CHAPTER VII

URBAN COMMUNITIES

Urbanization represents a unique kind of social development. It certainly differs from the rural set up in many aspects. The important features of urban society are absent in rural set up which is more rigid, conservative and not so large in size, consisting of the people of diverse interests. The people in the villages are mainly agriculturists (though a few crafts are also practised) but city is relatively large, dense and permanent settlement of socially heterogenous people. Despite these contrasts the city and the village may be regarded as the two poles in reference to one or the other of which all human settlements tend to arrange themselves.

Historically cities have been primarily depending on migration for their growth thus maintaining their size. The city has been called the melting pot of races, cultures, people and places more favourable for the breeding grounds of new biological and cultural hybrids. The migrants are of different kinds: those who migrate from rural places to urban, and others, who migrate from one city to other primarily for better avenues or some other reasons. The second kind of migrants participate in the urban activities more rapidly than the rural migrants who require more time to adjust themselves in an altogether new urban social system.

The urban society is comprised of diverse groups of people; also the urban life has a variety and the urban roles
are differentiated, this differentiation enhances the opportunities in different fields and make city a more interesting and complex entity. Whereas the rural society represents a cluster of families which have emotional bindings among themselves, and is essentially based on kinship, in contrast to urban society which is more of a residence where individual residents from different castes and classes have distinct functions, resulting in competition among them rather than of any other relationship.

The urban social set up is of more open kind and does not subscribe to conservatism and caste-based rigid society. During early medieval times the caste was not the only criterion for the choice of the profession in the society. Brāhmaṇas who were at the apex of society sometimes took to trade and agriculture which was mainly the profession of vaiśyas and sudras respectively. Similarly, vaiśyas took to agriculture other than trade. This is however not to suggest that there was no impact of caste division, which certainly had an important influence on urban society. There are references in the sources to vaiśyas and sudras forming the lowest strata of society engaged in petty industrial production, trade and agriculture. Similarly, a few crafts such as basket-weaving, garland-making, pottery-making, etc., were considered low which definitely make us aware that the social stratification in terms of profession also existed along with the traditional bindings of caste system. Such phenomenon was definitely a
hinderance to occupational mobility and also to the freedom of enterprise.\footnote{5}

The urban society differs from rural social set up not only on account of the commercial progress, technological advancement and political activity but socially it is more intricate, rational and of unique kind.

The Indian society in post-Gupta times was theoretically organised on the basis of *varnāśramadharma*.\footnote{6} There were four important castes: brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas and śūdras. These four castes were divided into many sub-castes. For instance *kāyasthas* grew out of the professional class of scribes who were appointed by the kings in courts for the documentation of the grants of lands which were donated by the rulers. To understand the very complex set up it is important to examine the various units through which urban society was organised. These units, their role in different socio-economic vistas, and their contribution to the process of urbanization has to be evaluated.

Different segments of urban society can broadly be classified under the following categories:

1. The king and the nobility;
2. Feudal lords;
3. Administrative personnel and feudatories;
4. Independent professionals:
   a. physicians,
   b. teachers,
   c. scribes, etc.
5. Merchants;
6. Artisans and craftsmen;
7. Temple priests and devadāsīs;
8. Prostitutes;
9. Public entertainers such as musicians, dancers and jugglers, etc;
10. Other groups of people following menial arts and crafts also constituted an important category of urban residents.

The king and the nobility formed the most important unit of urban social structure. They lived in big cities along with their officials. They enjoyed most of the privileges as urban residents. This class accelerated agrarian production in post-Gupta period by making free donations to the non-peasants in the arid areas; by improving the system of irrigation and introducing new agricultural techniques. This practice has been considered responsible for the feudalisation, regionalization and stagnation of urban economy. Recent studies on the subject suggest that the land grants acted as a thread of developmental unity and capable of harmonising the differences among the people and regions. It is further stated that these were a source of gain to the state, that is why, the system continued for so many centuries.

The ruling elites patronised different artistic activities and also founded new towns after their names. The kings had beautiful palaces to live in and their capital used to be adorned with beautiful houses of ministers, lakes, gardens,
The ruling elites had an enormous range of requirements. The inscription of A.D. 973 from the Shikar area of Rajasthan refers to many strings of pearls, gay steeds, fine garments, camphor, quantities of betel, first rate sandal wood and gold presented to king Vigrahārāja of Chāhamāna dynasty. Such gifts to kings suggest that expensive tastes ruled their life. The luxurious items required by the elites encouraged the production of betel-leaves, arecanuts, camphor, spices and good cotton cloth which were also exported to foreign countries.

