of theme with chapter	Towns, traders and craftsmen
4.	Class/ Level	Seventh
5.	Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To create awareness about important towns of Medieval India among the students</li> <li>• To enable the students to learn about the difference among the various towns.</li> </ul>
6.	Description	<p>The medieval period in India saw the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal established a vast empire. It was a great challenge for them to maintain peace and harmony as the chieftains and feudal lords aimed at declaring independence on some pretext or the other. In order to put the entire empire under the same administrative strategies they built many townships and small villages. These were also clubbed to form towns.</p> <p>Several types of towns developed serving different purposes. They were administrative centres, temple towns, centres of commercial activities and craft production. In fact, many towns combined several functions. The emergence of new towns and cities have their distinctive features. They were satisfying the needs of the ruler as well as the people living there. The process of urbanization, which had suffered a setback after the fall of the Gupta empire, got a boost in the early medieval period.</p> <p>By the 8<sup>th</sup> century AD, several small towns had come up across the subcontinent. Some towns had emerged from large villages. One reason for the rise of urban centres was the increase in agricultural production during the period. The rise of new politically stable powers such as the Cholas in the south and the Delhi Sultans and the Mughals in the north gave a further</p>

		<p>boost to the growth of new towns. For instance, as per the Tabaqat-Akbari, there were as many as 120 large cities and 3200 qasbahs or small towns during Akbar's rule. Each medieval town or city had a specific function to perform.</p> <p>Some cities performed more than one of these functions. For example, Lahore was not only an important administrative centre under Akbar, but also a centre for handicraft production. Similarly, Hampi was the capital of the Vijayanagar rulers, a centre for trade, and also a religious centre. Ajmer served not only as an important administrative centre for the Rajputs and the Mughals, but also as a centre for pilgrimage.</p>
7.	Key Words	Governance, Commercial, Urban, Deity, Sapta Puri, Durgah, Tirtha, Nobles, Bidri, Prominent
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# TOWNS OF MEDIEVAL INDIA



: Capital/Administrative towns



: Commercial/Port towns



: Temple/ Pilgrimage towns



: Craft towns

# CAPITAL TOWNS

## DELHI



- The administrative towns functioned as seats of governance. Delhi flourished in the Mughal empire come under this category. The Indian city of Delhi has a long history, and has been an important political centre of India as the capital of several empires. Extensive coverage of Delhi's history begins with the onset of the Delhi Sultanate in the 12th century. Since then, Delhi has been the centre of a succession of mighty empires and powerful kingdoms, making Delhi one of the longest serving Capitals and one of the oldest inhabited cities in the world.

## AGRA



Agra is a city on the banks of river Yamuna in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh. Agra is the example of typical administrative Mughal town of the 17th century. It was full of markets selling grain, spices, cloth and jewellery. It is generally accepted that Sultan Sikandar Lodi, the ruler of the Delhi Sultanate founded Agra in the year 1504. The golden age of the city began with the Mughals. It was known then as Akbarabad and remained the capital of Mughal Empire under the Emperors Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan. Shah Jahan later shifted his capital to Shahjahanbad in the year 1649.

## THANJAVUR



Thanjavur, formerly Tanjore, is a city in the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu. One of the oldest towns in Southern India, the history of Thanjavur dates back to the Sangam era. Although the city existed right from the time of Tamil Sangam Age, it rose to popularity only during the Chola dynasty. Serving as the important capital of the empire, the city of Thanjavur was endowed with many breath-taking sculptures and stunning temples that breathe of Cholas artistic grandeur and architectural refinements.

# COMMERCIAL TOWNS

The commercial and port towns came into prominence as a result of products produced in that region, or because of nearness of ports and trading centers. These are those areas which are important centers of commercial activities where goods could be purchased and sold and towns located near the sea are hub of economic activities whereby goods could be traded via sea routes are referred as port towns. For example: Surat- located in Gujarat.

- Surat, previously known as Suryapur, is a city in the Indian state of Gujarat. It was the showcase of Western trade during Mughal period. Surat is also called the gate to Mecca because many pilgrim ships set sail from here. It is one of the biggest ports and the gateway of trade with West Asia via the Gulf of Ormuz.

