

Architectural Conservation

Urban Conservation

Lecture 7

Urbanization

Urban history of India - what exactly is urban history? Urban history is a field of history that deals with historically cities and towns and the process of urbanization. This approach is usually multi-disciplinary, it's not sufficient if you just have particular science involved in it, it needs to discuss social, history, architectural history, urban sociology, urban geography, trade history and archaeology. Urbanization and industrialization were popular themes for 20th century historians, and these are often tied to an implicit model of modernization or the transformation of rural traditional societies. The history of urbanization focuses on the processes by which the existing populations can concentrate themselves in urban localities over a period of time so that social, political, cultural and economic contexts of cities are formed. Most social scholars focus on the word metropolis which is nothing but a special important city like Delhi, Calcutta or Mumbai or Chennai. Very rarely attention is paid to B centers or B towns or whatever it is referred to as which are towns like Trichy, Tanjavur, Madurai, Nagpur. However social historians do find the small city easier to deal with because they actually get the sensex data in a easier way because it is a smaller geographical area and lesser population to be dealt with. What exactly is urban biography? Urban biography is narrative history of a city, and often reaches a general audience. Urban biographies cover the interrelationships among various dimensions, such as politics, demography, business, high culture, popular culture, housing, religion, what kind of ethnic groups people are there and neighborhoods. It covers

municipal governments as well as physical expansion growth as well as decline. If you look at any city or town in history, there is any time that is born, there is any period where it grows steadily and there is sense of decline which emerges finally. Historians always focus on the most and largest dominant city usually the national capital where geographers refer to as a primate city. Urbanization forms an important branch of historical studies, though extensive work is being done in the west, in India this is not been the case. About the time of independence, we have not even thought about what exactly is urban planning or what is urban history. Although systematic research has been done on the subject from academic point of view, its been there through in terms of literature and other studies which have been happening in our country. The government post-independence has conducted a lot of socio economic studies in selected cities to understand the problems that occur there specially due to rapid urbanization. Although during past few decades some extremely important studies have been undertaken, which helps us understand the socio-economic balance in the history of modern india in a broader perspective very little research is yet to be done because urbanization as such is not been dealt with in the way, it is dealt in the west from a historical view point. Urbanization became a world wide phenomenon by the 20th century only. Of course this does not refer that urbanization did not occur earlier parts of history. Its actually been a very important part of ancient and medieval times. In history humans always have a tendency to move from less advanced parts of society to more advanced parts of society. What man usually searches for is a better way of living, a better standard of living. So if there is a place that exists that can offer to him and his family, he is definitely going to move and that is the beginning of urbanization. What happened before the industrial revolution was, the factors that influenced the urbanization was different. It was religion, agriculture, style of living. Post

industrialization that is 19th and 20th century the kind of industrialization that emerged, it was because of industries and the kind of industries that are developing in the urban center. To cater to the needs of an industrial society, many people are flocked to towns and worked in different societies especially creating something like slum areas. With the growth of industries simultaneous development has happened in administration as well as education. Because of new fields coming into place, new typologies are emerged. Necessities came for big administrative buildings, courts and even cinema halls for recreation became essential for systematic growth of towns. In modern India, the urbanization was facilitated by the British government. The East India Company selected cities which had both commercial and strategic importance. Since the beginning of trade, they chose the cities because they were close to the sea, because at that point of time trades were only through ships and sea routes. The cities that were developed were Calcutta, madras and Bombay. There are various grounds that facilitate urbanization, you have the administrative centre, religious centre, the market centre and finally the cultural centre. It's these factors that actually enable a town to be urbanized or increase the process of migration from smaller towns or villages. . Now we will be delving into particularly the urban history of Tamil Nadu. What we are trying to focus in this part of unit is, lets learn what kind of urban history happened with in Tamil Nadu right from medieval times to current period. So the major factors which happened are, you have port, like we just discussed, the britishers actually settled into places where sea route was important and as the Britishers came in, the Dutch came in the necessity for military post became important and as military and trade was happening, markets emerged, for protection, forts emerged and to take care of all these elements, administration was required and manufacturing for industry was happening. In India as such as a strong history in religion but along

with britishers and other foreign traders that came in, we started having even Christian missionary activities. So we will be looking into all of these elements. Historically urban centers have always played an important role, especially when you look at economic, political, cultural and military activities. The cities situated in strategic spots have natural linkages with the near and far off hinterlands. So where you need human as well as natural material resources. They offer natural facilities for the growth of defence, commerce and civilization. Urban history in Tamil Nadu has a very rich past. Most of the research are medieval Tamil Nadu has concerned itself as agrarian structure, that is buildings related to agriculture, peasant settlements and general pattern of socio economic changes. Problems of interpretation of records and inadequacy of statistical data have deterred scholars from reconstructing the history of urban centers, despite their interest in trade pattern. Because of the lack of documentation people are not able to study this better. however with the dependable favor of agrarian development has now provided during recent studies, it is been possible as well as it is necessary to venture into this urban history, because only if we venture into this urban history we will be able to learn, what was the thought behind these centers being established and where exactly these towns are heading to in the future. As far as Urban Tamil Nadu in medieval period is talked about, we have 3 important phases The first phase during the sangam period, the second, with the period is cholas from the ninth to thirteenth centuries and the 3rd from fourteenth to nineteenth centuries and the second phase is which includes the Muslims , nayakars, the maratas and the europen settlement which happened during the East India trading company which provides a large scale agrarian expansion, trade and commercial activities, Industrial development, craft and Institutional organization all of these began to serve as the bases for the growth of urban centers in various districts of Tamil Nadu. the most crucial factor