The king was held in high esteem by the people. He has been compared with Viṣṇu and Rāma in many epigraphs. He managed the imperial administration with the assistance of numerous ministers. The administration of towns and cities was carried on by different committees in which merchants and artisans also participated, besides kings' representatives.

This class of urban residents was the greatest consumers of the surplus produced by the peasants and other artisanal groups. They were completely dependent on the class of producers, but they did regulate the system of production, encouraged more and more production and indirectly helped the producers, hence were not mere exploiters.

Feudal lords or sāmantas played most important role in the court and kingdom along with other state functionaries. The feudals were closely affiliated with the agricultural rural economy and worked as governors during the period. The king
granted them land in lieu of their services which was cultivated for the landlords by the peasants. In the initial stage the peasants could only produce for the landlord but gradually the continuous efforts of the lords increased the production of the cultivated tracts and surplus was then supplied to the markets, consequently which led to the rise of urban centres. The tracts granted to them were free of taxes specified in the land grants but the king and the state definitely had some share in the piece of land, and the state was also relieved of the burden of administering that area. ¹⁴

They were the greatest exploiters and consumers of the produce yet their continuous efforts and pressure on the peasants resulted in surplus production. They introduced new methods of irrigation and employed a great number of agricultural labourers for the cultivation of the tracts, which in turn, increased production.

They led very comfortable and luxurious life. Their ostentatious life and aristocratic tastes attracted them to different vices of urban life such as excessive drinking and prostitution. They developed "chivalrous and seigniorial virtues". ¹⁵ They were distinct from other people on account of their dress, code of honour and also in military skills. ¹⁶ The increased military and political influence of feudals sometimes posed serious threats to the ruling elites. ¹⁷

The officials in charge of different administrative portfolios formed another important group of urban residents.
These officials managed different affairs of the state and formed an important unit of urban population. These were closely attached to the courts of the kings, so that they could actively participate in administration of the empire. Sources do mention numerous officials affiliated with different departments such as rāshtrapati, dandapāsika, dandanāyaka, pratihāras, mahāpradhāna, adhikāris and sāndhīvighrāhika, etc. For the maintenance of peace and tranquility the kings and the lords maintained large armies (large garrisons of soldiers, cavalry and infantry) for the protection of the empire.

How did they contribute to urban society and on what resources did they subsist, is the major question? They played crucial role in the urban social formation by helping the king in extracting surplus from the rural folk and assisted the authorities in its distribution. The officials had other duties to perform in urban environs such as maintenance of law and order, to make an assessment of taxes from the urban communities and many other. These officials were ravenous consumers of the surplus produced in the rural areas. They were regularly paid by the king mainly in the form of land grants, and occasionally payments were made in cash.

The physicians, the teachers and the writers, as independent professionals, formed another category of urban residents. They carried on their business independently, and at times, also worked under the government. The physicians were given respect in the society and were considered as an
important constituent of urban and rural social set up. A special place was reserved for them in the city. It is further important to note a reference in an eleventh century text that the physicians should be distributed in all quarters of the town along with the army and police. They were employed in the hospitals and also ran their own private practices by opening shops of medicines in the cities.

The temples also had their own hospitals. Here the patients were treated by the physicians, who received regular remunerations from the temple authorities. A record of eleventh century from south Indian temple mentions a hospital having fifteen beds where the students and the temple servants were treated. This hospital was in charge of a physician who prescribed medicines to the patients. The same record further informs us that the physician was paid annually ninety kalam of paddy and eight kāsū for performing the duty. They were economically well off is evident from a fact that a physician founded a vihāra in Kashmir.

They had thorough knowledge of Āyurveda, and in one place, it is mentioned that they could cure even incurable diseases. The veterinary science was also well developed. A literary text Sālihotra of Bhoja describes the diseases of the horses and their cure in detail.

