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BLOCK 7 COLONIAL CITIES - 1

Urban history's status as the somewhat neglected cousin in Indian scholarship has disappeared in the last two decades, as historians have joined planners and policy makers in recognising the importance of the massive (and growing) presence of the urban in contemporary Indian life. Histories of the modern Indian city are now investigated with some exuberance, using a very wide range of unofficial and official sources, and by historians asking questions that go beyond the strictly political or economic realms. These two blocks of the course introduce the student to not only the ways in which the modern Indian city was studied in the past, but also the new questions and approaches to, as well as sources for the understanding of urban history.

Beginning with the question of the impact of colonisation on urbanisation generally, the units outline a variety of important legacies and contradictions of colonial rule whose impact is felt up to the present day. At the end of the long period of colonial rule, not more than 11 per cent of the Indian people lived in cities, which indicates quite clearly the poor levels of urbanisation that occurred in the modern period. Many erstwhile Indian centres, particularly manufacturing centres and royal capitals, severely declined. Of those that arose in the same period, a large number were administrative centres. Nevertheless, as the first unit of this block reveals, many new types of towns also came into existence, though subordinated to overall imperial needs and initiatives, as revealed in their location and their urban form. **Unit 33** discusses the towns and cities that arose as a result of the introduction of railways (railway towns), in response to the development of canals (canal colonies), and as a consequence of the preference of the British to congregate in the cooler elevations of the sub continent (hill stations).

British rule importantly shaped not only the new kinds of urban settlements and cities, such as Calcutta or Madras, but also existing ones, such as Delhi and Lucknow. The port cities of Madras, Bombay and Calcutta developed into important centres of administrative power as Presidency capitals. As **Unit 34** shows, these cities shared certain common features, driven as they were by the imperial need to establish what Partha Chatterjee has described as "the rule of colonial difference" which was distinct from the more liberal forms of governance which were developed in the large cities of Britain. Cantonments, or areas where the troops were stationed, were distinct from the civil areas, as much as the administrative and European dominated "white town" was physically distinct from the "black town" inhabited by Indians. This meant the former were better planned and infrastructurally served. Read along with other units of this course, **Unit 34** reveals that in different ways, though such strict segregation was difficult to implement, racial divisions were both physically and administratively maintained, particularly in the early periods of colonial rule. Other markers of difference in the city emerged out of certain uses and meanings which were attached to city space, as revealed not only in its physical features, but as it gradually emerged as a performative space, producing over time both new solidarities and cleavages, on lines of religious affiliation, ethnicity or class.

Colonial rule staged power in the city in specific ways, which form the basis of the discussion in **Unit 35**. Both in its periodic darbars staged at Delhi, in 1877, 1903 and 1911 (when the decision to shift the capital of India from Calcutta to Delhi was made) and in its choice of architectural motifs and locations for its administrative buildings, the colonial regime drew from not only the legacies of imperial Rome and Greece, but from indigenous royal traditions, producing a new architectural and urban form. Most clearly indicative of this imperial splendour, was the manner in which New Delhi was conceived and built.

Studies of the physical planning of cities alone do not tell us much about the kinds of forces which gave life and meaning to the urban fabric. **Unit 36** discusses a very different aspect of the modern city, as a site of political and social movements, whether they were movements seeking radical political transformation, (such as trade unions and nationalist movements) or movements which defined new social hierarchies and beliefs (such as religious and cultural movements). This understanding of the modern city emphasises some of the important ways in which both elites and non elites were mobilised for political action, or for other kinds of more divisive public protests and occupations of city space, as during communal disturbances which were a source of increasing concern, and a cause for important control measures, by the early twentieth century.

The four themes in this Block highlight different aspects of the modern Indian city as they developed in the colonial period, but also reveal an underlying rationale for many of the physical features, and symbolic uses of space which have left an enduring mark, up to the present day. At the same time, the Units emphasise that the colonial regime also adopted several indigenous motifs and styles, or simply allowed some forms of urban power to continue and flourish. When the nationalist movement took root in Indian cities, and questions of urban governance were more hotly contested by Indians themselves, a new shape was given to the city, though a more thorough refashioning of city space occurred only in the post independence period.



UNIT 33 DEPENDENT URBANISATION AND NEW URBAN FORMS IN COLONIAL INDIA *

Structure

- 33.1 Introduction
- 33.2 Cantonments
- 33.3 Irrigation and Canal Colonies
- 33.4 Railways and Railway Towns
- 33.5 Hill Stations
- 33.6 Summary
- 33.7 Exercises
- 33.8 References

33.1 INTRODUCTION

The development of towns and cities in India was significantly affected by the introduction of colonial rule but there were elements of continuity from the past as well. The medieval towns and cities in India were founded as centres of administrative and military power or of trade and commerce or as places of religious importance. This pattern continued during the colonial period as well. The changes that came with colonialism led to the decline of some of the centres of power such as Delhi and Agra or of places of artisanal production like Dacca and Murshidabad, and of older port cities like Surat. The British were responsible for changes in the organisation and development of cities and towns on the basis of the needs of a European colonial power. Thus, the colonial port cities like Bombay, Madras and Calcutta supplanted Surat, Calicut and Dacca. While many old centres of industrial production declined, new market towns and towns fulfilling new needs emerged during the colonial period. To this, scholars such as Atiya Habeeb gave the term 'dependent urbanisation'.

Christopher Bayly has argued that there were new towns like Mirzapur and old ones like Benares which flourished because of the demand for Indian commodities created by the East India Company in the early 19th century before the formal incorporation of these territories. Bayly emphasises the role of Indian merchant capital in creating vibrant corporations in old towns or small new ones. Yet, the British were responsible by the late 19th century for the decline of artisanal production and of many urban centres. Some new centres, such as Moradabad which produced brassware, emerged in the twentieth century due to railway transport at reasonable cost and an increase in consumer preference for brass utensils. There was also the movement of some dispersed or rural traditional industries to bigger centres or towns as in the case of leather goods. The

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traditional textiles in rural areas employing unskilled workers declined. In such towns the textile producers improved their chances of getting better terms for credit, a better price for their products and they could also draw on the resources of skilled dyers, as pointed out by Tirthankar Roy.

The rise and growth of port cities has been examined more fully in other Units in this course: let us turn our attention to the small scale, but new, settlements that emerged under colonial rule, such as cantonments, railway and canal towns and hill stations.

33.2 CANTONMENTS

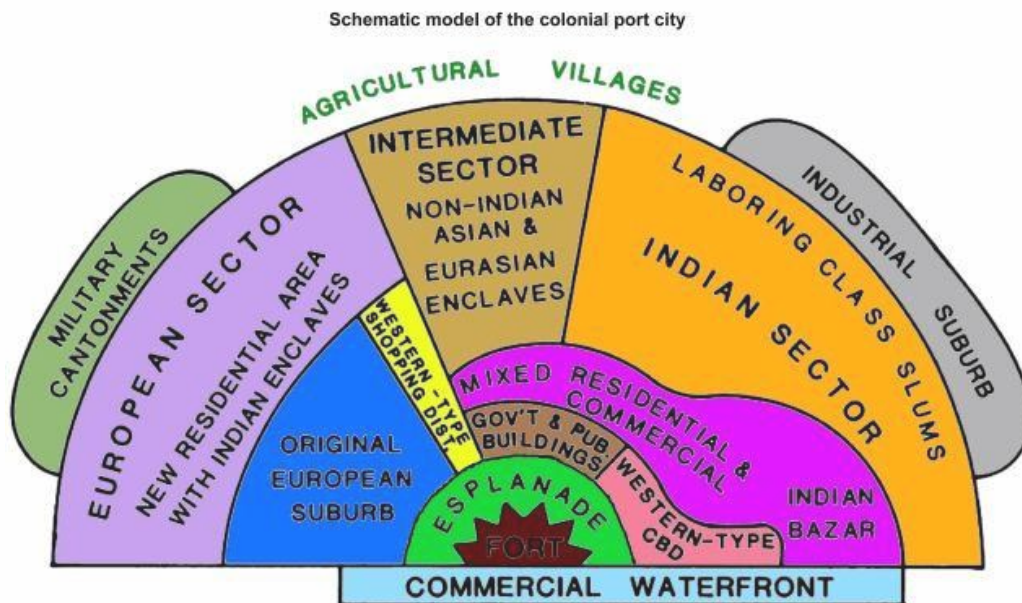
The British need to recruit and maintain a substantial army led to the creation of cantonments and urban centres close to such military stations. In Madras, the British had a fortified area of European settlement called the White Town that was separated from the Black Town where the Indians lived. Carl Nightingale writes:

In support of the walled division of residences, governors felt it necessary to either pass or propose laws in 1680, 1688, 1690, 1698, 1706, 1743, 1745, and 1751 that regulated where various groups could live, sometimes ordering English residents to restrict the resale of their houses to other Englishmen. Because of all these measures, a dual housing market, and even a version of what South African historian Paul Maylam calls “fiscal segregation” developed in Madras by the eighteenth century, if not before. Property values were deemed much higher on average in White Town – even taking into account Indian merchants’ palatial dwellings and temples in Black Town – and tax rates for European property were set lower than those levied in Black Town to avoid excessive burdens on Englishmen. (Nightingale, 2008: 55)

The idea of racial segregation developed in India because of the need to maintain European superiority as well as to ensure regulation of inter-racial contacts for reasons of health and avoidance of diseases.

In Madras the British officials first used the word Black Town in the 1670s. This was in contrast to the Christian Town, though after 1720 the term White Town came to be used for the first time in Asia. Racial segregation and its consequences varied over time. In Calcutta the distinction between Black and White town was not so important. Swati Chattopadhyay says, ‘From the Bengali point of view, the city was divided into a host of *paras*, *tolas*, and *tulis*, all terms used to distinguish localities. The *paras* extended over an area approximately one-quarter by one-half mile, a space that was easy to cover on foot and cognitively constituted a territory.’ (Chattopadhyay, 2000: 157) The area where the prosperous Europeans lived was called *sahibpara* and was one of the eighteen *paras* in 19th century Calcutta. The speculative nature of the property market in Calcutta, where houses were built to suit official, commercial and residential requirements at the same time, did not allow for racial segregation and even privacy in conformity with contemporary British preferences. The presence of innumerable servants, even in houses built in the latter part of the 19th century, ensured that blacks were always there in the White town, although they were not always visible.

The cantonment inhabitants in the early years of the 19th century were often victims of cholera, an illness which principally devastated the lives of the poor in rural areas. As David Arnold observes, ‘Troops were particularly susceptible to a disease that flourished in the unsanitary and crowded conditions of barracks and encampments; and they, in turn, were among the principal agencies by which the disease was disseminated throughout India. Large-scale troop movements across northern India from cholera’s homeland in Bengal in 1817-18 facilitated the epidemic invasion of the rest of India.



Source: Kosambi, Meera and John E. Brush, 'Three Colonial Port Cities in India', *Geographical Review*, Vol. 78, No. 1 (Jan., 1988), p. 34.

There was a similar correlation forty years later during the Mutiny campaigns of 1857-8. To speak of the "invasion" of cholera was thus more than a verbal analogy.' (Arnold, 1986: 126-127) Between 1818 and 1854 more than 8,500 British soldiers died of cholera, and between 1859 and 1867 a third of all deaths among British troops in India were due to the disease. The 1861 epidemic caused particularly heavy mortality. At Mian Mir near Lahore, 880 out of 2,452 soldiers and their wives and children were afflicted by cholera and 535 died. The European soldiers and not the European officers were particularly prone to cholera. The common Indian soldiers were less affected. After improvements in sanitation and water-supply, introduced following a parliamentary enquiry in Britain in 1863, the mortality among troops declined considerably by the 1880s. David Arnold argues that the defeat of cholera helped in the consolidation of British power in India. But the fear of provoking popular reactions to interventionist measures as well as the high cost of medical and sanitary improvements led to the neglect of such measures for the cities and small towns until the late 19th century and mid-twentieth century respectively.

The cantonments were meant to protect the European soldiers from contact with Indian society but that proved difficult. This was partly because of the proximity to markets which played an important role in meeting the needs of the soldiers. The British tried to define the limits of the cantonment by a regulation in Madras in 1809. Regimental markets were set up to reduce dependence on the local bazaars near the cantonments. The bungalows of the officers in the cantonments were surrounded by barracks of the European soldiers. There was a "prodigality of spatial use" that compensated the Europeans in exile with residential facilities much larger than what they would have enjoyed at home. (Nair, 2002: 1228) The provision of large bungalows for the officers in the cantonments, whether in Madras or Bangalore, was done to demonstrate the superior position of the rulers and their social distance from the local people. The Indian soldiers or sepoys lived in huts in the outer circle of the cantonment and the camp followers were left to fend for themselves further away. The needs of the European soldiers drove them into the local markets or the Black Town in search of liquor and prostitutes. The British tried to provide for the soldiers by setting up Lal Bazaars where the prostitutes were regulated in order to prevent the spread of venereal diseases, a major scourge affecting thirty per cent of European soldiers in early nineteenth century India.

It has been pointed out that the British were perturbed by the fact that the Indian soldiers were less affected by venereal diseases than the European soldiers which was partly attributed to the enforced singlehood for short service recruits introduced in 1870. In 1866 in Bengal the ratio of European soldiers admitted for treatment was four times higher than for Indian soldiers. This could be attributed also to the fact that the proportion of European soldiers who were married compared to the Indian soldiers was lower. This was because the army authorities did not encourage the soldiers to marry because they did not want the added financial responsibility of caring for women and children or to make arrangements for them. The restrictions on marriage were less in the case of soldiers of the Company as compared to those of the Crown regiments. According to Douglas Peers the levels of skill and education and prospects for promotion of Company soldiers were better than that of soldiers of the Crown army. Drunkenness was handled partly by providing liquor superior to the local variety and partly by encouraging temperance. The idea of segregation was meant to protect the health of the soldiers and to maintain discipline among them. According to one estimate, there were three toddy sellers and one supplier of ganja for each regiment of soldiers. The Cantonment Act of 1864 was meant to curb alcoholism in the army, but the effort to segregate the soldiers from these corrupting influences by geographical segregation was not very successful until the very end of the 19th century.

The British recruited a large number of Indians and trained them to accept military discipline. The extent of the discipline in the army might have been exaggerated since in many cantonments, European officers could not enter the barracks after dark without an escort. The soldiers of the Bengal Army were drawn from the Hindu upper castes – Brahmins and Rajputs – and Muslims. These upper caste soldiers, who had joined the Company army to supplement their incomes from land, were more susceptible to caste and religious appeals, as Seema Alavi has pointed out. Interference by missionaries in the lives of the soldiers and the resentment against the British policies regarding caste and religion had led to the Vellore Mutiny of 1806 much before the Revolt of 1857. Nevertheless, the soldiers recruited by the Madras and Bombay Armies did not have such a pronounced upper caste bias as those of the Bengal army. In the Bombay army the Mahars, a subordinated caste who claimed a martial tradition going back to the days of the Marathas, were recruited by the British until the end of the 19th century.

The British faced an uprising in the Bengal army partly because the proportion of Indian to European troops in the cantonments from Kanpur to Calcutta had become way too high during the 1850s. After the Mutiny of 1857 the ratio of Europeans to Indians, which was roughly 1 to 6, was increased to roughly 1 to 3. Further, the caste and religious feelings of the Bengal army soldiers were inflamed by British policies which propelled them towards mutiny. Nevertheless, British military training continued to have an impact on their behaviour and outlook. Tapti Roy has argued that the Army was among the most modern institutions in 19th century India and the Indian sepoys did not forget the military training that they had received in the British camps and cantonments even after they had become rebels.

In Lucknow, one of the key centres of rebellion, the British altered the layout of streets in the city after the revolt to enable the easy movement of troops. Land near Dilkusha was acquired without adequate compensation to the owners to build one of the largest cantonments of the 114 in India. Nearly three quarters of the PWD budget of Oudh was spent on military construction to ensure British military dominance and to prevent any repetition of the siege of the British Residency in Lucknow during 1857-1858. All railway stations in British India were subsequently converted into military posts. The Charbagh railway station in Lucknow, which was close to the cantonment, also 'included

a fort, arsenal, and barracks, and extra accommodation for the evacuation of Christians in the event of another outbreak in the city.’ (Oldenburg, 2006: 44) The pattern of urbanisation after the uprising against British rule was dominated by security concerns. The Arms Act and its subsequent modifications eventually disarmed the population. The widening and broadening of the streets in Lucknow led Sir Patrick Geddes in 1916 to criticize the mindlessness and insensitivity of this British policy.

33.3 IRRIGATION AND CANAL COLONIES

The British were in favour of promoting irrigation by means of canals and embankments because it would increase the land revenue and provide proof of the benign nature of British rule. In many areas the British improved or remodeled the existing canals as in the case of the Ganges and Yamuna canals in the United Provinces. In Bengal the Eden canal was not very successful partly because the demand for water was not as acute as in the dry regions of India and peasants did not want to pay for water unless it was absolutely necessary. The areas which were most suitable for irrigation were those where there was both the demand for water and the possibility of providing water by irrigation schemes. Unlike the railways, for which the British government guaranteed a five percent rate of return to investors regardless of actual performance, the irrigation projects were expected to give a minimum rate of return before they could be undertaken. Therefore, the pace of irrigation development in India was slower than what it might have been if the social rate of return on investment had also been taken into account.

There was the happy coincidence of both the demand for water and the possibility of designing irrigation projects which yielded an adequate rate of return in the Punjab. The central dry region of the Punjab needed water and the snow fed rivers which traversed through the Punjab could be harnessed by irrigation projects. The Chenab, Doaba and Jhelum canals were developed to provide much needed water for which the peasants were willing to pay. The fact that the Punjab became the main recruiting ground for the Indian army in the post-1857 period also made the British keen to promote irrigation and the allocation of land in what came to be known as the Canal Colonies of the Punjab. Lyallpur became an important town of these colonies. Imran Ali has highlighted the connection between military recruitment, settlement of colonists in these lands recently brought under the plough by irrigation and attempts to promote loyalism in the Punjab.

The settlement of the ‘surplus’ population in the newly settled areas, used by pastoralists earlier, was an important factor in providing stability to the Raj. Some of these colonies had allotments made to soldiers and some areas were devoted to providing fodder to the army. A colonial observer, C.H. Buck noted in 1906 the elements of colonisation thus: ‘the colonization officer has to arrange for the sites of the towns and villages; for those of buildings, such as hospitals, schools, police-stations, and other public offices; space has to be reserved for factories along the railway; and plots have to be kept for arboricultural plantations and nurseries, and for an experimental farm.’ (Buck, 1906: 65) Roads and railway lines, postal and telegraph offices, schools and hospitals, courts and police stations and other government departments came up in the canal colonies. New districts were carved out where such colonisation proved successful.

The towns in these areas were important centres for merchants and moneylenders who moved the agricultural output to the market and the centres of consumption. Nevertheless, the power of the merchants and moneylenders in the Punjab, and in the canal towns in particular, was less pervasive than in the Bombay Deccan or Bengal, since they were unable to exercise the kind of influence over the rural population through debt and loan advances that they did in other parts of India. Mridula Mukherjee has

pointed out that in a backward district like Attock compared to a canal colony district like Lyallpur the influence of the merchant moneylenders was more substantial. The backward regions that cultivated wheat were more dependent on loans than the better off regions like those in the canal colonies that produced cash crops like cotton.

Colonial legislation to protect the interests of the agricultural castes was also responsible for limiting the power of urban merchants and professional classes who emerged in canal towns and elsewhere. On the other hand, canal colonies were better linked to the world market than the local market which left little for capital accumulation among the peasants. The rise of agricultural output and productivity led to the growth of market towns and urban centers which catered to the needs of the more prosperous sections of the region as in the western districts of the United Provinces compared to the impoverished eastern districts of the province.

The irrigation policy of the British was not very effective in areas where the geophysical conditions were not conducive for state intervention to control river flow. In the unstable delta region of the Mahanadi in Orissa the attempt to train and regulate the river actually increased its destructive power whenever it was in flood and burst the embankments built to prevent flooding of land close to the river. Although the policy was meant to increase the productive capacity of the land, to ensure the regular collection of steadily rising land revenue and an increase in the value of agrarian and urban property, the protection of the town of Cuttack also became an important objective. The embankments built to control inundation of land by the river in flood ended the periodic enrichment of the flooded region by the silt deposits left behind by the receding river.

In the Indus region, the application of scientific knowledge and engineering expertise proved unsuccessful in controlling floods and providing irrigation from the 1840s to the 1930s. It was only the Sukkur barrage which produced a large viable irrigation scheme eventually. The British were perplexed by the fact that before they arrived on the scene there were no embankments to protect towns like Thatta and Dera Ghazi Khan. Richard Burton, the adventurer and orientalist, noted in the mid 19th century that ‘most villages could be razed to the ground, transported to the requisite distance, and re-erected in a week, at an expense of probably a couple of rupees per house.’ According to Benjamin Weil, ‘This gives some idea as to the general mobility of towns along the Indus.’ (Weil, 2006: 14) Dera Ghazi Khan was protected since it was an important cantonment town with both an infantry and cavalry garrison stationed there. It was also a hub for trade both by land and water. The Kosi river in Bengal Presidency was also subjected to control by a system of embankments in accordance with the engineering wisdom of the day but it led to devastating floods. Sir William Willcocks, who had designed a project for the Aswan Dam in Egypt, asserted that the British did not focus on irrigation in Bengal because it would have interfered with its system of embankments and rail transportation, which was vital for the ‘continuing flow of raw materials to the industries in Britain.’ (Hill, 1990: 16) The canal and embankment building strategy of the British was responsible for the growth of new towns as well as the increase in the size of old towns. Nevertheless the periodic devastation of such towns by floods was also a consequence of British irrigation policies.

33.4 RAILWAYS AND RAILWAY TOWNS

The British were the pioneers in railway building and became major exporters of wagons and locomotives during the second half of the 19th century. They developed the railways in India to facilitate the movement of British manufactured goods into the country and the export of raw materials from India. The import of railway equipment and skilled

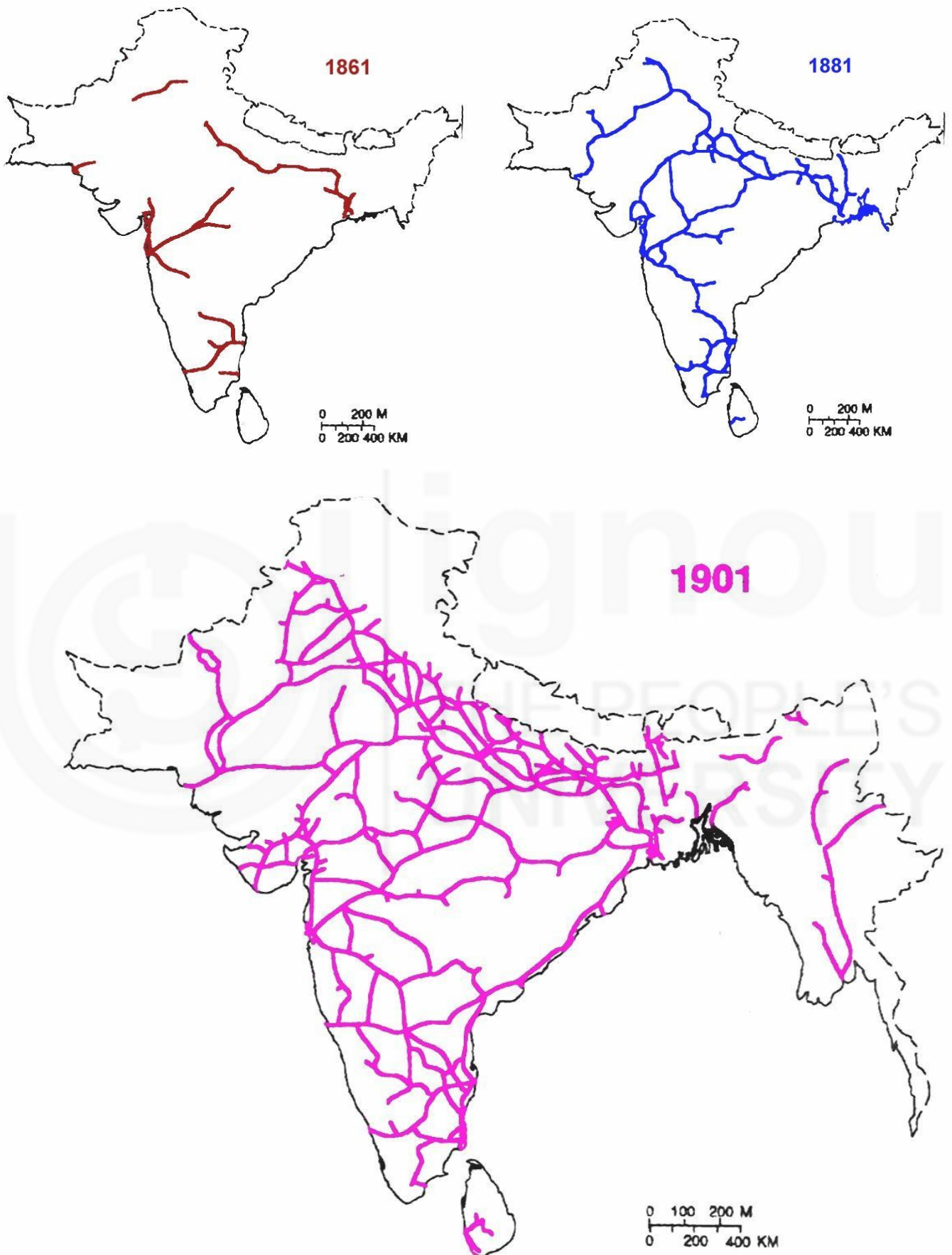
manpower to run the railways was a consequence. The railways were built on a substantial scale and imported a large number of locomotives and wagons until 1947, although the Tata Iron & Steel Company began providing the railways with wagons after protective tariffs were introduced by the Government of India during the 1920s. It has been estimated that only 700 locomotives were built in India between 1865 and 1941 while 12,000 were imported. Therefore the railways did not lead to the development of an indigenous manufacturing sector in steel and engineering that could have led to modernisation and urbanisation, although, as Ian Kerr has argued, even the production of 700 locomotives in India revealed its immense technological possibilities. Rajat Ray has argued that if India had been an independent country, railway development could have promoted rapid industrialisation by the early twentieth century.

