CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The urban study in India, as yet, is in its infancy. Recently a few attempts have been made to analyse the process of urbanization and its multifarious facets. Indian as well as foreign scholars are attempting to explore this hitherto a little known field of history. The theoretical formulations set forth by these scholars aim at certain basic concepts and conceptions in which urban growth and its processes can be easily assessed.

Urbanization is certainly a complex process characterised by the rise of a distinct kind of socio-economic order resulting into an improved style of living, and the changing role of artistic skills having been regulated by a supreme authority. It is a process by which a country comes to have towns, and certain rural places of some importance are gradually transformed into urban sectors.

An urban centre, however, does not grow in isolation; it grows and develops in response to fluctuating situational and societal needs. It has many common indicators which explain the rise, growth and decay of urban complexes. Such indicators are pre-requisites to understand urban activity in a given region and period of time.

The urban process in India has no continuous history. Prior to c.A.D.750, India witnessed two distinct phases of urban
The flourishing cities of the Indus marked the first phase of urban growth in India. It was represented by a flourishing agrarian economy supported by a regulated internal and external trade. It met its end around 1750 B.C. About one thousand years thereafter India could have its second urbanization. The widespread use of iron technology in the agrarian production, along with the strong political system, are held as the most important reasons for the growth of urban activity in this period. The traces of continuity of such flourishing agrarian economy served as the basis for the next phase of urban growth, generally termed as the "third phase" of urbanization. It normally commences from c.A.D. 700 or 750, which is marked by a distinct kind of socio-economic formations, which in turn, initiated urban activity during the period.

Despite a continuous interest in the field, however, the urban phase of the early medieval period remains un-explored. In recent years a few attempts have been made but these are confined only to regional surveys and are not adequate enough in revealing the Indian urban growth in its entirety. A few of such researches deserve mention here. These include the works of B.D. Chattopadhyaya, R. Champaklakshmi, V.K. Thakur and R.S. Sharma. Earlier too, some attempts were made by scholars to study the growth, planning and functions of cities but these works do not strictly confirm to the terms of urban studies.
Most of them deal with the prescriptions given in the Śilpaśāstras and other literary sources regarding the plan and layout of cities.¹

B.B. Dutt's work is based mainly on Mānasāra, Mayamata, Viśvakarmaprabhāṣa and so on. The material incorporated in this work cannot be used for the study of urbanization in early medieval India.⁵ The dates of most of these texts referred to also cannot be ascertained with certainty. The work does not present any specific feature by which any settlement can be termed as urban and distinguished from its rural unit.

A.S. Altekar made an attempt to study the cities and towns of Gujarat,⁶ again it is just a compilation of urban places known to us primarily from the literary works. This work, however, acquaints us with important towns and cities of Gujarat.

Pushpa Niyogi's work on the economy of northern India covers the period from the tenth to the twelfth century.⁷ It presents a list of urban centres. One of the chapters is on town planning which is entirely based on literary sources. The urban centres mentioned in literary sources are taken for granted, but nowhere has she tried to show the circumstances and conditions in which such centres grew. The work discusses the other aspects of economy such as trade (internal and external), the role of temples but no co-relation of such aspects with the process of urbanization has been shown.
The quantum of writings on early historical urbanism have been produced. They discuss socio-economic and cultural background of urban activity in society. Attempts have been made to study the system of planning and laying out of towns during the period. Amita Ray's work is an important contribution in this field. She discusses main features of town-planning in regard to the planning of houses, palaces and streets, etc. For the first time the archaeological data are used along with the contemporary literary sources. It marks a new step in the field of urban studies which reflects that urban historians were made aware of the value of archaeological evidence which is indispensable for the study of different aspects of urban growth. The work deals with the early phase and does not cover the period discussed in this study. She, however, has analysed the process of urbanization in Bengal and argued that the firm rural agricultural base of the post-Gupta period was a prelude to the "growth and expansion" of the urban process. A. Ray does not subscribe to the frequently articulated theory of de-urbanization as far as Bengal is concerned.

U.N. Roy's work is a first complete work on ancient Indian towns and town-life. This work is devoid of archaeological data. Roy's total reliance on contemporary literary works, irrespective of their uncertain chronologies, limits the importance of this work. The book, however, underlines some important indicators of urban growth but the author seems not
to be very successful in using them while distinguishing different periods of urban growth in India.

Another work is by B.N. Puri, which provides the glimpse of important sites having political and religious importance in ancient India.\(^{11}\) It merely presents an outline on the subject, and appears to be a revised edition of an earlier work by Pigott. It is more of the nature of a tourist guide rather than a work of historical importance.\(^{12}\)

A large number of works have been published on the town and town-life of early historical period, but the research carried out in the early medieval period is inadequate.\(^{12a}\) Such an inadequacy prevents us in understanding the process of urban growth in the larger perspective. K.C. Jain's attempt is, perhaps, the first of its kind. The study embraces the urban process in Rajasthan from the earliest times to A.D. 1200.\(^{13}\)

The work presents different aspects of town-life such as economy, society, administration and town planning. The major limitation of the work is that it does not clearly point out the basic traits of urban settlements in the region. Jain does not examine the mechanisms of urban growth which distinguish it from its rural counterparts? He is silent on the question: how did the urban centres of early medieval India differ from the centres of early historical period? Various theoretical formulations on urbanization also do not find mention in the work.
Major contribution in the field of urban studies has been made by A. Ghosh. His work presents a useful convergence of both archaeological and literary data. He opines that urban traditions in India had no continuous history. He undermines the importance of technological innovation in bringing an urban way of life. He emphasises the primacy of political power in the evolution of urban growth. For him surplus production is the secondary factor. Surplus according to him is "not a technical but a social product". It is political power which helps the surplus producing communities in its proper utilization and channelization, if it is already produced. During this period the agrarian expansion was characterised by cultivation of barren land, clearing of forests, better means of irrigation; all generated urban way of life. The initiatives taken by the kings and nobles equally played an important role by making grants of lands to the people for better agrarian production which gave fillip to urban growth. Ghosh is aware of numerous sociological studies which in turn help us to understand the process of urban growth in a wider perspective. The conclusions presented by him are not widely accepted, yet the study is remarkable for the wide ranging aspects of urbanization it tries to cover up.