With the opening of new educational institutions and progress in the field of educational awareness, the teachers
role became very important. During the early medieval ages villages were gifted to learned brāhmaṇas known as agrahāra and brahmadeyas. Such settlements were centres of higher education where education was imparted to students in different branches of Sanskrit learning. An inscription of tenth century mentions an agrahāra village in Karnataka which was a great centre of education, where the knowledge of Vedas, logic, poetics and political science was also taught to the students.25 The Sanskrit language got ascendancy during the Gupta and post-Gupta period; perhaps, with the revival of brahmanism Sanskrit teaching became very popular. However, the Buddhistic education was also imparted to the students especially in monastic settlements.

The teachers used to be learned scholars, poets, students of politics and philosophers. These scholars were not merely to teach but they were authors of several treatises which are even now widely read.26 An inscription of eleventh century refers to a college at Ummachige in Karnataka where the teachers could teach several sciences and composed works on mathematics, astronomy, prosody, poetics and were well versed in grammar.27

This profession was considered sacred and held in high esteem. A record of Śaka 993 of king Someśvara II refers to capital city Annīgere, where the lease was granted to thirty persons. In the end of the grant an appeal was made to all the recipients that they should not violate the decisions and should not oppose the lease granted to the achāryas otherwise their lease
shall be annulled. It suggests that teachers' right were secure and both state and temples looked after them. They got regular remunerations in kind, however, earlier they had no fixed salaries. Many schools and colleges were managed by the temples especially in south India. They paid regular and fixed salaries to the teachers and thus fulfilled the important social needs.

The Tirumukkudal inscription of eleventh century mentions that teachers attached to Mahāvisṇu temple got one padakku of paddy per day, in addition to the allowance of four kāsūs every year. There were other teachers who were paid two padakku per day and an allowance of ten kāsūs per day in Ennāyiram temple college in south Arcot district. Numerous grants were endowed to these temple-colleges by kings for their maintenance and finance. The kings made grants to the educational institutions without caring for the control and policy of the institution. The educational centres of early medieval period attracted students from abroad, as these had well qualified staff members. In general, they led a simple and comfortable life. They were considered most noble and virtuous.

The scribes or kāvasthas formed another unit of urban population. Many of them attained their distinction as writers. They were appointed in the courts for engraving royal charters on the stone slabs and copper plates. Their services were always required by the kings and nobles, so were mostly urban residents. In the literary and epigraphic sources of northern India several
references to kāvasthas are found. The word lekhaka used for them in the sources does suggest that they were mainly writers and clerks. But this class produced warriors and scholars too. The Arthuna inscription of twelfth century mentions that grant was recorded by gāndhivigrāhika Yamana, who was a son of kāvastha. They are also mentioned as governors of the province. They controlled treasury, as the superintendents of finance.

They were expert in their profession. The demand for their services outside the provincial boundaries suggest that mobility among them was not uncommon. Many references to Gauda kāvasthas are found from different parts of northern India, which reflect their proficiency in the art of scribing.

A section of this class was rich, especially those who were appointed as ministers. The inscriptions of late twelfth and early thirteenth century refer to kāvasthas making donations for religious purposes. An epigraphic record of thirteenth century refers to a kāvastha donor who made donation for the Jain monastery. A literary text of eleventh century mentions a wife of kāvastha, who earlier lived a miserable life, but when her husband came to power, she led a life full of luxuries and behaved like a queen. The Rājatarāngini mentions that the kāvasthas on account of their wealth and power posed challenge to the kings, who took guidance from them and followed their directions. The kāvasthas developed into a caste in early
Some scholars have, however, doubted their existence as a separate community. A few others, however, considered them as a mixed caste which originated from the four varnas.

The merchants form the most important segment of urban society which sparks urban development. They play the role of intermediary between the producer and the consumer by making the surplus easily accessible to the common folk. The merchants carried on inter-state and inter-regional trade during this period.

The land grant economy has, however, been viewed as antithetical to trade and mercantile community during the post-Gupta period. Recent researches carried out in this field yield important information regarding the merchants, trade, guilds, and items of trade which reflect that the land grant economy did not check the mercantile activities completely. So it is, however, somewhat misleading to undermine the role of merchants in early medieval economy.

