The study of urbanization in India from c.A.D.750 to 1200 is beset with many difficulties primarily because the archaeology of urban centres has been sadly neglected. However many early historical sites have been thoroughly explored and excavated. The results of the archaeological excavations have been profitably used by scholars to make an assessment of the nature and character of early historical urban settlements. Only a limited number of regional studies are available on early medieval India which give us a faint picture of urbanization as compared to the early period. The present study tries to incorporate the results of all regional studies, and with the help of archaeological and literary sources the study tries to encompass an all India perspective of urbanization during the early medieval period.

R.S. Sharma's recent work, Urban Decay in India shows that many Indian towns declined between c.A.D.300-1000. Sharma's whole argument is based on the findings of about one hundred and thirty-two sites which either deserted or showed signs of decay. What interests us the most is that some of these sites declined in the first century and a few were totally washed away by floods in the second century, and some exhibited signs of decay in the third century A.D. Most of the sites discussed by Sharma are associated with PGW and KBGW cultures. Whereas some of them deserted primarily because several centres of Buddhism declined during the post-Gupta period. The changed
socio-political atmosphere during the period saw the emergence of new locus of powers. Many new capital towns and military camps were established. Soon new centres of powers became larger fortified cities with all kinds of amenities available within the precincts. The new clan of rulers encouraged agrarian production through making a large scale land grants, providing better technical knowhow to the peasants. The wide network of merchants smoothened the process of distribution. Many regional dynasties issued their own coins which were used in bigger trade transactions whereas non-monetized usages of exchange were barter and payment of taxes in kind. Numerous towns and cities cropped up which subsequently became consumption centres.

Chapter I is an introduction which reviews the works of earlier writers on Indian urbanization. Various theories on urbanization have been briefly summarized and their bearing and relevance to the Indian context are assessed in the same chapter. The last section shows that some kind of ranking existed between the smaller and bigger towns. What are the basic constituents of an urban centre and how a rural settlement is transformed into an urban unit? These and some other related questions have been answered in chapter II. Functional variation amongst urban centres is analysed in chapter III and the chapter IV explains the mechanisms as to how an urban centre was planned. The complexities of urban economic system have
been dealt with in chapter V. The civic administration is analysed in chapter VI. The role and activities of diverse groups of people living in an urban landscape have been discussed in chapter VII and the last chapter summarizes the data presented in the preceding chapters. An appendix lists nearly two hundred and fifty-five urban sites primarily based on archaeological sources.

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