Some investigations in the early medieval urban process have been made by B.D. Chattopadhyaya. He has studied the early medieval trade and urban centres with special reference to the inscriptive evidence. While assessing the urban growth
in the period, he states that fully grown urban centres existed in India in the ninth century A.D.\textsuperscript{18} For him the emergence of a new socio-economic set up in the post-Gupta period did not widely affect the urban growth. On the contrary he states that the number of beneficiaries might have accelerated the urban process. He does not subscribe to the viewpoint that urbanism became possible only with the coming of the Sultans.\textsuperscript{19} He has studied the urban growth of the period as the "third phase" which emerged and flourished in a somewhat distinct kind of socio-economic milieu.\textsuperscript{20} He accepts trade as an equally important factor in the emergence of towns, in addition to other factors, but not the sole factor.\textsuperscript{21}

He invites our attention to many important queries: if urbanization was a widely distributed phenomenon during this period, then what are the common elements among them? How could urban settlements be distinguished from the rural units? Chattopadhyaya questions the importance of foreign trade in bringing forth early historical and early medieval urbanism.\textsuperscript{22} He suggests that numerous epithets and place-names mentioned in literary works and epigraphic sources should not be considered as centres of urban activity till their exact location and proper function is assessed.

A valuable contribution has been made by V.K. Thakur. His work analyses the early historical urbanism.\textsuperscript{23} This work is more comprehensive and covers different aspects of urban growth.
in ancient India. He studied the urban process of the period as the "second phase" of urban growth, and emphasised the primacy of technological innovations which accelerated urban activity. He assigns lesser importance to the political power in the emergence of towns as asserted by some scholars. Thakur does not accept Ghosh's assertion that Harappan culture made no contribution to the rise of towns in early historical India. He postulates that the Gupta and post-Gupta period marked a period of decline in ancient Indian urban traditions. Examining the process of decline, Thakur lays down that economic conditions of the period adversely affected the urban centres. He relied heavily on R.S. Sharma's thesis which is further confirmed by his assertion that contemporary agrarian economy was anti-urban in nature. He, however, undermines the role of surplus agrarian production of Gupta and post-Gupta times which acted as the catalyst for the urban activity during the third phase. Thakur is not clear in many of his statements; for instance, he says "even if viewed from theoretical perspective, the decline of urban centres in our period seems quite logical". His contention that surviving urban settlements in post-Gupta period did not play any crucial role either in ancient urban traditions or in revival of towns further seems to be incorrect. Although third urbanization did not develop in same kind of situation, and it developed in a distinct socio-economic atmosphere, yet, it did not grow in vacuum. This phenomenon cannot be placed out of the context of early historical urbanization because of its
continuity to early medieval urbanism. His conclusion, as far as early medieval India is concerned, is not very convincing and urban process in south India does not find mention in it.

A wider understanding of urban activity in different regional contexts has been made in recent years. The early medieval urbanism in south India, however, has not been adequately discussed. Some beginning in this field has been made by R. Champaklakshmi. Her work examines two major periods of urbanization in south India. The first coincides with the early centuries of Christian era, and the second with the coming of the Cōlas from ninth to the thirteenth centuries. Champaklakshmi further states that period from the fourth to the eighth century provided a large scale agrarian expansion in south India which coincides with the agrarian expansion in north India within the same period. B. Stein suggests that by ninth-tenth centuries south India had become predominantly an agrarian society. Whereas in Paul Wheatley's terms the central places of the Pallava-Cōla periods exhibited characteristics of "primary" rather than "secondary" urbanism.

In the context of south India Champaklakshmi recognizes the important role played by temples in the development of urban activity. It is further stated that the physical difference between the village and urban life was marked by the temple towers seen from a far-off, other than large sizes of urban settlements.
Elsewhere she states that in most cases trade was a secondary factor as compared to religious activities in the rise of urban centres. Religious developments seem to have influenced urban role in north India also along with other factors. The major limitation of the investigation is that it embraces only a part of south India.

The socio-economic development of the post-Gupta times is accepted to be a phase of urban decay in India. This hypothesis has been primarily developed by R.S. Sharma. Such contention has been questioned by many scholars, and a few others have seen its regional variations. His work, Urban Decay in India (c.300-c.1000), has grown out of a paper earlier presented to the thirty-third session of IHC in 1972, and a talk he gave to the Nehru Centre Bombay on "Town and Country in Early Middle Ages", in 1983. He views decay of urban centres as an integral part of the emergence of new patterns of production marked by agrarian expansion. In this new set-up the state officials and collectors of taxes gave way to landed chiefs, vassals, brāhmaṇas, temples and monasteries who collected surplus in the form of services and goods from the peasants. The economic consequences of this change represented increased ruralization, in which self-sufficient village became a foci of production.

Sharma further tries to correlate urban decay in post-Gupta times with the decline of foreign trade, which is characterised by paucity of coins in India. Chattopadhyaya however, does not agree with Sharma's contention that feudalism hampered urban activity during early medieval period.
Sharma on the basis of archaeology of early historical sites argues that there was a sharp decline in the urban centres during early medieval times, and he talks of mild urban renewal only after A.D. 1000, and urbanization as a recognizable process only in A.D. 1300. He himself admits that archaeology of early medieval sites has been totally ignored. Sharma only gives importance to the economic factor responsible for the decay of urban centres and ignores the role of political upheavals, religious changes and natural calamities which quickened the end of some cities.