Like the Army, the railways were major employers and instruments of colonial modernisation and domination. The introduction of railways immediately led to the decline of many centres of artisanal production in the late 19th century, since the railway network in India, primarily connected a raw material-producing hinterland to coastal cities. The decline of traditional industry in Rajasthan was delayed because the railways did not reach the region until the First World War. Yet, centres of raw material production in the interior were connected with the major ports at Bombay, Madras and Calcutta, giving rise to market towns in the interiors. When the Southern Mahratta Railroad commenced operations along short segments of line in 1884-85 it enhanced the existing differences between Dharwar and Hubli and centralised economic functions in the latter town. In Dharwar, cart hire services disappeared, its population grew slowly to only 31,270 at the 1901 census and it became a purely local market. Hubli, on the other hand, nearly doubled its 1881 population to 60,214 in 1901, and by 1907, the city employed 40,000 persons in 19 factories. Of them, half were employed in the workshops of the Southern Mahratta Railway, and about 1300 or 1400 in the two mills of the Southern Maratha Weaving and Spinning Company. According to Gumperz, 'The handloom industry survived primarily in the city in workshop-like arrangements where yarn was supplied to the weavers on credit by a jobber who sold the finished product, deducting the cost of supplies. Thus the handloom weavers had lost control of their capital in the city, while the country devoted itself almost entirely to commercial agriculture.' (Gumperz, 1974: 591)

It has been argued that the sub-optimal alignments of the early railroads were the product of 'the arrogant belief that traffic would come to the railways rather than vice versa.' (Derbyshire, 2007: 291) Lines were built on the shortest routes between 'obligatory points' like Delhi, Agra, Kanpur and Allahabad in the United Provinces. The East Indian Railway built its line in such a way that only seven of the thirty six stations between Allahabad and Delhi were near a town. Railway stations were five to ten miles away from Khurja, Hathras and Bulandshahr though they were market towns that could have been linked on this route: they were bypassed because the British wanted to get enough clean water, acquire land at low cost and 'to site stations at a distance from the "native city" in fortified defensible locations, as a last line of retreat for the European Civil Station.' (Derbyshire, 2007: 292) Therefore the railways led to the decline or slow development of some towns and the rise of others.

Initially, the railways were built on a scale that some felt was not efficient in its use of resources. For instance, the idea of a uniform gauge was abandoned throughout the country, and a narrower gauge was introduced on some lines to reduce costs, creating problems for the railways later.

Workshops and railway housing colonies were constructed in many parts of the country



Source: Kerr, Ian J., (2003) 'Representation and Representations of the Railways of Colonial and Post-Colonial South Asia', *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 2 (May), p. 290.

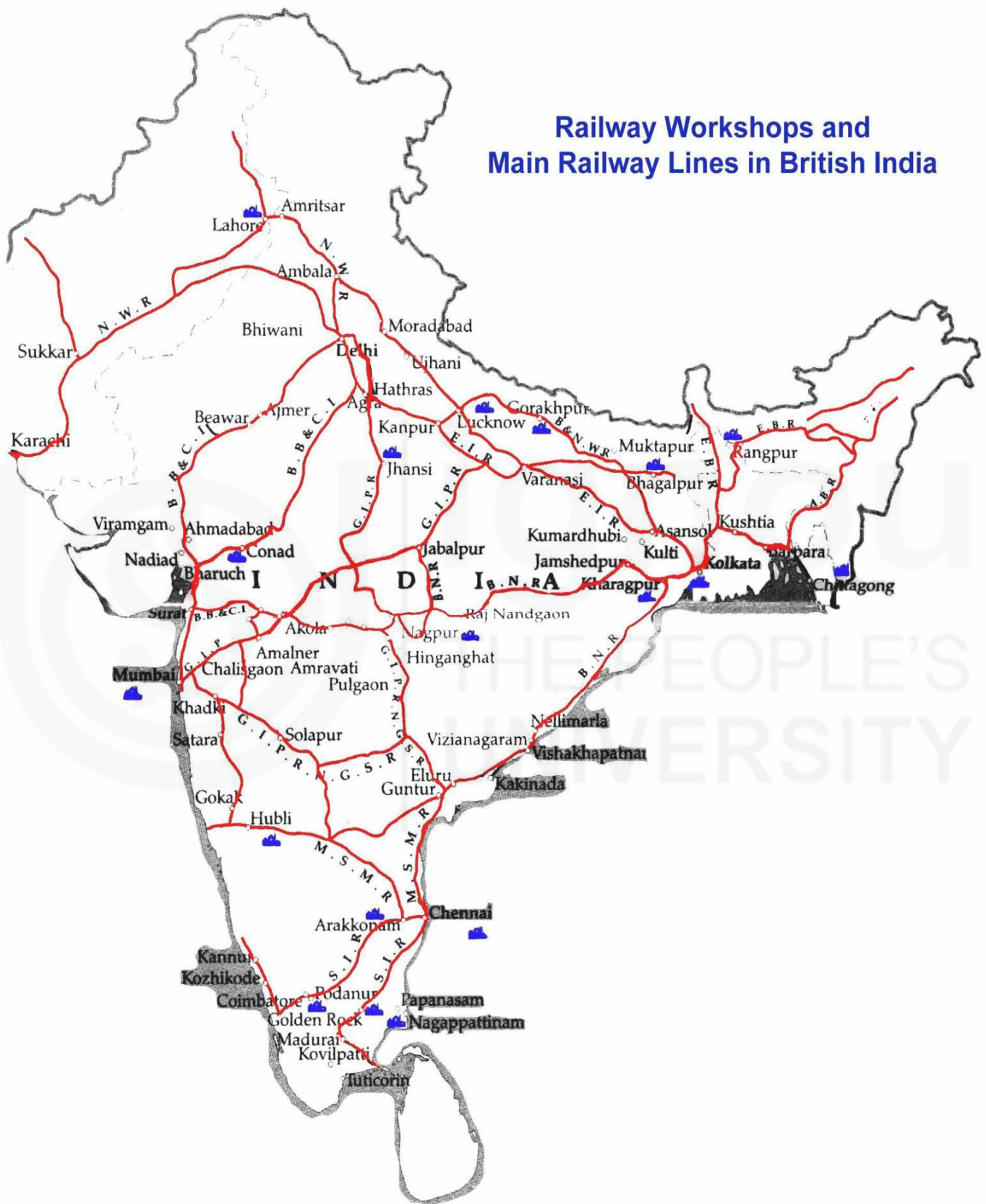
particularly for European and Eurasian employees who constituted about seven to ten percent of the total railway workforce. According to the Report of the Indian Industrial Commission of 1916-18 there were 70 workshop complexes which employed several thousand people. The Jamalpur shops of the East India Railway were the biggest single employer with more than eleven thousand employees. The railways employed about 800,000 employees according to the Report of the Royal Commission on Labour in India in 1931. About 136,000 persons were employed in 145 railway workshops although Kerr believes that there were only 22 large workshops at that time. The workshops for locomotives and for wagons and coaches were in close proximity to each other and may have been counted as separate entities together with the smaller running sheds.

The neat railway colonies with their recreational complexes were built to house the European employees who occupied the upper echelons and technical branches of the railways. The salaries they were paid were much more than what was given to Indian employees and this resulted in the 'racial' divide both in the big and small urban centres that they created. In Lahore the railway workshops and station together with the cantonment and civil lines were the nucleus of the city. Although a scholar has thought it fit to differentiate between the pre railway and post railway urban settlement patterns he does not hold the railway colonies in high esteem. Smailes asserts, 'The railway colony was the meanest, most drab and regimented element among the Western components, its dreary tone sometimes emphasised by the use of uniform paint throughout, but at least it offered certain minimum standards of sanitation and residential amenity, both in its streets and buildings, that were quite foreign to the neighbouring indigenous city.' (Smailes, 1969: 184)

In the Moghulpura area in Lahore more than 12,500 employees worked in the workshops in 1929. About the same number of workers were employed in the major workshop at Jamalpur in eastern India. Europeans and Eurasians trained the Punjabi workers who learnt how to maintain 150 locomotives and 4000 carriages and wagons by the 1880s. There were about 180 Europeans and Eurasians at Lahore in 1872 and about 1100 by 1916. The Railway Technical School set up in 1889 and the North-Western Railway Apprentices' Technical School which opened in 1898 helped in providing technical skills and training to a large body of workers in Lahore. The railway workshops and schools thus helped in the training of industrial workers and the diffusion of technical knowledge throughout Punjab.

The railways were important in the colonial port cities like Bombay, Calcutta and Madras where they were in close proximity to the Indian localities that grew up as residential or business segments. The railway stations, tunnels and bridges were built to signify imperial power. Writes Kerr, 'Colonial power threatened but determined to keep its emergent communication life-lines secure' opened the fortress-like Lahore railway station in 1862 'just a few years after the mutinies and civil uprisings of 1857-58. In the Lahore station outward form represented an imperative of colonial rule: security. Bombay's luxuriant Victoria Terminus opened in 1887 represented power, pride and a certain forced naturalization of the British-imposed railway system.' (Kerr, 2003: 291) Small railway stations on the journey from Mettupalaiyam in the plains to Ootacamund in the Nilgiri hills with English names like Lovedale, Hillgrove, Runnymede and Wellington sought to 'create a home away from home' for the Europeans. (Kerr, 2003: 293) The railways were the symbols of British superiority and civilisation and bigger stations such as Victoria Terminus signified the monumentality of the railways.

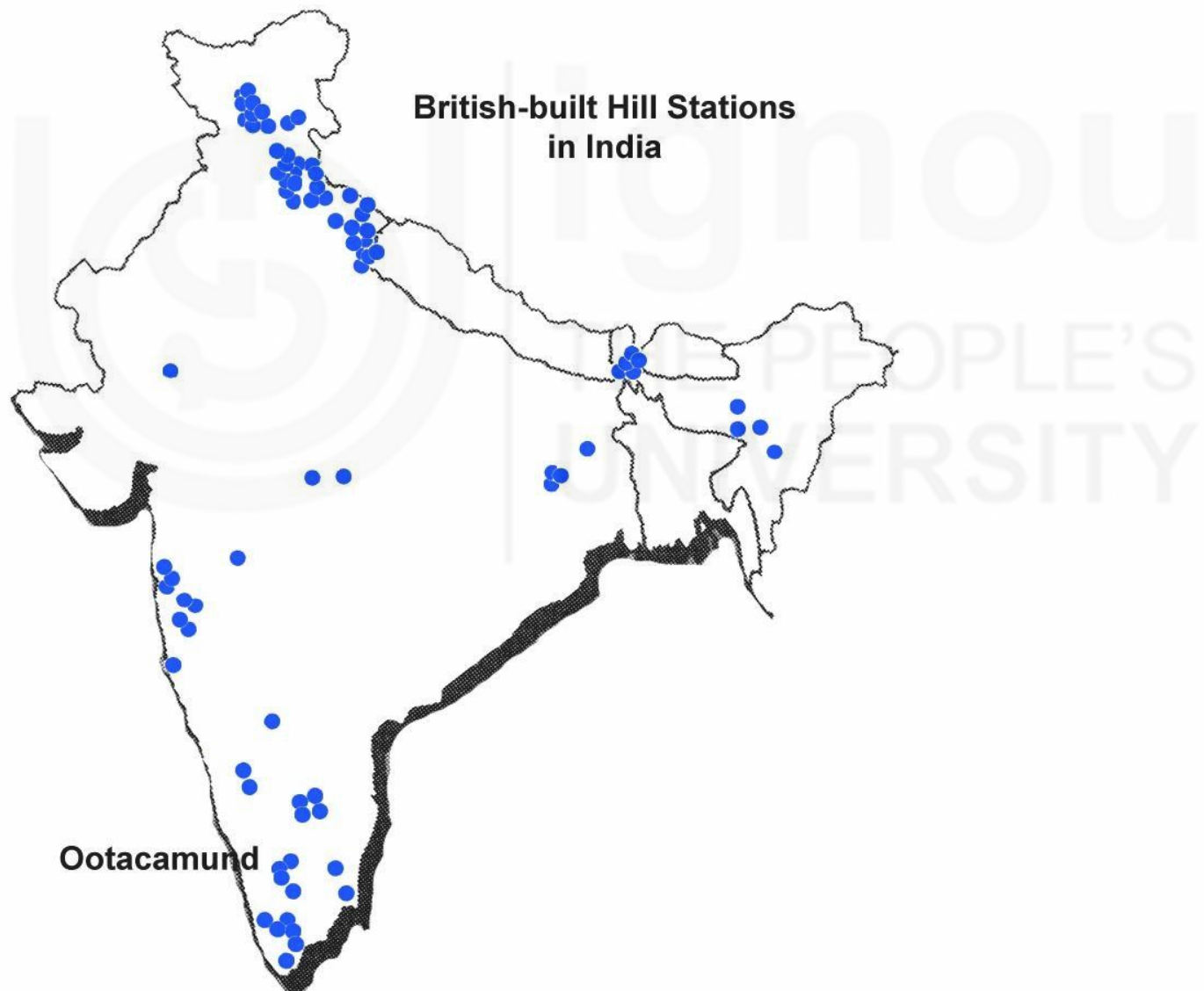
Railway Workshops and Main Railway Lines in British India



Source: Kerr, Ian, (2007) 'The Railway Workshops and Their Labour: Entering the Black Hole', in Ian Kerr (ed.), 27 Down: New Departures in Indian Railway Studies (New Delhi: Orient Longman), pp. 231-275.

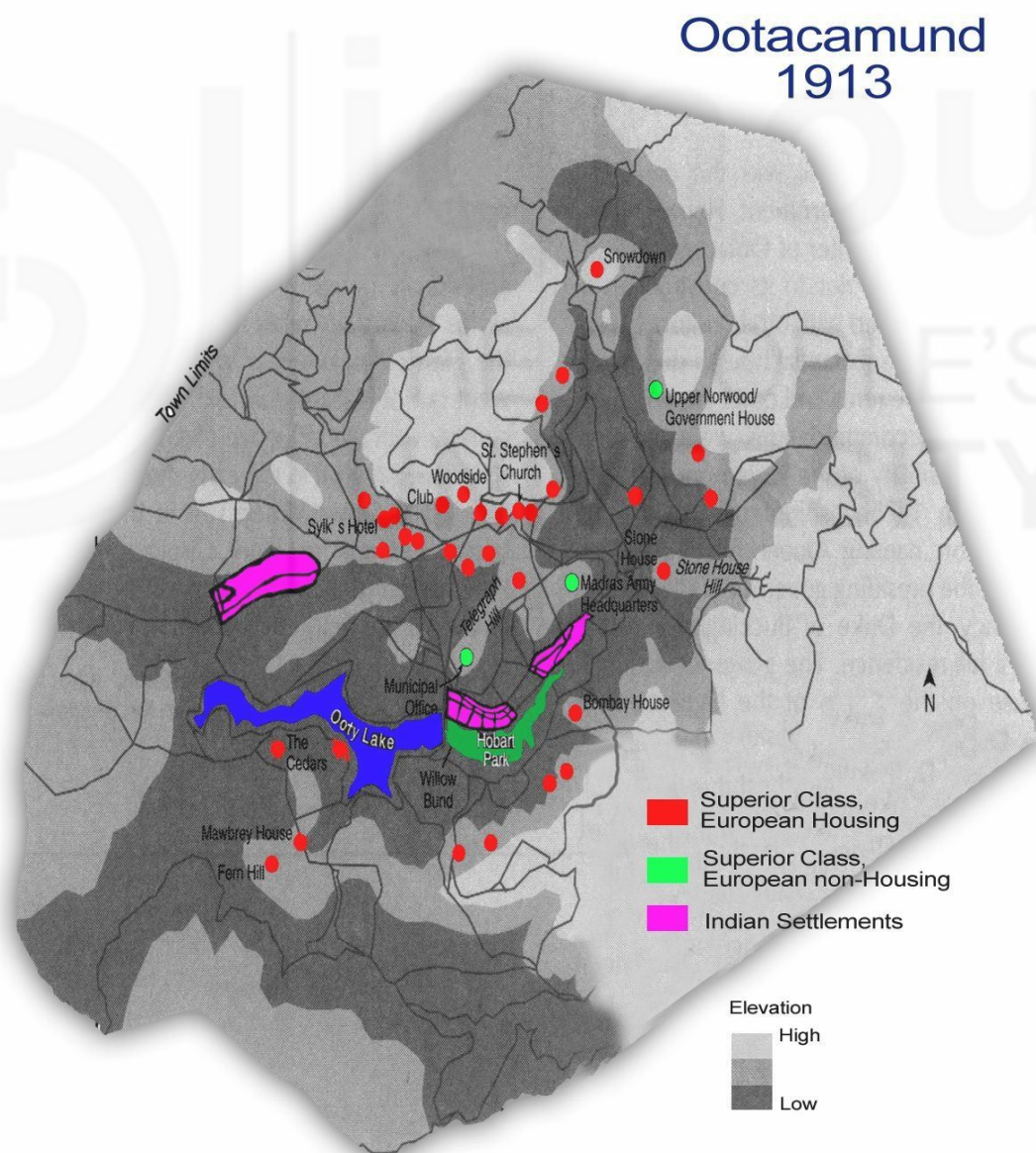
33.5 HILL STATIONS

The first British hill station was built in 1819 and by the 1860s, many of them served as the summer capitals of the British government in India. In 1864 Simla became the official summer capital of the Viceroy and in 1870 Ootacamund that of the Madras presidency. Nainital served as the summer capital of the United Provinces for five months in a year and Darjeeling as that of the Bengal government for three months. As a result of protests from Indian petitioners against this practice, (which reached a peak in Madras in 1884 when thirty thousand petitioners wrote to Parliament) the duration of the official 'flight' to the hills was curtailed. These hill stations were shaped by the need to make suitable spaces for European officials and their families. English medium private schools, sanatoriums and churches dotted the landscape of the hills, which had a lower population density than the plains, so the British were free to re-create an English atmosphere and promote an architecture that was closer to what they were familiar with back home. They could also 'overlook' the Indian elites and ordinary people in these mountain retreats. Although there were differences in their size and importance, the British created about eighty hill stations in different parts of the subcontinent.



Source: Kenny, Judith T., (1995) 'Climate, Race, and Imperial Authority: The Symbolic Landscape of the British Hill Station in India', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 85, No. 4 (December), p. 694. (After Mitchell, N., (1972) *The Indian Hill Station*. Kodaikanal Research Papers, No.141, Chicago:: University of Chicago, Department of Geography.)

The Viceroy of India, Lord Lytton, who visited Ootacamund in 1877, compared the rain there to English rain. He found features reminiscent of the English landscape: 'Imagine Herefordshire lanes, Devonshire downs, Westmoreland lakes, Scotch trout streams.' (Kenny, 1995: 702) The Indians in Ooty outnumbered the Europeans ten to one but they were somehow invisible in social circles, despite the fact that the real estate was primarily owned by them during the late nineteenth century and there were some significant Indian men of commerce in the station. The European presence was heightened by the fact that Ooty became the permanent headquarters of the Madras army in 1884. The British in the late 19th century were not too keen to let even Indian princes build their summer houses in Ooty. Even the Nizam of Hyderabad faced opposition in 1886 when he wanted to buy the house in which the Commander-in-Chief of the Madras Army had once lived. This was partly because the colonial authorities feared that the entourage of the princes would bring various diseases in their wake. In 1907, the Hill Sanitaria Municipal Act authorized hill municipalities to raise taxes and control land uses in order to keep these European enclaves free from disease. Another factor was that the British wanted to maintain European superiority and therefore to thwart the transfer of houses owned by Europeans to the Indians.



Source: Kenny, Judith T., (1995) 'Climate, Race, and Imperial Authority: The Symbolic Landscape of the British Hill Station in India', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 85, No. 4 (December), p. 703.

Simla became an important hill station because it served as the summer capital of the Viceroy and the Headquarters of the British army in India. The stamp of British architecture on Simla was substantial, partly because of the absence of indigenous and Mughal architectural traditions in the region. The Church at the end of the Mall was Gothic and the Town Hall and Public Library were Tudor and half-timbered. The Viceregal Lodge, built during 1884-1888, used 'grey stone in an eclectic Elizabethan style, reminiscent of a hotel in a British seaside resort, and with Jacobean interiors which must have reminded the Viceroy of his Ulster seat, Clandeboyne.' (Stamp, 1981: 366) In Simla the officials who came during the summer months hired houses in the town for many years before the construction of official buildings and residences. The valuable property in Simla was controlled and owned by a handful of Europeans. Indian princes too were important buyers of premium properties. In 1886 the Indian princes owned one-seventh of the houses considered appropriate for Europeans. Thereafter a policy of discouraging Indian princes from acquiring property emerged and by 1907 the number of houses that they owned had come down to seven. The Commander-in-Chief of the Army was not allowed to sell Snowden to the Nizam of Hyderabad in 1890. The Viceroy, Lord Lansdowne in 1890 wrote that the princes were not to be encouraged to hang about in Simla.

