CHAPTER II

GROWTH MECHANISM OF URBAN SETTLEMENTS

Urban process is a complex system and comprises a set of entities, objects, activities, infrastructure and land which are simultaneously interdependent and interactive among themselves. The study of it requires an understanding of the city structure, the pattern and the nature of the forces involved in its creation and maintenance. It is the oldest artefact of a civilized life. It has been variously defined exhibiting varying features almost distinct from rural settlement. Its population is denser; occasionally, a limited part of its area is utilized for agricultural purposes and most area is usually inhabited by non-agriculturists such as merchants, artisans, administrative officials, etc. A city performs diverse functions and may be considered as a political, economic, administrative and religious centre. The different functions performed by it necessarily suggest that city is never inhabited by only a crowd who has to buy food by selling something else in exchange for it.\(^1\) A mere increase in population cannot transform a rural settlement into an urban centre, similarly political power alone cannot create an urban settlement unless it is accompanied by other constituents which are equally indispensable for bringing urbanization. Same is the case with religion; no doubt, it is an important aiding factor in initiating urban growth but is not an isolated
one which is enough to convert a village into a city unless other requisites of a city are present. These include surplus product, mercantile class, markets and political power, which in turn, sustain an urban population. In this context, it may be suggested that basically the surplus agrarian production presupposes an urban settlement. Until the farmers produce surplus, the political power which thrive on the taxes derived from the farmers, cannot exist. Similarly the absence of strong political apparatus leads to lawlessness that affects the process of surplus distribution system, and therefore, such apparatus is crucial for urbanization. The mercantile class helps in the transfer of surplus produce from one place to another, but there does not exist an instance where a significant city had come forth through commerce alone.

The agricultural surplus is the complementary base for the emergence and development of an urban centre. No city can rise and grow unless it has a strong hinterland to supply sufficient food for the sustenance of the non-agriculturist class inhabiting the urban areas. A very existence of urban centre presupposes a presence of surplus producing rural communities, as both rural and urban units of human habitation are interdependent and work in mutual co-ordination. Some scholars, however, seem to have undermined the importance of surplus, which is the very basis of trade and strong political system, a most essential ingredient for the urban development.
The question arises: what are the basic constituents of an urban centre, and how a few rural settlements become active urban units with the passage of time? The difference between the rural and urban is not only of the density of population, area or economic resources only. But the urban process is very complicated and massive. It is bound up with different aspects of human life such as economic development, technological advancement and social awareness. It envisages a state of development where, among other requisites, a compact habitat of people within a delimited area with strong industrial base having a strong governing body exist for the residents of the city.

No single autonomous factor can be considered responsible for the origin of urban centres. While analysing the different aspects of urban centres, diverse constituents of a city come into forefront, thus initiating an urban activity. In some cases trade dominates, and in others, religion is the persistent and most important factor. Other factors of prime importance such as agricultural surplus, administrative set-up, a peculiar geographical location, etc., are common which affect the growth of an urban centre. A few scholars correlate the process of urbanization with commerce alone.

Some of the important factors which encouraged urban growth in early medieval period during the period c.A.D.750-1200, are enumerated below:
1. **Agrarian Expansion**  
   a. increased food-production  
   b. reclamation of lands  
   c. issuing innumerable land grants  
   d. irrigational facilities  
   e. emergence of land lords

2. **Religion**  
   a. temples as redistributive centres  
   b. occasional congregations and festive gatherings  
   c. religious ideologies

3. **Political**  
   a. administrative compulsions  
   b. military camps  
   c. feudatories  
   d. city defence system

4. **Economic**  
   a. trade and commerce  
   b. markets (*hattas*)  
   c. guilds  
   d. industries

5. **Education**

6. **Technological advancement**

7. **Geography**
8. **Population**

9. **Migration**

10. **Social stratification.**

Agrarian expansion plays a crucial role in the emergence and growth of cities. The availability of surplus is an essential requisite for the sustenance of urban population. The city, in fact, is never engaged directly in food-production; it, however, indulges directly in craft-production, industries and trade both internal and external. The increased food production comes from the increased opportunities given to peasants, the practice of issuing land grants to non-peasants such as brāhmaṇas and temples, along with the incentives given for the reclamation of forest and other virgin lands, and irrigational facilities.