In the same work he states that de-urbanization of Gupta and post-Gupta period helped in the expansion of agriculture. Despite considerable agrarian expansion, he talks of urban decay, which is the very backbone of urban culture. The urban centres cannot grow in vacuum, they are basically the product of the surplus agrarian production. In this context it may be pointed out that unless the surplus is produced by the farmers, the urban system which thrives on the surplus agrarian production cannot exist, because both rural and urban processes are interdependent and work in mutual cooperation.

However, this is an important study for those seeking basic information on the excavated urban sites of early historic India, and deservedly invites our attention to the study of urban activity in the post-Gupta periods.

A few regional studies have also been carried out which outline the growth of trade and towns during the early medieval
These works give us much information regarding India's foreign and internal trade which regenerated urban activity between the tenth and thirteenth centuries.

A few remarks on the theoretical aspects of urban growth and their overall bearings on the urban phase covered in this study would be of vital importance. V. Gordon Childe was the first to formulate the concept of urban revolution in the mid-1930s and he put forth ten important traits associated with the cities in 1930. He lists large settlements with dense population, non-food producing classes, monumental buildings, cultivation and development of various arts, writing and development of different sciences as important criteria which characterised the earliest city.

These characteristics have not been accepted universally. He laid great stress on the agrarian surplus and the presence of different crafts' specialists which provide support to non-agriculturists living in urban areas. Adams, recognizes the increased size of settlement and larger population as important requisites of urbanization. He does not see any contribution of craft specialists attributing to primary urban needs in society. For A. Ghosh hypothetical surplus is not a only requisite but an administrative and mercantile organisation, the ruler and merchant according to him are each ally of the other in history. He considers a strong political system as a necessary requisite for the proper channelization of the surplus. He opposes the view that surplus creates the institution.
Mumford emphasises the role of institution of kingship in bringing the urban growth. Sjoberg closely associates urban growth with the political apparatus. D.K. Chakrabarti also accepts the primacy of political power in the making of the city. In all these writings it is suggested that urban economy can only be maintained by a stable and efficient political system. This kind of theoretical interpretation, however, fails to appreciate the circumstances which lead to the rise of such political systems. The political system does not grow in vacuum. For the evolution and sustenance of political power the surplus agrarian production is the most important requirement. The political power or the king does not produce the surplus but it is generated by farmers. The political power helps in establishing peace, and permits the surplus production, the development of local, regional and national markets, which in turn, sustains the rise and emergence of the urban centre. In fact, in early medieval India the economic condition characterised by surplus agrarian production did not lead only to the growth of hierarchical political structure but also sustained it.

Childe's criterion of writing in the context of urbanization has not gained universal acceptance. However, Sjoberg, Gelb, Redfield support Childe's hypothesis. Adams invalidates writing and does not associate it with urbanization. Mellart assigns urban status to Anatolian, though it lacked writing.

Similarly some objections have been raised against other traits set forth by Childe. Adams questions the validity of
representational art in an urban milieu.\textsuperscript{58} He, however, undermines the role of technological innovations in the rise of cities.\textsuperscript{59}

The trade and commerce is regarded as the secondary factor in the rise and growth of the city by Sjoberg.\textsuperscript{60} Weber, however, emphasises the role of market system (where the things are bought and sold) in the rise of cities. He specifically mentions that market system brought the city into existence.\textsuperscript{61} Here it may be stressed upon that market and trade themselves imply the surplus production; it is only after that both of them grow. Ultimately, it leads to the emergence of political power, which normally opens the way for the market economy. No isolated factor can create urban institutions but proportional developments in all fields are inter-connected and one leads to another.

In the light of above discussion we shall now examine the important characteristics of early medieval urban centres. Scholars working on the processes and growth of urbanization during the period, depending entirely on epigraphic and literary sources, stipulate some classificatory factors for distinguishing the cities from their rural units.\textsuperscript{62} The total absence of archaeological research on this period, however, does not permit us in forming an overall picture. Consequently the uncertainty about the chronology and character of the urban activity from c.A.D.750-1200 prevails among the historians.
The phenomenon of urbanization was geographically widespread in India during the early medieval period. The post-Gupta development in India marked a departure from the early historical period. The integral features of the new system were marked by land grants to brāhmaṇas, temples and other officers for spiritual merits, and also in lieu of their services. The village self-sufficiency was the special feature of the system. The agrarian expansion during this period served as a prerequisite for an increase in the number of craftsmen and craft-production, and the development of market economy finally helped the emergence and growth of urban centres. The powerful surplus producing class in the hinterlands initiated the growth of private farming. Improvements in the techniques of agriculture and a sharp increase in crop production ultimately led to the growth of market economy. The greater utilization of uncultivated and barren land can be seen in the land grants made to the donees. The gifts of land to the brāhmaṇas, temples and other officials imply that more and more people were accommodated on the existing land. There is a clear reference in the sources that land grants opened virgin land to cultivation in many parts of the country. The epigraphs refer to the reclamation of forests for the cultivation of crops. This system consequently encouraged the large scale agrarian production, a necessary precondition for the urban economy.

A literary text, the Abhidhānaratnamāla mentions a large number of cereals and other food grains as the products of this period. It also mentions different kinds of soils and fields.
selected for sowing numerous crops. The Arab writers of ninth and tenth centuries refer to the different food-grains and fruits as the products of India; they also refer to rich fertility of soil in India. Ibn Khurdadbeh refers to the export of rice from certain parts of Andhra to Sarandīb (Ceylon) in the ninth century. The cultivation of sugarcane was introduced, and cultivation of betel leaves and areca-nuts rapidly expanded during this period. Abu Zaid, an Arab writer of tenth century refers to betel offering as a token of honour and friendship. The early medieval records point to an extensive cultivation of paddy and sugarcane in north-eastern India. The production of food crops also increased substantially.