The government came up with schemes to restrict the inflow of people into Simla after the railway came up to Kalka in 1891, but the attempt to control the character of the town and its population growth was abandoned after the rise of political agitations in Simla and its neighbourhood led by the Indian National Congress and the Praja Mandal. After the Lee Commission in 1925 allowed the British officials to spend their vacations in England the popularity of Simla declined, bringing down the demand for and prices of large properties. The British became indifferent to the increasing control of the town and its properties by middle class Indians during the inter-war period. As Pamela Kanwar has argued, it was possible to create a 'British haven at Simla "given" a politically quiescent Indian population', but growing nationalist awareness amongst the functional groups which were crucial in the town undermined British control over Simla even before 1947. (Kanwar, 1984: 236)

The British in India were only interested in temporary ownership or control over housing as they did not intend to settle down permanently in India. Although they used strong measures to regulate the private housing market in Simla, they did not adopt measures that were used in African or American cities. Argues Carl Nightingale, 'Most whites in suburban civil lines and cantonments did not own the houses they lived in at all; the Raj provided the typically temporary shelter there as partial payment' for 'colonial service. ... Faster steam ships ultimately made the trip home to England just as easy and much more desirable than a summer stay in the hill stations, underscoring Britons' relative lack of commitment to real estate investments in India. Independence movements in Asia and Africa of course eventually sent most of all the whites in a "White Town" home by the middle of the twentieth century.' (Nightingale, 2006: 682)

33.6 SUMMARY

The British in India were responsible for the decline of many urban centres associated with traditional industries but they also founded new towns based on the needs of British commerce and European ideas of race and climate. The urbanisation during the colonial period has sometimes been called parasitic or dependent because it was based on the exploitation of the peasants by urban and commercial interests. The new urban centres were principally the port towns, the military cantonments, the railway towns and the commercial centres or market towns. Urban centres grew not because of the

rise of modern industry but because of exports of agricultural commodities to which the railways contributed immensely. The overdeveloped tertiary sector was a product of the slow development of the secondary sector and high levels of underemployment in the primary agricultural sector. The canal towns encouraged some growth and urbanisation but even in the Punjab a lot of the prosperity was linked to the remittances by soldiers who served in the British army. The limited economic development under colonialism did not adversely affect the level of urbanisation in India as much as the social and economic role of these urban centres. The difference in the nature of urbanisation in the colonial periphery and the metropolitan centre was substantial.

33.7 EXERCISES

- 1) Discuss the emergence of cantonment towns during the colonial period. In what ways did it lead to the segregation and compartmentalisation of the urban population?
- 2) Why did the British segregate urban centres in 'Black' and 'White' Towns? What kind of new urban space was produced here?
- 3) Describe the emergence of canal colonies. What was its impact? How did it alter the urban spaces?
- 4) Examine the connection between military recruitment, settlements of colonies, irrigation and loyalism.
- 5) How did the railways alter urban settings?
- 6) What lay behind the creation of Summer Capitals? Could the 'segregated' city be reproduced in these 'hill stations'?

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UNIT 34 RACE, CLASS AND ETHNICITY IN THE COLONIAL CITY*

Structure

- 34.1 Introduction
- 34.2 From Port to Presidency Towns
 - 34.2.1 Madras (Chennai)
 - 34.2.2 Bombay (Mumbai)
 - 34.2.3 Calcutta (Kolkata)
- 34.3 Race, Caste and Class
- 34.4 Health and Sanitation in the Divided City
- 34.5 Summary
- 34.6 Exercises
- 34.7 References

34.1 INTRODUCTION

Both existing and new towns and cities which developed during the period of colonial rule in India were primarily links in a colonial economy and were often in contrast to pre-colonial urban centres. New principles of social and spatial division made colonial cities distinct from earlier urban centres. The ideology and requirements of colonial rule recast, on the one hand, certain indigenous social and cultural traditions to significantly shape the new colonial cities. On the other hand, distinctly new ethnic, linguistic and racial elements came into play in the colonial city. So the development, or indeed decline, of towns and cities in the colonial period is generally a result of the needs of the imperial order.

In what ways did the dynamics of race, class and ethnicity shape urban spatial relations and control over urban space? The three main port cities, before they became Presidency Cities, were characterised by some stable sets of features, which as Partha Mitter has said do not amount to planning as such, at least until 1757. The main elements of fort, port, government residence, hospital, church, gardens, garden houses and parks were in place, but they were not linked in a master plan. To begin with were the fortified factories, set up in relatively undeveloped sites: Madras, 1639 (Fort St George); Bombay 1667 (Bombay Castle); Calcutta 1690 (Fort William). These were sites of economic and political power as evidenced in shared common features: a fort, an open esplanade around a fort, separate European and Indian residential areas, commercial areas, residential zones for immigrants – Asians, and Europeans, a peripheral manufacturing zone, and an outlying military zone. Over time, there were phases of building which added to the original nucleus, but it was dualistic in form from the outset, with separate regions for Europeans and Indians. There was considerable expansion of these enclaves in the middle to late 18th century, when new areas of ‘white’ and ‘black’ towns were added, administrative buildings

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multiplied and a degree of suburbanisation occurred. There was a more radical separation of European and Indian spaces, with central business districts consisting of European dominated commercial, managerial and administrative activities. There was also an identifiable intermediate zone where dubashis, ethnic groups like Parsis and Eurasians lived. The waterfront and the port became the centres of major commercial activity and thus Madras (today Chennai), Bombay (today Mumbai) and Calcutta (today Kolkata) emerged as three major urban centres in colonial India. Though the three Presidency towns reflected certain British ideas about race and class distinction, over time they also came to reflect indigenous social hierarchies relating to the uses and meaning of urban space. We will explain the influence of race, class and caste identity in shaping the pattern of habitation largely with reference to these presidency towns during the period of colonial rule. As we shall see, apart from marking these cities in spatially distinct ways, the new forms of segregation and difference had important and lasting influences on a range of other facets of urban life, such as health and sanitation.

34.2 FROM PORT TO PRESIDENCY TOWNS

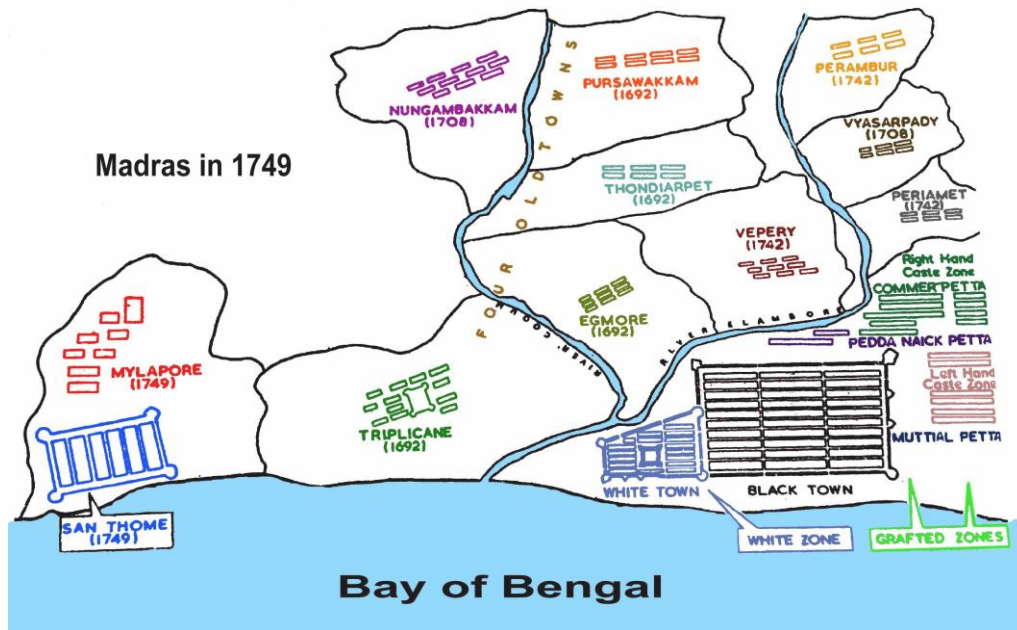
The growth of the Presidencies of Madras, Bombay and Calcutta in India were primarily a result of the East India Company's commercial need to develop land bases for its trading network. Though Madras, Bombay, and Calcutta shared some common features, the trajectories of their developments were quite distinct and deserve separate consideration.

34.2.1 Madras (Chennai)

Madras, today renamed as Chennai, had its origins as a colonial trading post of the English East India Company in 1639-40 and the Fort St. George was the nucleus of this new settlement. Madras was established as a base for the export of ready-made cloth to the European market. Initially the Company took a land grant of three square miles from the local Hindu Nayak ruler but later on with the growth of trade and increased Company activities, more territories were added.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, the EIC expanded territorial possessions around Fort St. George and included 15 villages. By the mid 1700s, Black Town was demolished to improve the defenses of Fort St. George. A new Black Town was created, though it was a misnomer since Europeans occupied the space until the 1800s, (which was later called George Town). The expansion of colonial commercial and residential sites from the old White Town into the Black Town and the suburban villages obliterated the dual settlement pattern that had characterised Madras since its establishment in the mid seventeenth century, and that continued to shape many other colonial towns in British India. Yet, there continued to be important markers of class, race and ethnicity.

Black and white towns were separated in various ways. 'Eighteenth – and nineteenth – century Madras was an amalgam of three separate though overlapping societies: the suburban villages, which belonged to the pre-colonial agrarian society of Tondaimandalam; the predominantly Indian town centers, which had their own links with indigenous urban and rural society but which grew mainly in response to the new colonial trading settlement; and the colonial urban and suburban society which emerged during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and reflected British colonial interests and policies.' (Basu, 1979:218)



Source: Roche, Patrick A., (2010) 'Caste and the British Merchant Government in Madras, 1639-1749', in Banerjee-Dube, Ishita, (ed.), *Caste in History*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, p. 8; Originally published in *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, Vol. 12, No. 4, 1975, p. 387.

Madras attracted different indigenous social groups, and by the early 1800s one-fifth of Madras's total population belonged to the formerly 'untouchable' communities who constituted the majority of the unskilled labour force. There were Muslim traders from Kerala, trading communities from Gujarat, and many agriculturalist castes displaced as a result of conflict with the Mysore kingdom. These different social groups lived in distinct places in the city and were identified, and even administered, according to their ethnic identity. 'The defining character of Madras was not its concentration in a central business district but a distinctively distributed urbanization that long preserved features of the rural environment and a variety of neighbourhoods that retained special socio-spatial markers. The creation of this pattern occurred partially through the official establishment of suburbs such as Washermanpet (ca. 1720), designated for cloth washers north of the city, Chintadripet (1735), designated for weavers on an ox-bow of the Cooum River southwest of the Fort, and Royapuram (1799), designated for boatmen north of the city.' (Heitzman, 2008: 109). The urban poor of Madras always lived at a distance so that they neither posed a threat of caste pollution to local upper castes, nor any threat to Europeans. Over time, the Europeans gradually moved from the urban centres to the outlying districts of Madras where they established garden houses as symbols of wealth and authority. Local elites also followed their footsteps by building palatial houses near temples as sign of their newly acquired socio-economic status.

34.2.2 Bombay (Mumbai)

Bombay, the second of the English port cities, was originally a group of seven islands, situated off the west coast of India, and was acquired by King Charles II in 1661 as dowry when he married Catherine of Braganza (from Portugal). The East India Company got the control of it in 1667, and fortified its factory there, a structure which was later called Bombay Fort. Not much development took place in Bombay until the Company defeated the Marathas in the beginning of the 1800s. But by the mid-nineteenth century with the growth of the cotton market and later trade in opium the port in Bombay grew in importance and the city gradually acquired the status of a major metropolitan centre.

In 1838, the seven islands of Bombay were linked through an ambitious process of land reclamation. After the large scale construction of docks, wharves, warehouses, necessitated by the arrival of steam power, the east coast of Bombay island became one continuous strip of docks, wharves piers, jetties, and bunders.

Social segregation in the residential pattern was very visible in Bombay as in other Presidency towns. The city was initially divided into two distinct districts- one for the Europeans and the other for the local inhabitants. Between the European town and the 'Native' town there used to be an area earmarked as esplanade for defense. Mercantile communities of Gujarat initially formed a dominant group of local inhabitants and there were diverse religious groups among local inhabitants like Hindu, Muslim, Jain and Parsi. Rajnarayan Chandavarkar writes:

The opportunities opened up by Bombay's growth brought people into the city from the whole Presidency and indeed, further afield. It ensured that no single social group, whether defined by caste, language or religion, dominated its commercial or political life. Hindus, divided by caste and language, class and sectarian belief, made up about two-thirds of the city's population. But their strength of numbers did not ensure their social dominance. Parsis were among the largest property owners in the city and among its leading merchants and entrepreneurs from the late eighteenth century. They played a prominent role in the city's public life and its municipal politics. But they formed only about 5 per cent of the population. About one-fifth of the city's inhabitants were Muslims, but they were no more homogenous than the Hindus or Parsis and were divided by sect and caste, doctrine and language. (Chandavarkar, 2009: 17)

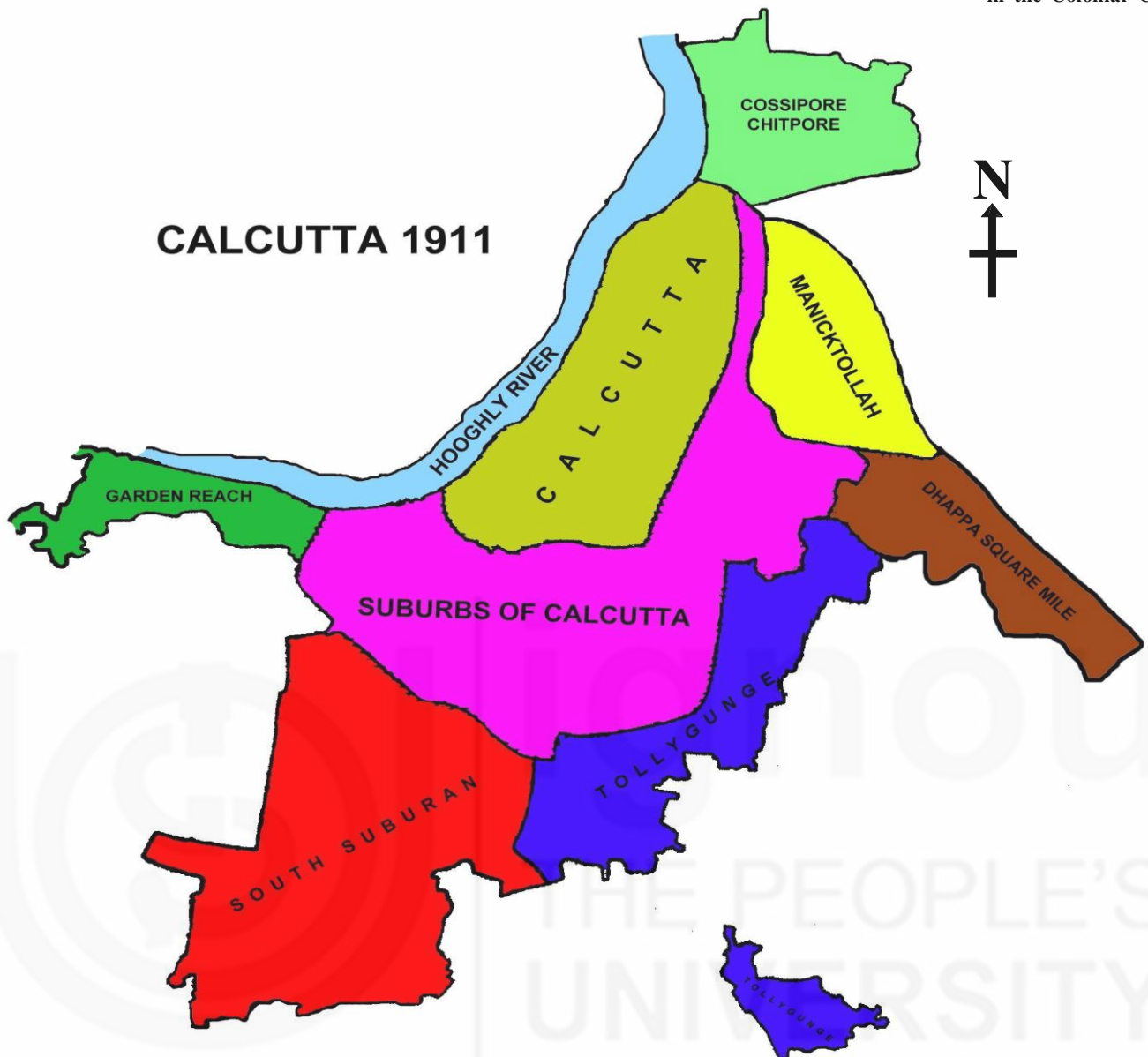
The original black or native town also began expanding in response to the needs of dockworkers, warehousing workers etc. Poor Marathi speaking people who were the main source of labour lived near the dock area and in the outskirts. Cotton textile mills began to emerge near Native Town largely in the central part of the island. Meanwhile, Europeans and others went further away for housing in a process of suburbanisation that imitated Britain. Following the cotton boom during the civil war (1861-65), there was an explosion of commercial banking and trading activity, which while it was short lived, considerably expanded the city.

Yet the port and the railways affected the morphology of the city more profoundly than the autonomous development of the cotton textile mills: in fact, according to Frank Boaze, the cotton textile industry was developed due to its port. The population density was very high in the indigenous part of the town, which mixed residential and commercial uses, while richer elites such as Parsis migrated to the suburbs.

34.2.3 Calcutta (Kolkata)

The English East India Company, while in search of a better factory site in Bengal away from Murshidabad, the provincial seat of political power, selected a place on the banks of the river Bhagirathi. The place was comprised of three villages, Kalikata, Sutanati and Gobindapur which was controlled by a local zamindar but officially belonged to the Mughal emperor. The Company later on purchased the zamindari rights of these three villages and constructed a fortified factory there.

The settlement plan of Calcutta, the third port city, reflected not only the imperial ideology but also certain ideas about the local population. In one corner of the 'maidan' (open field), Fort William was constructed with all modern defense requirements and this symbolised the British might and supremacy. There was a clear demarcation between the 'white' town and the 'black' town. In between the 'white' and the 'black' town there was a buffer zone. The name suggests that 'white' town was for the residences



Source: Datta, Partho, (2012) *Planning the City: Urbanisation and Reform in Calcutta, c.1800-c.1940*, Delhi: Tulika Books, p. 173.

and offices of the Europeans, 'black' town for local population and an intermediate zone housed other communities like Persians, Armenians, Jews, Chinese, Persians and others. Thomas Twining who arrived in Calcutta in 1792 described the 'white' town in the following way,

A range of magnificent buildings, including the Governor's Palace, the Council House, the Supreme Court House, the Accountant-General's office, etc., extended eastward from the river, and then turning at a right angle to the south, formed the limit of both the city and the plain. Nearly all these buildings were occupied by the civil and military officers of the Government, either as their public offices or private residences. They were all white, their roofs invariably flat, surrounded by light colonnades, and their fronts relieved by lofty columns, supporting lofty verandahs. They were all separated from each other, each having its own small enclosure, in which at a little distance from the house, were the kitchen, the cellars, storerooms, etc. and a large folding gate and porter's lodge at the entrance. (Cited in Roy, 1991:29)

Within the ‘black’ town, caste affiliation, occupation and place of origin played a significant role in deciding the area of residence. There were zamindars, traders, officials working for the Company and a large section of people doing various kinds of manual work. This working population included domestic servants, barbers, water-carriers, washer men, coach-men, boatmen, palanquin-bearers, porters, etc. This class of people lived in thatched homes in neighbourhoods which were locally known as *basti* (slums) in the outskirts of the city. The quality of residences was a clear marker of the class of people living in a particular area. Swati Chattopadhyay however suggests that the distinctions between black and white towns was somewhat blurred both by the existence of elite Indians in the European areas, and poorer Indians in white areas.

H. Beverly, the Census Commissioner, wrote in his Report way back in 1881 that Calcutta was not an industrial centre but essentially a ‘commercial city’ because more than one-half of its population was engaged in commercial pursuits. The industrial class consisted mostly of ‘carpenters, bricklayers, thatchers, barbers, tailors, shoemakers, washer men, water carriers, and the like.... The trade of Calcutta is one of buying and selling raw produce or goods manufactured elsewhere, a trade of exchanging the products of other countries or places, and not a trade of production.’ (H. Beverly, *Report of the Census of the Town and Suburbs of Calcutta*, 1881, cited in Datta, 2012: 129) Against this brief background of the development of Madras, Bombay and Calcutta we will now turn to how the ideas of race, caste and class shaped urban life in colonial cities.

34.3 RACE, CASTE AND CLASS

Colonial rule according to Partha Chatterjee was predicated on the rule of colonial difference, i.e. colonies such as India could not but be exceptions to the rule of law which the British strenuously upheld as the ideological justification for its rule. What this translated into in the city space was what Anthony King has broadly understood as the divided city: one part, European, administrative and military in function, the other, indigenous, residential, commercial and in some cases, industrial. Racial distinction was sought to be established and maintained without hesitation as the necessary condition for colonial rule; in almost all cases, as we shall see, the colonial port cities, and many others as well, long bore the marks of this division. Segregation in the city space performed important roles in colonial society, quite different from earlier forms of segregation that might have prevailed in Indian cities. Within the ‘colonial city’ a specific urban form was engendered, by the complex power relations exercised by an alien power over an indigenous population: it included the colonial settlement, namely the cantonment or the civil lines, and the indigenous settlement, namely the Black Town, the native quarter (as in Madras, Calcutta) or sometimes even the densely settled old historic quarter (as in Delhi, Lucknow, Ahmedbad or bearing both features (as in Bangalore).

Given that the colonial administrators for the most part, and especially after 1857, preferred to rely on local caste/ethnic structure to govern the urban populations, caste and community identities retained their significance in structuring access to, and uses of, urban space and opportunities. Apart from differences of race and class there were stratifications which were spatially materialised, since there was a strong overlap between caste and class at the lower levels. Ideas relating to race, class and caste decided allocations of urban space and the patterns of social relations. Though race played a crucial role in determining city space and amenities for the ruling race, colonial administrators were initially unwilling to intervene in the socio-cultural customs of indigenous people and therefore the local people carried forward their socio-cultural practices in the new urban settlements which were reflected in the residential patterns.

Caste not only determined space and its uses, but also decided what kinds of opportunities would emerge from this hierarchical structuring. However, these were not mere replicas of kinship and village networks, or caste networks, though they could form the basis for the new arrangements in the city.

What was common in all the Presidency towns was the line of demarcation between the European settlement and the settlement of the local people. A sense of superiority in terms of racial distinction, cultural distinctiveness and concern for hygiene and health played an important role in making distinct settlement patterns. The distinct settlement areas not only signified socio-cultural difference but also symbolised the authority and power of the dominant and the dominated. Living in segregated neighbourhoods strengthened ethnic bonds. Writing on control of urban space in colonial Madras Carl H. Nightingale observed that Indian practices of caste and religious segregation made the division of Madras much easier in the 18th century:

As in other South Indian cities, the rival Right Hand and Left Hand Hindu caste alliances in Madras lived on separate streets in Black Town, as did “untouchable” Pariars and Muslims. Many Hindu residents of Madras no doubt preferred to live far from what were seen as sacrilegious practices of the British, such as eating beef or hiring Pariars as household servants – although mercantile interests just as doubtlessly led many to suspend some such pieties...

The British company was not above using Indian caste politics for its own ends. For many years, governors relied primarily on members of the higher status Right Hand caste alliance as the company’s principal *dubashes* and suppliers. When the British sought better prices by allowing merchants from the Left Hand to bid on contracts, they provoked an enormous battle that centered on fights over the neighborhoods allotted to each caste. Governor Pitt finally forced caste leaders into seclusion to negotiate a clear division of Black Town, complete with a system of boundary stones, and the British got their cheaper cloth....The very residential structure of cities could also symbolically tell key parables about the unequal order of white and black. Madras’s gleaming White Town and its dowdier Black Town, for example, impressed travelers on their way to the newer city of Calcutta, which adopted similar designations in somewhat different political circumstances. A more ambiguous version was also debated at Bombay, and later British colonial cities further adapted the pattern. (Nightingale, 2008: 54-55, 70)

Susan Neild Basu’s study of the development of Madras city refers to the continuity of many features of the pre-colonial order along with the changes of the colonial era. This is viewed ‘as a process of accommodation between local and colonial influences.’ While there are different interpretations about why existing caste divisions were preferred in the residential settlements of the new Presidency towns they definitely contributed to the polarisation of urban life.

Patrick A. Roche in an article titled ‘Caste and the British Merchant Government in Madras, 1639-1749’ observes that:

The colonial city of Madras was largely the creation of British commercial interests; yet, like most indigenous cities, it has provided a representation of the social order both in its spatial arrangements and its social structure.... The British value system, centring on “colour” and “religion”, worked through a *process of assimilation* to create a “colour-caste” which led to the particular spatial and social features of “White Town”. A *process of integration* – involving the acquisition and absorption of ancient villages and temple centres – established the “orthogenetic-indigenous” sectors in Madras. Since colonial commercial interests were not directly linked to the social organization of these

sectors, the British adopted a *laissez-faire* policy that ensured the continuance of spatial and social features along traditional caste lines. (Roche, 2008: 3-23).

