CHAPTER - I

URBANISATION IN INDIA
In the recent years the study of urban history has gained importance among the scholars. It mainly concentrates on various aspects of urbanisation. In history, towns have emerged with two primary characteristics, a high concentration of population within a limited space, and a predominantly non-agricultural, particularly non-cultivating, nature of its population.\(^1\) Urbanisation is an important aspect of the social organisation of any civilization. In India, since different civilizations flourished at different stages in the past, the traditional cities reflect the social organisation and its interactions.\(^2\)

Whenever we talk of urbanism, we are faced with difficult questions related to its definition. According to one view, the size and population are crucial to the concept of urbanisation in the Bronze age cultures in which crafts and commerce did not play a vital role. On the other hand, it is also argued that in the Harappan urban life commerce played a significant role.\(^3\) To identify a town, it is not only the size and the population

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which matter, but we should consider the nature of population. Basically, a town has to be a concentration of non-agriculturists, with people living in the hinterland having attended a food producing economy of a considerable extent. In early historic towns in India craft and commerce played a significant role, the indication of which is found in archaeological records and literary texts.⁴

In 1936 V. Gorden Childe first formulated the concept of urban revolution. In 1950 he recorded that archaeological traits are the most important features of the earliest urban towns. He laid down the essential criteria and the basic norms to be observed in the scientific method needed for extracting history from archaeological data. He showed how the process of abstraction and classification can bring out the saga of human history free from distortion and reveal trends and patterns of social development which lie hidden in the material remains of past societies and civilizations. Further he emphasized that the use of the concept of typology is one of the most important features of archaeological study.⁵

According to Childe, writing is a necessary trait of urbanity. The art of writing is the most important element which distinguishes a

⁴. Ibid., p.9.
⁵. V. Gordon Childe, Piecing together the Past, p.17.
civilized urban group from its relatively barbaric society. Childe emphasises on technology as the moving force behind the urban revolution. The thousand years or so immediately preceding 3000 B.C, was perhaps more fruitful in inventions and discoveries than any period of human history. Its achievements made possible for economic re-organization of society which is called the 'Urban Revolution'. The most important invention was the copper bronze metallurgy, the first approximation to international science. It combined with other inventions and discoveries ruined the comparative self-sufficiency of the earlier peasant communities and paved the way for a new settlement pattern which manifested itself in the form of the city. Adam who is of the same opinion, pointed out that metallurgy came to be affectively developed only in early dynastic Mesopotamia when the cities were already a normal feature of its society.

The introduction of metallurgy had a consequence which has been noted by Margaret A. Murray, among others. She points out that the users of metal arms had military superiority over the users of crude stone weapons. Neolithic Peasants who did not know how to make weapons from

6. Ibid., p.23.


8. Margaret A. Murray, The Splendour That was Egypt, p.4.
copper, bronze, or iron, were easy prey to invaders armed with metal weapons. The invaders then moved in to the territory of the peasants, who become their serfs. The overlords, to secure their rule, selected settlement places, it is postulated that the first cities were Originated in the metal age.\footnote{Niles Carpenter, \textit{The Sociology of City Life}, pp. 2 ff.}

On the other hand, some scholars hold that the first cities were primitive villages that gradually grew in to urban centres.\footnote{L.F. Thomas, \textit{The City}, p.19.}

Ghosh, however, says that in the early historical periods, there was no large scale drift to the city. The vast population continued to be rural, and nothing altered the predominantly rural character of the land. His only criteria for calling a period urban, is the large scale rural urban migration."\footnote{A. Ghosh, \textit{City in Early Historical India}, pp.7-10.}

Ghosh, while dealing with ancient urbanisation, tries to impose the features of a modern urban society because in no pre-industrial era was there any large scale drift to the city. In the ancient context society was predominantly rural, and the rural element was quite strong even within the city.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 15 - 18.} Mumford has clearly shown that even the Greek Cities of the fifth-fourth centuries B.C., were quite close to the rural way.\footnote{Lewis Mumford, \textit{Culture of Cities}, p.3.}
urbanism of the pre-industrial era was fully dominated by the rural spirit. Max Weber is too explicit on this point to remark that the urbanite of antiquity was semi peasant.\textsuperscript{14}

The beginning of urbanisation in India goes back to 2350 B.C., to the Indus valley region.\textsuperscript{15} Prior to this settlement, there is sufficient archaeological evidence of palaeolithic and neolithic settlements in North, Central and South India and in the border areas of Baluchistan and Afghanistan. In all these areas there is clear evidence of the practice of agriculture and the domestication of animals. Another evidence is the wheel made pottery and painted ware of great artistic beauty and variety of tools used by the people of these areas. It is at this stage that the cultural and technological developments and the larger village settlements showed distinct urban attributes, thus ushering in an era of urbanisation.\textsuperscript{16}

The origin of the earliest cities is based on archaeological evidences, obtained from different excavation sites of the early settlements. From the archaeological evidences we can form certain idea and understanding of the physical aspects of city developments such as, the extent

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{14} Max Weber, \textit{The City}, p.7.
\item \textsuperscript{15} R. Ramachandran, \textit{Urbanisation and urban system in India}, p.24.
\item \textsuperscript{16} Ibid., p.25.
\end{itemize}
of the cities, the system of town planning and the types of materials used in the construction of the building. We have also concrete evidence of pottery showing variations in the technique of its production, and of tools made of stone and metals and of articles such as clothing, food grains and the various types of domesticated animals. There are some skeletal remains of human bodies at excavated sites from which we can guess their racial origins. However, there is no literary evidence in the support of the origin of the earliest cities.