The post-Gupta period saw the rise of new land operating class, characterized by the introduction of new system of land grants to brāhmaṇas, temples and other officials in lieu of their services. This new social phenomenon tremendously helped in the cultivation of distant virgin lands. The donations were made of forest land for the agricultural purposes which undeniably increased the crop production. An inscription of sixth-seventh century of Maurya AnirjitaVarman mentions the clearing of a forest tract for cultivation. It is mentioned in the sources that Pratāparudra, a Kākatiya ruler, increased the extent of cultivable land by cutting out forests and bringing fresh land under cultivation. The Pallava and early Cōla rulers
also deforested large tracts of land and made them fit for
cultivation.\textsuperscript{8} The epigraph of A.D. 1071 refers to a clearing
of patch of forest for the cultivation of rice and rice-fields
were laid there by a merchant.\textsuperscript{9} Again a record of twelfth
century from Belur refers to the cutting down of village and
excavation of two tanks for irrigational purposes by some Adi
Gavunda.\textsuperscript{10} The \textit{Rājatarangini} refers to reclamation of land
for cultivation and foundation of villages with teeming
population.\textsuperscript{11} It is further stated in the text that reclamation
of land resulted into increased cultivable lands and food
production. Especially rice cultivation increased substantially
and the price of a \textit{khārī} of rice in Kashmir fell from a two
hundred dīnārs to thirty-six dīnārs.\textsuperscript{12} The reclaimed land was
provided with improved irrigational facilities, removing their
dependence solely on natural resources like rain, rivers, etc.
The process of reclamation of land definitely played a significant
role in increasing the agricultural produce by allocating more
and more areas for cultivation.

The grants to religious and secular beneficiaries opened
more and more fallow and virgin land for agricultural purposes.
The land grants were given in backward areas whereby introducing
new methods of cultivation the food production increased. The
Cambay plates of Govinda IV of Rāṣṭrakūṭa dynasty stipulates
that six hundred villages were granted to brāhmaṇas and eight
hundred to temples for religious and educational purposes.\textsuperscript{13}
Apparently it suggests that these donations might have definitely
enhanced the fertility and productivity of land for meeting the
requirements of students and teachers living in that area. Land grants to temples further helped the agrarian expansion during this period. The temple assumed great importance in the social and religious life of the people. Inscriptional evidence refer to a great number of land grants made to temples.\textsuperscript{14} The land owned by temples was used for agricultural purposes for growing fruits and other commodities required by the temples for daily use. The temples also participated in trade by leasing shops to the traders, they maintained schools and colleges out of the money earned through these transactions.

The irrigational facilities provided to the cultivable land facilitated agrarian production. The development of new techniques of irrigation in the seventh and eighth centuries increased the fertility and productivity of agricultural tracts in the country. Many canals, tanks and wells were dug to ensure a proper supply of water to the fields. This obviously permitted the larger population to settle together in those areas, which had irrigational facilities for the cultivable land. In early medieval Gujarat and Rajasthan irrigation was provided by tanks and wells. An inscription of seventh century mentions a tank in the village of Rajasthan for irrigating the field, it also specified the boundary of the village.\textsuperscript{15} The Sevādi copper plates of A.D. 1119 mention reservoirs for the irrigational purposes.\textsuperscript{16} An inscription of twelfth century refers to an excavation of tank by Gangādhara, a counsellor of king Rudramana in the Gaya district for irrigating the tract of land.\textsuperscript{17}
Karnataka is known for a large number of tanks which were constructed for agricultural operations. Increased productivity and fertility of soil in Kashmir was brought by irrigational facilities made available to the agriculturists. In south India land was irrigated by canals and tanks. The inscription of Uttama Cōla mentions that land shall enjoy the privilege of being irrigated by canal dug out and no branches were to be cut out of this canal. There are many other references to tanks constructed by the state and private individuals for improving the fertility of land.

Besides tanks, well irrigation was also in vogue. An inscription of tenth century from north India refers to a well where a leather bucket was used for drawing water. In Karnataka also wells were dug both by the state and private officials for irrigating the fields. Similarly, step wells or वृपिस were most popular in Rajasthan and Gujarat areas. The water of these वृपिस was not only used for irrigating the fields but it could also be used for drinking purposes.

It is significant to note that from the sixth century onwards there is a reference in the sources to araghatta (ghatiyantra) or water lifting machine set up on a well for irrigating the fields. An inscription from Banswara of Paramāras V.S. 1116, refers to the fields irrigated by an araghatta. Another inscription of twelfth century of Kelhanadeva mentions the fields irrigated by an araghatta. In Kashmir also this device was used for the irrigational purposes in the early medieval period. The king Lalitāditya has been credited
with the erection of water-wheels which lifted water from Jhelum for irrigating the villages near Cakradhara.  

The innovation of better agricultural techniques and cultivation of virgin land led to the greater agricultural yield. The wet-cultivation was expanded and new food crops were introduced such as vine crops and garden production. The greater socialization of wild and marginally grown cereals was also the special feature of this period.