Rajanarayan Chandavarkar (2009) has shown that by the early twentieth century, urban space in Bombay was clearly divided along class lines, which was also made visible in the types of residential houses available in that city. With the proliferation of cotton mills in the city and despite the growth of new suburbs, mill workers usually lived close to the factory areas. In his opinion, the planning and development of the city was thought of in 'terms of separate spaces for different social classes'. This notion of social separation played a significant role in planning the infrastructure and hygiene of the city. Compared to Bombay, central spaces of Calcutta were not industrialised, as the jute industry flourished from the late nineteenth century mostly outside the city of Calcutta. But the large public works attracted a large number of casual labourers who formed the bulk of city's population. There was continuous migration to the city not only from various districts of Bengal but also from outside Bengal in search of work in the city. The poor in the city came mostly from the underprivileged and the lowest strata of the social hierarchy. The poor people without the means to build houses in the city lived in temporary huts which gave birth to slums in the city. Slums existed in both the 'white' and the 'black' towns. As Nathaniel Kindersley wrote in 1768 from Calcutta:

Here is not as in Madras, a black town near for the servants of the English to reside in; therefore Calcutta is partly environed by their habitation, which makes the roads rather unpleasant; for the huts they live in which are built of mud and straw, are so low that they can scarcely stand upright in them; and, having no chimnies, the smoke of the fires with which they dress their victuals, comes all out at the doors, and perhaps more disagreeable to the passenger than themselves....Everyone who can procure a piece of ground to build a house upon, consults his own taste and convenience, without any regard to the beauty or regularity of the town; besides, the appearance of the best houses is spoiled by the little straw huts, and such sort of encumbrances, which are built up by the servants for themselves to sleep in; so that all the English part of the town, which is the largest, is a confusion of very superb and very shabby houses, dead walls, straw huts... (cited in Datta, 2012: 138)

34.4 HEALTH AND SANITATION IN THE DIVIDED CITY

Writing on public health under the British colonial rule, Radhika Ramasubban argues that the health care system developed under the colonial rule was marked by residential segregation and the indigenous people did not receive the desired medical attention. David Arnold has also pointed to the fact that much of government expenditure on health and sanitation was for the Europeans and not for the local population. In fact there is agreement among most of the researchers worked on health and sanitation in British India that the public health policy itself made a clear distinction between the needs and habits of Europeans as opposed to the local inhabitants.

The growing population in the cities and the consequent problem of public health and hygiene especially during the plague epidemic of 1896-8 forced colonial officials to pay serious attention to remedial measures in order to protect the health of Europeans and the local inhabitants. In formulating the policy to address problems of health and sanitation, it was not only the material interests of the colonial state, the perceptions of colonial rulers and the prevailing social divisions and customs in local society that significantly shaped the discourse on 'improvement'. An inadequate water supply, drainage and sanitation, and the spread of epidemics compelled the government not only to think of

formulating effective mechanisms for public health and hygiene but also to develop municipal authorities to address the issues of city governance. The introduction of Indians on municipal boards, especially after 1862, was intended more to stifle nationalist aspirations, rather than resolve urban problems; furthermore, municipalities were to raise the funds to pay for new policing arrangements in cities. As a result, white areas were prioritised for water and sanitation interventions, and boards were starved of essential funds. (Gupta, 1981; Dossal, 2010) we must note however that in the initial stages, there was also the reluctance of elite groups to accept piped water supply or underground sanitation, and therefore were unwilling to pay for such general services which would benefit all sections of society, as Kenneth Gillion has shown for Ahmedabad. (Gillion, 1968)

In Calcutta, the settlements of local people were considered as major threat to health of Europeans. James Ranald Martin in his 'Notes on the Medical Topography of Calcutta', published in 1837, commented that the 'natives' were yet to learn that 'cleanly habits and pure air are some of the most precious gifts of civilization... The institution of caste is of itself an enormous injury to public health'. (cited in Datta, 2012: 93) Martin found a direct link between cleanliness of the 'native' town and the spread of diseases. Partho Datta has observed that 'Martin's view, that a combination of smell, dirt and dense buildings were somehow incompatible with civilizational values, was a reflection of the deep current of reformism popular among the governing classes in England and increasingly in Calcutta. One outcome of this view was that Indians were typified as unchanging, passive and helpless, needing to be worked upon to raise them from their moribund state.' (Datta, 2012: 98)

We find a reflection of Martin's perception even among later colonial officials. C. Fabre-Tonnerre, Health Officer for the Calcutta Municipality wrote in 1872 that many of the epidemics that broke out in Calcutta first appeared in the northern part of the town inhabited by local people. The link between disease and dirt, local habits and customs was predominant in the perceptions of Europeans. Naturally, the colonial government initiated policies to develop sanitation and public health facilities in Calcutta but the primary focus was on the area inhabited by the Europeans. The beneficiaries of the governmental development initiatives first were the Europeans, followed by the indigenous middle classes, and only lastly the poor. There was a marked difference in terms of population density between European and indigenous settlements and the congestion and lack of adequate civic amenities in the area of indigenous settlements had an impact on the quality of life, particularly in regard to health and sanitation.

Though municipal bodies were created under the control of the Europeans and the local affluent classes to address health and civic problems of urban people, there was a visible bias in municipal spending which favoured Europeans and colonial elites and resulted in a differential development of residential zones. In fact, the improvement trusts that came up in Bombay and Calcutta in 1890s took initiatives for sanitation and slum clearances but such initiatives had very little impact on the lives of the poor in the cities.

How did the various initiatives taken for the improvement of urban environment reshape or alter racial, caste and class biases in Indian cities? Chandavarkar argues that 'That formulation of social policy for an urban complex which was expanding rapidly was not only governed by selfish, material interests, but also by perceptions of how the poor live, the habits and customs of the "natives"'. There was a dominant perception that bad hygiene and the threat of disease was largely because of dirty habits and lack of cleanliness among local population, particularly those who belonged to lower social order. H. Coneybeare wrote:

it could not be expected that any town containing half a million people can be without a dirty quarter, and this is particularly the case in India where the connection of caste has a tendency to concentrate sweepers and others of low caste in one locality. Municipal improvements can only provide the means of cleanliness to those who are willing to avail themselves of them. . . (cited in Chandavarkar, 2009:48)

The same perception was echoed in the observation of Burnett-Hurst that ‘...it is no exaggeration to say that the masses are utterly unacquainted with even elementary ideas of hygiene and sanitation, and little improvement can take place until they have been educated to a different standard of living.’ (cited in Chandavarkar, 2009: 50) Chandavarkar therefore argues that there was conscious effort on the part of colonial rulers to construct an image of India whose society and citizens have different habits and therefore demanded a different set of policies to achieve improvement. The plague in Bombay in the 1890s and the response of the colonial rulers to this calamity provides another example of the colonial discourse on hygiene and sanitation. Even after the medical discovery of the theories of the plague, Prashant Kidambi has explained that in 1902 Bombay’s health officials and medical practitioners were convinced that plague was a disease of locality and not an epidemic caused by outside sources. It was the unhealthy condition of ‘native’ quarters which has caused this disease. The plague was ‘a disease of locality and does not occur in epidemics by being introduced from without and spreading only by personal contact or by means of affected material into unaffected localities’. (Kidambi, 2007:56)

Ranchodlal Chotalal, who was nominated Chairman of the Municipal Committee of Ahmedabad in 1883 wrote a memo listing the improvements needed in the city: better water and drainage, new thoroughfares, more open spaces, better hospitals, the encouragement of people to live outside the wall, and a ban on selling further land for building in the crowded parts of the city. He concluded that ‘The most important duty of the Municipality is to look after the public health.’ Yet there was widespread opposition to his plans, some of which stemmed from personal and caste-based prejudices about the perils of underground drainage: there was Brahman and Vania opposition to the use of piped water for instance. None of these were forms of opposition that were unknown in England when new water, sanitation and public health measures were being introduced for the first time. However, colonial officials did not agree that such facilities were essential in India: in the words of a former Collector, Sir Theodore Hope in 1886, Ahmedabad should have nothing to do with underground drainage since it was costly, still in its experimental stage in India, with mistakes being made even in England, and “too far advanced for the present stage of average intelligence and civilisation of the population of towns in the Bombay mofussil.” Only in the early 1900s did Ahmedabad get piped water and underground sewage.

The racial attitude was further spatialised in specific ways through the passage of the Contagious Diseases Acts in 1868. The objective behind the Act was to protect the British officers from venereal disease, for which Indian prostitutes were seen as the important cause. They were therefore kept under strict surveillance, isolated in Lock Hospitals and periodically sent away from areas visited by European soldiers. Long after the Contagious Diseases Acts were repealed in England and in India, after 1888, measures of segregation were continued under Cantonment Rules. The arrival of European and Japanese prostitutes in Indian cantonments produced new anxieties among colonial officials about the possible threats to racial distinction, which in some instances were sought to be retained by expelling these women from specific cantonments as well. (Tambe, 2009; Ballhatchet, 1980) Yet, any act which aimed to protect only British citizens and devolving on the municipality as a whole was considered untenable, and

therefore in Bombay, as Ashwini Tambe tells us, the Contagious Diseases Act was suspended since the municipality refused to pay for its implementation. The rule of colonial difference was reflected in most measures that were taken to address the issues of health and hygiene in the colonial city. (Tambe, 2009)

A number of scholars who have studied the Indian city under colonial rule have revealed the ways in which caste and ethnicity were given renewed meaning and importance in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Labour historians such as Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, Shashibhushan Upadhyay, Chitra Joshi and Dipesh Chakrabarti, among others, have shown that while they might not have had the same meanings as in the places of origin, the ties of caste and community provided new migrants with important resources to survive in their new urban locations, of Bombay, Kanpur and Calcutta. (Chandavarkar (2009), Upadhyay (2004), Joshi (2003), Chakrabarti (1989) Even the new sites of work, at the factory or the mine, did not always dissolve the distinctions based on caste and often strengthened and revived them, though new opportunities for self definition of lower castes were also being opened up. (Nair, 1998) In fact, both factory managers, and landlords of housing colonies in these working class areas found it more useful to leave the solidarities of caste/ethnicity in the neighbourhood untouched, for either administrative or financial reasons, thereby placing the burden of transforming the lives of the urban poor as a whole on the poor themselves.

A few small scale experiments were tried by individual administrators to alter the social habits of the lower castes by planning the physical space within the city. One such example was the small colony called Knoxpet which was established in Bangalore in 1923 with the intention of raising the Chuckliars or leather workers to a 'proper social and sanitary standard'. New principles of planning and building space were thus introduced which aimed to transform living styles and the social status of the lowest castes in the city. (Nair, 2005)

34.5 SUMMARY

The cities of Madras, Bombay and Calcutta developed primarily to serve the commercial interests of the growing British colonial empire in India. The men who came as representatives of the British colonial empire were influenced by the ideas and interests of the mother country. The notion of racial superiority that they had as 'white' men played a significant role in maintaining the difference by adopting segregated residential settlements. The space segregated as 'native' town was inhabited by different local social groups and their residential areas represented their caste and religious differences. Poor people belonging mostly to lower castes and engaged in different menial works lived in the outskirts of the city or near the industry/factory in slums. While threats of disease compelled the colonial government to initiate measures for the health and hygiene of urban residents, ideas of racial difference thwarted the possible success of any measures right from the outset. Over time, even the involvement of a sizable section of Indian urban elites in municipal politics, after 1862, and nationalist leaders, in the 20th century, did little to redress the entrenched differences of class and race in the Indian city, and deepened the hold of such affiliations of caste and ethnicity, which gave people, especially those from lower castes and classes, a sense of security and belonging.

34.6 EXERCISES

- 1) In what ways did the dynamics of race, class and ethnicity shape urban spatial relations and control over urban space?

- 2) Critically analyse the emergence and growth of Presidency towns during the colonial period.
- 3) Can colonial cities rightly be understood as divided cities? Justify.
- 4) Were the divisions within cities also the basis for new antagonisms and solidarities?

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UNIT 35 THE CITY AS THE SITE OF SPECTACLE*

Structure

- 35.1 Introduction
- 35.2 Colonial Construction Before 1857
- 35.3 The Revolt of 1857 and Its Implications
- 35.4 Interpreting the Empire
- 35.5 The Indian Response
- 35.6 New Imperatives of Empire
- 35.7 Blended Architectures
- 35.8 Planning an Imperial City
- 35.9 Summary
- 35.10 Exercises
- 35.11 References

35.1 INTRODUCTION

Political power is almost invariably expressed through built structures in addition to other means. Whether it is parks and public spaces dotted with statues of icons of the regime, public buildings, or private residences of those in power, considerable thought often goes into what they intend to express. This is equally true whether or not the ruling power is culturally similar to or different from the mass of the population. In ancient and medieval India, rulers built imposing fortresses, palace complexes, monumental temples, mosques and tombs, and even victory towers and gateways to express their political and cultural control over their subjects as against their rivals.

In the same way, architecture and city planning under British colonial rule reflected political agendas; the buildings as well as their settings made a statement about the nature of colonial rule. In particular, impressive public buildings and grand vistas could turn the city into a spectacle of imperial grandeur, designed to awe the subject population, but also to lay claim to their loyalty. At the same time, the Indians who lived in these cities used these spaces to express their own identities in creative ways.

35.2 COLONIAL CONSTRUCTION BEFORE 1857

British Imperial architecture was fashioned over a long period of time. In the early years of territorial rule by the East India Company, the aim was, on the one hand, to make functional buildings to live and work in; on the other hand, to express a cultural distinctness and sense of identity through these buildings. This distinct identity through the architectural idiom was expressed most strongly in the enclaves where the white population tended to seclude itself, apart from the 'native', or indigenous, town.

In terms of style, the eighteenth century in Britain was the era of Georgian Architecture, with the clean simplicity of forms inspired by the classicism of ancient Greece and Rome. This was, therefore, the style that came to dominate early British colonial

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architecture in India, most notably in Calcutta. By the early decades of the nineteenth century a row of elegantly simple but impressive buildings lined Esplanade Row and the area immediately behind – the Supreme Court (built at the turn of the nineteenth century but later demolished), Government House (1803), Town Hall (1813), St John's Church (1787), Writers' Buildings (1776) and St Andrew's Church (1818).



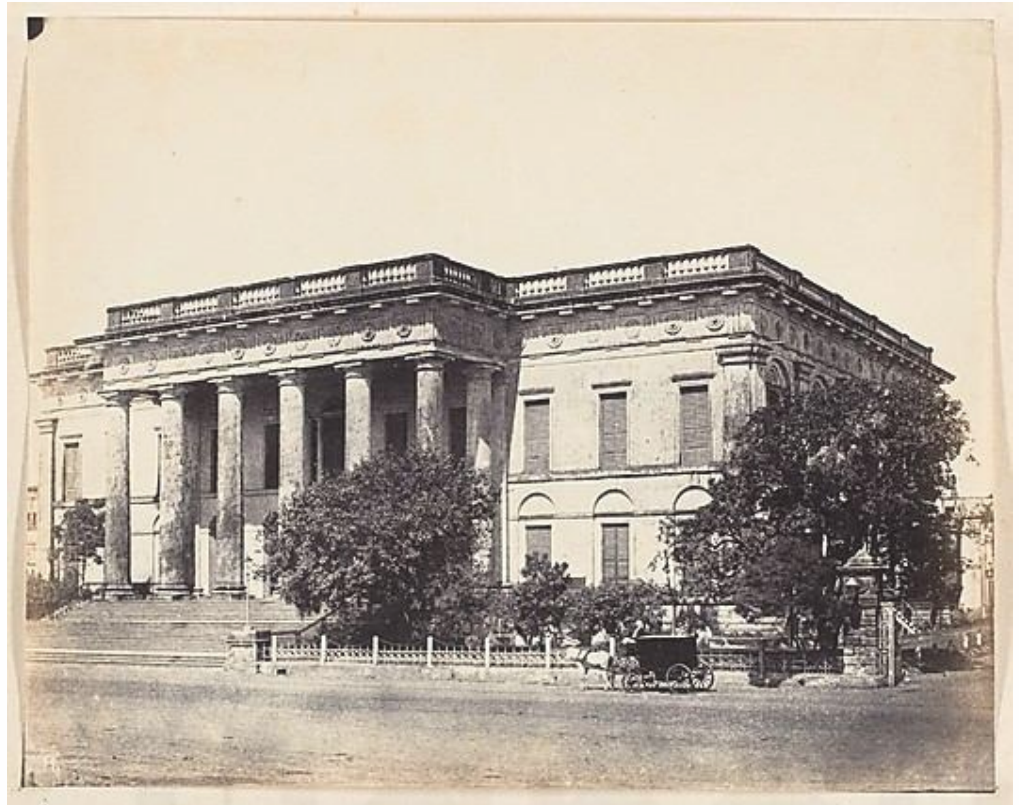
1. Old Writers Buildings (left) and Supreme Court Building (right), Thomas Daniell

Source: <http://www.wmcarey.edu/carey/wmward/Image%20Lib%20html/writers.html>;
<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/5/57/Oldwriters.jpg>



2. Government House, Calcutta. Engraved by R. Havell Jr.; James Billie Fraser, 1824

Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:FraserCalcuttaGovernmentHouse.jpg>



3. Town Hall, Calcutta, 1850s

Source: Gilman Collection, The Metropolitan Museum of Art; http://metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/287733?rpp=60&pg=3&rndkey=20130802&ft=*&what=Albumen+silver+prints&who=Unknown&pos=156#fullscreen



4. St John's Church, Calcutta by Frederick Fiebig

Source: Courtesy of the British Library, London; <http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/apac/photocoll/s/019pho0000247s2u00004000.html>; http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e6/St_John%27s_Cathedral_Calcutta_by_Frederick_Fiebig_1851.jpg



5. St Andrew's Church, Calcutta

Source : Biswarup Ganguly; http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/78/St_Andrews_Church_-_Dalhousie_Square_East_-_Kolkata_2011-12-18_0124.JPG

The architecture of these buildings owed everything to Western, mostly Classical models, and made few concessions to the Indian setting. Often buildings in India were directly modeled on British examples. Thus the Government House was modeled on Kedleston House, a country mansion in Derbyshire; both St Andrew's Church and St John's Church were modelled on St Martin-in-the-Fields Church in London. Often, however the materials used were different; for instance, cheaper limestone plaster was used for surface decoration in place of the expensive stones of the originals. This inconsistency between the superficial skin and the core of the buildings was in keeping with the early days of empire – aspirations to greatness, unmatched by feelings of solidity and permanence.



6. St. Martin in the Fields Church, London

Source: ChrisO at the English Language Wikipedia; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:St_martin_in_the_fields_exterior.jpg

Another noteworthy feature of these early colonial buildings, as pointed out by Swati Chattopadhyay (Chattopadhyay, 2005) was that the interiors were not designed according to the plans of the European buildings they were ostensibly copied from. Instead, they reflected the very different needs of colonial life in India – such as the large retinues of domestic staff which made common, as opposed to private, areas more important.

Calcutta of course was first and foremost a British stronghold and thus bore a marked colonial stamp. The situation was different in other, remoter parts of the British Indian territories in the early nineteenth century. For instance in Delhi, the British presence was thin on the ground. Though the administration was in the hands of the officials of the East India Company, the Mughal Emperor still enjoyed considerable symbolic authority. Till the late 1850s, pride of place in the urban landscape was taken by Mughal landmarks such as the Red Fort palace complex, Jama Masjid and other mosques, squares such as Chandni Chowk and Chowk Sa'adullah Khan, and gardens such as the Begum ka Bagh.

The British had carved out small enclaves for themselves in Delhi; some of the more important buildings were located in the northern part of the city. Predictably, the buildings were of a distinctly Western idiom, such as the Renaissance Revival style of St James' Church (1836). In some cases it was considered practical to use certain pre-existing

Mughal mansions, and in these, facades were added to disguise their original look. Thus the mansion known as Dara Shikoh's Library was transformed into the British Residency with the addition of Classical columns to its exterior. Another mansion nearby was re-incarnated with a Gothic exterior, while leaving internal features including a *tekhana*, or underground chamber, intact.



7. St James' Church, Delhi

Source: Grentidez; http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/51/Delhi%2C_Saint_James_Church.JPG



8. Dara Shikoh's Library/Residency, Delhi

35.3 THE REVOLT OF 1857 AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

The revolt of 1857 profoundly affected the circumstances and self-perceptions of the British in India. The British had fought hard to regain control of the country, and cities like Delhi and Lucknow had been major sites of the contestation. To take just these two examples, the British needed to underscore their authority; in Lucknow, which until 1856 was the seat of a large principality; and in Delhi where the British had always felt the need to counter the cultural and political influence of the Mughal emperor, ensconced in his palace in the Red Fort.

The physical destruction of the built fabric was the first step towards sweeping away older cultural regimes. The Red Fort at Delhi, the seat of the Mughal royal family, was taken over by the British army. Most of the buildings within it were destroyed, leaving behind only those considered to be of particular architectural value. A large area of the city of Shahjahanabad (as the 17th century city founded by Shahjahan was called), around the fort was also cleared of buildings.

Security reasons were cited for the clearance of some areas such as that immediately around the fort. This was to give a clear line of fire around the fort wall. Nevertheless some of the clearances were of a punitive nature, to punish the people of Delhi who had supported the revolt. A particularly harsh line was taken with Muslims. While predominantly Hindu areas such as Dariba were spared, many Muslim areas were leveled, including the Akbarabadi Masjid, a major mosque of the city. For a while there was even talk of demolishing the main congregational mosque, the Jama Masjid.

The revolt of 1857 altered the nature of colonial rule in important ways. Rule of the East India Company was swept away and Indian territories were placed under the British Crown. This led to a greater self-awareness among Britons both at home and in India of being an imperial power, wielding power over large subject populations spread over vast territories, much as Rome had in the ancient world.

So, as the structures of indigenous regimes were swept away, they were replaced by visual, self-confident, symbols of British power. In Delhi, this was most evident in the re-ordering of space in the main Mughal ceremonial way that led from the entrance to the fort, through the city. Chandni Chowk, which was a major square on this street, had originally held a large pool in the centre. Ranged around it were a number of buildings commissioned by Jahanara, the daughter of Shahjahan. They included a *serai* or resting place for travellers, a garden, and a *hammam* or bath house. All of these were cleared away. The *serai* was replaced by the building that was soon to become the Town Hall. The garden was re-designed and re-named 'Queen's Gardens'. A clock tower was built in the centre of the square. This was rounded off with the construction of the railway line in the 1860s and its Gothic style station sometime later. Mughal Shahjahanabad was thus invested with a new British colonial look, with buildings that were representative of new social functions, such as the Town Hall, or of new lifestyles and technology, like the clock tower and railway.



9. Town Hall, Delhi

Source: Varun Shiv Kapur (<http://flickr.com/photos/72155957@N00/4142579345>);
http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/5b/Delhi_Town_Hall.jpg



10. Railway Station, Delhi

Source: http://tourmet.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/old_delhi_railway_station.jpg

Churches were built too – the Baptist Church, the Catholic St Mary's, and the Anglican St Stephen's; but these essentially fulfilled a practical need for places of worship. Even under the Mughals, Shahjahanabad had not been an overtly 'Islamic' city, filled as it was with not only mosques but Hindu and Jain temples and gurudwaras. The new churches therefore simply added to the already rich variety. The state in post-1857 British India, while it sought to represent the intellectual and technological superiority of the West, did not project a religious identity.



11. St Stephen's Church, Delhi

Source: Varun Shiv Kapur; http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/1e/St_Stephen%27s_Church_on_Church_Mission_Marg.jpg

In Lucknow, demolitions immediately after 1857 were carried out with aims similar to those in Delhi – to punish, and to ensure easier control over the population by British forces. Thus the densely populated city around Machhi Bhawan (the fort of the Nawabs, which was also demolished), was cleared of buildings to make broad roads such as Victoria Street, that would allow quick and easy movement of troops through the city in the event of any disturbance. Colonial civic and institutional buildings – clock towers, monumental railway stations, etc. were slow to develop, coming up only in the later decades of the century. This was probably because Lucknow, shorn of its political importance, was not a major commercial centre like Delhi.