Earlier archaeological studies, mainly by Western scholars, emphatically point out that the central idea of the urban way of life came to the Indus valley from Mesopotamia, possibly by the migration of people. The salient features of the civilization in Mesopotamia and in the Harappan cities are the same, these include the location of the urban settlements on the banks of the rivers, the practice of agriculture, the use of wheel-turned pottery, and so on. Besides that the Indus valley was not far from Mesopotamia where the cities existed more than a thousand years before the Harappan cities. Interaction between these two cities, at least in the later stages of the Harappan civilization, is indicated by the presence of the Harappan seals in Sumerian cities and Sumerian seals in the port city of Lothal, a Harappan city. The shapes and artistic expressions on pottery and other objects on the Harappan civilization are distinctly indigenous. Coins and weights used by the
people of both the cities are entirely new and are of different designs. No doubt, the city way of life can not be transplanted, but at least it can be guess that the people of Mesopotamia migrated to the Indus valley.\textsuperscript{17}

Indian urbanism has essentially been shaped by three civilizations: the Hindu during the early period, the Muslim during the medieval period and the Christian during the modern period.\textsuperscript{18} Without a simplification of the time periods of analysis it is difficult, to describe the history of Indian urbanisation. For the sake of convenience the urban history of India has been divided into certain periods such as, the pre-historic period (2350 to 1800 B.C.), the early historical period (600 B.C. to A.D. 500) and the medieval period (A.D. 600 to 1800).\textsuperscript{19}

India’s urbanism has attracted the attention of many scholars including Maxweber, Arnold Toynbee, Patril Geddes, Milton Singer and Percival Spear. Max Weber has offered a comparative historical account of the cities in the Indian context.\textsuperscript{20}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{17} Ibid., p.27.
\item \textsuperscript{18} M.S.A. Rao, op.cit., p.15.
\item \textsuperscript{19} R. Ramachandran, op. cit., p.24.
\item \textsuperscript{20} Max Weber, op. cit., pp.88-104.
\end{itemize}
The history of India's urbanisation dates back to the Indus valley civilisation. Before the advent of the British a number of cities existed in India. These pre-British cities could be classified into four types, namely, the religious, capital, educational and commercial cities. Banaras, Prayāga (Allahabad) etc., were great religious cities. Pātaliputra (Patna), Ayodhya, Dwārakā, Agrā, Delhī, Kanauj, Lahore, Vijayanagar, Kānchipuram, Madurāi and Mysore were great capital cities. Nālandā, Taxila and Vikramsīlā were great University centres. Cālicut and Cāmbay were flourishing port cities. At that time many capital and port cities were famous as trade centres. The rise and fall of capital cities were dependent on the rise and fall of dynasties.21 Obviously, the urban Centre comes into being within a rural setting. The rise of towns has been described as a revolution in human history and the starting point of the civilization. In many cases it has been seen that the Indian town is an extension of the village carrying over the same social unities and attitudes; the peasant urbanites being no new feature in Indian history.

In the evolution of society and civilization the role of the town can be understood in its proper perspective. According to Lewis Mumford;22

"The city, as one finds it in history, is the point of maximum concentration for the power and culture of a community. It is the place where

22. Lewis Mumford, op. cit., p.3.
the rays of the many separate beams of light fall into focus, with gains in both social effectiveness and significance. The city is the form and symbol of an integrated social relationship; it is the seat of the temple, the market, the hall of justice, and the academy of learning. Here, in the city, the goods of civilization are multiplied and manifolded; here is where the human experience is transformed into visible signs, symbols, patterns of conduct, systems of order. Here is where the issues of civilization are focussed."

In India and elsewhere, there is a considerable amount of literature available on towns which may be called 'biographical' i.e., the biography of town. In Indian urban literature, there is a considerable literature of this nature on different towns, particularly old historical centres. The earliest probably, is Sir Syed Ahmad's classic work on Delhi and Mohammed Latif's work on Agra and Lahore. In Indian languages there are similar studies: Four Gujrathi - on Ahmedabad, Surat, Kambhat and Bharuch are available. There are also other most Gazetteers volumes containing such histories - the District Gazetteer in detail, the Imperial Gazetteer in brief.

Urban studies in India is growing rapidly in all social sciences. The economists undertake detailed surveys of growing towns, the sociologists

study neighbourhoods, rural urbanites, urban elite, and for political scientists, the interest is on study of government as a whole, with town as a base. Primarily, studies in urban history may have to take urbanisation in general and urban centres in particular. Such studies would illuminate first, the nature of the towns in an area, their institutions and the socio-psychological make up. Definitely, the studies of urbanisation would significantly improve our understanding of ancient Indian economy, society and culture.

In this chapter it is essential to show the difference between the types of urbanism flourished in Bronze age culture of Harappa and in the middle Ganga plains. One important difference, we can find, is geographical or ecological. The Harappan area is an arid, or semi-arid zone without much rainfall whereas the Gangetic area had heavy rainfall. Urbanism started in Harappa during Bronze age, and in the Ganga plains in the iron age.\textsuperscript{24} Because Iron tools appeared for the first time on a large scale, and these were used for supporting the rulers, priests, craftsmen, artisans, army men, etc. living in the town.

