



CHAPTER- 13

TOWNS, TRADERS AND CRAFTSMEN

NOTES:

- Capital towns are the capital cities and the official seat of the government whether of a state or a kingdom.
- Thanjavur was the capital of the Cholas in the medieval times. Other capital towns may include Delhi, Ajmer, Kanauj, Agra etc. during the medieval period.
- The Temple towns were the pilgrimage centres built by rulers and endowed with land grants and money. Pilgrims flocked and a large number of priest, workers artisans, traders etc. settled near the temple to cater the needs of everyone and it represented a very important pattern of urbanization.

A.PORTS AND PORT CITIES:

- Ports are the places near the sea or oceans where ships load and unload the goods.
- These ports became trade centers where trade activities took place for both local and foreign countries and got developed into port cities.

SEA TRADE:

- Many foreign travelers in their accounts have mentioned that textiles was the most important trade items of India.
- Ibn Batuta mentions about production of silk in Bengal and a cloth used for turban called sirbund which was very popular among Europeans.
- Duarte Barbosa a Portuguese official in Cochin mentions Gujarat to be a leading centre of cotton trade which was exported to Arab countries.
- India also imported goods from outside and the items were dry fruits, precious stones from Europe, horns from Kabul and Arabia, high grade textiles from west Asia. Raw silk and porcelain from China .

- Trade with China and South East Asia was done through the port city of Sonargaon (Dacca in present Bangladesh).

TRADERS- MANY KINDS:

- There were many kinds of traders apart from the local traders during the medieval period
- The Banjaras were trader- nomads who moved from place to place buying goods and selling to another and had a caravan.
- Traders formed their welfare associations and guilds to protect their interest from the eighth century onwards.
- Some of the communities of traders were the Chettiars, Marwari, Oswals, Hindu Baniyas and Muslim Bohras who carried their trade extensively in the ports of Red sea, Persian gulf, east Africa, south Asia and China.

TRADING TOWNS :

(i)HAMPI – A CASE STUDY :

- Hampi is situated in the Deccan in the present state of Karnataka which was one of the most splendid historical sites in south India and is a world heritage site
- It was a commercial centre for both local and foreign merchants and is known best for its temple architecture and cultural activities.
- Hampi fell into ruin following the defeat of Vijayanagara by an alliance of Deccani Sultans in 1565.

(ii) MASULIPATNAM A CASE STUDY:

- Literally 'Masulipatnam' means first fishing town. Also known as Machilipatnam it lies on the delta of Krishna river in Andhra Pradesh which became an important port in the seventeenth century.
- European powers like the English, the French and the Dutch tried to control the town and the Dutch built the fort of Masulipatnam.

- It flourished as a sea port during Satavahana rule but it was the Qutb Shahi ruler of Golconda who had their important ports in Masulipatnam and tried to prevent various European countries to control this port.
- Many struggles took place for the possession of the town between the Golconda rulers, Persian merchants, European traders etc.
- In 1686- 87, the Mughals annexed Golconda which led the European companies to move elsewhere.

(iii) SURAT : A CASE STUDY.

- The port city of Surat lies on the Western Coast in the state of Gujarat, which was the most important port city during the Mughal rule.
- In 1613, the British established their first factory at Surat and it became a centre of trade and commerce. Also the French, Portuguese and the Dutch had their factories by the seventeenth century.
- The Portuguese had the control of the sea through this port city but by 1612 AD the British destroyed its supremacy and with the decline of the Mughals and the competition from Bombay where the East India Company had shifted its headquarters in 1688 may have led to the decline of Surat.