Public spaces, new or re-designed, were used for demonstrations of colonial splendour, such as the Durbar processions which travelled from the Red Fort down to Jama Masjid and then to the Town Hall and onwards. At the same time, Indian residents used these broad ceremonial avenues for their own religious, and later, overtly political processions. The religious procession often expressed the desire of a particular group to demonstrate its wealth and influence, and as such became a contentious issue, and faced opposition from rival groups. This prompted attempts by the local administration to control and regulate such demonstrations, as described in the case of Delhi by Narayani Gupta and Jyoti Hosagrahar (Gupta, 1981; Hosagrahar, 2005). In Calcutta, the Swadeshi movement saw the start of aggressive political agitation, that took over the public spaces of the city.

35.4 INTERPRETING THE EMPIRE

The vexed question of the cultural role of the state was one that occupied the rulers of India in the post-1857 years. Much of British policy in these years was based on the presumption that most Indians were inordinately attached to their ways and traditions. The experience of the revolt of 1857 had seemed to suggest that any attempt to interfere with their beliefs and practices could threaten the stability of British rule. The state

therefore had to forge ties with this conservative majority, in a language that was familiar to it, and in ways that inspired loyalty and respect.

One device used to this end was the grand spectacle of the Durbar – an imperial levee seeking to bring together the rulers and subjects in an elaborate ceremonial jamboree (first studied in detail by Bernard Cohn, 1990). This was a practice borrowed from the Mughals, who were experts at formalising ties with diverse feudatories. The first Durbar held by the British on an India-wide scale was in 1877, at Delhi, to celebrate the new title of ‘Kaiser-e-Hind’ or ‘Empress of India’, adopted by the British monarch, Queen Victoria. A range of practices and rituals that were deemed to be essential to Indian expressions of royalty were adapted to the ceremonial. Thus Lytton, the Viceroy, seated on a richly caparisoned elephant, went in procession past the Clock tower and Town Hall, those unabashedly alien symbols of British authority erected not many years before. (For photographic representation of the event see http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00routesdata/1600_1699/shahjahanabad/clocktower/clocktower.html)



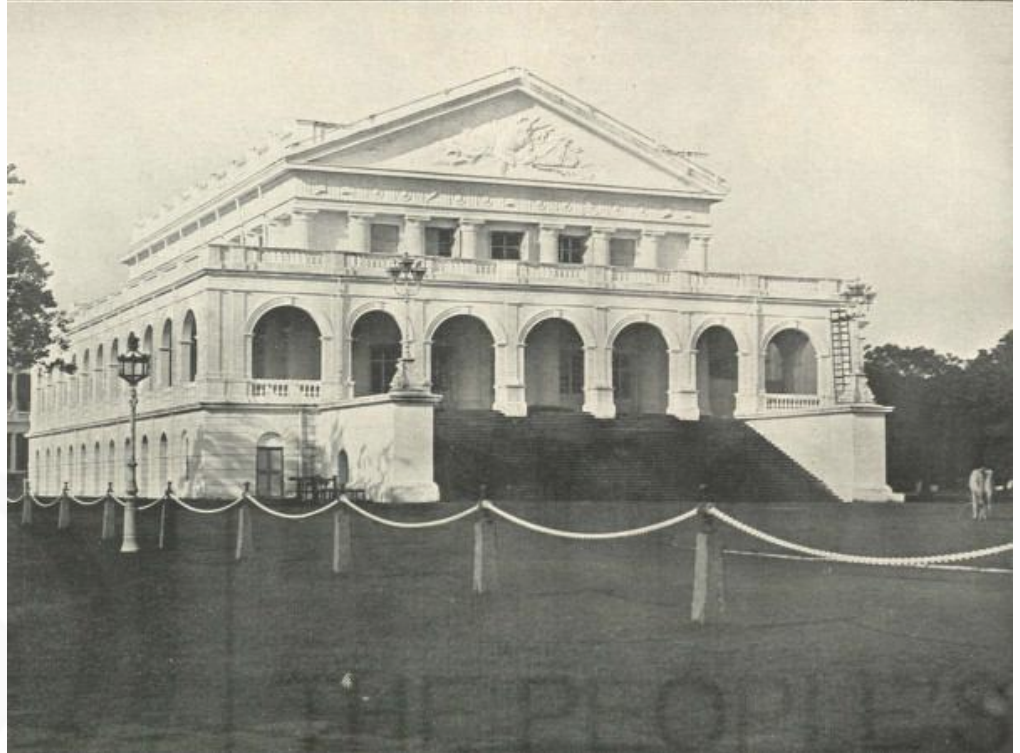
12. Durbar Procession, 1903

Source: James Ricalton; (<http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/apac/photocoll/m/019pho000000181u00080000.html>);
http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/d6/Durbar_Procession_in_1903.jpg

On the one hand the Durbar in its spirit and its form sought to express British authority in terms that Indians would understand and appreciate. At the same time however, the idiom it used was given a stamp that was unmistakably colonial. Thus all the native rulers were given banners emblazoned with specially designed coat of arms, in a style that was distinctly European. Each coat of arms was designed to have relevance to the peculiar traditions of the respective ruling house, incorporating ancestral symbols, origin myths, identification with particular deities, events in their history, or topography of their lands.

Important cultural values of the empire were sought to be expressed through the Durbar: the use of some forms familiar to Indians, but with an unmistakable stamp of the technological, organisational and cultural superiority of the ruling power. These were values that were also beginning to be expressed in the architectural enterprise of the empire around the same time, most evidently in the style known as ‘Indo-Saracenic’, analysed in some detail in works such as that by Thomas Metcalf. (Metcalf, 2005) As an architectural style first becoming evident in the 1870s, it consciously sought to use Indian, or at least vaguely ‘oriental’, forms and motifs for public buildings. One of the early practitioners of this architecture was Robert Chisholm, consulting architect of the

Madras Presidency, who also designed buildings elsewhere. Until then, buildings in Madras, as in Calcutta had been of a Classical style. They included the Governor's Banqueting Hall and Government House (1779-1803), St Andrew's Church (1820) and St George's Cathedral (1816), both on the popular St Martin's Church plan. Chisholm's creations changed all this. Of his major buildings, The Post and Telegraph Offices building (1881) at Madras and the Napier Museum (1880) in Trivandrum incorporated local Travancore styles into Western forms, while the Madras University Senate House (1879) and the Baroda College (1880s), unusually, used Byzantine elements.



13. Governor's Banqueting Hall and Government House, Madras, 1905

Source: "Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries."
http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e7/The_Banqueting_Hall%2C_Government_House.jpg



14. St Andrew's Church, Madras

Source: Courtesy Arun Ganesh, PlaneMed; CC-by-sa; http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/04/St_Andrews_Church_-_The_Kirk.jpg



15. St George's Cathedral, Madras

Source: Prithvin88; http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/d2/George%27s_Cathedral.jpg



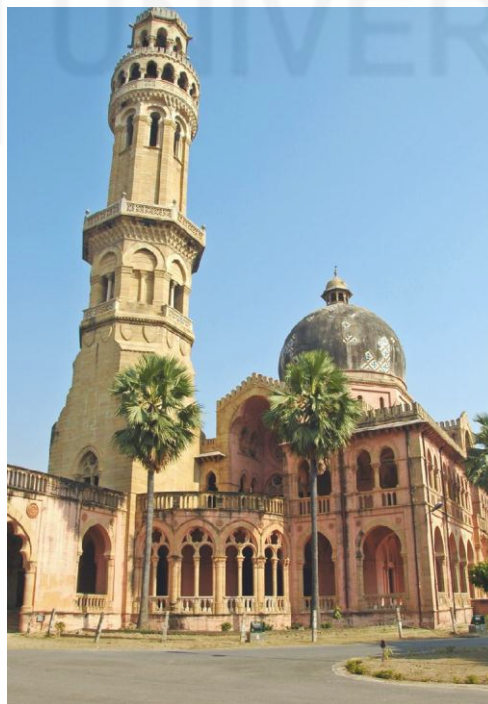
Source: Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries.
http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/d2/General_Post_Office%2C_Chennai.jpeg



17. Baroda College, Baroda

Source: Vintage Post Card, Dokka Srinivasu Collection;
<http://indian-heritage-and-culture.blogspot.in/2012/12/baroda-college-vintage-post-card.html>

Other architects too were experimenting with the Indo-Saracenic style. William Emerson, who would later go on to design Victoria Memorial at Calcutta, designed the Muir College at Allahabad in the 1870s, with distinctly Mughal arches, cupolas, projecting windows and a minaret. Henry Irwin's Victoria Memorial Hall (1909) in Madras was a Mughal style pink sandstone edifice. Swinton Jacob designed St Stephen's College, Delhi (1890) and St John's College, Agra (1913), also using primarily Mughal features. Charles Mant designed the Mayo College, Ajmer (1885) as well as the Lakshmi Vilas Palace, Baroda, though it was finished by Chisholm.



18. Muir College, Allahabad

Source: Abhijeet Vardhan; http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/a9/Au_science_faculty.jpg



19. Victoria Memorial Hall, Madras

Source: Williamsatish25; http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/98/Quenn_Victoria_Memorial_Hall.JPG





21. St. John's College, Agra

Source: Jain.tanuj; [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/ed/St. johns college %2C agra%2C uttar pradesh%2C India.JPG](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/ed/St._johns_college%2C_agra%2C_uttar_pradesh%2C_India.JPG)

The theories behind the Indo-Saracenic movement can be found in the notes of the architects themselves, and in occasional discussions about proposed plans of buildings. The message of the Imperial Durbar was that the British Raj could present itself to its native subjects in forms that they could identify with, while retaining its integrity as a force for positive change. This was also the principle that underlay Indo-Saracenic architecture. Chisholm had used a Kerala-style roof for the Napier museum at Trivandrum, and in the Mughal cities of Agra and Allahabad distinctly Mughal elements were prominently used. There was frequently a very conscious desire to conform to what were considered 'local tastes'. This was evident, for instance in the design of the Mayo College. Charles Mant, the architect, described at some length how he had arrived at a style suitable for a college meant for young Rajput princes. To Mant, it seemed logical that an essentially 'Hindu' style was most suitable for the Hindu princes. However, the style that had been prevalent in Rajputana for many centuries was one that incorporated many elements which the British labelled 'Muslim'. The architect therefore decided to use these so-called Muslim elements, but give them and the building an overall 'Hindu' look.

Architects like Mant were thus interpreting indigenous tastes strictly according to the categories in which British colonial systems put Indians, such as 'Hindu' and 'Muslim', irrespective of complex cultural contexts. Having stereotyped Indians as basically conservative, it was difficult for them to understand the ease with which the inhabitants of Rajputana, as elsewhere in India, had adopted forms and elements from a wide variety of often quite alien sources and modified them to their own use.

While the practitioner of this hybrid architecture used a variety of 'oriental' forms and motifs, the technology and building practices that were followed in their works were strongly western. British architects designed buildings using modern materials like steel and concrete, incorporating the latest advances in European structural engineering. Moreover, unlike traditional Indian buildings, where master builders worked with guilds

of builders and craftsmen to create buildings, the Indo-Saracenic edifices were entirely conceived by professional western architects, with no design inputs from traditional Indian professionals.

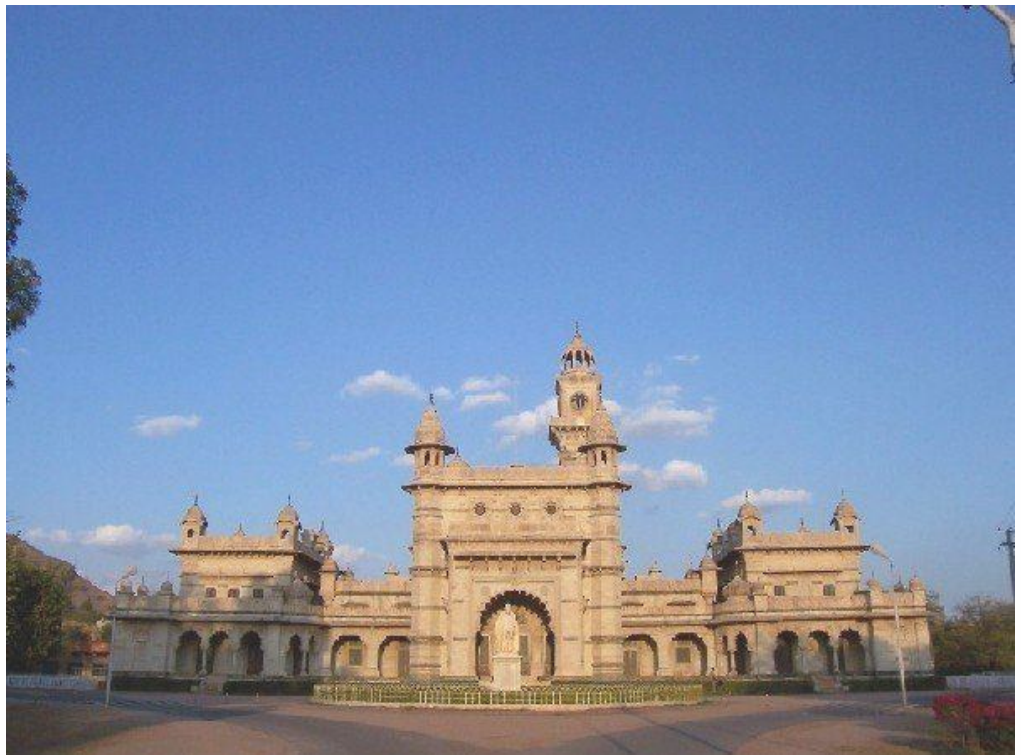
35.5 THE INDIAN RESPONSE

What did Indians think of the Indo-Saracenic style? In their domestic architecture most Indians still preferred traditionally designed houses, but were not averse to adopting European decorative forms. Therefore, in a curious inversion of Indo-Saracenic architecture, there was for instance, a growing trend of traditional havelis (courtyard mansions), made with traditional materials and techniques, but decorated with European style arches and pillars, often mingling with indigenous motifs. Such nineteenth century buildings can be seen in the streets of many Indian cities. Far from being conservative, as the British had imagined them to be, Indians had been quick to adopt new fashions, as they always had. They chose to keep intact the essentials of their way of life – e.g. as reflected in the basic form and function of the haveli, but were willing to experiment at the more superficial levels. However, the relation between private and public was also being refashioned in elite and non elite homes alike, as Hosagrahar (2005), Chattopadhyay (2005) and Kidambi (2007) have shown.

According to Swati Chattopadhyay, the havelis of the elite in the earlier era included important public areas – in the form of outer courtyards, that were important arenas for the patronage of the performing arts, or semi-public religious ceremonies. These tended to be important means for the expression of wealth and influence. With the rise of the importance of the middle class, smaller houses and means necessitated the absence of such public space within the house. Instead, the public face of the house and its inhabitants had to be expressed through its street face. This not only led to the tendency for heavier ornamentation of facades, but the greater use of design features such as seating platforms that would facilitate social interactions at the street level.

Hybridity in design was also a conscious political choice, opening up opportunities for straddling different social and political spheres. The example of the Nat Mandir – a semi-public hall commissioned by the Calcutta magnate Radhakanta Deb is an interesting one. Designed as a double height enclosed space, in neo-classical style, this also had space for the family deity. It could thus function equally well for religious celebrations and for those that emphasised the connections of the family with the British rulers. This included the ball to celebrate the victory of the British in the revolt of 1857, where the ornamentation of the room was designed along the lines of the ball room at Government House. In such a context, the use of European forms was a strategic choice representing a claim to association with the power of empire.

Among the group considered most conservative by the British – the rulers of the Princely States, there were mixed responses to Indo-Saracenic architecture. There were those who were developing westernised tastes, and wanted their buildings to follow European patterns. Thus the princes of Rajputana had in fact expressed a preference for a classical European design for the Mayo College building. The fact that the British decision makers overrode their wishes, tells us something about the connection between architecture and the role the British expected the Indian Princes to play. The British saw the Princes as the bulwarks of 'traditional' Indian society. They were to be given an enlightened education to impart to them western values, aimed at making them better rulers. At the same time they were expected to, at least in outer form, exhibit their Indian-ness so as to represent their states adequately. This duality exactly mirrored the essence of the Indo-Saracenic building: western in its core forms, Indian in embellishments.



22. Mayo College, Ajmer

Source: Sinmgh92karan; http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/51/Mayo_college_in_a_sunny_day.jpg

The rulers of many of the states therefore, in accordance of what was expected of them by their British overlords, built public buildings – clock towers, railway stations, offices, museums etc, in the Indo-Saracenic style. In their private palaces more individual tastes could be expressed and often they adopted classical forms. Jayajirao of Gwalior commissioned the opulent Italianate hybrid Jai Vilas Palace in 1874, and the Italianate Falaknuma palace was built in Hyderabad in the 1880s.



23. Jai Vilas Palace, Gwalior

Source: Mohitkjain123; http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/08/Jai_Vilas_Palace_%28_Scindia_Palace%29.jpg



24. Falaknuma Palace, Hyderabad, 1900

Source: Courtesy Collection of Horatio Kitchener, 1st Earl Kitchener of Khartoum and Broome, (1850-1916). <http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/apac/photocoll/f/019photo0000017s4u00029000.html>; http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/c8/Falaknuma_1900.jpg;

The rulers of Jaipur state, Ram Singh and Madho Singh, patronized Indo-Saracenic architecture for public buildings like Albert Hall Museum in Jaipur (1876, designed by Swinton Jacob). They however continued to use traditional models for their personal buildings. Even exceptions such as the Ram Bagh Guest House and the Mubarak Mahal were those buildings where Europeans were entertained. Some rulers of course did commission Indo-Saracenic palace buildings, such as Lakshmi Vilas Palace at Baroda (1890), Amba Vilas Palace at Mysore (1912), and the palace at Kolhapur (1881).



25. Albert Hall Museum, Jaipur

Source: V S Vinay Kumar ; <http://www.panoramio.com/user/vsvinaykumar>;
http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/7c/Albert_Hall_Museum.JPG



26. Ram Bagh Guest House, Jaipur

Source: Lunialaura; <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/eb/Showroom.png>



27. Mubarak Mahal, Jaipur

Source: V S Vinay Kumar ; <http://www.panoramio.com/user/vsvinaykumar>;
[http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/fa/Mubarak Mahal City Palace.JPG](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/fa/Mubarak_Mahal_City_Palace.JPG)



28. Lakshmi Vilas Palace, Baroda

Source: Bracknell; [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/67/Baroda Lvp.JPG](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/67/Baroda_Lvp.JPG)



29. Amba Vilas Palace, Mysore

Source: Kiran Ravi Kumar; http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/99/Mysore_Palace_south_gate_view.jpg

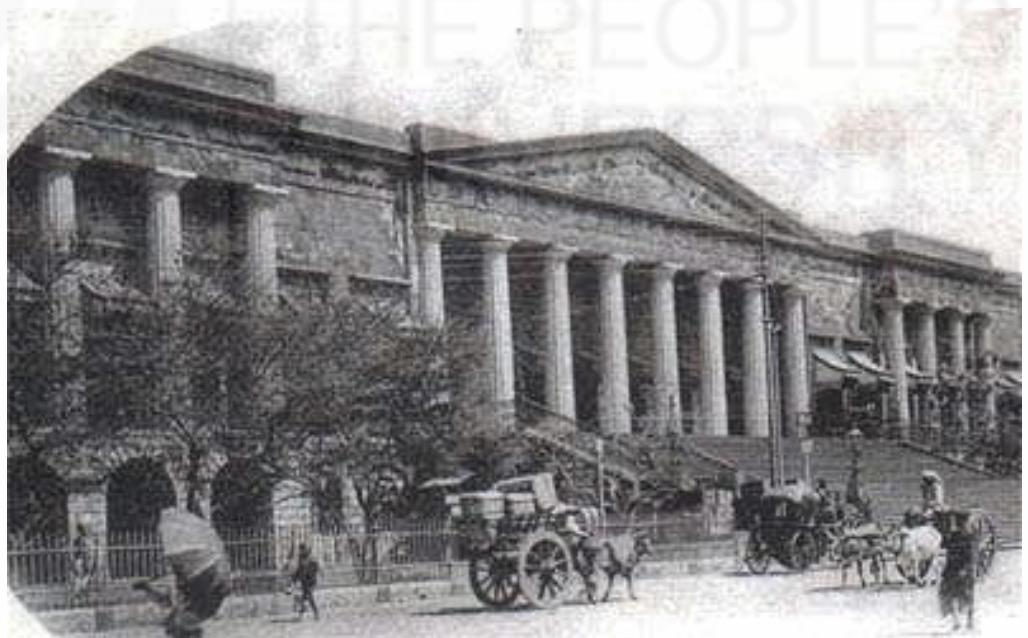


30. Palace at Kolhapur

Source: Vijayshanker.munoli; http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/33/Kolhapur_New_Palace.jpg

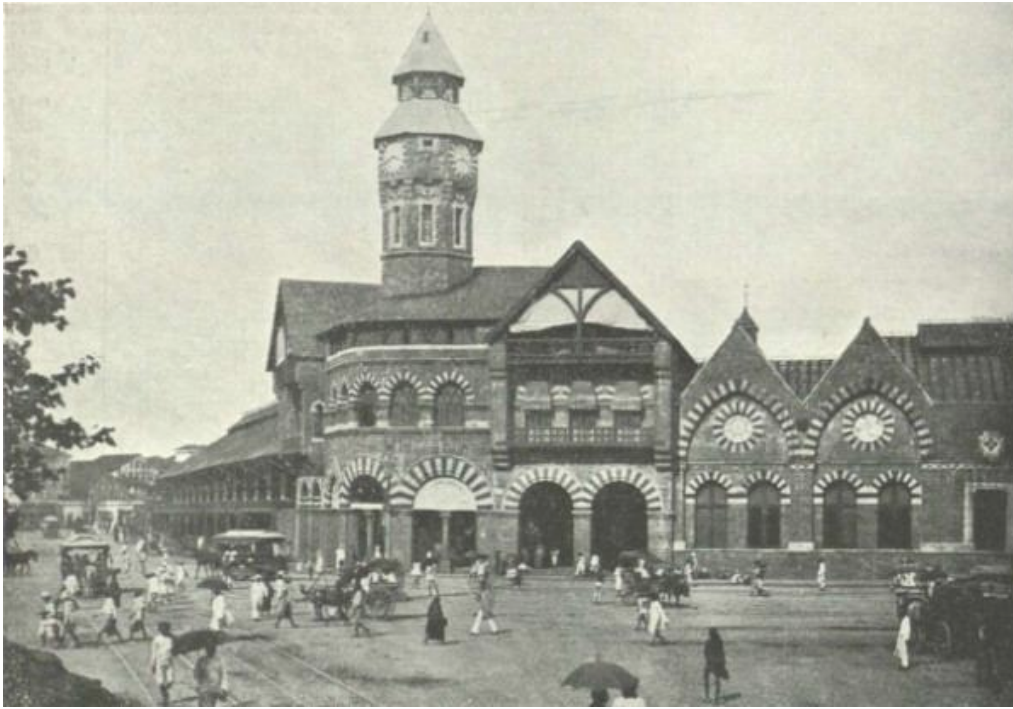
The princes needed to present a carefully calculated face to their subjects, as much as the colonial state did. Public spaces were created and designed for the display of royal splendour. In a study of Mysore state, Janaki Nair describes the important role played especially by royal ceremonial, especially the staging of the Dussehra festival in newly enlarged public facades of the palace. (Nair, 2011) While rulers connected to their subjects at the ‘traditional’ level of court ceremonial, they also sought to put into place important changes in city planning that conformed to the standards of ‘modernity’. Among substantial developments such as well-planned residential localities, broad roads and squares, these included the ubiquitous clock tower.