The land was measured and its seed capacity was assessed for better crop production. The fields were ploughed earlier only twice or thrice, but now they could be ploughed as many as five times, thus resulting definitely in an increased agrarian production. The agriculturists received special attention from the rulers and the feudals. The improved irrigational system, preparation of better fertilizers, treatment of the various plant diseases, all confirm that crop production might have further increased. The Vṛksāyurveda, an early medieval text, put forth certain measures for treating the diseases harming the plants. A marked increase in agrarian production and agrarian settlements consequently accentuated urban activity in the country representing different chronological sequences.
The emergence of temple economy facilitated urban activity. It served as a source of income to the village and the town. In the post-Gupta period the temple ceased to be a small structure of brick, and instead it became "a city in miniature." The concentration of surplus in temple has been seen by Childe as one of the important criterion of urbanization. It is fully applicable to the Indian context.

The temple was made the nucleus around which in course of time a town grew. A scholar while commenting on early south Indian urban situation has stated that difference between a village and a town was generally that the latter had a temple of high reputation. This seems to be true in early medieval Indian context, where the temple not only performed religious functions but also had an important economic role in an urban environs.

The temple was a wealthy institution which employed officials, priests, accountants, craftsmen and cultivators. The temple structures were provided with various halls, gateways and rooms for several social and cultural activities. The expansion in their architectural structures does indicate the concentration and investment of surplus economy, and utilization of the expertise of artisans and craftsmen.

The temples received land, gold and money endowments from the ruling authorities and other officials, which were again invested in land, sometimes in trade and in leasing residential accommodation to the people. Briefly it can be concluded that religious and pilgrim centres evolved into huge urban complexes.
either around a single temple or with many temples forming an integral part of an urban complex.78

India during the post-Gupta period lacked centralized government of a Mauryan type, yet, it was successful in gearing up the agricultural activities, as necessary precondition for urban growth.79 The north India saw the rise of many regional kingdoms. The Pālas founded their empire in the east; the Pratihāras had northern and western India under their sway, whereas Rāṣṭrakūṭa established themselves in the Deccan. Kannauj became the bone of contention among three imperial powers. In south India Gōlas were active. During their reign the achievements in all spheres of activity reached in their climax. In the tenth-eleventh centuries other regional states were laid down: the Paramaras in Malwa, the Gāhadavālas, the Chandellas, the Senas, the Chālukyas, the Kalachuris all established their principalities in different parts of India. Nevertheless, the country lacked one locus of power, but this did not hamper the agrarian production and urban activity.80

Numerous references to taxes levied on people reflect that there definitely existed some kind of system of taxation which imply urban growth.81 The grants issued by the feudals and their rulers record different kinds of taxes or all kinds of income from the land. The eleventh century inscription of Chandradeva declares that donee was allowed to enjoy every kind of income, the bhoga, kara, turushka-danda, praty-adāya, vishaya-dāna, naukā-bhātaka and taradāya.82 Another copper plate
inscription of Śrīchandra A.D.925-75 records that donees were allowed to enjoy *samasta-rāja-bhāge-kara-hiranya-pratyāya* but not *ratnārayabhūmi*. The taxes levied were paid normally in kind to the king or the feudal.

The existence of different ministers for assisting the king further reflects the bureaucratic character of administration. The king used to listen to the advice of the ministers on various vital issues concerning the state administration.

Childe's criterion of foreign trade has been taken to be almost inapplicable in this period. Scholars explain the growth and decline of urban centres exclusively on the basis of foreign trade. The land grant economy of post-Gupta period has been seen as antithetical for foreign trade and urban activity. However, there are numerous references to inter-regional contacts. We come across references to the distant merchants visiting the towns entirely for trade purposes. The sources also refer to foreign traders trading in India and establishing even their colonies in south India.

The use of coined money implies a developed stage of economy which brings urbanization. In the post-Gupta period there are several references to coins and cowries, both in the inscriptions and literary sources. For example *dramma*, *vīśopaka*, *gadhaiyāpana*, *rūpaka*, *kalanju* and *kāśu*, etc., are frequently mentioned. The coins in circulation were made of gold, silver and copper. The limited circulation and use of coins suggest that they would have been of very high value and
were not required for ordinary transactions. The paucity of coins, however, has been explained in terms of the decline in foreign trade.  

The market economy was another important feature of urban centres. The local goods were transferred through markets and several transit-points to wider networks of commercial exchange.

In modern times the art of writing is taken to be an important feature of a civilized life. The literary works of early medieval period exhibited developed stage of writing. The voluminous literature written in Sanskrit and other regional languages was definitely the product of urban environs. Apart from drama, Kāvya and Champu much development was made in the field of poetics. To this age belonged great rhetoricians such as Udbhaṭa, Vāmana, Rudrata, Ānandavardhana and Kuntaka. The tenth century is considered to be a golden age for the Kannada literature. The three gems Pampa, Ponna and Ranna flourished during this period. The works on grammar were also composed.

The progress in the field of different sciences, another criterion of Childe, seems to be applicable in Indian context. The science of astronomy, medical science, mathematics and geometry saw phenomenal development. Several astronomers flourished between sixth and thirteenth centuries. Many commentaries on the astronomical works were composed. In the ninth century Prthudakasvāmi wrote two commentaries Brahmasiddhānta-Vāsanābhāṣya and Khandakhādyaka-Vivarana. Govindasvāmi another commentator further elucidated the works of Bhāskar I.
The greatest inspiration to mathematics came from different hitherto unexplored subjects such as science of architecture, problems of reckoning time, and commercial accountings. Mahāvīrāchārya occupies most important position as a mathematican of this period. His *Ganitārasaṅgraha* treats mathematical problems in a simple way. Another work which was composed during the period is *Mahāsidhānta* of Āryabhaṭṭa II.

Elaborate town planning system, measurement of land and detailed rules for the construction of buildings have been dealt within the architectural treatises of the period. Every detail has minutely been described in the texts suggesting an advanced knowledge in the field of mathematics. Examinations of grounds and soils and their suitability for various kinds of buildings in the texts indicate an advancement acquired in the field of architecture.