Another important difference is the use of money. In India, so far as the actual coins are concerned, they are not earlier than 500 B.C.\textsuperscript{25}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{24} R.S. Sharma, op. cit., p.10.
\item \textsuperscript{25} Ibid., p.11.
\end{itemize}
Coins are an indication of different types of economic activities. Coins led to many changes in the economic life of the people. It is a very convenient mode of exchange. It is very easy to transport coins from one place to another. In the middle Ganga plans coins became associated with the towns on a considerable scale.

Another difference between Harappan urbanism and that of the middle Ganga plains is duration. The Harappan urbanism lasted shorter than urbanism in the middle Ganga plains. Once Harappan urbanism disappeared there was no urbanism for more than a thousand years. Once town planning disappeared, the use of bricks also disappeared because we do not find any burnt bricks in other parts of the country till the times of the Mauryas, that is around 300 B.C. But the urbanism which developed in the middle Ganga area around 500 B.C. never completely disappeared. It lasted much longer.

While there has been no obvious cultural link between Harappan cities and the contemporary ones, there is some continuity between the Indo-Aryan cities and the present day cites. The Vāstusāstra has mentioned the science of town planning and several kinds of towns. A nagara was an ordinary fortified town where inland trade was organised. Pattana was a large

26. Ibid., p.11.

27. B.B. Dutt, Town Planning in Ancient India, pp., 272-85.
commercial port town situated on the bank of a river or sea. *Dronamukha* was a market town lying on the delta of a river or sea shore. *Kheta* was a small walled town situated on the plain near a river or a forest lying in the midst of villages and having facilities of communication. *Kharavata* was similar to *Kheta* but was an inland town lying in the midst of about 200 villages. *Nigama* was also a market town but mainly consisting of artisan. It was also a resting place for traders and caravans. It is seen that different kinds of towns were organised for both inland and marine trade and commerce. The royal capital, *rājadhāni*, was another distinct type of town which was elaborately planned. *Durga* was another type of fortified town. It was both a seat of chiefs and kings and a military town.

Another type of town was organised centering educational institution. The university town, called *Vihāra*, consisted of students and teachers. A classic example of a university town was Nālandā which developed during the reign of Harshavardhan. It was a centre of Buddhist learning and educational activities. The city had a large campus with lecture halls and residential quarters. Another educational town was Taxila (now in Pakistan). It combined various other political and commercial interest. Another type of town was temple town. Some temple towns, such as Srirangam, Tirupathi, Kasi and Puri were the centre of diverse cultural

activities. Besides temple towns, there were sacred cities which attracted pilgrims from different parts, of the country. The former included Gayā, Nāsik, Ujjain, Pushkara and Mathura.29

The other most important type of city was the capital city. According to Megasthenes the Greek Traveller, Pataliputra was the greatest capital city in India during the Mauryan period. The total area of the city was 20 square miles. It remained the capital and metropolis about a century and it was also a great centre of learning. Ujjain was also considered a religious centre and capital of the sakas. It was also an emporium of trade, exporting precious and semiprecious stones to the western world. In south India, Kanchipuram was the capital of the Pallavas and Cholas. It was also a seat of literary and artistic developments. Madurā was the capital of the Pāndyas. The city was a great centre of trade and commerce.30

The urbanisation started in ancient India from the Indus valley civilization. The two most important cities of this civilization were Mohenjodaro and Harappa. Both the cities, showed remarkable similarities in their urban morphology.31 Each city was located on the bank of a navigable

29. Ibid., p.56.
river- Mohenjodaro on the bank of river Indus and Harappa on the river Ravi. These two cities represented the climax of urban development in the first phase. Both these cities are now in Pakistan. Besides these two cities there were however, other cities in the region. These cities were smaller and perhaps functioned, not as capital cities, but as regional centres. Lothal, the third major city of this period located near a distributary of the Sabarmati river, was actually a sea port. Through Lothal, the Harappan established their trade links with the outside world, particularly with the Mesopotamian cities. The city was also a centre of industry, as indicated by the presence of different items at the excavation site, like ivory objects, cotton goods and a good number of war materials. The city was partly destroyed by floods in about 2000 B.C. after which it lost its importance. A major flood around 1900 B.C. resulted in its final destruction. The structure of Lothal is similar to the other two cities, Harappa and Mohenjodaro.

Other Harappan cities and towns were located at Kalibangan in Rajasthan, Banwalli in Haryana, Surkotada in Kachchh and Rangpur and Rojdi in the Kathiawad peninsula respectively. These small cities were in a flourishing condition. Though Harappan cities had been deserted in about 2000 B.C., Kalibangan and Lothal appears to have survived until 1900 B.C.

33. R. Ramachandran, op. cit., p.31.
The Harappan culture was distinguished by its system of town planning. Harappa and Mohenjodaro each had its own citadel or acropolis, which was possibly occupied by the members of the ruling class. Below the citadel in each city lay a lower town containing brick houses, which were inhabited by the common people. The remarkable thing about the arrangement of the houses in the cities was that they followed the grid system. The roads cut across one another almost at right angles and the city was divided into so many blocks. The most important public place of Mohenjodaro seems to be the Great Bath, comprising the tank. It is an example of beautiful brick work.\textsuperscript{35} The use of burnt bricks in the Harappan cities is remarkable. But the city of Lothal consisted of two parts - the western part containing the major palatial buildings housing the ruling class and on the other side the lower town with a market centre and industrial sector and residential area. There was a large dock yard in the eastern part, connected by an artificial channel to the river.\textsuperscript{36}

The total picture and scale of urbanisation in the Harappan civilization is yet to emerge as newer sites are discovered and investigations made. The Harappan areas consisted of a few large cities, a number of smaller


\textsuperscript{36} S.R. Rao, op. cit., pp. 24-36.
towns and a large number of rural villages. The archaeological evidences clearly define the relations between the urban centres and the villages. It is clear from the excavated evidence that the villages were mainly concerned with agriculture, although a few industries such as pottery-making and textiles for ordinary wear were also existed. On the other hand, the city produced a variety of goods, both luxury items such as jewellery, quality clothing artistic ware, and articles of everyday use. So the cities were most important centres of production of goods as in the villages. The villages and the cities shared a common culture in terms of language, religion, customs and beliefs. The city also provided the leadership at the cultural, political and economic levels. The Harappan culture has all the attributes of a fully developed urban society supported by rural villages around the larger urban centres.