The Indian response to this phase of colonial architecture was also evident in the structures of Bombay, unusual among colonial cities, in that it had a fairly large, prosperous, and influential Indian mercantile class. This group of people, many of them Parsis and Jews, had Anglicized lifestyles and tastes, and this was projected in the architecture they patronized. Pre-1857 buildings in Bombay, such as the Town Hall (1833) had tended to be of a Classical style, but later building projects tended to reflect newer European trends. Crawford Market building (1869) commissioned by Cowasji Jehangir and donated to the city, was built in a Flemish and Norman style. A large contribution to the funds for the Venetian Gothic style Sassoon Library ((1870) came from the banker David Sassoon. The dominant feeling among the prominent Indian citizens also influenced the design of many public buildings. The Bombay High Court (1878), Bombay University Senate Hall, Library and Clock Tower (1878), and the Victoria Terminus (1887), though built at the height of the Indo-Saracenic movement in India, owed practically nothing to it. Instead they all mostly followed the Gothic Revival that was the current trend in Britain.



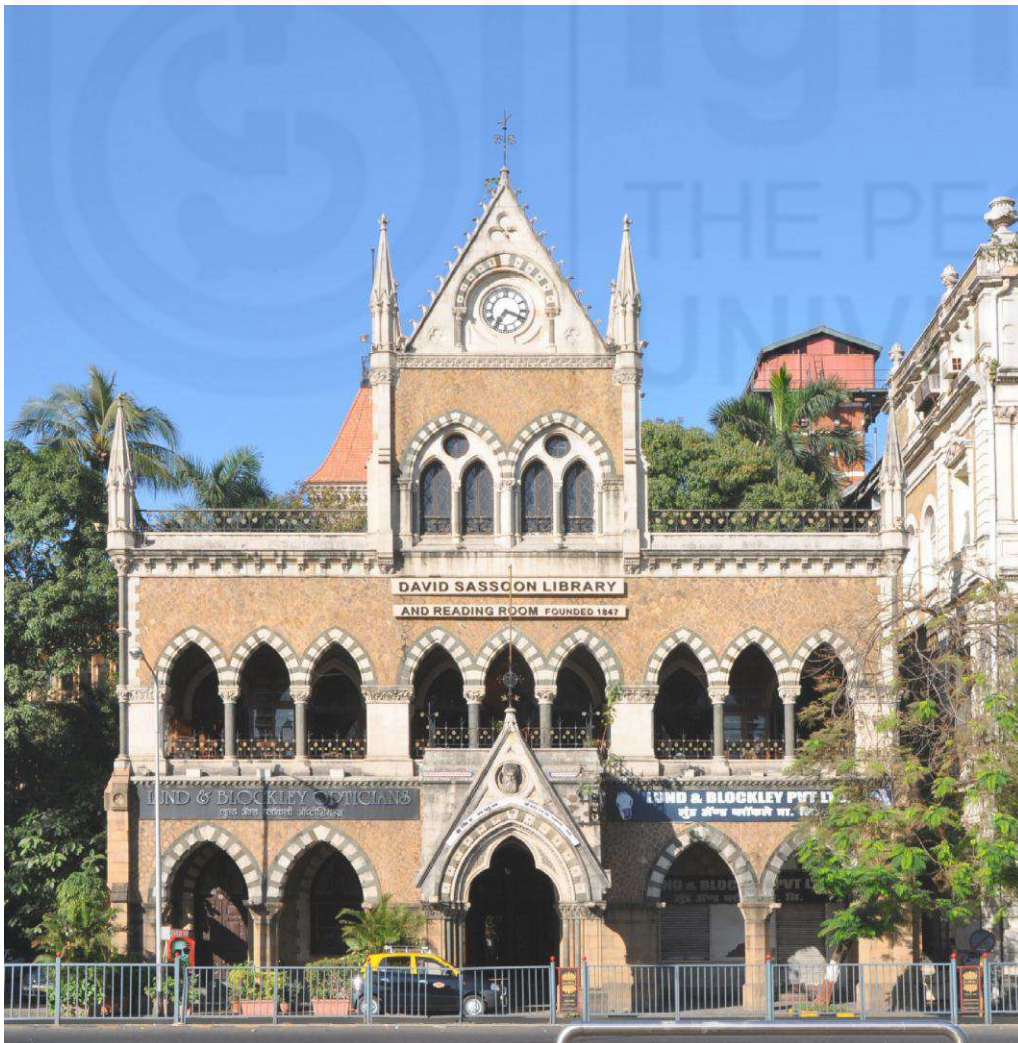
31. Town Hall, Bombay

Source: http://bestundertaking.com/his_chap01_1.asp; http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/da/Asiatic_Town_Hall%2C_Mumbai.jpg



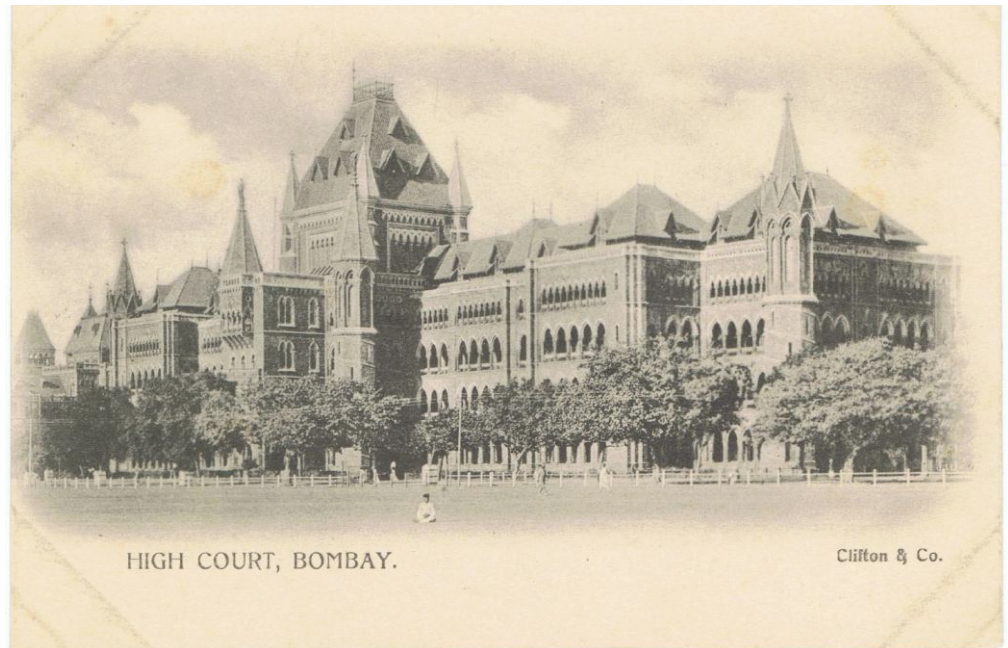
32. Crawford Market, Bombay, 1905

Source: “Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries.” http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/71/Crawford_Market_-_1905.jpeg



33. Sassoon Library, Bombay

Source: Joe Ravi; http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/fa/David_Sassoon_Library.jpg



34. High Court, Bombay

Source: FIBIS; Original post card owned by Beverly Hallam; http://wiki.fibis.org/images/a/af/High_Court%2C_Bombay.jpg



35. Bombay University Senate Hall

Source: Universities News, 1 April, 2012; <http://universitiesnews.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/mumbai-uni.jpg>



36a. Victoria Terminus, Bombay, 1905

Source: “Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries.” http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/af/Victoria_Terminus_GIP_Rail.jpg



36b. Victoria Terminus, Bombay

Source: Joe Ravi; CC-BY-SA 3.0; http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/c5/Chhatrapati_Shivaji_Terminus_%28Victoria_Terminus%29.jpg

Strangely, the Indo-Saracenic style was adopted in Bombay, much later. Major buildings included the Bombay Municipal Corporation Building (1893), The administrative offices of the Bombay Baroda and Central India Railway at Churchgate (1896) the Taj Hotel (commissioned by the entrepreneur Jamshedji Tata and completed in 1904), the Post Office building (1913, modelled fancifully on the Gol Gumbaz at Bijapur), the Prince of Wales Museum (set up at the initiative of prominent Bombay citizens, the building was completed in 1914), and the Gateway of India (1924).



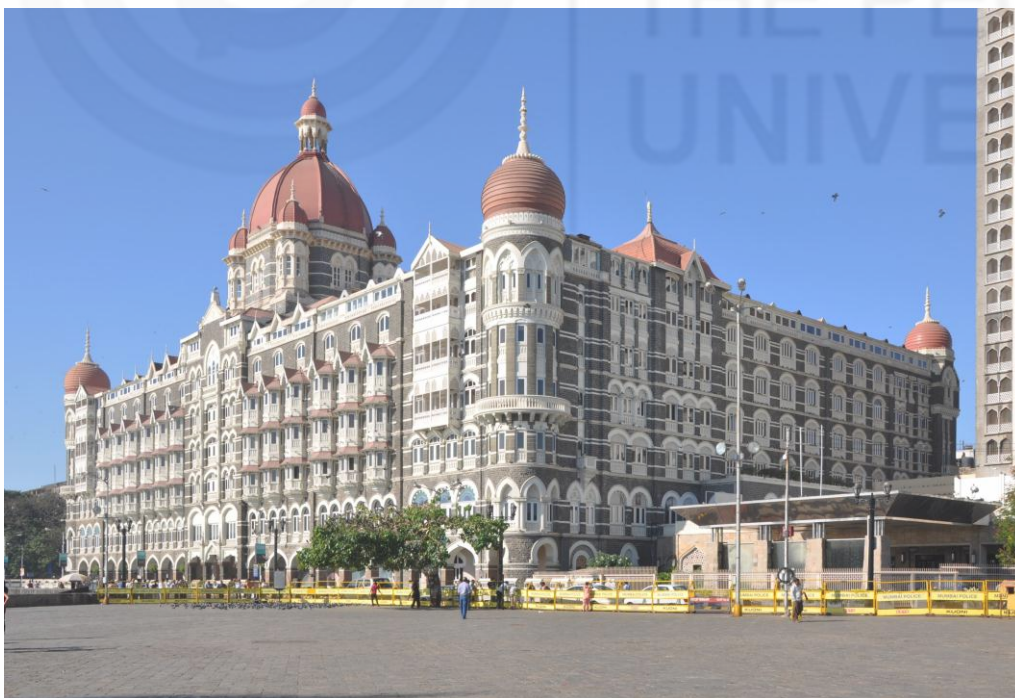
37. Municipal Corporation Building, Bombay

Source: Vegpuff; http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/ac/Bombay_Municipal_Corporation.JPG



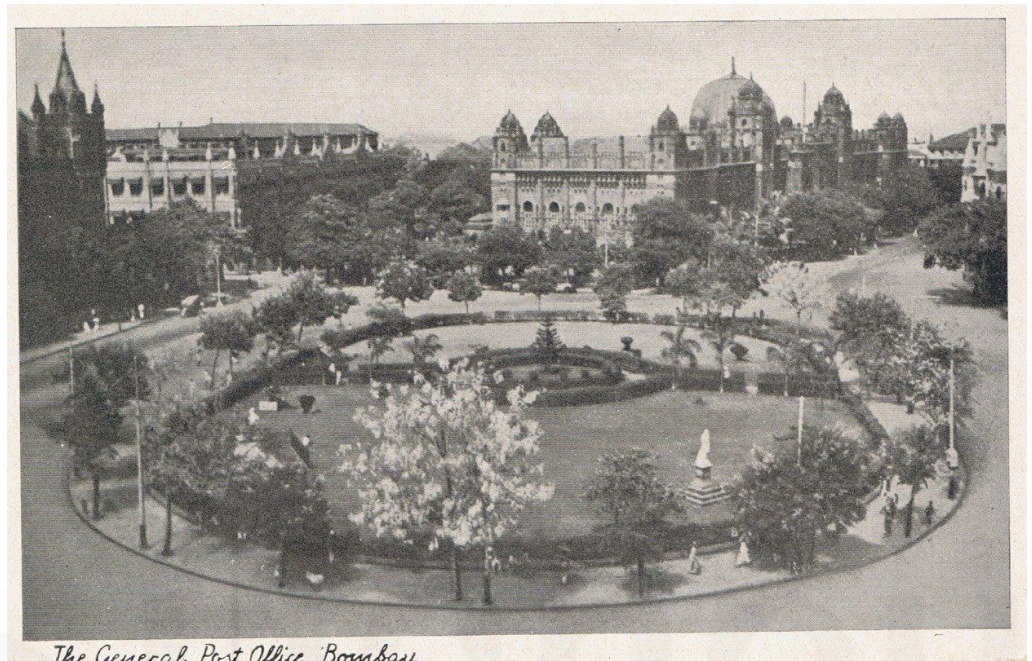
38. Bombay Baroda and Central India Railway office, Churchgate, Bombay

Source: Valmay; <http://wiki.fibis.org/images/f/ff/Bbciofficebombay.jpg>



39. Taj Hotel, Bombay

Source: Joe Ravi, CC-BY-SA 3.0; http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/73/Taj_Mahal_Palace_Hotel.jpg



40. Post Office, Bombay

Source: Beverly Hallam; CC BY-NC-ND 3.0 Unported;

http://wiki.fibis.org/images/5/5f/The_General_Post_Office%2C_Bombay.jpg



41. Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay

Source: Bernard Gagnon ; <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/39/>



42. Gateway of India, Bombay

Source: Beetelaces; http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/9b/Gateway_of_India_Sepia.jpg

This trend had probably something to do with the politics of the city. By the last decade of the nineteenth century, nationalism was gaining ground among the upper class of the city. Therefore a need was felt to break away from the overt European facade of prevalent architecture. But there was an absence of Indian models for the kinds of public buildings that needed to be built in the twentieth century – hotels, museums, post offices. Therefore, the Indo-Saracenic was found the most suitable ‘Indian’ style, even though it was the creation of the British Colonial effort to redefine ‘traditional’ India.

35.6 NEW IMPERATIVES OF EMPIRE

The Indo-Saracenic style dominated the last quarter of the nineteenth century, as the preferred architectural idiom of the colonial state. It was of course not universally used, even in public buildings. We have seen the case of Bombay and the uneven response to it in the Princely states. Calcutta, the capital of the empire, also remained outside its pale. In British opinion, Calcutta, dominated by British political and commercial elite, did not need to make many concessions to ‘native’ sensibilities.

Unlike Bombay, the major public buildings erected in Calcutta in this period did not include the participation or patronage of important Indian citizens. So the architectural style followed in Calcutta remained largely Classical or Gothic, for reasons somewhat different from the current European trends followed in Bombay. When a High Court building was erected in 1870, it was patterned on the Cloth Hall at Ypres in Belgium. The Writers’ Buildings, when they were re-furbished in the 1890s to accommodate the offices of the Bengal Secretariat, were given a Greco- Roman façade.



43. High Court, Calcutta, 1862

Source: Samuel Bourne Archives; http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/c7/Calcutta_High_Court_1860.jpg



44. Cloth Hall, Ypres

Source: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/4d/Lakenhalle_Ieper.JPG



45. Façade of Writers' Building, Calcutta

Source: Rangan Datta Wiki; http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/07/Writers%27_Building.jpg

35.7 BLENDED ARCHITECTURES

By the beginning of the twentieth century new movements in architecture and town planning as well as political, were at work in defining how Indian cities would look. In Britain itself, the empire had assumed a new popularity, as the accumulated fruits of colonialism created a prosperous middle and upper class, bigger than ever before. The desire to celebrate empire was reflected in a revival of Classical forms that drew inspiration from the time of the Roman empire.

Thus the façade of Buckingham palace was re-done, giving it a more emphatically Classical appearance, through porticos composed of columns and pediments. The space in front of the palace was re-designed to create a ceremonial way, the Mall, which led from the palace gates, past the Victoria Memorial sculpture, and the gateway known as the Admiralty Arch, on to Trafalgar Square. Such ceremonial ways were by now considered an essential part of grand capital cities such as Paris, Washington D.C., and Vienna.



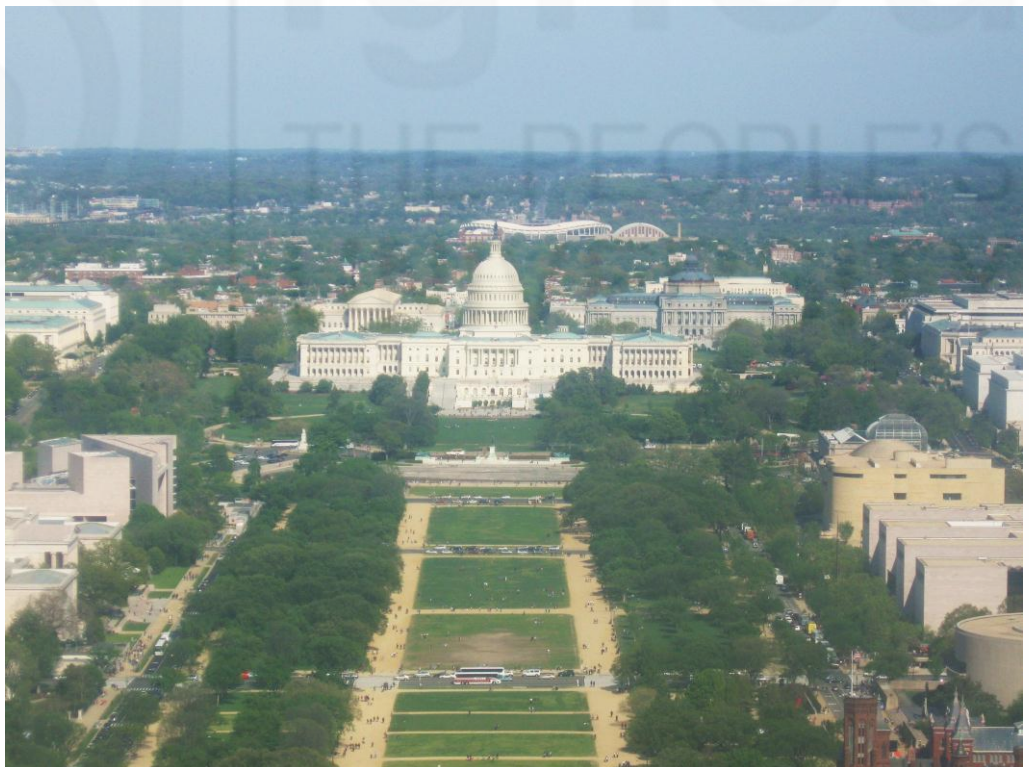
46. Victoria Memorial, Calcutta

Source: Ken Walker; http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/d8/Victoria_memorial_kolkata.jpg



47. Avenue de Champs Elysee, Paris

Source: Bretwa; http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f4/Champs-%C3%89lys%C3%A9es_-_eastern_view_-_20111001.jpg



48. National mall, Washington, D.C.

Source: Tyrol5; http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/3e/Capitol_from_top_of_Washington_Monument.JPG

In India, the empire was not as self-confident as it had been, faced as it was with a growing national movement. For that reason it had to make bold and dramatic gestures. The Victoria Memorial Hall, built in Calcutta between 1906-21, was grander than any previous building of the British Raj. It was essentially Italian Renaissance in style with

some small suggestions of Indo-Saracenic, i.e. in the cupolas at the four corners. In decorative details, the depiction of early Governors such as Hastings and Cornwallis in the garb of Roman statesmen, emphasised the parallels with the Roman empire. Sculptural representations of landmarks in British Indian history, such as the abolition of sati by Bentinck, told the story of British rule in India.

The last flourish of British imperial architecture in India, and the most spectacular, however was in Delhi. A decision was taken in 1911 to move the capital of British India from Calcutta to Delhi, and the choice of Delhi for the capital again had to do with a desire to establish continuities with the imperial rule of the Mughals. Coronation Durbars of 1903 and 1911 had continued the traditions set in the 1877 Durbar, being ever more elaborate pageants, incorporating ceremonial underscoring the fealty of important groups of Indians to the empire.

35.8 PLANNING AN IMPERIAL CITY

The decision was made to lay out a grand capital city, worthy enough to be the centre of a great empire, following the decision to shift the capital. The design of the city of New Delhi, and of the individual monumental buildings in it, embodied all the values of the 'high noon' of British imperialism. The spectacle of grandeur was centred in a majestic ceremonial way – Kingsway, inspired by the Avenue de Champs Elysee in Paris and the Mall in Washington D.C. It was a long avenue, lined with water channels and large trees. At one end stood the core apparatus of the empire – the Viceroy's House and the Secretariat, and at the other, the War Memorial Arch. Parallels with Champs Elysee were obvious, as that too was a broad avenue with the Louvre Palace at one end and the Arc de Triomphe at the other. The placement of the Government buildings on Raisina Hill was reminiscent of the US Capitol building on a raised site dominating the National Mall in Washington.



49. War Memorial Arch (India Gate), New Delhi

Source: Thebrowniris; http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/a6/India_Gate.jpg



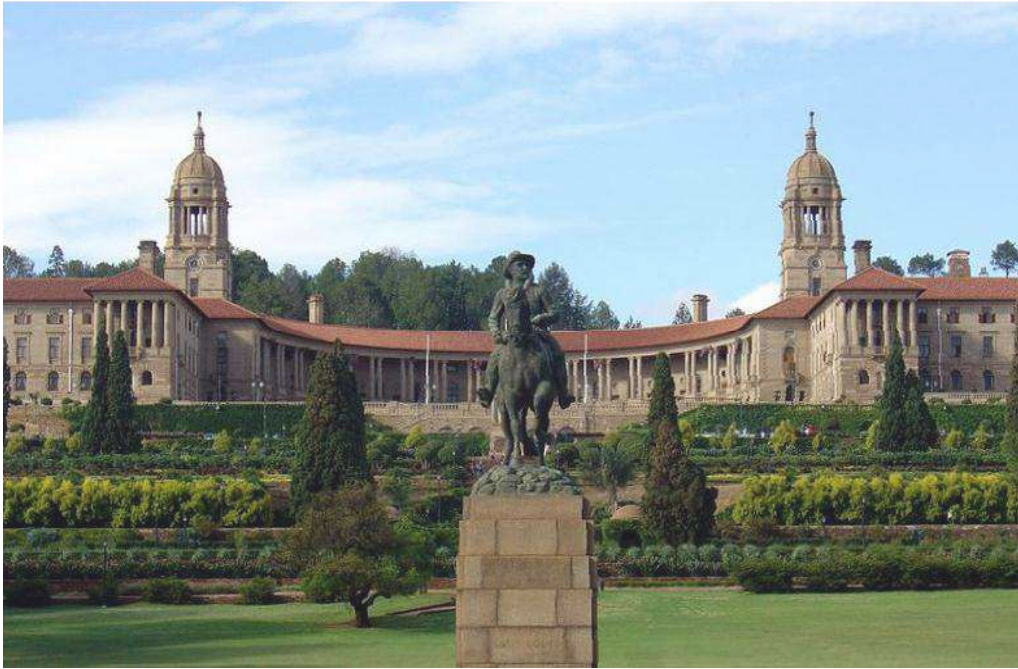
50. Viceroy's House (Rashtrapati Bhawan), New Delhi

Source: Scott Dexter; [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/24/Rashtrapati Bhavan Wide New Delhi India.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/24/Rashtrapati_Bhavan_Wide_New_Delhi_India.jpg)

A unique feature in Delhi was 'Princes' Park', the area around Memorial Arch (today called India Gate). Here plots of land were given to the rulers of various princely states, so they could build small palaces for themselves. As the ceremonial of the Durbars had grouped the princes physically around the sovereign power, so now the princes were grouped like satellites around the symbols of colonial power.

The process of planning New Delhi (described in detail by Irving, 1981; and Volwahren, 2004) was made easy because of an important feature of Delhi; the planners did not have to locate the new structures in or even in close proximity to a pre-existing city. There were practically no important pre-existing colonial structures that had to be incorporated into the plan of the new city. Also, plenty of potentially usable land was available. Admittedly, this was covered with ruins of historic cities of Delhi, and by some villages, but these were cleared away without a second thought, leaving only a few historic structures that could be picturesquely integrated with the new plan.

The commission for the planning of the city and its major buildings was given to Edwin Lutyens, with Herbert Baker as his associate. Lutyens was well connected among the elite in Britain, having married Emily, the daughter of Robert Bulwer-Lytton who had been Viceroy of India in the 1870s. This played a big role in his landing the job, though all his experience so far had been in designing villas for the rich in England. Herbert Baker, whose career had been spent mostly in South Africa, had designed some important public buildings, including Pretoria's Union Buildings, South Africa's seat of Government.