Commentaries on earlier works of medical sciences were composed. Science of alchemy had progressed. V.K. Thakur, however, doubts their connection with urbanization. Such supposition seems incorrect in the present context. His contention that they grew out of sacredotal exigencies is correct, but they developed only in early historical and early medieval period when they found proper urban environs for their growth and development.

The progress in artistic activities is reflected in the surviving magnificent temples, palaces, forts and other buildings. Childe's eighth criterion of artistic activity, was very well
represented in this period. In this period the people proceeded to embark on an era of temple building which can have a few equals. It was a period of great religious concentration and intensity of purpose corresponding in some aspects to that wave of passionate building which swept over much of Europe in the middle ages. In India every small village and a big town had temples as proved by the surviving remains all over India. Exquisite art edifices strictly adhere to the prescriptions stipulated in the canons of art and architecture. Several eloquent bronze images, stone sculptures and wood carvings all represent the art traditions of the period. With the development of the art activities, the need for the specialized artisans increased substantially. Several surviving monuments in all parts of India testify to the existence of different groups of artisans producing colossal monuments. They were looked after by different organisations. In fact, the surplus agrarian production during the early medieval period encouraged the emergence of a patron class, who patronised various artists and craftsmen. This further indicate that the artists and craftsmen were definitely provided some kind of security. Such security consequently encouraged them to construct such colossal structures, which were otherwise, not possible. The artisans were granted land free of revenue payments in lieu of their services which made them wealthy and they started donating money and land for the spiritual purposes.

An epigraph of tenth century records that a bard was given two hundred drammas and clothes for his living by the king
Krishṇa II of Raṣṭraḵūṭa dynasty. The literary sources of the period also refer to poets patronised and looked after by the king.

It was a period when many technological innovations were made. Many works on science were either commented upon or experimented. The widespread use of iron technology and its extension to the fields accentuated urban activity in early historic period. Similarly many new innovations in the field of irrigation enhanced the productivity of the newly cultivated tracts of land during the post-Gupta period. Significantly a water lifting machine gave impetus to urban productivity as depicted in two important texts: Kamban's Krisiprāśara and Kāśyapa's Krisisūkti. It was a device of far-reaching consequence as it substantially increased production of cereals and pulses especially in those areas where the canal irrigation was not in vogue.

The Samarāṅgaṇasūtradhāra refers to various machines and aeroplanes which were quite popular in early medieval India. No epigraphic evidence of the Paramāras, however, refer to them. There are references to shower baths used by the kings and nobles for taking baths. The above survey shows that some kind of fillip was provided to urban activity by technological advancement too.

Different terms used in epigraphs and literary sources denote premature and mature character of urban settlements. This suggests that some kind of ranking and difference definitely
existed between the towns and cities. These are clearly
classified in the literary texts of the period. For instance,
the Kāmasūtra, a work of fifth century A.D. refers to nagara,
pattana, karvata and mahati as urban settlements.96 The Amarakoṣa
a work of sixth century refers to pura, purī, nagari, pattana,
putabhedana, sthāniya and nīgama.97 Varāhamira's Brihat Samhitā
refers to pura,98 nagara99 and skandhāvāra.100 The Skanda Purāṇa,
a work of ninth century mentions a large number of cities having
different suffixes and prefixes. They include pura,101 purī,102
nagara103 and pattana.104 The Mayamata refers to ten different
synonyms which possibly denote urban settlements. They are nīgama
nagara, rājadhānī, pattana, khetā, kharvata, śibira, dronamukha,‘
śkandhāvāra’ and sthāniya.105 These epithets are not different
from those mentioned in the Mānasāra.106 The Samarāṇaganasūtradhāra
a work of eleventh century mentions three important categories
of nagara. These are pura, khetā and grāma. Pura is described
as the biggest settlement and a half of pura makes a khetā, and
further half constitutes a grāma.107 It, however, mentions
another categories such as rājadhānī, karvata, nīgama, pattana
and putabedha as branch-towns or sākhānāgaras.108 The Aparājit-
aprochā, a śilpa text of twelfth century divides urban settlement
as pura, nagara, khetā, kūta and karvata.109

The different categories of towns are further supplemented
by the inscriptive evidence. Epigraphs of early medieval period
mention numerous terms such as grāma,110 pura,111 adhisthāna,112
khetā,113 rājadhānī,114 nagara,115 nagaram,116 kharvata,117
skandhavāra, pāttan, purem, etc. In the inscriptions of post-tenth century numerous new terms were used to denote the urban character of settlements such as mahānagara, rājadānī-pattana, banañju-vattana, and erivirapatāna.

Different terminologies referred to above suggest the functional variations among urban settlements although sometimes the epithets are used irrespective of their exact nature. The word grāma is usually referred to denote the rural character of the town but in a few cases, the grāma word suggests their urban character (for instance, Manigrāma and Venugrāma). The word pura was usually referred to as the fortress or a castle but during this period it meant a city which had a temple, a market place, also having artisans, guilds, big and small streets, etc. The adhisthāna was the capital city or a headquarter of an administrative unit. An epigraphic evidence reveals that Pehowa, which is referred to as an adhisthāna, was a place of commercial importance rather than an administrative unit. Kheta is described as a nagara of uncivilized people in the sources. The Mānasāra usually associates it with the sudras. Whereas Samarānganaśūtradāra suggests that it is smaller than nagara but does not specify that it was associated with only sudras. Kheta is used in the sense of capital towns at places. Rājadānī meant a metropolis or a capital of the king having a politico-administrative importance. It is mentioned as the sākhānagara, which is a town other than the
mūla-nagara. Nagara is commonly used as a synonym with the place-names from the eighth century onwards irrespective of its functional importance. Generally it is referred to as a town or a city. The Samarāṅgaṇasūtradhāra mentions nagara as a city, and pura, kheta and grāma as its different categories. Kaiyata, the grammarian of eleventh century refers to a nagara surrounded by a moat, which has guilds of merchants and artisans. The Aparājitaprocchā, refers to nagara measuring one thousand cubits in area. The sources reveal that nagara comprised of an extensive area, non-agricultural population such as merchants, artisans, rulers, priests, temples and important surplus accumulating institutions. Nagaram is a term used to denote the market centres in south India. They definitely suggest that places comprising big nagarams acquired urban character which are further referred to as mahānagarams after having attained commercial importance. The Mānasāra refers to kharvata as a town situated near a mountain and surrounded by many houses of different castes of people. The Mayamata assigns similar features to it. The Samarāṅgaṇasūtradhāra mentions kharvata to be a town bigger than a nigama. Whereas the Aparājitaprocchā describes it as smaller than a village. During the post-Gupta period it is not used very frequently, yet it denotes the urban characters of some towns usually full of markets at a few places.