Recent works throw significant light on the nature of the material culture of the Harappan civilization. The excavations in Haryana, Rajasthan and Gujrat have revealed that the urban culture of Harappan town was of composite character. The layout of the settlements, brick architecture, standardized bricks, pottery, seals, script, weights and measures, all dominating the life of the Harappan people. Advanced craft specialization and long distance trade were the characteristic features of the Harappan economy.

The emergence of the earliest cities generated a little tradition, based on common beliefs and mythology, which united rural and urban society.\textsuperscript{39}

Throughout the period of the existence of Harappan culture it seems to have retained the same kind of tools, weapons and houses. The whole style of life appears in Harappa to be uniform. We notice the same town planning, the same seals, and the same terracotta works.

The carbon 14 dates from a large number of Harappan sites date the urban period between 2300 B.C. and 1750 B.C. Around 2000 B.C. the two important cities of the Harappan culture, Harappa and Mohenjodaro, disappeared,\textsuperscript{40} but the Harappan culture at other sites faded out gradually and continued in its degenerate phase in Gujrat, Rajasthan and Western Uttarpradesh. This clearly indicates that the Harappan civilization had a differential life span in different regions or zones.

It is as difficult to explain the origin of the Harappan culture as its end. Several pre-Harapan settlements have been found in Baluchistan and in Kalibangan in Rajasthan, but the connection between them and the mature

\textsuperscript{39} J.P. Joshi, "Exploration in kutch and excavation at Surkotoda and New light on Harappan migration", \textit{JOIB} vol. XXIII.

\textsuperscript{40} Suraj Bhan, "Emergence of urbanization and its decline in pre-historic period, A plea for Historical Approach", \textit{PIHC}. Vol.II, p.139.
Harappan culture is not clear, though the Harappan culture may have evolved out of these indigenous settlements. Nor do we have clear proof of outside influence on the Harappan cities. Contact with the Mesopotamian cities may have provided some stimulus to the development of Harapan culture. Although the Harappan culture was a Bronze Age culture they used bronze on a very limited scale, and largely continued to use stone implements. No contemporary culture spread over such a wide area as the Harappan culture did. The structures of Harappa and the area cover are the largest of their type in the Bronze Age. No urban complex of the Harappan magnitude has been discovered so far.41 While the ancient cultures of Mesopotamia continued to exist even after 1750 B.C., the Harappan culture disappeared at about that time.

The urban settlements of Harappa started to decline gradually. This decline may partly be explained by the growth of heavy population and the increasing pressure on the city's available land area. The progressive decline occurred over a period of two centuries, until ultimately the cities were abandoned for some reason which is still unknown to the historians. On the other hand we can say that the decline and eventual disappearance of the Harappan civilization and cities due to natural disaster or deliberate destruction by an invading army. Most Harappan cities were located on the

41. A. Ghosh, The Indus Civilization - Its origin, Authors, Extent and Chronology, pp.113-156.
banks of the river, either the river changed its course or heavy floods destroyed all these cities. Another view holds that the Harappan cities were destroyed due to the invasion of Aryans. Harappan agricultural technology was weak because the plough was not known and they used metals like copper and Bronze for tool making. It is quite possible that a general decline in the fertility of the land aggravated by frequent droughts destroyed the very base of the urban super structure which was totally dependent on agricultural surpluses.

An alternative view holds that the Harappan culture and cities were destroyed by an outside people, believed to be the early Aryans. In the Rigveda, there is an account of the destruction of many walled settlements, which the Aryans called Purs. The Harappan cities lacked defensive structures and easily fell to the invaders. These invasions probably began by 1800 B.C. Although the Rigvedic Aryans settled down mostly in the land of the seven rivers, in which the Harappan culture once flourished, but we have no evidence of any mass scale confrontation between the Harappan and the Aryans. The early Aryans, being essentially a rural folk, they made no efforts to revive the Harappan cities.

Whether the Harappan culture was ultimately destroyed by nature or by man, it undoubtedly came to an end by about 1800 B.C. The

42. D.P. Agrawal, The Archaeology of India, pp.188-192.
Harappan culture was distinguished by its system of town planning. It was so highly developed as to be the envy of even modern day town planners, never again reappeared in the Indian subcontinent. Really it is unfortunate that the successors to the Harappan culture did not take any step to carry forward the levels of perfection in town-planning attained by the Harappans.