51. Baker's Union Building, Pretoria

Source: Davinci77; <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/6b/Uniegebou.jpg>

Both were conservative in their outlook, and conscious of their task of making their buildings represent the ideals of British rule in India. In fact, for all the decision makers involved with the project, the building of New Delhi meant putting in stone the idea of empire – that a strong alien race, in its own mind motivated by the highest principles, could bring order and civilisation to a subject people. As they well understood, the very task of creating a grand city on this scale on a clean slate was possible only under a despotism.

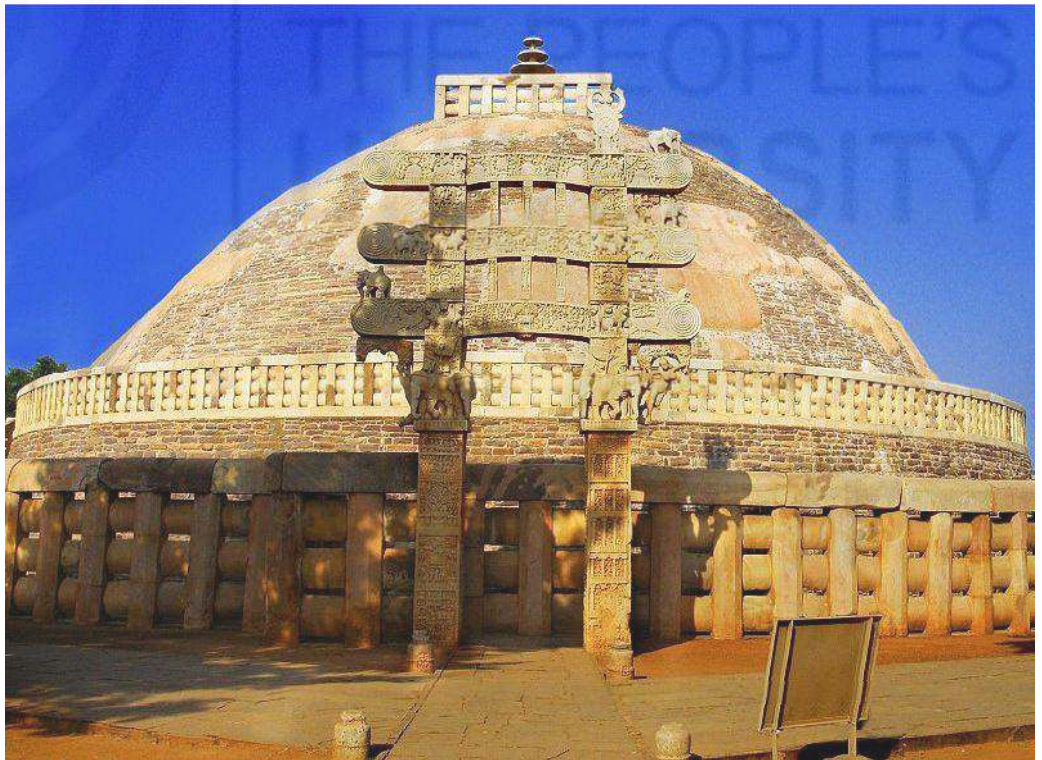
Their personal instincts took both architects in the direction of essentially Classical forms, which were elevated to the status of 'universal principles'. According to them only the superior architectural traditions of the West could embody and represent British Imperial rule, that had brought progress and order to the land. The architects' clients, the political authorities in India and Britain however felt differently. The Viceroy, Lord Hardinge and King George V in particular felt that in these important public buildings the British empire should put forth a more 'Indian' face; seeking to establish connections with the traditions of the country and its people.

The result, arrived at after a great deal of negotiation, was an interestingly original ensemble of buildings. They were not quite Indo-Saracenic in style, for they owed their basic form and important decorative features to the Western architectural tradition. However, the continuous insistence of Hardinge on the incorporation of Indian elements had led to a distinct quality. In the case of Baker, who designed the Secretariat buildings, the Indian elements – *jalis* (stone screens), *chhatris* (cupolas), carved elephants, were grafted on, more or less in their original form. Lutyens, whose major works were the Viceroy's House, The war Memorial Arch, and George V Memorial, worked more creatively to adapt Indian forms such as the Stupa at Sanchi and Ashokan pillar capitals, in addition to *chhatris* and *jalis*, into his buildings.



52. Baker's Secretariat Buildings, New Delhi

Source: Laurie Jones; (<http://www.flickr.com/photos/ljonesimages/>);
http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/53/Delhi_India_Government_.jpg



53. Stupa at Sanchi

Source: http://www.flickr.com/photos/chromatic_aberration/; [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/20/Sanchi_Stupa from Eastern gate%2C Madhya Pradesh.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/20/Sanchi_Stupa_from_Eastern_gate%2C_Madhya_Pradesh.jpg)



54. Dome on Viceroy's House (Rashtrapati Bhawan), New Delhi

Source: Ashish Bhatnagar; [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/0c/Rashtrapati Bhavan flank perspective.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/0c/Rashtrapati_Bhavan_flank_perspective.jpg)

In New Delhi, a whole new city had to be planned too, not just the monumental government buildings and memorials. The street layout, the built-up area, and even the avenue trees, were meticulously planned. Lutyens headed the New Delhi Town Planning Committee, and his hand can be seen in much of this work. Before coming to Delhi he had worked on an important project – Hampstead Garden Suburb. Founded in 1907, this locality in London had been designed along lines that were quite revolutionary for its time. It provided aesthetically pleasing housing for all classes, in a community setting within a healthy green environment. Woods and public gardens were open to all classes, and plots were not separated by boundary walls. As much as the layout, which emphasised wide tree-lined streets and open spaces, it was the social experiment that made Hampstead Garden Suburb stand out.

Lutyens had been involved with the Hampstead Garden Suburb plan, having designed the Central Square, and it is generally believed that he was inspired by the ‘garden city’ concept while designing New Delhi. Yet the premise of New Delhi was very different. There were of course many open spaces, not only in the wide avenues, but in the large plots of land on which houses were located. The social context of these however was very different from that in Hampstead Garden Suburb, because this was housing for the privileged class of colonial administrators. Thus the bungalows in New Delhi owed much more to the long lineage of colonial bungalows all over India – situated on large plots of land, shielded from contact with the town outside by boundary walls and trees.

In fact, New Delhi was not in a strict sense a complete city. It was a city for a very limited social class. It was designed to house only the colonial administrators and the Indians who either served as subordinates in the government, or as personal servitors, or the princes who occasionally lived in their palaces at Delhi. Its public spaces were not used in any meaningful way by the citizens of Delhi until much later. The bulk of the Indian population continued to live in Shahjahanabad, which was now designated ‘Old Delhi’ and gradually allowed to sink into neglect and disrepair.

35.9 SUMMARY

British rule created a break of sorts in the Indian tradition of monumental construction. As the new patrons of significant public buildings, the British to begin with re-created structures they were familiar with at home. While many of these were simple, functional buildings, some were clearly intended to invoke grandeur in terms of western ideals, notably the Roman empire. The phase of Indo-Saracenic architecture, which was at its height in the last quarter of the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, represented an attempt by British architects working in India, to interpret ‘traditional’ Indian style and incorporate it eclectically as a veneer on buildings that were western in form, function and building technology. Though many buildings were constructed in this style throughout British India and in the Princely States, it was rarely a style of choice for Indian patrons. Where they had a choice, Indian patrons rejected these attempts to represent ‘tradition’.

Contrary to the traditionalism ascribed to them, Indians frequently chose to express their architectural tastes either in purely western styles, or experimenting with it at the level of surface decoration. In these choices, and in the creative use of newly designed public spaces, they underlined their own interpretations of and engagements with British rule.

The tradition of British imperial architecture reached its climax in the building of New Delhi, a grand capital city for British India. It sought to express many of the ideas of imperial rule – the rulers’ authority and might, the superiority of western intellectual and technological attainments, and finally, through the use of Indian motifs and devices, the idea that the British empire was an Indian empire, having taken over the mantle of grand Indian powers such as the Mughals.

Interestingly, colonial architecture proved to be one of the least persistent legacies of colonial rule. Neither the constructions of Baker or Lutyens, nor those of the Indo-Saracenic architects, much less the Classical and Gothic models, found any significant imitators after independence. For a newly independent democracy, different indigenous histories were pressed into service, and often the utilitarian principles of modern architecture served public building design much better. (Nair, 2005) Moreover, buildings no longer needed to express the might of the rulers, or their self-conscious attempts to engage with the culture of an alien subject population.

35.10 EXERCISES

1. In what ways did colonial architecture and city planning reflect a British political agenda?
2. Highlight the characteristic features of early colonial architecture.
3. What was the impact of the revolt of 1857 on the planning of older Indian cities?
4. Why do you think the British felt compelled to organise such grand spectacles such as the Durbar in Delhi in 1877/1911?
5. How did Indians adapt or transform features of the Indo-Saracenic style developed by the British in their own architectural practices? Discuss at least two examples.
6. 'The New Capital City – New Delhi – truly represents the ideals of British rule in stone'. Comment.

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UNIT 36 THE CITY AS THE SITE OF MOVEMENTS*

Structure

- 36.1 Introduction
- 36.2 An Urban History of Anti-Colonial Nationalism?
- 36.3 Elite City Spaces
- 36.4 Mobilising the Non-Elite
- 36.5 Cities as Sites of Religious Identities
- 36.6 Lived Cities
- 36.7 Summary
- 36.8 Exercises
- 36.9 References

36.1 INTRODUCTION

The past ten years have witnessed a resurgence of interest in colonial Indian cities which, one commentator suggests, ‘... represent, perhaps, the first wave of a major emerging field in the historiography of the region.’ (Beverley, 2011: 483) New texts address modern architecture and planning in Lahore, public politics in Bombay, the control of Delhi as India’s new capital, Bangalore’s and Delhi’s experiments with modernity, postcolonial stories about Mumbai and studies of its Indian architects and apartment dwellings. They, and other works, demonstrate that the colonial Indian city was witness to several different types of movements, relating to: public health; the regulation of prostitution; architectural styles; municipal politics; religious movements; and changes in domestic architecture. But an earlier review of many of the same books identified one of the major movements that this newer wave of urban literature neglects, as reflected in its title ‘Beyond nationalism: modernity, governance and a new urban history for India’. (Nair, 2009) This review rightly pointed out that India as a “land of villages” has dominated much history writing, but that there *was* a place for the Indian city in post-independence histories of colonialism. These studies usually portrayed the city as an economic space, that is, as a node that allowed Indian wealth to be traded back to the British metropole. But these economic histories themselves superseded works which had examined the city as a site of anti-colonial nationalism. With the rise of cultural and postcolonial studies in the 1980s-90s, economic analyses have been overshadowed, while the simultaneous rise of interest in the (often rural) subaltern has detracted attention from the formal politics of anti-colonial nationalism which was often centred in cities. Janaki Nair suggests that two more recent books, by Douglas Haynes (1991) and Nandini Gooptu (2001), are subject to the lingering influences of political and economic history in their portrayal of Indian city life. Yet these two books will feature prominently in this Unit since they blend political and economic analysis with understandings of rhetoric and cultural history. Also, they focus upon nationalism in its various forms, as a vital component of Indian urban history. Any attempt to study urban nationalism, however, faces the immediate problem of definition: what is urban? And

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what is nationalism? The rest of the Unit will review continued elite discourses about, and activities in, the city, before looking at the techniques used to mobilise the non-elite of the city. It will then consider religious nationalism before concluding with comments on some of the most exciting approaches which focus on the city as a lived, sensed, and heterogeneous space.

36.2 AN URBAN HISTORY OF ANTI-COLONIAL NATIONALISM?

Urban history has long struggled to define what about its history is specifically urban, rather than a more general trend that can be detected in a city. (Chandavarkar, 2009: 208) In the Indian context this has often meant distinguishing city life from habits brought to the city by rural migrants or colonial governors. Other models sought to explain Indian cities through the frame of modernisation, underdevelopment or, their unique Indianness. The 'urban' itself can be thought through the formal and informal spaces of politics and power that operate in different localities, mohallas, wadis and galis, bazaars, factories, mills and other workplaces. (Masselos, 2007: 6)

Nationalism is no more easily defined. Do we accept the uprising of 1857 as 'The First War of Independence'? Were members of the municipal committees of 19th century cities nationalists? Or should nationalism be dated, as is often presumed, to the 1885 founding of the Indian National Congress (INC) and the 1906 birth of the Muslim League? Should we emphasise the non-constitutional, more radical politics that emerged in opposition to the partition of Bengal in 1905? Should we associate nationalism with popular politics and mass movements, which only really began in 1919 (and were continued through the noncooperation movement 1920-24, Civil Disobedience 1930-34 and Quit India 1942-44)? And do socialists and communists, many of whom were *inter*-nationalists, and religious nationalists, many of whom were blamed for communal violence and divisive politics, also merit attention?

First, we must acknowledge that these types of politics overlapped and intersected. The more elitist, constitutional nationalists continued to work alongside both Gandhi and the more radical nationalists, although they defied their calls to boycott elections for provincial assemblies that were introduced by the 1919 Government of India Act. Gandhi attempted to appropriate the Khilafat movement of Muslim protest against the treatment of the Ottoman state and the Caliphate after the First World War, though simultaneously threading Congress appeals with Hindu rhetoric, while Nehru was one of the many bridgeheads between Congress and socialist organisations.

But we also have to acknowledge that each of these movements had very different approaches to the city. Prashant Kidambi (2012: 951) has made the vital distinction that: '... while nationalist *thought* might have re-imagined the colonial city, nationalist *political practice* certainly strove to reorder and reclaim it.' Gandhi remained committed to the Indian village as the political and spiritual heart of India, posing the city as the corrupting core of modern life: the export of India's wealth and the import of cheap European goods occurred in the city, while amenities were confined to a few elite parts. As Gandhi commented dismissively in 1915: 'I don't like Bombay.... I see here all the shortcomings of London but find none of its amenities...' (quoted in Hazareesingh, 2007: 204)

However, Gandhi's view was counterposed to the campaigner Benjamin Horniman, who suggested that urban regeneration and civic reconstruction in the cities was an indispensable part of anticolonial nationalism. Horniman appreciated the city dwellers' comprehension of their rights and privileges and the potential force of an urban satyagraha.

(Hazareesingh, 2007: 131) Gandhi later came around to this pragmatic view of the urban. In a city like Ahmedabad, as Howard Spodek (2011: 19) has shown, Gandhi could promote many different struggles for independence: '... an end to untouchability; harmonious relations between Hindus and Muslims; a clean and safe city; peaceful, cooperative labor relations; an educated citizenry, with an emphasis on moral education and civic awareness; compassion and support for the poorest of the poor; hand spinning and weaving of cotton cloth, providing work for almost anyone who wanted it; and the use of khadi by rich and poor alike.' These tactics emerged after what Kidambi has termed the Victorian-Edwardian period of civic patriotism in Bombay, which correlated with constitutional, reform nationalism. After the First World War, the urban nationalist scene was radically transformed.

36.3 ELITE CITY SPACES

Kidambi (2012) has shown how late nineteenth-century Bombay emerged less as a *space* of nationalism than a *sphere* of middle class mobilisation through journalism, civil and political associations, and municipal politics. This sphere of Indian, and increasingly nationalist, civil society allowed an elite to act as representative of the masses, to initiate programmes of self reform, and to challenge the shortcomings of colonial urban governance. Douglas Haynes (1991: 4-5) has examined parallel developments in the western Indian town of Surat through a series of more broadly relevant questions: what were the attractions of liberal and national concepts during late colonial rule? Why did communal identities get strengthened alongside the expansion of democracy? And why did the expansion of democratic institutions not include the 'underclass' in the emerging Indian polity?

Haynes has argued that it was the culture of local politics that changed in Surat, as clearly expressed in its changing rhetoric and ritual. One strand of this was led by Gandhians (who had their *own* leading class), but another was more elitist and fought for political change within the limits of the constitution, though in the 'outer' public sphere (as opposed to the 'inner' public or community sphere). During the 1921 municipal elections in Surat, many councillors refused to adopt noncooperation tactics and confirmed their commitment to constitutional methods. This liberal discourse (loyalty to the law, progress through political evolution, a spirit of service to the state) was attacked by Gandhians, but it survived the collapse of noncooperation and was still influencing forms of city nationalism in 1925. Many nationalist leaders returned to the provincial legislatures and municipalities, within the constitutional system devised by the British (known as Dyarchy) and implemented by the 1919 Government of India Act. However, this was by no means a conservative measure, many of the Swarajya party members entered the Bombay legislature so as to wreck it from within. However, once within the political machine, many members found themselves collaborating with the colonial government to secure the sort of urban reforms they had accused the colonial government of neglecting.

Similar processes were underway in Bombay but Hazareesingh (2007: 174) has detailed how complexly intertwined the elite nationalist movement was here with debates about citizenship and with non-Indians. Patrick Geddes was a Scottish social theorist and town planner who was very influential in urban development circles after arriving in Bombay in 1915. He argued that cities needed civic commitments, and that material poverty was an obstacle to citizenship, which entailed rights such as water supply, public transport and urban sanitation. These ideas were extensively reported by the nationalist press, the Chronicle newspaper asking what was 'politics... but civics in their [*sic*] extended application to the country'? (quoted in Hazareesingh, 2007: 180).

These citizenship arguments were made alongside compatible nationalist demands for *reform* (not overthrow) of the existing system, to benefit the poor, women, and the under-educated. This form of nationalism placed social rights as a demand before the colonial state for the first time, and in protest against the lack of rights contained in the Government's 1919 Act. While providing a forum for the city elites to exert their influence, the nationalist press was also widely read and served to bridge the "outer" domain of the public sphere with the 'inner' domain of the domestic, the community and, when necessary, the street.

As editor of the *Bombay Chronicle*, Horniman was a key figure in the city's nationalist elite politics, but he was also pivotal in crafting the urban response to Gandhi's first mass movement through a hartal (business closure) on 6th April 1919: 'The Mahatma envisaged the hartal as a low-key day of mourning which should not appear as an attempt to "put pressure on any government"'. However, Horniman and other members of the Satyagraha Sabha insisted on the inclusion of public speeches and processions effectively making a bid to transform the hartal into a day of action.' (Hazareesingh, 2007: 132) The day itself was a triumph for Horniman's vision, in part due to the people of Bombay being stirred by reports of shootings by the police in Delhi the previous day.

D.W. Ferrell (1971), similarly, provided an early interpretation of elite influence during the Rowlatt Satyagraha in Delhi which lasted from 30 March to 18 April 1919. After the transfer of the capital from Calcutta was announced in 1911, Delhi was increasingly penetrated by nationalist institutions, revolutionary movements, pan-Islamist/Khilafat activists, and other discontents over the inadequacies of the Dyarchy reforms. Delhi's political scene was subdued after the suppression of the 'Mutiny' in 1857-58 (Gupta, 1981). But by 1919 the city had a new vernacular press, regular public meetings and numerous volunteer organisations when the new movements combined to encourage a political awakening in Delhi.

Ferrell divided the anti-Rowlatt movement into three phases: the first two days of hartals (30-31 March); a phase when the established leaders lost control of the satyagraha movement, being unable to prevent a second hartal on 6th April; and the final phase of 10-18 April, being nine days of protest over Gandhi's arrest. Ferrell argued that the primary leaders of the movement (notable figures such as MA Ansari) lost control of the movement due to the activities of secondary leaders of the city (*'petite bourgeoisie'*[sic]) who identified with, and articulated the demands of, the underprivileged of the city. The resulting mobilisation, and uncontrolled crowds at the Delhi Railway Station, allowed the police to open fire on 30th March, facilitating Swami Shradhanand's emergence as the local hero who confronted the police in front of the Town Hall, on Chandni Chowk. Over the past four decades, explaining the links between elite politics and the mass mobilisation of the urban poor has proved more challenging to historians of urban nationalism in India than providing historical descriptions of events.

36.4 MOBILISING THE NON-ELITE

Jim Masselos (2007: 1) has, more consistently than other scholars, sought to explain the ways in which city people established their presence in the cities they lived in, coming together in different places and areas, in formal and informal ways. He claimed in a 1977 essay that the formal, nationwide structures of the INC and Muslim League, and the way they hierarchised their *own* politics, does not mean that we should similarly rank and differentiate between those 'national level' cities, and the regional, provincial, or other type of city. . Instead, he said, '... to view the local as national ...[is to] analyse

the diversity of kinds of power operating within such a field.’ (Masselos, 2007: 15) This ‘field’ has most often tended to be the street, and the object of analysis the crowd. Crowds were quickly formed, and were suddenly dispersed after a brief, though far from unplanned, existence, and as such, pose difficult questions about how they relate to their surroundings, and whether they are determined by class and history or are autonomous? (Masselos, 2007: 82, for further work on the crowd see Tambiah, 1997)

How has the urban majority and its links to the economy and politics been studied? Nandini Gooptu’s (2001) focus on popular politics in United Provinces towns emphasised the need, in the context of a preceding emphasis on factory labourers, to look at the spaces of the *bazar* (market areas), of small scale manufacturing units, and the sites where artisans and craftspeople, transport and construction workers, hawkers, street vendors and peddlers, and service groups such as sweepers and municipal workers worked and lived. Gooptu stressed the role of democratic institutions and emerging political languages and ideologies (rhetoric) referring to nation, class or community, while pointing out that dyarchy reforms shaped both *popular* and elite politics:

The imperatives of representative politics necessitated effective mass mobilisation which, in turn meant that ‘politics’ penetrated the lives of far wider social groups than ever before. As the elites galvanised themselves into action to compete for office and influence, they needed to make those whom they sought to represent a part of the political process. This, in turn, spurred on the formation of new organisations and the evolution of new modes of political action and discourse. It led to the expansion of the ‘public sphere’ and the innovation of political rituals and practices to forge political collectivities. (Gooptu, 2001: 8)

Therefore, it wasn’t just the colonial state that collected information about, disciplined and regulated the urban population. Gandhi’s Congress was wary of cities, but it was also suspicious of the urban poor, and its inherent instability, volatility and rootlessness, which could lead to moral decay, social animosity and political disorder (Gooptu, 2001: 14). In addition to uplift and reform movements, the poor were disciplined and marshalled into an urban political force: ‘In this view, the poor were either childlike, needing reform and moral and spiritual guidance, or misguided and violent, needing discipline and a strong, paternalistic, even coercive, hand of control and direction’. (Gooptu, 2001: 17) Explicitly urban tactics were forged, as when the Home Rule Leaguers targeted communities in their localities to capitalise on Gujarati discontent in 1918 Bombay: thus, Gujarati and Marathi lower and middle classes at Girgaum and nearby areas; traders, workers and servants near the cloth markets at Dhobitalao and Crawford Markets; grain dealers at Dana Bunder; Marathi mill workers near Elphinstone Road; and the Muslims of Chakla, Umarchadi and Khara Talao (Masselos, 2007: 167) were targets of their campaigns.

While Congress did explicitly view the urban poor as a resource to be drawn upon and disciplined, these activities have to be seen in the context of existing and legitimate interest in the inspirational techniques adopted by Gandhi to inspire a new generation of political subjects. Gandhi’s genius was to articulate *Swaraj* (self rule) as a concept that did not just span points in time (a glorious pre-colonial past, a degraded colonial present, and a virtuous post-colonial future) but also scales of space (national self-rule being dependent upon an individual’s rule of self). Each individual’s self-discipline was, therefore, the basis upon which independence would be won: ‘Armed with this powerful rhetoric, the Gandhians attempted to break down the conceptual walls between the inner and outer arenas of local politics, to smash colonially derived assumptions about the political world, and to persuade many city dwellers that it was not only possible to oppose the government and make it bend to their wishes but also a moral imperative to

do so.’ (Haynes, 1991: 204) Gandhi’s rhetoric was profoundly religious, including: *ahimsa* (non-violence); *tapas* (self-suffering or penance); *tyag* (renunciation); *dharma* (duty); and *satya* (religious truth). These rhetorical techniques were used to mobilise the urban poor through public speeches, printed circulars, songs and slogans virtually every week in Surat during the noncooperation movement of 1920-23. Audiences were expected to wear homemade *khadi* (cloth) ‘... and one had to be willing to endure the shame-oriented rhetoric of public speakers. Often audiences responded very concretely to the appeals of speakers by throwing their foreign caps and coats into the bonfires, by signing up as members of Congress, or by subscribing to Congress funds.’ (Haynes, 1991: 241) This was part of a broader programme that included attacks on governmental institutions in the city; winning seats in the municipal elections of 1921; hartals; attempts to nationalise local education; and the withholding of tax payments.