Skandhāvāra meant a military camp and sometimes indicates the capital of the king. Brihat Samhitā refers to skandhāvāra
as a military camp having all the requisites of an urban settlement. The *Mayamata* mentions it to be a suburban town, situated a little away from the main city. Various references to *skandhāvāra* suggest that places which were chosen for the military cantonment necessary gave impetus to the place in evolving several urban traits by initiating trade, market system, religious and other auxiliary activities (e.g., building religious complexes and attracting trained artisans from the neighbouring regions).

*Pattana* is specifically mentioned by U.N. Roy as a town associated with economic functions. The *Samarāṅganasaūtradhāra*, however, mentions it as a *sākhā-nagara* and a temporary residence of the king. It is found with many important towns, i.e., Prithvīpallavapaṭṭana and Desī-uyyavāṇḍa-paṭṭana which were market centres colonized by the merchants as early as the ninth century. *Pattana*-towns meant port-towns in some cases, such as Sommāthapattana and Nāgapatṭinam.

In south Indian epigraphs the word *puram* is mentioned to denote the urban character of the settlements. For instance, Kāñchīpuram enjoyed religious, political and commercial importance specially under the Pallavas in the eighth-ninth centuries. Other categories of towns like *mahāpattana* meant a big commercial centre. Similarly *mahānagara* meant a town bigger than a *nagara*. Whereas *rājadhānīpattana* was a term used in the post-eleventh century sources which possibly denotes
the politico-commercial character of the towns. The *banañju-vattanas* were spread all over early medieval Karnataka; these were commercial establishments especially abounding in marketing products. The *erivirapattana* was another kind of towns mainly consisting of commercial establishments. The *Samāraṅgaṇasūtra-dhāra* mentions another category of town, namely the *putabheda*, supposed to be full of merchants. Such settlements seem to be the centres of whole-sale trade. The *dronamukha* town was another type of town situated at the mouth of rivers and thus was a chief trading centre.

Unfortunately archaeology is silent on the dimensions of early medieval towns. Whatever archaeological evidence has been unearthed till today has profitably been used for the assessment of early historical urbanization. The paucity of archaeological data led historians to depend entirely on the epigraphic and literary sources. However, whatever little information is available from the archaeological excavations has been carefully utilized by us in the chapters that follow. As long as the archaeology of early medieval sites remains out of the purview of the excavators' spade, the real nature of urban growth cannot completely be understood.

The present survey represents the third phase of urban activity in India. The Harappan cities made a very little contribution to the rise of second phase of urban growth in India. As much of Indian sub-continent was not affected by it, especially in south India Indus urbanism was not at all represented. But
early historic urbanization was fairly widespread in the entire country and had a sound technological base which initiated surplus production, a necessary pre-requisite for urbanization. The second urbanization never met its abrupt end like that of the Harappan type but maintained a continuum.

The third phase of urban activity was not altogether a new development; it did not usher after a total lapse of earlier urban traditions. It is, however, considered to be a new kind of urban development initiated by the rise of distinct kind of socio-economic and political systems. This period saw the rise of surplus appropriating classes in the hinterland, which consequently led to the rise of market economy, and ultimately saw the development and re-emergence of urban centres in different parts of early medieval India. The market economy obviously influenced urban activity with varying degree in all parts of India. Religion played an important role in the growth of urban centres. The temple, in this period, became a centre around which towns grew in the course of time. They, however, did not play any significant role in the early historical period.

Internal trade (inter-regional) definitely contributed to the expanding network economy of urban settlements during the period. We often get references to the merchants of distant places visiting urban markets for trade transactions. Foreign trade in various items was definitely carried out during this period with the countries of South-east-Asia and China. The Arabs also had good trade relations with the Rashtrakutas in the Deccan and parts of western India.
The urban activity during the period show regional variations, representing different chronological sequences. In many parts of north India fully grown urban centres were visible in eighth-ninth centuries whereas in south India such phenomenon was observed a little earlier. The urban activity was initiated by different regional elites in the form of establishing either military camps or capitals; and also by creating agrahāras and brahmadeyas in the remote areas during this period. No doubt, the process was a little slow in the beginning but it was fairly widespread from the ninth century onwards and India was marked with many towns of note having flourishing commerce and such towns were noted for their extensive exquisite art-activity and cultural functions.

Notes and References

4. The first work on the planning of towns is confined to the Deccan with special reference to Tamil literature; cf. C.P.V. Ayyar, Town planning in early south India, rpt., Delhi, 1987.
5. B.B. Dutt, Town planning in ancient India, Calcutta, 1925, is another attempt in the same direction to study town planning alone on the basis of literary sources.


12a. The standard work like *The Cambridge economic history of India*, vol. 1, c. 1200-c. 1750 eds. Tapan Raychaudhuri and Irfan Habib, Hyderabad, 1984, does not sufficiently acquaint us with the urban life in the section "economic conditions before 1200", pp. 45-7. Surprisingly the section undermines the value of epigraphic evidence for analysing economic conditions before c. A.D. 1200 (p. 45).