The merchants are referred to in the sources as vaniks, mahājanas, setti, sresthins and sārthavāhas. All the four varnas carried out business profession and vaiśyas were no exception. The sources indicate that wheat, barley, pulses, sugar, butter-oil, spices, betel-nuts and leaves, coconut, textiles, thread etc., were the main items bought and sold in the markets. The big cities had many shops, stalls and markets where
transactions were carried out. In some cases each market was specialized in a particular commodity.\textsuperscript{44} Anāhilwāra in Gujarat had eighty-four markets, each specialized in separate article and located separately.\textsuperscript{45} An epigraph of A.D. 905 from Kaman in Bharatpur refers to kambali-hatta or separate cattle market where cattle were bought and sold in addition to other markets.\textsuperscript{46} Separate markets existed for the manufactured goods also. The Arthunā record of A.D. 1080 refers to shops of braziers and distillers in the markets, in addition to the hattas where other items were sold.\textsuperscript{47} There were shops of clothiers, jewellers, perfumers and paddy-sellers in the cities; these were subject to some kind of taxation.\textsuperscript{48}

We come across several descriptions of bazars in the sources, which had commodities of every kinds in huge quantities. An epigraph of A.D. 1123 from Terdāl refers to town which was very beautiful on account of various shops of cloth dealers, corn dealers, milk sellers, new ornaments, heaps of jewels; interestingly the bazars of Terdāl on account of their riches appeared laughing at Kubera's wealth.\textsuperscript{49}

The merchants dealt in different kinds of commodities. A record of eleventh century mentions a cloth merchant who made donations to god Kadambēśvara.\textsuperscript{50} Similarly the inscription of Jayasiṁha II of Šaka 959 refers to thousand betel traders, subject to certain kind of taxation, and were to pay one visa on each load of betel leaves.\textsuperscript{51} Jewellers are referred to in many epigraphs who dealt in different kinds of ornaments.\textsuperscript{52}
In many other instances vaniks dealt in the commodities of daily use, such as vegetables, turmeric, sugar, paddy, arecanuts, etc.\(^{53}\) The Bijāpur inscription of Dhavala of Hastikunḍī A.D. 995 refers to wheat, mung, barley, salt and oil sold in the markets.\(^{54}\) The Kolhāpur inscription of A.D. 1136 refers to green and dry ginger, turmeric, garlic, black pepper, mustard salt, eighteen kinds of grains, dry and fresh fruits sold in the markets of Kolhāpur.\(^{55}\)

The merchants were rich but there also existed petty shop-keepers who led a simple life. The big merchants invested their capital in making donations to the temples and for the works of public utility. The epigraphic sources refer to many rich merchants who made various donations to the temples. The Somnath temple inscription mentions donations given by three merchants to the temple, which consisted of daily gifts of a karsha, i.e., about three-fourth a tola of ghee for the temple.\(^{56}\) The Bayana inscription of Chitralekhā of tenth century records a grant of three drāmmas to the Viṣṇu temple by the market place at Śrīpathā and another at Vasāvata.\(^{57}\) A record of twelfth century refers to the city of Erambarāpura which had host of vaiśyas who resembled Kubera in wealth.\(^{58}\) Another record of twelfth century from Mutgi refers to rich merchants Chaudi Setti and Mādhva Setti, two men of ceaseless and renowned bounty, treasures of exceedingly dignity and were renowned in the world.\(^{59}\) A Gadag inscription of Vikramāditya VI of eleventh century mentions the city of Lokkiguṇḍi, which resembled the ocean because of its merchants who were said to be equal to Varuṇa.\(^{60}\)
The mercantile class on account of their richness formed one of the important urban units, and so constituted the town committees. They were assigned different administrative tasks such as collection of market taxes which were usually in kind. A record of seventh-eighth century of king Prithvīchandra Bhogaśakti refers to merchants taking active part in the town council of Samagiriṃpattana, who were exempted from the payment of custom duties. Similarly, merchants participated in the administration of Gwalior, a fort town, by constituting a corporation during the ninth-tenth century. This class had corporate bodies among them and carried on profiteering trade with the help of guilds.

They used to exploit the society by their profit-making nature. The realistic portrait of merciless exploitation by the merchants is given by Kalhana who calls them as suckers of blood and flesh. They are mentioned by him as swindlers. They used to cheat people by using false weights and measures; they used to talk softly and rob the poor people. The richer class of merchants led a very comfortable life and enjoyed greater pleasures than even the class who lived in the royal palaces.

