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## Chapter 6

### Work, Life and Leisure

#### ❖ Characteristics of the City

- Cities are the centres of political power, administrative network, trade and industry, religious institutions and intellectual activity, and support various social groups such as artisans, merchants and priests.
- Three historical processes have shaped modern cities in decisive ways.
  - The rise of capitalism
  - The establishment of colonial rule over large parts of the world
  - The development of democratic ideals.

#### ❖ Industrialisation and the Rise of the Modern City in England

- The early industrial cities of Britain such as Leeds and Manchester attracted large number of migrants to the textile mills set up in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.
- Five major types of industries employed large number of people. These were
  - Clothing and footwear
  - Wood and furniture
  - Metals and engineering
  - Printing and stationary
  - Precious products such as surgical instruments, watches and objects of precious metal
- During the First World War (1914-18), London began manufacturing cars and electrical goods. The number of large factories increased until they accounted for nearly one-third of all jobs in the city.

#### ❖ Marginal Groups

- **Women**
  - Lost their industrial jobs owing to technological developments and were forced to work within households.
  - A large number of women used their homes for increasing family income by taking lodgers or through such activities as tailoring, washing or matchbox making.
  - In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, women got employed in wartime industries and offices and withdrew from domestic service.
- **Children**

- Large numbers of children were pushed into low paid work by their parents, while many became thieves.
- The Compulsory Education Act of 1870 and the Factory Act of 1902 kept children out of industrial work.

### ❖ Housing

- Factories or workshops did not provide housing to the migrant workers. Instead, individual landowners put up cheap, and usually unsafe, tenements for the new arrivals.
- The unhygienic condition of slums highlighted the need of housing for the poor.
- There was widespread fear of social disorder, especially after the Russian Revolution in 1917. Workers' mass housing schemes were planned for preventing the London poor from turning rebellious.
- Attempts were made for decongesting localities, creating open spaces and reducing pollution. Large blocks of apartments were also built.
- Rent control was introduced in Britain during the First World War for easing the impact of severe housing shortage.
- Between the two World Wars, the responsibility for housing the working classes was accepted by the British state, and a million houses, most of them single-family cottages, were built by the local authorities.

### ❖ Transport in the City

- The London underground railway was introduced. It partially solved the housing crisis by carrying large masses of people to and from the city.
- **10<sup>th</sup> January, 1863:** The first underground railway in the world opened between Paddington and Farrington Street in London.
- Between the two World Wars, the London tube railway led to massive displacement of the London poor.
- Better-planned suburbs and a good railway network enabled large numbers to live outside Central London and travel to work.

### ❖ Social Change in the City

- In the Industrial city, ties between household members loosened, increasingly higher levels of isolation were faced and among the working class and the institution of marriage tended to break down.
- The city encouraged a new spirit of individualism among both men and women.
- The public space increasingly became a male preserve and the domestic sphere was seen as the proper place for women.

- The 19<sup>th</sup> century **Chartism Movement** was a movement demanding the voting rights for all adult males.
- **The 10-hour movement** demanded limited hours of work in factories.
- Women also demanded voting rights and the right to property from 1870s.

#### ❖ **Leisure and Consumption**

- Various methods of recreation were adopted by the working class people in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. These included
  - Cultural events such as opera, theatre and classical music performances.
  - Working classes met in pubs to have a drink, exchange news and sometimes for organizing political action.
  - Libraries, art galleries and museums provided a glimpse of the British history.
- By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, cinema became the great mass entertainment for mixed audiences.

#### ❖ **The City in Colonial India**

- The pace of urbanisation in India was slow under the colonial rule. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, no more than 11% of Indians were living in cities.
- Population in the Presidency towns rose considerably owing to the availability of major ports, warehouses, homes and offices, army camps, as well as educational institutions, museums and libraries.
- **Bombay: The Prime City of India**
  - Bombay was a group of seven islands.
  - **1661:** The control of Bombay passed into the British hands after the marriage of Britain's King Charles II to the Portuguese princess.
  - Bombay became the principal Western port for the East India Company. At first, Bombay was the major outlet for cotton textiles from Gujarat.
  - It became an important administrative and industrial centre of Western India.
  - **1819:** Bombay became the capital of the Bombay Presidency after the Maratha defeat in the Anglo-Maratha war.
  - **1854:** First cotton textile mill was established in Bombay
  - **1919-1926:** Women formed 23% of the mill workforce
  - **Late 1930s:** Women's jobs were increasingly taken over by machines or men

- With the rapid and unplanned expansion of the city, the crisis of housing and water supply became acute by the mid-1950s.
- More than 70% of the working people lived in the thickly-populated *chawls* of Bombay. *Chawls* were multi-storeyed old structures.
- Merchants, bankers and building contractors owned these *chawls*. Each *chawl* was divided into one-room tenements with no private toilets.
- Lower castes were kept out of many *chawls* and often had to live in shelters made of corrugated sheets, leaves or bamboo poles.
- Town planning emerged from fears of social revolution and the fears about the plague epidemic.
- **1898:** The City of Bombay Improvement Trust was established. It focused on clearing poor homes out of the city centre.

- **Land Reclamation in Bombay**

- The need for additional commercial space in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century led to the formulation of several government and private plans for the reclamation of more land from sea.
- **1864:** The Back Bay Reclamation Company won the right of reclaiming the Western foreshore from the tip of Malabar Hill to the end of Colaba.
- As population started growing in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, every bit of the available area was built over and new areas were reclaimed from the sea.

- **Bombay as the City of Dreams: The World of Cinema and Culture**

- **1896:** Harishchandra Sakharam Bhatwadekar shot a scene of a wrestling match in Bombay's Hanging gardens and it became India's first movie.
- **1913:** Dadasaheb Phalke made *Raja Harishchandra*
- **By 1925,** Bombay became the film capital of India.
- Many people in the film industry were migrants from cities such as Lahore, Madras and Calcutta.

- ❖ **Cities and the Challenge of the Environment**

- Large quantities of refuse and waste products polluted air and water, while excessive noise became a feature of urban life.
- Black fog engulfed the towns owing to pollution, thereby causing bad temper and smoke-related illnesses.
- The Smoke Abatement Acts of 1847 and 1853 did not work to clean the air as smoke was not easy to monitor or measure.

- **By 1840s:** Towns such as Derby, Leeds and Manchester had laws for controlling smoke in the city.
- In Calcutta, high level of pollution was a consequence of the huge population that depended on dung and wood as fuel, and also the use of steam engines that ran on coal.
- The railway line introduced in 1855 introduced a new pollutant-coal from Raniganj.

**1863:** Calcutta became the first Indian city to get smoke nuisance legisla

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