in the process of urbanization was the maritime trade. Because as we described just now sea routes and the maritime trade was the main trucks of the transportation department. There was no other way of transporting it. It was only later on that railways came into being and roadways came into being. So these were extensively used by the great cholas in the coastal territories like that of thanjavur, emerging from this region of Cauvery delta, the cholas controlled vast tracts of agricultural land in this river valley. All this evidence we get only from literary descriptions of fortified cities, coastal towns, several quarters for merchants and social groups which all we will learn from the quite sophisticated urban development, there was segregation between communities, work and leisure . our archaeological evidence was very less and what little we anert was kaveripoompattinam in Thanjavur and uraiyur inn Thiruchirapalli district. So besides all of these, its only the rich literary descriptions that we have to fall back on. Many factors can be attributed to middle urban centers in Thanjavur district in Tamil Nadu You have the holding of fairs, religious centers commercial center activity around in land ports, urban status around rural settlements, initiative taken by kings and ministers in the creation of urban centers. So combination of King and religion played a very important role. besides these 2 factors, trade and trade related agriculture was crucial as well. There were some other factors responsible for urban centers in thanjavur district.

1. geographical location, which is most important, makes it a point of convergence for all major routes, passed through this region
2. Trade, which however to begin with was incidental in the process of urbanization.
3. Importance of center for political and administrative activity.
Once the king develops and the kingdom develops with economic

activities, it becomes a seat of political administrative power as well

4. Religious importance happens because at that point of time, kings put their stamp as their kingdom by building huge temples and the same happened with the Thanjavur with the construction of Brahadeeswara temple, which is a very famous, Shiva temple.
5. The most crucial and urban important factor of the urban centre was the geographical system of area. So when you are talking about geographical system, you are talking about rainfall, how fertile is the land, what kind of agricultural land is there, is there a river near by, is there a natural irrigation its going to be dependent on rain completely. So all these factors are very important.

Role of Urban Centres

It should however be emphasized that in medieval times hardly any town performed a single function. They were simultaneously performing the activities of administration, religion, market and a centre of culture. What kind of urban centers emerged? Urban centres can be classified under various categories on the basis of port towns, trade routes, fort towns, administrative towns, military towns, and market centers, religious and cultural centers. we will be looking into what are the kind of factors that are influencing the information of these urban centers. So the main factors that we mentioned like activities of the king, trade, places of worship, village assemblies, agriculture. The possible supplementary factors, these are the main factors that we saw. The supplementary factors are the food, what kind of food is available over there, what crops are grown in that area, crafts specialization. If there are houses being built, what kind of work can I do. If a king is building a particular kind of temple or structure, there would be stone masons who move in there. And at that point of time, when a temple was being

constructed, it was done over a long period of time. it was not over a few years. So a entire generation of family would be involved in it. Special stratification, administration, warfare and defence and population. All town depends on certain external forces like non urban population supplying food and materials and in turn consuming the goods and services offered by the town. So a symbiotic relationship emerge between the village and the town and as the town grows, the population also increases. The increase in population was obviously due to migration. People from smaller villages and towns started moving towards larger towns and cities. As the town grows, the change and need for migration is mostly economic. Like we already discussed, man always wants to move to better place which offers him and his family better opportunities and standard of living. So how did market towns come into being. The market played an important role in the crystallization of times in a sense, it can be suggested that urban economy is sustained by the trade. This can be seen by the power and prestige of the mercantile community, the communities that are emerged by the chettiyars, marakkayars, mudaliyars and so many other communities that emerged in this area around thanjavur. The agricultural developments and proliferation of new urban settlements was the causes of urban networks. So when 1 important town emerged, small satellite towns, which will support this main important town emerged. So market networks were created automatically. Most of the micro regions administrations had 1 or 2 trade centers. so for example nagapattinam had paravai and velipalayam as marketing centers. So when nagapatinam emerged as port town, paravai and velipalayam started too emerge as main town to trade on the products that were brought in from other parts of the country or world. Ports actually play a very important role in the economy of a country. Market towns and port towns co-exist together. So now we will see how port towns emerge.