The phenomenal art activity and temple construction prove that a large number of artisans worked ceaselessly to complete colossal structures. It is clear that artisans were in great demand all over India. They are referred to in the sources as śilpin, sūtradhāra, sthapatī, takaśaka, sūtraçrāhin, karmikā, chitrakāra and rūpakāra. Other artisans such as
pitalahāras, rathakāras, potters, bamboo-workers worked both in the rural and urban areas. They played an important role in society by supplying the articles of daily use to the urban inhabitants. Their services were considered indispensable for both urban and rural residents. ⁷⁰

There were many small and skilful artists, who changed their respective designations as and when they gained new techniques and experience. An epigraphic record of twelfth century refers to an artist Palhana, who some seven years ago carved the Semra plates and called himself a pitalahāra or brass worker, five years later he called himself a silpin (an artist), and with two years further experience he developed into a viññānin (skilful artist). ⁷¹

Not much information is available about the organisation of the artisans in early medieval India. However, some scholars are of the view that they worked under the control of srenis or guilds. ⁷² The similarities in art activities and stylistic analysis of temples suggest collective art activity and mobility among the artisans. The temple styles and sculptural mouldings in Himachal Pradesh suggest influence of Rajasthan, Kashmir, Madhyadesa, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Bengal art traditions. ⁷³

In south India also the colossal temples and eloquent sculptures constructed in post-sixth century do not represent individualistic art traditions, nevertheless they are more of a collective artistic expression. ⁷⁴ The Deopara inscription of
king Vijayasena refers to the guild of *śilpis* of Varenḍra.\(^{75}\) Similarly the Chalukya inscription refers to a guild of artists who worked jointly and were well versed in the secrets of *śrī silemudde*.\(^{76}\)

The craftsmen were granted plots of lands to settle and carry on their artisanal activities. An inscription of Sovideva of A.D. 1172 mentions a gift of land to Samgoja who was an expert in art of building and was called *sūtradhārī*.\(^{77}\) Many of the artisans were employed by the temples and they received regular salaries in cash or kind to finish the commissioned tasks. An epigraphic record of eleventh century from south India suggests that skilled artisans were paid higher salaries than the ordinary ones.\(^{78}\) There used to be one master craftsmen assisted by other assistant craftsmen who were paid regularly by the temple authorities.\(^{79}\)

The architects and other artisans made donations to the temples, that is sufficient to show that skilled artisans were economically well off. An inscription of tenth century refers to *sūtradhāras* Jejapa, Visīka, Bhalvāka and other stone cutters who made donation of a one third of *vigrahapālādramma* to god Viṣṇu.\(^{80}\) All of them were not rich; however, there also existed some small artisanal groups who worked in the villages and small semi-urban areas. Such artisans got recognition only when they became highly skilled artisans and their services were in demand on a larger scale. However, the social status of the artisans remained almost unchanged in a traditional society.\(^{81}\)
Temple became the most significant unit of urban and rural area in post-Gupta period. Each town and a big village had one or more temples. These temples had their own officials and priests to look after the temple affairs. Each temple had a priest to perform various ritualistic duties in the temples. They discharged multifarious duties in the temples from the sweeping of the inner floors to participation in the actual worship. They recited holy scriptures too. The priests also assisted the ruling elite and actively participated in the rituals and ceremonies performed in the courts during the earlier periods. However, the Gupta inscriptions do not mention purohita in their sources, when otherwise there was predominance of brahmanas in the society. With the growth of regional monarchies the office of purohita became increasingly important. They helped the kings in carrying out certain duties but nowhere do we find them responsible for the de-urbanization.