After the end of the great Harappan culture and cities, no urban development took place in any part of India. But around 600 B.C. the second phase of urbanisation began in India. The main architecture of this phase were the Aryans. Originally the Aryans seem to have lived some where in the area east of the Alps, in the region known as Eurasia. On their way to India the Aryans first appeared in Iran, where the Indo-Iranians lived for a long time. We known about the Aryans from the Rigveda, which is the earliest veda of Aryans. We do not find clear and definite archaeological traces regarding the advent of Aryan in India. Possibly they used socketed axes, bronze dirks and swords which have been discovered in north-western India. From this little evidence we can guess that the earliest Aryans lived in the geographical area covered by Eastern Afghanistan, Punjab and Western Uttar Pradesh. The whole region in which the Aryans first settled in India is called the land of the seven rivers. The Aryans came to India in several waves. The earliest wave is represented by the Rigvedic people, who appeared in the sub-continent in about 1500 B.C.

From 1000 B.C. to 600 B.C. is known as later vedic period. The history of the later vedic period is based mainly on the vedic texts which were compiled after the age of the *Rigveda*. All these later vedic texts (*Samaveda Samhitā*, *Yajurveda Samhitā*, and the *Atharvaveda Samhitā*) were compiled in the upper Gangetic basin in around 1000 to 600 B.C. In the same period and in the same area, digging and exploration have brought to light nearly 500 sites inhabited for the first time. These are called Painted Grey Ware (PGW) sites because they were inhabited by people who used earthen bowls and dishes made of painted grey pottery. They also used iron weapons. With the combined evidence from the later vedic texts and PGW iron phase archaeology we can form an idea of the life of the people.

The later Vedic texts show that the Aryans expanded from Punjab and over the whole of Western Uttar Pradesh covered by the Ganga-Yamuna doab. The *Bharatas* and *Purus*, two major tribes, combined and thus formed the *Kuru* people. Soon they occupied Delhi and their area called Kuruksetra. They established their kingdom and they set up their capital at Hastinapur situated in the district of Meerut. Excavations at Hastinapur, datable to the period 900 B.C. to 500 B.C. have revealed settlements and

44. R.S. Sharma, "Later vedic phase and the painted Grey Ware," *Puratattva*, no.8, p.64.

45. N. Ray, "Technology and Social Change in Early Indian History - A Note posing a Theoretical Question", *Puratattva*, no.8, pp.132-38.
beginnings of town life.\textsuperscript{46} Towards the end of the later Vedic period, around 600 B.C. the Vedic people spread from the doab to other regions of India. The Vedic people succeeded in the second phase of their expansion because they used iron weapons and horse-drawn chariots.

Although very few agricultural tools made of iron have been found, there is no doubt that agriculture was the chief means of livelihood of the later Vedic people. Agriculture and various crafts enabled the later Vedic people to lead a settled life.\textsuperscript{47} Excavations and explorations give us some idea about settlements in later Vedic times. In the later Vedic period peasants could not contribute much to the rise of towns. Although the term \textit{nagara} is used in later Vedic texts, we can trace only the faint beginning of towns towards the end of the later Vedic period. Hastināpura and Kausambi (near Allahabad) can be regarded as primitive towns belonging to the end of the Vedic period. They may be called proto urban sites. On the whole the later Vedic phase registered a great advance in the material life of the people. Iron played a vital role in the life of Aryan People. As a result they could settle themselves in other parts of India. By 600 B.C. a number of settlements were established in the different parts of India. That could help for rapid urbanisation in India.

\textsuperscript{46} B.B. Lal, "Excavations at Hastinapur", \textit{AI} no. 10-11 and "Painted Grey ware culture," Ch.XVIII.

The second phase of urbanisation began in India by the Aryans in the North and the Dravidians in the south. These parallel and independent urban developments in the north and in the south culturally interlinked by large scale migration of Aryan people to southern India, particularly the Brahmans, Jaina and Buddhist monks. These migration initiated a process of Sanskritization of Dravidian south, resulting in the emergence of a composite culture. Thus the cities of the North and the South were intimately tied to each other through cultural and economic interaction. The second phase of urbanisation is in many ways more important, because from this time on wards, urbanisation became a permanent feature of the Indian landscape. The oldest existing cities in India like Vārāṇāsī, and Patana (pataliputra) in the north and Madurai and Kanchipuram in the south, are symbolic of India's long urban heritage.

The early historic urbanism reached its peak in this country between 200 B.C and about A.D 300. Between 200 B.C and A.D. 300 near about 130 excavated sites of the period have come into notice from the different parts of India. These sites were prosperous in term of artefact, coins and structures.

We can divide the second phase of urbanisation in north India into three parts consisting of the post-Vedic period, the Mauryan period, and

the post-Mauryan period. These periods indicates the origin, climax and decline. In southern India, urbanisation Originated and rose to great heights during the Sangam Age.49

The Rigveda is the oldest of our great religious texts and it belongs to the pre-urban phase of Aryan culture. The Rigveda is followed by a number of vedic texts like Dharmasāstras and Dharmasūtras belonging to the period 600 to 300 B.C., where in references are made to the growth of urban places. The Arthaśāstra of Kauṭilya provides ample evidence regarding the rise and development of urban centres during the pre-Mauryan and Mauryan period. The great epics, the Rāmāyan of Valmiki and the Mahābhārata of Vyassamuni, and the Kāmasutra of Vatsayana, Mahābhāsyā of Patanjali, Manusmṛiti and the Puranas provide detailed information of urbanisation during the post-mauryan phase. Archaeological evidence in support of the existence of early Aryan cities is not altogether lacking. Nevertheless there are no spectacular remains of ancient cities comparable to the Harappan cities. Besides these the travel accounts of Fa-hsien and Meghasthense and the archaeological excavations provide for more convincing evidence of urbanisation during the period. The period also witnessed the introduction of aspects of Greek architecture and scientific knowledge in India’s urban landscape, brought about by Alexander’s invasion in 326 B.C.