18. Ibid.; on the basis of inscriptive evidence he suggests that Siyaḍoni, Pehowa, Gwalior and Tattandalpura were important urban centres of this period.
20. Chattopadhyaya, op.cit., p.11.
21. Ibid., pp.11-12; he, however, supports the argument of Champaklakshmi, who has shown religion as the dominant cause in the rise of two towns, Kuḍamūkku-Palaiyārai, and others factors, in the case of these two towns, were of the secondary importance; cf. Champaklakshmi, "Growth of urban centres in south India: Kuḍamūkku-Palaiyārai, the twin-city of the Gōlas", Studies in History, vol. 1, no. 1, 1979, pp.1-29.
23. Thakur, op.cit., In his work nowhere the period of study is specified and conclusions set forth by him are not different from R.S. Sharma; cf. "Decay of Gangetic towns in Gupta and post-Gupta times", PIHG, thirty-third session, Muzaffarpur, 1972, pp.92-104.
24. Ghosh, op.cit.; D.K. Chakrabarti, "Concept of urban revolution and the Indian context", Puratattva, no.6, 1972-3, pp.27-32; Chakrabarti lays emphasis on political power as the sole factor which influenced urban growth in early historic India.
25. Thakur, *op.cit.*, pp.261 ff.; on the basis of a few literary and archaeological sources he describes the post-Gupta phase as a period of decline.

26. Ibid., p.319.

27. R.N. Nandi, "Growth of rural economy in early feudal India", Presidential Address, Ancient Indian Section, IHC, forty-fifth session, Annamalainagar, 1984, pp.1-72. (Separately printed text used.)


34. Champaklakshmi, "Urbanisation in south India", *op.cit.*, pp.92-3.

35. Pehowa was basically a religious centre as reflected from the importance given to the temples; and such contention is further made stronger by the fact that one share of the contributions was kept for the "sacred place Prthūdaka", see *EI*, vol. i, pp.184-90; *IA*, vol. xi, p.68.
36. R.S. Sharma, *Indian feudalism: AD 300-1200*, New Delhi, 1980; idem, ed., *Survey of research in economic and social history of India*, Delhi, 1986; also see PIHC, thirty-third session, 1972, pp.92-104.


39. Chattopadhyaya, "Trade and urban centres in early medieval India", *op.cit.*, p.204, fn.3.

40. Sharma, *Urban decay in India*, p.185; Chattopadhyaya has shown that fully grown urban centres existed in ninth-century India if not earlier.

41. Many of the sites which have been mentioned by Sharma met their end in pre-Kushāṇa times and a few others in post-Kushana age, and rest in Gupta and post-Gupta times. Sharma has tried to show the decline of towns during the post-Gupta period on the basis of archaeology of early historical sites. He illustrates many examples: for instance, archaeology of Paithan, the capital of Sātavāhanas suggest that it was washed away by floods in first century and never regained its earlier glory in later times, see IAR, 1965-6, p.28, but Sharma has counted it in the list of the decayed township of Gupta and post-Gupta times.


43. The theoretical formulations also suggest that the surplus agrarian production is the first requisite of an urban culture.


46. Ibid.
49. Ibid. This question has been discussed in Harry W. Pearson, "The economy has no surplus", American Anthropologist, vol. lxi, 1979, pp.185-99.
52. Chakrabarti, op.cit., p.31.
54. Sjoberg, op.cit., p.10.
56. R. Redfield, "Civilizations as things thought about", in Ancient cities of the Indus, pp.6-11.
59. Childe attributes technological innovations carried out by the agricultural and non-agricultural population as the important factor in the rise of cities. See idem, What happened in history, rpt., 1971, pp.97 ff.
60. Sjoberg, op.cit., p.75.
62. Some urban centres exhibited common elements which were not very distinct from rural units. For example, industries, fairs, guilds, corporations, religious beliefs were common to all of them. The distinction was only of "degree" in them and not of "kind", see C.R. Kuppuswamy, *Economic conditions in Karnataka, A.D. 973 - A.D. 1336*, p.95.

63. Various regional researches carried out by scholars show that urbanization was geographically a widespread phenomenon during this period, though it was a slow process at the beginning, see, O.P. Prasad, *op.cit.*; T. Venkateswara Rao, *Local bodies in pre-Vijayanagara Andhra*, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Karnataka University, Dharwar, 1975; Chattopadhyaya, "Markets and merchants in early medieval Rajasthan", *Social Science Probing*, vol. ii, 1985, pp.413-40; Amita Ray, "Urbanization in Bengal", *op.cit.*, pp.9-46.


66. *EG*, vol. x, no. 47, refers to the use of forest land for agricultural purposes; *EI*, vol. xv, pp.307-11, records a grant of land in a forest region for crop cultivation.


67a. Ibid., II, 3-6.

68. H.M. Elliot and Dowson, *The history of India as told by its own historians*, vol. i, rpt., Allahabad, n.d., p.90.


70. Ibid., p.129.

71. *IA*, vol. xvi, p.209.


76. Champaklakshmi, "Growth of urban centres in south India", *op.cit.*, pp.1-29.

77. It is believed that the temples owed their importance to the grants of lands made by the rulers and the feudals; see B.K. Pandeya, *Temple economy under the Colas (c.A.D.850-1070)*, New Delhi, 1984, p.135.

78. Towns such as Somnāth, Prthudaka, Siyađoni, Tattāndapura, Tanjore, Kudumūkku, etc., all owe their importance to the temple establishments.


80. There are many references to different crops, fruits, etc. produced in these states; and epigraphs refer to a large number of towns under the regional petty monarchs as capital towns, small trade centres, big emporiums and pilgrim centres, etc. The rise and fall of many kingdoms in early medieval India have been critically analysed by R.S. Tripathi in his presidential address (PIHC,sixth session, Aligarh, 1943, pp.138-60) but urban situation escapes his attention.