The brahmanical religion enjoyed royal patronage in Gupta and post-Gupta times. Several brahmadesyas and devadāna holdings were created by the ruling elites. The brāhmaṇas and the temple-heads dominated these areas, but it is not correct to assume that the king was the tool in the hands of the temple heads and brāhmaṇas. Many of the ruling regional dynasties such as the Pālas and the Senas did not accord him any importance either in political affairs or in socio-political activities. The purohita office existed in the Mauryan times too, and he received regular remuneration from the state, however, the
Mauryan rule marked the second phase of urban activity in India. The Pratihāras of Kanauj did have a purohita who helped the king in performing various ritualistic ceremonies, and received remunerations for his duties.⁸⁵ Examining the political system and ritualistic role of the purohita, the dissociation of priests with urbanism, argued by some scholars, seems to have been unfounded.⁸⁶

**Devadāsīs** or the temple girls formed the most prominent feature of early medieval temples. It was very old institution in which the dancing girls were gifted to the temples by their parents to the service of the gods. Such practice was regarded as the normal establishment of the temples, which might have grown around the cult of the mother goddess.⁸⁷ In the beginning the temples had one or two devadāsīs in the service but gradually the number of these girls increased substantially. They were assigned other duties in addition to the entertainment of the pilgrims coming to the temples from far off places. These ladies attracted large number of pilgrims, thus remained a source of income to the temples and the kings.

The devadāsīs lived in the temple complexes and with the passage of time their profession became hereditary. Consequently, the daughters of the devadāsīs took to the profession of their mothers.⁸⁸ A devadāsī once employed in the service could never be removed from the temple. They got grants of lands from the kings and lords in lieu of the services they performed, normally such grants were permanent in nature, apart
from grants made by the temples and regular wages given by the temples in cash or kind. An epigraph of eleventh century of Cōla king of south India records that a dancing girl received one hundred kalam of paddy per year from the temple in which she was employed. An epigraph of A.D. 1011 from Rājarājesvara temple of Tanjore refers to one veli of land and one house each given to four hundred dancing girls employed in the temple. In some cases these girls used to save out of their wages and made donations to the temples.

This institution was supported by both the kings and the temples as it enriched their treasuries. They never put check to the existing practice because of financial reasons and so it continued and is said to have been existing even upto the present days in some parts of south India.

The institution of prostitution which differs from the practice of gifting devadāsīs also existed during this period, which was essentially an urban phenomenon. They were mainly urban residents. This institution led to the emergence of a class of women who took to this profession for their subsistence. They were noted for their beauty and were fully proficient in the art of singing and dancing. These ladies were of pleasant etiquettes and fully conversant in the sixty-four arts.

The kings and the richer class of urban population were mainly the victim of this vice. The palaces of kings were adorned with prostitutes for the recreational purpose. A text of seventh century refers to king Harsha surrounded by prostitutes.
They amused him with their performances. The presence of prostitutes in the court of Chauhan king Prithvirāja III is described in the Kharatāsaccha-pattāvalī of Jinapāla. In royal camps they lived in the tents set apart for them and carried on their business comfortably.

These ladies had their own colonies where they lived and carried on their business. The Kuttanīmata refers to such colonies situated at Abu and Varanasi. In these colonies prostitutes were found from Kerala, Saurastra and Pātaliputra, which exhibit their cosmopolitan character.

The prostitutes in general did not enjoy high position in the society. They were looked down by the people. They led a luxurious life as long as they were physically acceptable to a certain section of male population. The discarded prostitutes used to beg and steal for their survival. They were different from devadāsis who were gifted to the temples, and were paid by temples, but professional prostitutes had direct links with the customers.

Despite unhumanly treatment by the society, this evil survived. It was considered lawful by some sections of the Hindus. The royal class was a victim of this vice but we get a few instances in which kings and nobles accepted devadāsis as their wives. The institution of prostitution presuppose a prosperous economic condition which can support consuming class of prostitution. It clearly suggests that post-Gupta economy
supported this class of society, who did not do anything productive in the society and entirely subsisted on the mercy of wealthy and aristocratic elites.

Urban society requires public entertainers, who can entertain people with their artistic activities. The musicians, singers, jugglers, snake-charmers and dancers, all made the towns as the hub of their activities. They used to get royal patronage from the ruling elites.  

Abu Zayd, an Arab traveller of ninth century records that the jugglers performed most striking and astonishing feats.  

Alberuni mentions a guild of jugglers who entertained the public.  

He refers to a class of people called domas who played on the lute and sang songs. They earn their living by entertaining people.  

Kshemendra confirms the existence of professional musicians in the towns.  

He refers to musical instrument such as tumbukavina on which singer played and acquired wealth.  

The Rajatarangini refers to skilled singers who were invited by the kings in the courts from abroad on account of their expertise in the field of singing.  