49. K.P. Velayudhan, "The Role of Merchant guilds in the urbanization of South India", PIHC, p.203.
There are a number of evidences related to the urbanisation in south India. Number of literary evidence exists in the Tamil language. The earliest phase of Tamil literature is known as the Sangam literature. This phase of Tamil literature includes the Tolkappiam, a grammatical work, the epics of Silappadikaram, Manimekhalai, the philosophical work of Tirukkuiral and a number of other works. All these texts together provide a picture of the emergence of early Tamil Kingdoms and of urban centres.

The pre-urban phase of Aryan occupation of northern India is well documented in the so called painted Grey Ware culture described by archaeologists. During the post vedic period the centres of the Aryan home land had shifted to the upper Yamuna and Ganga basins. In the meantime they established small territories which led to the emergence of kingdoms and capital cities. The earliest cites of this period were Hastinapura, Śrāvasthi, Kapilavastu, Ujjain, Mahismati, Champā, Rajgir, Ayodhya Vārānasi and Kausambi. The location of most of these cities is supported by archaeological evidence in addition to the literary evidence.

The emergence of cities in the Post-vedic period is also important. The Aryans were essentially the iron age people but the use of iron

50. Romila Thapar, Ancient Indian Social History, pp.43-44.
51. R. Rama Chandran, op.cit., p.36.
was completely unknown to Harappan people. Iron tools were the most important component of the Aryans. The use of iron was important in many ways for setting the stage for urbanisation.\textsuperscript{52} It contributed to the increased mobility of the population and helped trade and commerce, a basic economic factor leading to urbanisation.

From the sixth century B.C. the widespread use of iron in eastern Uttar Pradesh and Western Bihar facilitated the formation of large territorial states.\textsuperscript{53} During this period the smaller \textit{Janapadas} gave way to the \textit{Mahajanapadas} which gave rise to the Magadhan empire. The \textit{Janapadas} were Magadha, Kośala, Vatsa, Avanti, Vajjis, Kāsī, Malla, Panchala, Chedi, Kāmboja, Gāndhāra, and Kuru. The growth of Janapdas and empires encouraged urbanisation. The cities increased in number size and the complexity of their internal structure and functions.

During the Mauryan period the complexity of urbanisation is indicated by the presence of different types of towns.\textsuperscript{54} From Buddhist texts we get some references of different types of cities. The more important categories of towns were: \textit{Rajadhaniyanagar, Sthaniyanagara, Kharvata,}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{52} V.K. Thakur, \textit{Urbanisation in Ancient India}, pp.1-21.
  \item \textsuperscript{53} R.C. Majumdar, \textit{Ancient India}, pp. 95-96.
  \item \textsuperscript{54} B.B. Dutt, op. cit., pp. 272-85.
\end{itemize}
Kheta, Putabhedana, Nigama, Patana & Dronamukha. The first four types are administrative towns. The last four types refer to commercial cities. In addition, there were cities of a permanent character specialized centres of learning and religion, arts and crafts and medicine. The well known educational cities of Takṣaśīlā, and Nalanda, however, belong to the post-Mauryan period.

The internal structure of the cities of this period resembled the early Aryan villages. They were all walled cities, rectangular or square, with four gates, one in the centre of each side. In the city were the king’s palace, the council hall, the royal store-house, sports field, residence of ordinary and business people, and market places. *Arthaśāstra* of Kautilya mentions details about the internal structure of capital cities. According to Kautilya’s description, a capital city should have three royal highways in the east-west direction and three in the north-south direction, dividing the city into number of sectors. The city’s internal structure had acquired great variety and complexity. The city showed distinct levels of segregation in terms of occupations. Brahmanas, Kṣhatriyas, and Vaisyas lived in separate sectors in the city. There was a particular sector for industrial area of the city. Arthasastra also gives details regarding the urban administration during the Mauryan period. The city was under charge of a *nagaraka* or Mayor, just as the village was under the charge of the village headman or Mukhya. The
Mauryan city was also a centre of the manufacturing industry. In addition, the city was surrounded by craft villages. Within the city itself, there was a great variety of crafts and industries. It has been mentioned that about sixty-odd industries were in a flourishing condition in the Mauryan cities.

Most towns flourished in the Kusana period in the first and the second centuries A.D. This may be said on the basis of excavations. Excavations show that several sites in Bihar such as Chirand, Sonepur and Buxar witnessed prosperous Kusana Phases. In Uttar pradesh Sohgaura, Bhita, Kauśāmbi and several sites in the district of Meerut and Muzaffarnagar were in a thriving state in Kuśāna times. In Jullunder, Ludhiana and Ropar, all lying in Punjab, several sites show good Kuśāna structures. On the whole, the materials remaining ascribable to the Kuśāna phase display urbanisation at its peak. Town prospered in the Kuśāna period because they carried on thriving trade with the Roman empire. Most Kuśāna towns in India lay exactly on the north-western or Uttarāpatha route passing from Mathurā to Taksāśīlā. Its end in the third century, A.D. was a great blow to

57. IAR, 1974-75, p.47.
these towns. With the ban on trade with India imposed by the Roman empire from the third century A.D. towns could not support the artisans and merchants who lived there.

