

CLASS-7  
HISTORY  
CHAPTER-6 –TOWNS, TRADERS AND CRAFTSPERSONS.  
MODULE ¼

**Towns in Medieval India:**

After the eighth century, many new towns emerged in India. These were different towns with different functions such as temple towns, administrative towns, commercial towns and craft or port towns. In fact, many towns combined several functions- they were administrative centres, temple towns as well as centers of commercial activities and craft productions.

➤ **Administrative Centres: (The story of Thanjavur)**

**Thanjavur was capital of Cholas.** It is situated on the banks of Kaveri river.

- The famous temple **Rajarajeshvara is in Thanjavur. It was built by King Rajaraja Chola**
- The townspeople are all praise for its architect **Rajaraja Perunthachchan** who has proudly carved his name on the temple wall.
- Besides the temples there were palaces with mandapas. Kings held courts in the mandapas, issuing orders to their subordinates. There were also barracks for the army.
- It was a busy commercial town with markets for grains, spices, cloths and jewellery. Water supply to this town **was arranged** from wells and tanks.
- **The Saliya** weavers of Thanjavur and the nearby town of Uraiyur were busy in producing **cloth** for flags to be used in the temple festival, fine cottons for the king and nobility and coarse cotton for

the masses. The sthapatis or sculptors of Svamimalai were famous for making of bronze idols and tall ornamental bell metal lamps.

- Thanjavur and Uraiyur were important centres.

### **Temple Towns and Pilgrimage Centres:**

- Thanjavur is also an example of temple town.
- Temple towns represent a very important pattern of urbanization, [the process by which cities develop].
- Rulers built temples to demonstrate their devotion to various deities.
- They also gifted temples with grants of land and money to carry out elaborate rituals, feed pilgrims and priests and celebrate festivals.
- Pilgrims gave huge donations to temples. This wealth was used by temple authorities to finance trade and banking.
- Gradually a large number of priest, workers, artisans, traders etc settled near the temple to **cater to its needs** and those **of the pilgrims**. In this way new towns emerged around temples.
- Important temple towns were **Bhillasvamin in Madhya Pradesh, Somnath in Gujarat, Kanchipuram and Madurai in Tamil Nadu and Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh.**
- Bronze is an alloy containing copper and tin. **Bell metal** contains a greater proportion of tin than other kinds of bronze. This produces a bell-like sound.
- Chola bronze statues were made using the lost wax technique.
- **Lost wax technique**-First an image was made up of wax. This was covered with clay and allowed to dry. Next it was heated, and a tiny hole was made in the clay cover. The molten wax was drained out through this hole. Then molten metal was poured into the clay mould through the hole. Once the metal cooled and solidified, the clay cover was carefully removed, and the image was cleaned and polished.

- Pilgrimage centres slowly developed into townships.
  - **Vrindavan in Uttar Pradesh** and **Tiruvannamalai in Tamil Nadu** are examples of two such towns.
  - **Ajmer:**
  - Ajmer was the capital of Chauhan kings in the twelfth century and later became the *Suba* headquarters under Mughals. This is a great example of religious coexistence.
  - Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti, the celebrated Sufi saint who settled there in twelfth century, attracted devotees from all creeds.
  - Near Ajmer there is a **lake Pushkar**, which has attracted pilgrims from ancient times.
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