We get reference to women singers, who sang well and because of their artistic skill, sometimes they were kept in courts as queens.  

Numerous musical instruments are mentioned in the sources which suggest that the people were lover of music and for the best kind of performance several musical instruments were played. They include śringa, sankha, jayaghanta and tabor. The Mayamata refers to conches, drums and other musical instruments played by the singers in different rooms meant for them in the kings' courts.
The temples also appointed singers, drummers and musicians. They were looked after by temple authorities and were paid regularly for their services. An inscription of eleventh century from south India refers to lute players, singers, drummers in the temples who got remunerations from the temple treasuries. They were transferred from one temple to the other and their wages were revised from time to time.

The dancing and singing masters were appointed for providing training to the dancers and singers in the temples. The skilled master received two hundred kalam of paddy per year whereas highly skilled singers got one hundred and fifty kalam and drummers received few kurunis of paddy per head daily. Other skilled singers were paid by the kings in the form of land grants. In spite of the fact that patronage was given to a few skilled artists by the ruling elites, nonetheless that could not alter the fate of all singers, dancers and artists, who earned their living by public performances. In general, they did not enjoy honourable position, however, those patronised by the kings were given respect.

Other class of urban residents comprised of shoe-makers, washermen, barbers and candalas. They did not participate in production and distribution of the goods. They subsisted on others and performed non-productive duties. Their duties, however, were considered indispensable for the upper strata of the urban society. On account of their services they were paid
by the urban residents. They led a very simple life. Their services were also required by the temples. The temples appointed tailors, washermen and barbers who performed respective duties for the temples. The temples paid them regular wages both in cash and kind. The Gōla inscription from south India refers to a washerman who got one hundred kalam of paddy per year, barber fifty kalam per year, and tailor got one hundred kalam per year. In some cases the washermen received a piece of land, and a house in lieu of their services.

It is argued that these people lived in the outskirts of cities and were ranked as antya. Contrary picture emerges from the study of Mayamata, where weavers and potters were allowed to have their quarters within the periphery along with other artisans. It is further contended that caṇḍāla and kolika huts may be two hundred poles beyond to the east and south-west. In the pre-Gupta age also they were looked down upon by the people in society because of the menial professions carried out by them and were allotted a particular locality meant exclusively for them and were excluded from the sacrificial rites.

During early medieval period many sub-castes came into prominence on account of changes in the socio-political and economic vistas of life. The brahmanical religion and temple-building activity got active support from the ruling elites and aristocracy. The brāhmaṇas were at the apex of the society, yet there were different categories of brāhmaṇas in the society.
They did not always keep to the duties assigned to them in the law books. It is argued that the oil-makers, stone-cutters, etc., formed the lower class of urban residents, yet we get references to the guild of oil-makers and stone-cutters who made certain gifts to the temples of Viṣṇu. Their gifts for temples were accepted by the temple authorities and these people were kept in the premises of the temples and paid by temple authorities both in cash and kind, because their services were required by all.

The above discussion suggests that early medieval urban society was extremely complex. Diverse social elements consisted of producers, exploiters and other groups of people performing non-productive duties and subsisted on others. These people performed respective duties not merely on the caste diversities, the people did enjoy certain kind of occupational mobility and also the freedom of enterprise. The society had, however, become intricate with the impact of brahmanical ideas, which had definite effect on the socio-economic life of the people. They wanted to make the system more rigid but certain developments like, freedom of enterprise and upliftment in the condition of śūdras show that Indian society had reached the cross roads and was not so rigid as many scholars would make us believe.
Notes and References

2. Ibid., p.47.
3. Ibid., p.52.
4. V.K. Thakur, Urbanisation in ancient India, p.149.
6. Theoretically there was nothing new about the caste system, it was fully established even prior to this period.
7. Om Prakash, Early Indian land grants and state economy, p.302.
8. Ibid., pp.1-11.
9. Bhoja Paramāra founded a town Bhojpur, Rajendra Cōla founded a capital town Gaṅgaikondaṇḍalapuram in south India, the Pāla king Rāmapāla founded a city Rāmavati and the city of Kārnāvati was founded by Kārna, the son of Gaṅgeyadeva.
13. Ibid.
14. Om Prakash, op. cit., p.3.
18. Elliot and Dowson, *The history of India as told by its own historians*, vol. i, p. 3.