Around 5th century A.D. cities and the urban way of life, began to decline. This is described by Fa-hsian and Hsuan-Tsang who visited India during the periods A.D. 405-11 and A.D. 630-44 respectively. The accounts of these foreign travellers and archaeological evidence state the urban centres and its decline. The literary accounts described the utter ruin and abandonment of a number of well-known cities of the earlier period. Takṣaśāla, Mathura, Śrāvasthī, Kauśāmbī and Pātaliputra were in a state of decline during this period.59

The reasons for the decline of urban centres in the post-mauryan period are many and varied. The frequent recurrence of natural calamities such as faminies, pestilence and earthquakes took a heavy toll of urban population. The political factor was also responsible for the decline of urban centres. Foreign invasions, particularly Ḥunas, destroyed many Buddhist centres in the north western India and so in the Ganga plains caused the decline of urban centres. In addition to the foreign invaders, the internal wars between feudal chiefs also contributed to the destructions of urban centres.

Many cities in the Mauryan period had emerged directly due to the rise of Buddhism, and with the decline of Buddhism in the post-mauryan period, the urban centres also lost their former importance. However, by the close of the 5th century A.D. the trade with Roman empire was stopped on account of the downfall of the Roman empire. It was also another cause for the decline of port-towns and urban centres. For the above reasons the urban centres declined during the post-mauryan period. However, from 600 A.D onwards there was a rapid revival of some old towns and the emergence of new ones.

The second phase of Indian urbanisation has largely been confined to the North. However, during this period in the extreme southern part of India, which comprises the two states of Tamilnadu and Kerala, witnessed an independent process of urbanisation resulting in the emergence of a number of trade centres and towns. The first phase of urbanisation in India, namely Harappan phase, had resulted in the establishment of urban centres in far south at the mouth of the rivers Narmadā and Tāpti and in the Malwa plateau. There is archaeological evidence of the spread of Harappan culture into south. The origin of dravidian phase of urbanisation may be traced in about 5th century B.C. Unlike the Aryan phase of urbanisation, the origin of the Drāvidian phase are not fully understood. The earliest human settlements in South India, from archaeological evidence, date back to 2300-

60. K. Pillai, *The Tamils Eighteen Hundred Years ago*, pp.148-152.
1800 B.C. These settlements were located on the tops of the hills and on hill slopes. Between 1800 and 1500 B.C. the rural settlements show further advancement with the use of metals and wheel-turned pottery. A large number of sites belonging to the period (1400-1050 B.C) have been excavated in the states of Tamilnadu and Karnataka indicating the emergence of urban centres.

From the early chalcolithic settlements, it is clear that Dravidian culture developed with Tamil as the spoken language. The Dravidian culture attained a very high level of urbanisation due to the large number of classical works in Tamil language in what is known as Sangam literature. The other Dravidian language such as Kannada, Telgu and Malayalam, originated in the later period. The early Tamil literature of the Sangam period contributed a number of works to grammar, poetry, epics, philosophy and culture. The most important earliest work, Tolkappiam have been written only in an urban context. The two major Tamil epics, namely, Silppadikaram and manimekhalai deal with the urban societies in the Pandyas and Chera Kingdoms. Thus the classical Tamil literature provides sufficient evidence of an independent urban civilization in the south India. The important Tamil cities of the early period were Madurai, Vengi, Uräyur, Puhär, and Korkai which served as the capital cities of the Tamil Kingdoms of the Pandyas,
Cholas and Cheras. These kingdoms were situated on the south of the Kṛṣṇa river. The Greek ambassador Megasthenes at the court of Mauryan king mentions that the Southern cities of Madurai and Kancheepuram were in a flourishing condition during the 4th century B.C. Kautilya in his Arthśāstra refers to the trade between the Mauryan empire and the cities of Madurai and Kancheepuram in the 3rd Century B.C.

From the early times the Tamil kingdom was divided into four Mandalams equivalent to the Mahajājanapadas of the North in the 6th century B.C. The Mandalams were further subdivided into smaller territorial units called nādus and Kottams. These unit served as the small towns. Besides the towns, there were capital cities and a number of port cities. The building of the city were made of bricks and tiles cemented by mortar. The major cities of the period were Puhār, the coastal capital of Chola as well as one of the important ports, Urāiyur, the Chola inland capital, Korkai, the Pāṇḍya coastal capital, Madurai, the Pāṇḍya inland capital, Musiri, the Chera port and Vengi, the Chera inland capital. Kanchi, was the inland capital of the Tondaimandalam.

Towns thrived in the Sātavāhana kingdom. The most important of the native successors of the Mauryas in the Deccan and in central India were the Sātvāhanas. The Sātvāhanas are considered to be identical with the Andhras who are mentioned in the Purānas. According to some Purānas the Andhras, ruled for 300 years and this period is assigned to the rule of the Satavahana dynasty. Through contacts with the north the people of the Deccan, learnt the use of coins, burnt bricks, etc. The elements of material life had become quite important in north India by 300 B.C. Towns appeared in Maharashtra by the first century B.C. Towns emerged in the eastern deccan a century later. Pliny informs us that the Andhra country in the eastern Deccan included 30 walled towns, besides numerous villages. Several towns of the second and third century in this area are known from inscription and excavations.64 Increasing trade is indicated by numerous Roman and Sātavāhana coins.65 They appeared about a century later in the eastern Deccan, in the Godavari-Kṛṣṇa area.