From time memorial, thanjavur has been enjoying very good port activities because of the natural coast line it has. So this has lot of important ports in thanjavur district since the sangam period. Ports undoubtedly represents potential centers of urban growth. You can actually see how well developed a place is when you buy the coast at that point of time. During medieval times, coastal trade was mainly in food grain, fire wood, cattle transportation and bulk commodities from coastal areas. Another important port own that came into being is tranquebar or what it came to be known as tharagambadi danish settlement on the coromandel coast. It was brought by the danes from raghunatha nayaka in 1612 and they bought 16 other villages like this from the marata kings and this settlement brought the first protestant missionary in South India. So till now as Hinduism was main religion tharagambadi became the 1st protestant Christian missionary in South. The port that was most visible in our area was tranquebar, kaaraikal, nagore, nagapattinam and these are all Danish, French and Portuguese settlement. And the beginning of 17th century, nagapattinam became so important, it actually got international recognition as port town. So simultaneously what was happening is trade is happening as we mentioned as Indians, worship always plays an very important role. So devotional or bakthi worship was one of the most important cultural development of this period. And the result of that was the temple that was constructed and the temple centre that emerged. IN SOUTH India at that point of time, the chola period, the sangam period, no temple was built as aloof structure an entire town emerged around the temple, an entire city settled around the centre. So many cities and towns have grown around such temples and we will be looking at one such temple in the case study following. So people from long time in history had mutual attraction to temples and natural surroundings. So spirituality and morality have been in our body for a very long times. Its not

something that can be removed. So religion and social they interact well at this time. Temples actually provided a institutional ways, because they started learning, having veda schools and things related to that. Socio economic differences were happening, political integration was happening because things got together in the name of religion and great significance from the time of bhakthi movement, this all started around 7th century. Some of these bakthi centres, you have lot of these areas emerged, thanjavur district, trichy district, kumbakonam, all of these places emerged because of the bakthi movement and they emerged as pilgrimage and religious centers, which not only made them grow as urban complexes but also gave a lot of trade activities to the local area. So if we think of what kind of temples grew around and how temples effected urbanism its not only religion that played an important role. Religion is only one factor that gives rise, the other factors are dependant on religion and the kind of people that come into to visit the temple you have something called floating population and in those days people in town became famous for a particular religion, people would actually like to settle down in that area. So you have migratory population and it became a place of pilgrimage which made people would visit and then leave as well. So the new concept of travel came into being. At that point of time when we talk about the 7th century, the concept of travel was pretty much not there. People would stay where they live and they would work in the same area and then finish their life in 1 particular region. Now when pilgrimage places came into being, religion started playing an important role, people travelled to visit these temples and population and growth of literature, growth of economics, everything was there, because of 1 factor.

Character and issues of historic cities: The development of planning ideas applied to historic urban areas extends back to the nineteenth century. So we have lot of concepts regarding the planning of historic

cities which are yet to be completely understood and applied as well. Urban conservation was born out of disorientation and dismay. There was irreversible loss of monuments that actually happened in 1800s in France and the 1st person to protest this was Victor Hugo who actually said, why we have to destroy old monuments and old buildings in the name of growth of urbanization. Following this we have an Australian architect, Camillo Sitte who was a planner, he actually made a lot of studies even in respect to India, he actually evaluated that ancient and medieval heritage has a lot of value and it needs to be preserved. All this happened in late 1800's and early 1900's. Sitte actually discussed about how a historic city can provide continuity in a format. Yes a city has to develop, it has to embrace new technology and everything. But at what cost is all that happening, Isn't it better for a city to grow organically around it, rather than go and demolish it and start away again from scratch. And that is what he brought about; he wanted us to understand the danger of urban renewal. When we talk about urban renewal, as the word suggests, renew- we will remove what is there and re-construct from scratch which was very bad idea at that point of time. In his plan for the city of Madurai, he advised against demolitions, reconfiguring, sanitizing neighborhoods. Instead he opted for something called conservative surgery, where you improve all conditions, every housing conditions, improve sanitation level, standard of living but with minimal interventions as well as expense. A giant step forward in this movement attributed to Giovanni, at the later part Sitte came into being. What he brought in the concept was, let's enlarge the concept of monument. At that point of time, everyone knew how important a monument is. Why don't we apply the same concept to a historic city. He introduced the concept of vernacular architecture, which is the architecture prevalent to that particular local area and which is not only the integral part of that urban fabric, but is also very much worthy of

conservation. He was also the 1st to recognize that historic cities are incompatible with modern urban development. So he actually advocated for city expansions to happen around the urban core away from the historic core fabric such that motorized traffic is not allowed in the motorized core but away from it only. If we actually look at this here, it is Qutub Minar which was constructed and how it was meant to be, a very scenic layout, a very beautiful layout just few people around and look at it in 2007. It become insignificant with taller building constructed with haphazard wires and surrounded by all kind of croachments, houses and ruins. India if we actually look at, is a place of many ancient civilization but none of the cities today in still any ancient pride. We have beautiful cities right from harapen Vera, dolor hera to the 20th century Delhi and Chandigarh but not one of these have been mentioned or designated by the world heritage cities. Where as in Italy there are 10. We actually not went into urban renewal. we have not thought of or destroyed any town but because of our carelessness and in ability to look at all these cities, we have gradually destroyed over a past 50 years many of our historic core fabric and this has happened because of the politician official builder nexus. So this is like a triangle we are struck in and this gradual and not been done in a very good civil way. So this requires better policy and preservation.