81. V. Gordon Childe accepts that a system of taxation reflects the working and skill of government which in turn brings urban centres.

82. D.C. Sircar, *Select inscriptions bearing on Indian history and civilization (from the sixth to the eighteenth century A.D.)*, vol. ii, Delhi, 1983, p.274.
In fact the powerful feudatories dominated the political scene in some regions but that does not mean king was totally suppressed and dominated by them. Both of them simultaneously worked for the improvement of agricultural output by encouraging the construction of irrigational canals and also by encouraging art activities in their respective regions. This consequently led to "temple urbanization" in south India; see Stein, op.cit., pp.241-53, and "market economy" in north India, see Nandi, op.cit., pp.181-2.

The land grants were profusely made to the religious and secular donees in this period. If these were the major causes of decline of urban centres in pre-ninth centuries, why not later when in the tenth-eleventh centuries the urban activity was geographically widespread amidst the similar pattern of land grant economy? See D.C. Sircar, Political and administrative system of ancient and medieval India, Delhi, 1974, p.32.

Despite this it is not to deny that India suffered economically after the downfall of Roman empire which ended favourable trade contacts between India and Rome. But India had trade contacts with the kingdoms of South-east Asia, China, and also with some European countries.

R.S. Sharma and other scholars mention that lack of coined money is a sign of deurbanization and decline in urban activity. But these riddles regarding the paucity of coins require serious attention of the archaeologists working in India, which would definitely help us in reaching at some reliable conclusions.
89. The sources refer to numerous hattas and nagarams working as markets in the village and towns, in which various commodities were bought and sold. There are references to big and small merchants in the sources who carried out trade in different commodities. The establishment of markets and nagarams led to the initial urbanization of the settlements, because in addition to the local products, markets definitely had other commodities also, and the growth of one market resulted into the emergence of merchants, and then the process further got impetus by founding of residential complexes. There are references to the powerful guilds of merchants who carried on profitable trade not even within India but also with foreign countries.


91. Important works like Kāvyamāṇāsā, Karpūramanḍarī, Yuktikalpatarī, Gānitasārasamgraha, Samarāṅgarasūtradhāra, Mavamata, Rājavarma, Rāmacarita etc. all were written during this period.


96. Kāmasūtra, IV, 2.

97. Amarakoṣa, 11, 2.


105. *Mayamata*, ch. X.
106. *Mānasāra*, ch. X.
109. *Aparājitaprocchā*, chs. LIII, 18; LXXVIII, 26, 27, 28.
110. *Grāma* meant a village but in some instances it is used for the towns such as Veṇugrāma, Maṅigrāma, Viṣṇugrāma, and Kīrgrāma which were urban settlements.
111. *EI*, vol. xiv, p. 325.
112. *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 188.
116. In south India the epithet *nagaram* is used with the market towns, which acted as the centres of redistribution of commodities to local villages clustering around.
117. *EI*, vol. v, p. 29.
120. Kāṇchi puram during the early medieval period was a town of commercial importance. Undoubtedly it had religious and political importance too.
121. *IA*, vol. x, pp. 185-7. An epigraph of eleventh century refers to Dērmavoḷal in Dharwāl district as mahānagara where the sixteen *settis* made endowments to the temple of Tārāṇāra.
122. SII, vol. xv, p.120.


124. Erīvipāṭṭana settlement worked as centres of trade in frontier and remote areas where there was great need of markets; cf. Kenneth R. Hall, Trade and statecraft in the age of Cōlas, New Delhi, 1980, p.151.

125. EI, vol. i, p. 44; in this epigraph (eleventh century) Maṇigrāma is referred to as a town of merchants on the Konkan coast which carried on trade with the foreign lands also. Also see EI, vol. xiii, pp.15-36 for Venugrāma and EI, vol. i, pp.97-118 for Kīragrāma.


127. In the epigraph of tenth century Tattēndapura is referred to as a town which had a market place, merchants, temples, streets big and small; cf. EI, vol. xix, pp.52-7.


130. Pāñini-Śūtra-Pāṭha, 6.2.126.

131. Mānasāra, ch. X.


133. The capital town of Rāṣhtrakūṭas was Mānyakheṭa which was established by Amoghvarsha suggests that at places kheta meant a capital town.


137. Aparājita-prcchā, ch. LXX, 3.


140. Ibid., p.5; *SI*, vol. iii, pp.268-76; also vol. 1, p.40.

141. *Mānasāra*, ch. X.

142. *Mayamata*, ch. X.


144. *Aparājitapracchā*, ch. LXIII, 26.

145. *EI*, vol. v, p.29.


147. *Brihat Saṁhitā*, ch. XLVII, 16-17.

148. *Mayamata*, ch. X.


150. *Samarāṅgasūtradhāra*, ch. XVIII, 5.


152. Similarly Vālikandapuram is mentioned as a trade centre in south India where local and itinerant merchants carried on regular trade.

153. O.P. Prasad refers to *pattana, nagara, mahāpattana* and *mahānagara* for the towns in early medieval Karnataka, *op.cit.*, p.105 ff.


156. Kāṭṭūr in Chingleput district was one such centre where mercantile community challenged the local residents, *ARIB*, 1912, no.256.
157. Samarāṅgaṇasūtracāra, ch. XVIII, 6; this epithet also occurs in the Milindapañho for the city of Śāgala which denote the commercial importance of the town; cited in V.K. Thakur, op.cit., p.22.

158. Ibid.


160. The archaeological data has been used both by V.K. Thakur and R.S. Sharma for the study of urbanization during this period.


162. Ibid., p.2.


164. EI, vol. 1, pp.84-90; see Hall, Trade and statecraft in the age of Cōlas, especially ch. VI for inter-state and inter-regional trade.

165. Recent researches carried out by Amita Ray point out that in Bengal urbanization was a recognizable process and fully grown urban centres existed from the sixth century onwards, see Amita Ray, "Urbanization in Bengal", pp.9-46.