Tagar (Ter), Paithān, Amarāvati, Nāgārjunakonḍā, Broach, Sopara, Arikamedu, Kaveripattanam were prosperous towns66 in the Sātavāhana period in western and south India. Several sātavāhana settlements,

64. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, A History of South India, pp.30-72.
some of which may be identical with the thirty walled towns of Andhras mentioned by Pliny have been excavated in Telengana. They had originated much earlier than towns in the coastal Andhra, although not much later than towns in Western Maharashtra. But the decline of towns in Maharashtra, Andhra and TamilNadu generally took place from the third century A.D. onwards.\textsuperscript{67} Towns prospered in the kuśāna and sātavāhana empires because they carried on thriving trade with the Roman empire. Towns in Punjab and Western Uttar Pradesh thrived because the centre of Kuśāna power lay in north-western India. With the ban on trade with India imposed by the Roman empire from the third century A.D. the decline of towns started. Archaeological excavations in the Deccan also suggest decline in the urban settlements after the Sātavāhana phase. In general south India, and particularly the Tamil country, shows remarkable continuity in urban traditions from the 5th century B.C. to the present. The earlier urban centres such as Uraiyur, Puhar and Korkai exist only in a ruin condition, whereas the towns like Madurai and Kānchipuram are now in a flourishing condition. One major factor contributing to this continuity is the near absence of foreign invasions which characterise the history of North India.

The decline of urban centres that began in the Gupta period (5th century A.D.) continued during the succeeding centuries in northern India,

\textsuperscript{67} K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, op. cit., pp.30-72.
which witnessed during this period the political disintegration. The decline of Buddhism gave rise to the revival of Hinduism. Sankaracharya of Kaladi contributed a lot to the revival of vedic religion; he travelled widely over the country and established four *Mathas* like Josimath in the Himalayan region, Puri in Orissa, Dwaraka in Gujrat, and Sringeri in Karnataka. These centres have emerged as urban and religious places. The decline of urban centres in the north was parallel by the emergence of powerful Hindukingdoms and urban centres in south India. Urbanisation in North India, on the other hand, further suffered due to the invasion of Muslims from the North-west. On the one hand urbanisation was in a declining condition in North India and in other there was rapid growth in the south.

In the later vedic period, two major centres of urbanisation were prominent—the northern centre located in the middle Ganga and Southern one in the Tamil country. But during the Mauryan period, urbanisation spread to the lower Ganga valley, Orissa, Gujrat and Maharashtra. Cities such as Nasik, Puri, Cuttack, Broach, Ujjain and Machilipatnam served as a link between northern and southern urban centres. A few towns are found in the coastal Orissa. Jaugada in Ganjam district is situated on the bank of the river Rishikulya. It is really known for a set of the fourteen Rock Edicts of

Asoka. The fortified site of Jaugarāda represents a full-fledged iron using culture. Besides a solitary punch marked coin, eleven Puri-kusana coins were found. It suggests an era of prosperity. But it did not last beyond the mid-fourth century A.D. Another town was Sisupālarh in Puri district lying close to Bhubaneswar. It possibly represents Tosalī of Asoka’s Dhauli edicts and Kalinganagar of Khăravelas Hātigumpha inscription. The fortified area enclosed a town, which existed between 200 B.C. and A.D. 350. Although urbanism lasted from 200 B.C. to A.D. 350, the Śisupālarh culture reached its climax in 200 B.C.-A.D. 100, when it was marked by sophisticated pottery. The coastal area of west Bengal shows a couple of towns in early historic times, but they also declined in Gupta and post-Gupta periods. Tamluk, identical with the ancient port town Tāmrālipīti, lies in Midnapur district. Chandraketugarh in 24 praganas district was an ancient port-town on the coast of the Bay of Bengal. Excavated

69. Ibid.
70. Ibid., pp.30-31.
72. AI no.9, pp.168-69.
73. AI, No.5, pp.68-72.
sites in Orissa and West Bengal show the beginnings of urbanisation around 200 B.C. and its end around A.D. 300.

Urbanisation had an impact on rural life in manifold ways. There was the migration of artisans and skilled craftsmen from villages to towns. There was also the migration of people from rural areas to urban centres to provide for the sanitary services, and labourers to work on construction in capital cities. The villages around the market town and ports had an impact in the nature of commercialization of crops and were thus drawn into the network of regional and even international markets. Villages supplied several consumer goods to towns and in turn received their daily needs. Thus towns and villages formed the part of civilizational process.

The rapid growth of urban centres in India is largely attributed to the merchants and merchant guilds. It should, however, be noted that in North India urbanization had commenced many centuries earlier than it did in the south. The reasons is to be seen in the different historical background and in the uneven character of the socio-economic development in the two parts of India. The maximum development of guilds in the North occurred before the 6th century after which we notice the decline of merchant guilds and urban centres. Parallel to the growth of rural agrarian settlements and the weakening of the state power. In the south, however, we find the maximum
development of trade guilds in our period after the 6th century. In south India urban development and feudal formation in policy and society occurred simultaneously. The activities of the merchant guilds were not confined to creation of towns and cities but on some cases they contributed a lot for the development of trade and commerce. Some records clearly state that the merchant guilds were the founders of certain towns and cities.

The peak in urbanism could be associated with the growing trade and commerce in different areas. This growing trade and commerce is linked with the use of coins, because coins are a convenient medium of exchange. With the advent of urban centres trade became the mainstream of economic life of India. The Indian society of the period was dominated by traders. These commercial people caused the first industrial revolution in India and after that India become an industrial and great exporting country. With the growth of commercial centres, trade began to assume certain fixed forms and passed through a stage of development in which production was earmarked for some definite market. Markets arose as a centre of commerce and industry where trade became a permanent feature.