22. Ibid., p. 223. Numerous medicines stored in the hospital are also referred to in the same inscription, p. 224.

23. Rajatarangini, IV, 216.


27. EI, vol. xx, p. 66; similarly an inscription of Śaka 1114 refers to Kaclevād on the bank of Bhiramarthi as a ghatikasthāna (educational centre) where provision was made for the teaching of Nyāya, Prabhakara, Rigveda, Purāṇa and Vedānta.


30. SIER for 1918, p. 145.


33. Ibid., pp. 12-14.

34. EI, vol. xxi, p. 50.


37. *EI*, vol. i, pp. 81 and 129; *ibid.*, vol. xii, p. 61; *ibid.*, vol. xi, p. 39.


42. In sources at several places they are referred to as brāhmana kāyastha; cf. *Rājataraṅgini*, VIII, 2383, other regard them as śūdras; cf. F.V. Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra* (ancient and medieval religious and civil law), vol. i, pt. 1, 2nd ed., Poona, 1974, pp. 75-6.


44. *EI*, vol. xix, p. 52 ff.

45. Pushpa Niyogi, *Contributions to the economic history of northern India (from the tenth to the twelfth century A.D.)*, p. 159.


55. *Ibid.*, vol. xiv, p. 35.

67. Ibid., 131.
69. Rājayatraṅgini, IV, 14-16.
70. EI, vol. ii, p.40; the inscription mentions that a family of potters, gardeners, oil-men etc., were asked to settle in the donated villages.
71. Ibid., vol. xvi, p.10.
74. R. Champaklakshmi, "Growth of urban centres in south India: Kudamukku-Palaiyārai, the twin city of the Cōlas", *Studies in History*, vol. i, no. 1, p. 25.
76. *IA*, vol. x, p. 164.
77. *SII*, vol. xx, p. 196.
78. *Ibid.*, vol. ii, nos. 5 and 75; the master carpenter was paid one hundred and fifty kalam of paddy per year and an ordinary carpenter got seventy five kalam of paddy per year, whereas brazier was paid one hundred kalam of paddy per year (one kalam is equal to twenty-four seers).
79. The Cōla inscription of A.D. 1011 refers to regular wages paid by the temple treasuries to all the craftsmen and officials working there, *ibid.*, no. 66.
83. B.D. Chattopadhyaya, "Political processes and structure of polity in early medieval India", *PIHC*, Presidential Address, forty-fourth session, Burdwan, 1983, p. 9. (Separately printed text used.)
His role was not restricted to the religious functions but extended to political sphere as well; cf. Romila Thapar, *Aśoka and the decline of the Mauryas*, rpt., Oxford, 1963; however, in Aśoka's reign he was not allowed to intervene in the political affairs.


V.K. Thakur, *op.cit.*, p.154; he argues that re-emergence of office of purohita synchronises with the urban decline.


Rājatarādhānī, IV, 267-70.

SII, vol. ii, nos. 5 and 75.

Ibid., no. 66.

Ibid., vol. xiii, p.42.


Dāmodaragupta refers to prostitutes inhabiting big cities, *ibid.*, pp.125-6; Kshemendra also mentions them as urban residents, *Samavamātrikā*, I, 4-7.


Ibid., p.123.


Māgha, *Śiśupālavadha*, V.


Ibid.; Kshemendra, *Samavamātrikā*, IV, 72 refers to a colony of prostitutes at Pataliputra.

Ibid., IV, 116-17.

Elliot and Dowson, *op.cit.*, vol. i, p.13.
102. **Rājatarāṅgini** IV, 36-39, where a king accepted a dancing girl as his wife; see also IV, 424-70.


104. Elliot and Dowson, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 10.


112. SI, vol. II, nos. 5 and 75.


115. **Rājatarāṅgini** V, 397-8.


118. This term is used for people who were ranked below südras and followed different arts and crafts, see Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, vol. I, p. 101.

119. *Mayamata*, ch. X, p. 44.


122. B.K. Sharma, *op. cit.*, p. 44.
123. Brāhmaṇas did not exist for performing rituals and ceremonies in the temples and otherwise, but they worked as teachers, merchants, artists and administrators.