SURAT



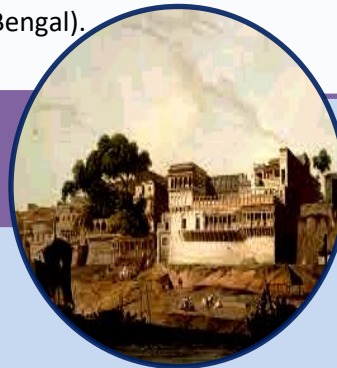
- Ahmedabad became one of the most important cities in the Gujarat region. It is the largest city of Gujarat. Gujarat came under the control of the Delhi Sultanate in the 14th century. During the Mughal reign, Ahmedabad became one of the Empire's thriving centers of trade, mainly in textiles, which were exported as far as Europe.

AHMEDABAD



- Towns such as Patna, which had flourished under the Mughal rule, grew in importance and assumed the significance of an urban centre. The modern city of Patna is situated on the southern bank of river Ganges. It was founded in 490 BCE by the king of Magadha. Ancient Patna known as Pataliputra, was the capital of Magadha empire. By 1620, the city of Patna was being described as the 'cheapest mart town of all Bengala (i.e. largest town in Bengal).

PATNA



**TEMPLE TOWNS**

Temple towns represented a very important pattern of urbanization along with centers of worship. The rulers used to build temples to demonstrate their devotion to various deities. Many towns grew around temples because temples were essential for the economy and the society. There were numerous temple towns in different parts of the country. A classic example is Tanjore (now Thanjavur). It was the capital of the Cholas but was more famous for its temples. The temples were central to the economy and society of that particular region as they performed a large number of functions. To cater to the needs of the temple and the pilgrims, people of different professions settled there. There were priests, garland makers, weavers, sculptures, shopkeepers, traders, musicians, dancers and many more. Some example of these towns are as follows:



### BANARAS

The spiritual capital of India, it is the holiest of the seven sacred cities (*Sapta Puri*) in Hinduism and Jainism, and played an important role in the development of Buddhism. Varanasi also grew as an important industrial centre, famous for its muslin and silk fabrics, perfumes, ivory works, and sculpture. Hindu believe that death in this city will bring salvation, making it a major centre for pilgrimage. Among the estimated 23,000 temples in Varanasi are Kashi Vishwanath temple of Shiva, Durga temple etc.



### AJMER

The Durgahs of the famous sufi-saints such as Khwaja Muinuddin Chisti at Ajmer attracted large number of devotees to settle there. **The Ajmer Sharif Dargah** which is a shrine of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti is situated at the foot of the Taragarh hill. The main gate to the shrine is the Nizam Gate, followed by the Buland Darwaza built by Sultan Mahmood Khilji.



### KANCHIPURAM

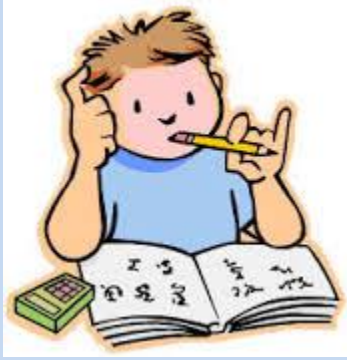
Kanchipuram is one of the seven Tirtha (pilgrimage) sites, for spiritual release. The city houses Varadharaja Perumal Temple, Ekambareswarar Temple etc which are some of major Hindu temples in the state. The Garuda Purana says that seven cities, including Kanchipuram, are providers of Moksha. The city is a pilgrimage site for both Saivites and Vaishnavites. It has close to 108 Shiva temples.





The craft of each state of India reflect the influence of different empires. Throughout centuries, crafts have been embedded as a culture and tradition within rural communities. The concentration of craft towns were mainly found to be the administrative seats where the kings and nobles stayed. Their establishment led to the emergence of craft towns. *Bidar* was famous for its beautiful '*bidri*' work. *Hyderabad*, the capital of the kingdom of Golconda, was a gem cutting and trading centre for jewels. *Murshidabad* was a prominent centre for different kinds of silk fabrics. The prosperity of a craft town was often due to a few master-craftsmen. They took many apprentices and trained them from an early age. However, they did not teach them the finer aspects of their crafts. They revealed these only towards the end of their life and that too only to the favourite apprentice.





## TIME TO DO

Make craft items from old unused things.

### ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

1. 'Political stability led to economic prosperity in medieval India'.  
Comment.
2. How did crafts town develop?
3. What is the significance of Kanchipuram as a temple town?
4. On what basis were towns classified?
5. What was Hyderabad famous for?

1. On a map, mark five important towns that came up in medieval India

Were they as important in ancient India?

2. We have read about how craft persons of Bidar got so famous that their

Inlay work came to be known as bidri. Find out more about this craft.

Is it still practice in India?

3. Hampi is famous for its architecture. Name some of the important buildings

Found in the city and paste their pictures in your scrapbook.

## URLs

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