These tactics were deployed to mobilise urban dwellers throughout India. Howard Spodek (2011) has argued that Gandhi made Ahmedabad into the ‘shock city’ of nationalism. Here at the national headquarters for the INC, cloth workers were mobilised, uplift work for the ‘untouchable’ (*harijan*) populations launched and literary cultures transformed. Again, while Gandhi’s tactics were non-violent they were not passive. Moderate local politicians, like Ramanbhai, were replaced and a shift in culture and language as much as politics was organised, as exposed by Spodek’s sensitive balancing of urban history and political biography. (Spodek, 2011: 32) Gandhi’s new city leadership, which would be used to target the urban masses, comprised wealthy benefactors like Ambalal Sarabhai, Congress ‘lieutenants’ like Vallabhbhai Patel, figures who took elected posts such as Kasturbhai Lalbhai, who became a member of the Central Legislative Council, and campaigners for the urban poor like Anasuyaben Sarabhai. Though with very different visions of what the city ought to be, these workers collaborated under the Gandhian creed to change the city, just as the experience of Ahmedabad changed Gandhi’s views of cities, business and industry. Articulating the links between citizenship, cities and nationalist politics that had been outlined in Bombay 20 years earlier, in 1935 Gandhi outlined a hopeful urban image of latrines as clean as libraries, children in education, minimised contagious diseases, no division between labourers and owners; ‘... someday the Municipality will be like this. And I will get to see it. It is in the power of the citizens to achieve it.’ (Spodek, 2011, 69)

This came after the suspension of the Non Cooperation movement in 1922 following an outbreak of violence against the police in Chauri Chaura. But the urban poor had been kept at a distance by the organising Gandhian elite and therefore failed to participate fully. The poor were usually censured for not meeting Gandhi’s strict moral codes regarding violence, alcohol and foreign cloth. In Surat, the working classes responded by not volunteering for high profile or dangerous positions in the movement, or for picketing duties or imprisonment. The mid to late 1920s saw the Congress focus shift to rural uplift, working with low caste groups and campaigning for women’s education. While not always explicitly urban, these policies helped Congress penetrate more and more of the population, such that they were ready to be called upon when the next mass movement was launched in 1930. Congress inaugurated the Civil Disobedience movement with Gandhi’s Salt March to Dandi and its first phase ran from March 1930 to March 1931. When the Round Table talks in London failed to deliver what Gandhi had hoped for when he suspended the movement, Civil Disobedience was relaunched and ran from January 1932 until it was disabled by mass arrests in 1933-34.

Civil Disobedience used similar tactics to Non Cooperation but radically altered their scope in order to target the poor, who were increasingly impoverished as the Great Depression hit the global economy in 1930. Massive propaganda drives were launched

in 1928 against the (all-white) Simon Commission for constitutional reform, and used meetings, pickets, bonfires of foreign cloth, hartals, processions, drills parades, flag hoisting, and the celebration of national days and weeks. (Gooptu, 2001: 325) While many of the processions were strongest at the level of the *mohalla* (neighbourhood, as discussed later in the chapter), major processions focussed on business districts and the *bazars* where the working poor could participate. These were the people described by the government and police in the United Provinces as ‘bazar scum’, ‘vagabonds’, people of ‘very poor quality’ and ‘low class elements’, constituted by manual labourers, job hunters, hawkers and street vendors. (Gooptu, 2001: 327) Rather than being a passive audience, these workers participated in Congress processions and gatherings. Volunteers trained local supporters in physical exercise, drilling and flag hoisting, and this training often took militaristic forms, at odds with Gandhi’s non-violence ethos (Gooptu, 2001: 341). Indeed, the fear of popular urban uprisings led in part to remarkably harsh measures by the colonial government in 1932.

After the Government of India Act of 1935 and the fuller provincial autonomy it offered, Congress participated in the elections of 1937 and ran ministries in provinces across the country. As with earlier collaborations under the dyarchy regime, nationalist politicians found themselves quickly absorbed into the bureaucratic mindset. While many pursued radically egalitarian, reform programmes, other nationalist programmes regarding policing and planning displayed (perhaps necessarily) remarkable compatibilities with the colonial tradition. (Chatterjee, 1998) However, Congress resigned its seats in 1939 in protest at India’s entry into the war without consultation, and launched the Quit India movement in 1942. Though drawing upon the established repertoire of civil disobedience, this movement allowed a greater scope of techniques that edged closer to forms of violence (for instance, sabotage or arson). This can, in part, be attributed to the rising influence of socialists and communists in the 1930s, many of whom had links to, and influence over, Congress. The Congress Socialist Party had been formed in 1934 and favoured an agitation programme that would allow Congress to tap into the groundswell of protest by the working poor that had emerged during Civil Disobedience, by addressing tangible concerns in the village, town or *mohalla*. (Gooptu, 2001: 373) The focus was on workplace inequalities such as low pay, accident compensation, and arbitrary dismissals, while campaigns were begun in neighbourhoods against high rent, lack of services and poor housing, injecting the goals and tactics of socialism into the Congress repertoire.

The Quit India protests from August 9th 1942 constituted the largest insurrection in India after 1857. Marshalled under Gandhi’s iconic phrase “Do or Die” the movement appeared to mark a newly militant Congress, but Masselos (2007: 244) has emphasised the role of repetition, remembering, and returning to the protests of 1919-24 and 1930-34 in Bombay. There were attempts to direct the crowds and volunteers, to mediate open rebellion with calls to non-violence, and to use the same techniques of pickets, processions, and flag raisings. But the early arrest of the Congress elite freed city populations to express themselves in new ways, moving from neighbourhood protests to attacks on the police throughout the city, only to disperse and regroup later in the day. The city’s infrastructure was targeted in a wave of new tactics (which were also tried successfully in the countryside): grain shops and trucks were attacked; telegraph lines and mail boxes were burnt; rail lines were sabotaged, police chowkies were attacked; while arson became much more widespread in late August. Many workers also went “underground”, relying upon networks of harbourers, supporters and suppliers to evade both the police and Gandhi’s call for them to surrender to the police. The Quit India years saw a decline in violence between Hindus and Muslims, which had been accelerating in India since the 1920s, though this tension was to re-emerge as ‘religious nationalists’ debated what shape a post-war independent India would take.

36.5 CITIES AS SITES OF RELIGIOUS IDENTITIES

The rising tensions between Hindus and Muslims from the 1920s onwards cannot be reduced simply to a question of nationalism, but the political organisation of religious communities as a means of strengthening demands for independence was a major force in shaping religious identities in the interwar period. Sandria Freitag (1989) has demonstrated, through the case of Benares, how central the city was to the formation of community identity, in terms of public performances, collective ceremony and popular protest, and how religious communities shifted from anti-government protests to communal hostilities in the 1930s. Nandini Gooptu (2001: 190–191) has complemented this emphasis on urban religious groups with attention to divisions *within* religious communities, in terms of caste, urban rituals, or Islamic Sunni-Shia divides.

In part, these divisions have to be explained outside of urban contexts and at the national scale, as Muslims had seats reserved for them in the Government of India Acts of 1919 and 1935 (as did Sikhs in the Punjab and non-Brahmins in Madras), making the triannual elections into provocative politico-religious events not just for the minorities but also for a new meta-category of ‘Hindus’. But religious identities were also fostered by the major political parties as well, and not just the explicitly religious Muslim League. Despite claiming to represent all Indians, and having many influential Muslim leaders, Congress strategies were saturated with Hindu imagery and practice (Gould, 2004). In part, this can be attributed to Gandhi’s belief (in agreement with much colonial thinking) that India was distinguished by its deep religious affiliation, which was marked out as superior to western civilisation in opposition to colonial orientalist thought. (Haynes, 1991: 265). But Muslims in India were also coping with changing conditions and demands on their everyday lives. In Surat, for instance, municipal housing regulations were felt to be restricting practices of *purdah*, while urban development threatened the sanctity of mosques and Muslim heritage sites. (Haynes, 1991: 264) During the Khilafat campaign, a Muslim campaigning language (Gujarati laced with Urdu) had developed, while Gandhian Gujarati favoured Sanskrit-derived words. Public meetings echoed to very different cries, of ‘*Allah-o-Akbar*’ and ‘*Vande Mataram*’ respectively. (Haynes, 1991: 269)

Both Hinduism and Islam were developing and militarising forms of social and political organisation within the space of the city, as well as in the textual arenas of the Quran or the Vedas. Gooptu (2001: 192) especially identifies the *shudra*, or labouring, poor, as a significant driving force of Hindu militancy in the cities of the United Provinces in the 1920–30s. In the context of growing competition for fewer jobs and changing patterns of patronage, religious mobilisation provided the Shudra with a means of claiming self respect and masculinity, while demarcating Hindu land and territory in the city. Festivals such as *Holi* presented an opportunity to temporarily overturn social hierarchies and geographies of the city, unlike upper-caste Hindu festivals like *Dussehra* that did not, although they also presented opportunities for religious processions to proclaim communal identity (Legg, 2007: 119–148). Though Congress worked around, and with, some of these developments, organisations like the Hindu Mahasabha were more assertive at penetrating the cities with campaigns for reclaiming converted Hindus and organisations at the *mohalla* level.

Muslim ritual practice and religious expression was also changing, with many organisations preaching a return to early puritanical Islam, textual norms of the faith, and a greater personal adherence to the tenets of Islam (Gooptu, 2001: 245). But this seeming traditionalism actually led to innovations in the public, urban life of Islam, in which ‘outer’ expressions of anguish and sentiment were encouraged, just as festival practices were adapted and martial

public rituals became common in north India. Muslim artisans had suffered economically and socially even more harshly than their Hindu counterparts, and were easily converted to movements that promised to address their marginalisation. Sacred and institutional geographies of the city were vital: ‘... many of the urban mosques and sufi shrines, as well as the anjumans and madrassas, developed as centres of community organisation and support, where people came for advice, consolation and material help.’ (Gooptu, 2001: 276) These changes in Indian Islam were, of course, related to an increasingly antagonistic Hindu reformism. *Tanzeem* (organisation) and *tabligh* (propagation of religion) emerged as a means of focussing on the urban Muslim poor in competition with Hindu voluntary organisations and their campaigning in the bazars. They operated at the mohalla level on an everyday basis but also mobilised large Hindu processions. Such sites were of religious significance, but marked for the Muslim and Hindu poor a way of claiming cities from which they felt increasingly excluded: ‘... with the mounting scarcity of housing and land for settlement or for petty trading, the politics of space and territory assumed central importance in the lives of the poor, in which the sacred and the profane intermingled.’ (Gooptu, 2001: 314) In cities across India communities that had previously mingled started to separate out into Hindu and Muslim neighbourhoods into becoming militarised defenders of their faith and families. These movements unintentionally but undeniably prepared the way for the violence between Hindus and Muslims of 1946 ahead of partition in August 1947 that saw cities across the country violently fold in upon themselves. (for a sensitive discussion of Delhi as a partition city see Pandey, 2001). It must be remembered though, that the city equally produced and encouraged new and unprecedented unities, such as trade unions, based on the common experience of exploitation and suffering, which often existed alongside and sometimes against the more divisive qualities of urban politics. (Some of these moments are discussed in the Unit on Bombay.)

36.6 LIVED CITIES

In conclusion, I would like to focus attention on some writings on nationalism in the city that go beyond the political and economic historical approaches that Nair critiqued in her review essay “Beyond nationalism”. These could broadly be referred to as *cultural* geographies and histories of urban nationalisms. They attend to what Thomas Blom Hansen and Verkaaik (2009, 5) call “urban spirits” which are not empirically verifiable but are, ‘... the proliferating fantasmic and mythical qualities of cities and urban spaces are effective realities that shape the behaviour, cosmologies and desires of people in cities, or of those who visit them, imagine them, or describe them in narrative or imagery.’ They also encompass the practices and rituals through which people live and experience their city and are as much about time as space. For instance, the exhilarating feeling during Non Cooperation in Surat during which Congress succeeded in making public politics accessible and emotive and created an atmosphere of impending change; of a different future becoming attainable (Haynes, 1991, 239). But they can also regard not-letting-go, the refusal to forget, and the determination to remember. For instance, after the police fired on the Gurdwara Sisganj on Chandni Chowk during Civil Disobedience in May 1930, regular protests were held at the temple, and a Sikh counter-inquiry was formed, to contest the state magistrate’s conclusion that the firing was ‘inevitable’ and ‘manly’, and to insist that it had actually been ‘... indiscriminate, vindictive and excessive.’ (Legg, 2005: 191) Plans of the site revealing the marks of unrestrained shooting of bullets onto the building, personal narratives and photographs of the injured were used to make the Gurdwara into a site of counter-memory that refused to forget the violence inflicted upon the building and its inhabitants.



1. Some of the Persons Injured by Firing into the Gurdwara

Source: *Gurdwara Sisganj Firing Committee, 1930, Report on the Firing into the Gurdwara Sisganj, Delhi, May 6, 1930, Amritsar: Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee.*

The *mohalla* (or *moholla* in Bombay) was a unit of community cohesion in many Indian cities that became the prime target of nationalist movements seeking mass mobilisation. Masselos (2007, chapter one) has explored the sheer diversity of Muslim mohallas in Bombay, divided upon lines of doctrine (Shia and Sunni, or the leader followed by Muslims in that area), social grouping (such as khoja or konkanis, expressing a group's history and customs), and language (Marathi, Gujarati, Urdu or Hindi), with intersecting subgroups between all three. Mohallas often had *jamats* (elder councils) in addition to family authority networks, which *could* become the last wrung in national hierarchies leading up to the Muslim League and resisting colonial attempts at governance, but they could also be stubbornly autonomous. As such, Masselos (2007: 41) concludes: '...what is significant is how the field operates, the kind of forces which become manifest within it, and the processes of change that occur as a result. In this sense, the moholla symbolizes a greater – not a lesser – world.'

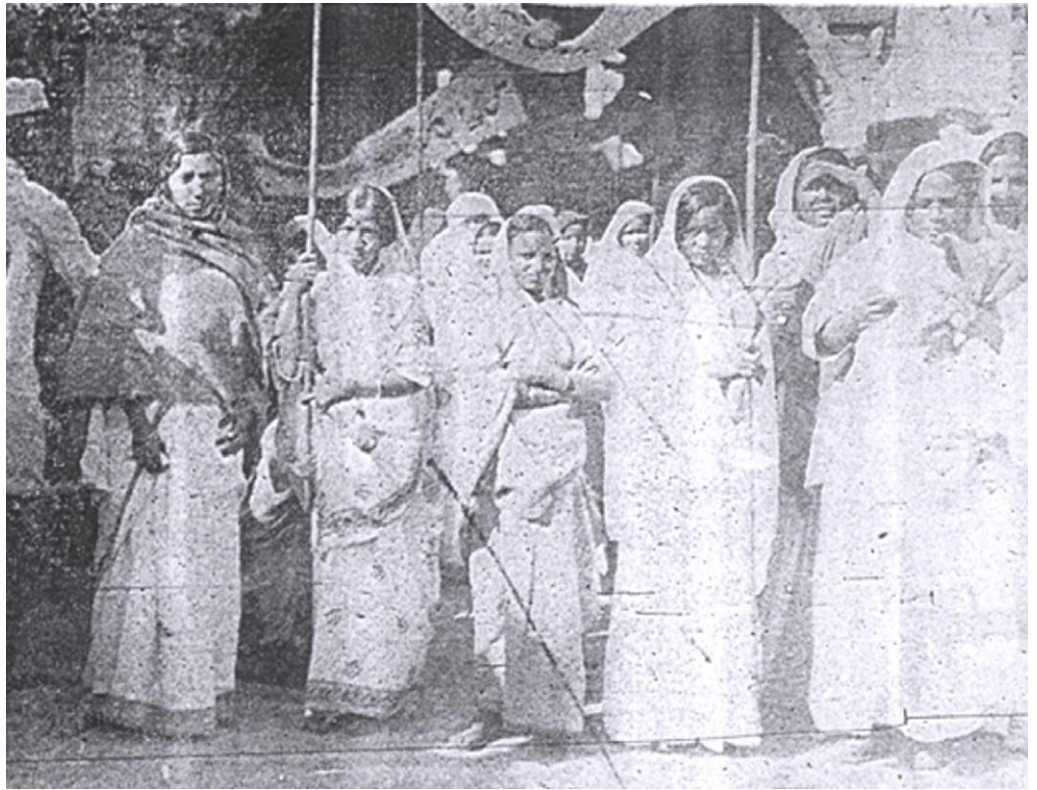
At the level of the mohalla, novel types of cultural-political practice were made possible. *Prabhat Pheris* emerged during the Civil Disobedience movement across India even if no one seems quite sure of their origins, though residents at the Patidar Ashram in Surat claimed to have forged them through blending religious devotionism and nationalist sentiment (Haynes, 1991: 234). They consisted of small bands of people moving through a city in the early morning, singing patriotic songs and urging households to do their duty. (Masselos, 2007: chapter eight) They became so popular in Bombay that by July 1930 it was estimated that 125 groups existed in the city, across geographical, linguistic, class and religious divides. They disturbed the city's peace, which perturbed the police, and their widespread and deeply emotional appeal

even alarmed the Congress, which established a committee and published rules of conduct to regulate the prabhat pheris, free them of bad passions, and make them productive, harmonious and uniform across the country. While they did become unified, Gandhi was unable to stop negative political songs: after a Kanpur riot in 1931 it was reported that prabhat pheris had been singing anti-Muslim slogans. (Gooptu, 2001, 294)

Between the route of the procession and the space of the mohalla lay the crowd. This was the source of most parties' power, but also the source of fear; a massive population of boundless energy and potential for overwhelming the government, but also for turning on each other. Through establishing clear daily routines during the Civil Disobedience movement, Congress tried to discipline the crowd and penetrate the city, but it also had to *relate* to the crowd and draw them in to the city's political performances. In Bombay '... behind the innovative novelty of the national cycle and the secular freshness of its idiom were significant parallels between the national commemoration and the city's religious festivals and practices.' (Masselos, 2007: 205) The crowds had been trained on how to participate in city religious processions and Congress capitalised on these emotional, embodied memories: the symbolism of the sea; the aural experience of prabhat pheris; the 'holi fires' of foreign cloth. The crowds became so involved that they later became victims of police violence: 'Such expectations developed an audience and a connoisseurship, it created emotional involvement and, in some cases, activist crowd participation not necessarily along Gandhian non-violent lines.' (Masselos, 2007: 215)

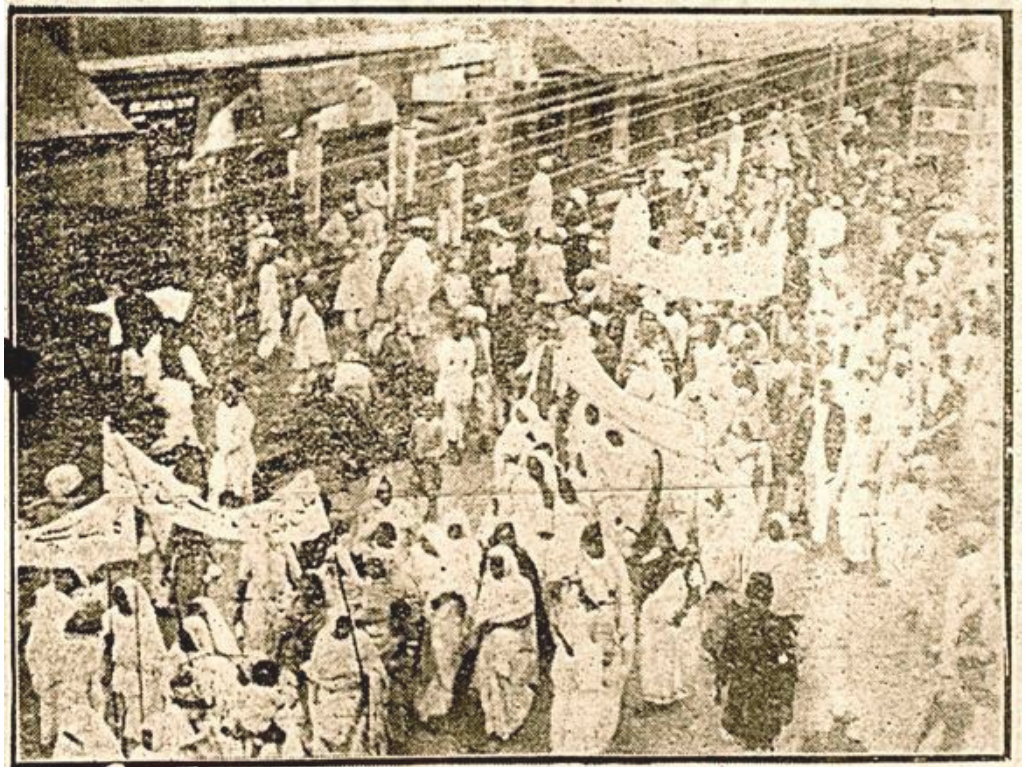
Similarly, Muslims protesting the proposed demolition of a portion of a mosque in Kanpur in 1913 had appropriated the mourning rituals of Mohurram to draw out local support: explicit parallels were drawn between the trials of Hussain and Hassan (Gooptu, 2001: 269). Processions could also play on audience emotions in different ways. A Congress procession in Benares in April 1930 stopped at points throughout the city to enact scenes of police brutality and satyagrahi oppression (Gooptu, 2001: 332), while the folk dance tradition of *nautanki* was appropriated for expressions of Hindu and nationalist themes (Gooptu, 2001: 347).

If the nation, the city, the mohalla and the street were politicised by nationalism, so was the home (Chatterjee, 1989). Gandhi had not only called for women's social uplift and education, but called them forth as a political army. Initially he tried to proscribe women to spinning cloth from the home, or using their moral force to picket liquor and foreign cloth stores, but in 1930 many women refused his spatial demarcations and took to the street. Many women also played a pivotal role in revolutionising domestic space and politicising it. A few women made their homes into political headquarters for their politician husbands, but many more women made their homes political by spinning cloth, teaching nationalist songs to their children, supporting processions and prabhat pheris and even printing prohibited leaflets or harbouring absconding or underground radicals. (Legg, 2003) The home could also be a depoliticised space for training in Congress nonviolence. During potentially uncontrollable protests in Bombay over the deportation of Horniman in 1919 Gandhi ordered his followers to go home for private religious contemplation; evacuating the streets and dividing popular sorrow into private mourning, thus neutralising the risk of an unruly public display. (Hazareesingh, 2007: 144)



2. Swadeshi League Procession in Delhi

Source: *Hindustan Times*, February 27th 1930. Lady Workers of the Delhi Swadeshi League: Standing from the left is Mrs. J.N. Sahni who presided over the meeting; Mrs. Bishen Narain (wife of Late Bishen Narain) is seen at the other end.



3. Swadeshi League Procession in Delhi

Source: *Hindustan Times*, February 27th 1930. Lady Workers of the Delhi Swadeshi League carrying placards, advocating the use of Swadeshi articles.

36.7 SUMMARY

From the domestic to the national, from economic and political to the cultural and the sacred, nationalism was both made in, and went on to make, the cities of interwar India. This Unit has only been able to give a brief sense of a rich literature on the elite, popular, religious and lived spaces of nationalism in 20th century colonial India. With a new generation of literature emerging on Indian cities, it remains to be seen if the nationalist city will be explored as richly as the examples of colonial urbanism.

36.8 EXERCISES

1. Why has the Unit discussed the city as a 'sphere' or 'field' of politics?
2. How does religion become a formative aspect of colonial urban life?
3. Why is it necessary to understand the mobilisation, actions, and capabilities of the urban crowd?
4. What links are produced and maintained between neighbourhood/mohalla level politics and National level campaigns and programmes?
5. The city is a space for both remembering and forgetting. Discuss.

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