The increase in the production of different varieties of rice, wheat, barley, peas, lentils etc. are referred to in the Amarakosa; and also in an another text, Paryāyamuktāvalī. An Arab traveller Ibn Khurdadbeh refers to the export of rice from certain parts of Andhra to Sarandib or Ceylon in the ninth century. The production of sugarcane was started in the country during this period for the manufacture of jaggery. The literary sources of the period frequently mention the cultivation of sugarcane. The Rāmacarita refers to the cultivation of sugarcane in Varendrī. The Kāvyamīmāṃsa also mentions a variety of sugarcane grown in the country.

The betel-leaves were grown in plenty during this period. An Arab chronicler refers to an offering of betel as a token of honour and friendship. The Chinese traveller of twelfth century refers to the betel chewing among the kings as a popular habit. The epigraphs of the period refer to the cultivation and use of betel leaves quite common. The copper plate grant of the Sena king shows large plantations of betel leaves in
Bengal. It is further stated in the epigraphs that betel vines cultivated in Bengal formed a source of revenue to the state. The betel traders trading in betel leaves are referred to in the sources who went far and wide to sell their product.

Areca-nuts were widely grown, which were not used on any scale by the people in the early centuries. Inscriptions refer to the regular trade carried on in areca nuts by the traders, the nuts were brought to the markets and then sold. An inscription of eleventh century refers to in details the methods of harvesting and processing of areca nuts by the workers.

Coconut production also increased. The sale of it is referred to in the inscriptions. With the growth of temples, coconut entered the temple rituals and customs in much bigger way than the pre-Gupta period and so it was cultivated on a larger scale.

Fruit cultivation progressed. The Rajatarangini mentions grapes and grape-gardens in plenty in a town named Martanda. The orange trees are mentioned in the sources. An inscription of twelfth century mentions a place Elamballi having plenty of orangetrees. The cultivation of mango also got impetus during the period. The cultivation of mango and bread fruit is mentioned in the Pala and Sena inscriptions. In Karnataka the cultivation of mango increased substantially in the post-tenth centuries when more and more people showed interests in the cultivation of fruits, perhaps because of profits gained through it.
inscription of eleventh century mentions a mango tree forming the boundary of the donated land. An Arab writer of tenth century states that countries comprising Fāmhal, Sindān, Saiānur, and Kambāyad produced mangoes, coconuts, lemons and rice in abundance.

Other than these crops mentioned above Indians also participated in the market of spices. Black peppar was exported to China from the western coast. In Malabar ginger, turmeric, coriander, mustard seeds, cardamom, long pepper were grown and exported also. In Gujarat pepper, ginger and indigo were grown; however, cotton was produced on a larger scale. Sulaiman mentions that cotton was the staple produce of Bengal, and cotton fabric made in Rahmā was so delicate that it could pass through a signet ring. Rashihuddin states that in Kambāyah, Somnāth, Konkan and Tana cotton plants grow like willow or plane trees which produce cotton for ten years. The kingdom of Malwa also produced cotton which was sent to other countries by land routes. The Cōla empire in south India also produced exquisite cotton stuffs with coloured silk threads and pure cotton stuffs.

Increased food supply, therefore, converted many of agrahāras and the rural settlements into big market places or staging posts. This change in the character of rural settlements is accordingly described in the sources as pura, nagara and mahāpattana. The inscription of tenth century records the grant of the village Ereyana-Kādiyur, which was an agrahāra
but gradual development of market place, tanks, beautiful parks added to the beauty and prosperity of the place and subsequently it developed into a town.\textsuperscript{55} An inscription of A.D. 1036 refers to a brahmadeya of Chidambaram which developed into a city after being occupied by merchants and it was named as Guṇamāṇagaipuram.\textsuperscript{56} Similarly the archaeological evidence from excavated sites help us to know the gradual development of villages into towns and important urban centre. Gopāla is one such agrahāra village, situated about a mile and a half, to the east of Sidlipura in the Bhādravatī taluk which developed into an important town having temples of gods and also traces of forts and moats are noticed here and there in the town, which were the special features of early medieval towns.\textsuperscript{57} Kābbur is four miles to the north-east of Maikondā, which was a prominent agrahāra town in eleventh-twelfth century as revealed by the material remains of the town.\textsuperscript{58} Bada was another such place in pre-tenth centuries was simply an agrahāra village but in the eleventh-twelfth centuries it developed into a prosperous town having beautiful temples.\textsuperscript{59} An increase in the crop production during the post-tenth century is revealed by the export of articles such as spices, silk, fine muslims, leather goods, coarse cloth and other textile materials other than luxury articles.\textsuperscript{60} The items of export also included sugarcane, ginger, orange, etc., which brought wealth to the Indian merchants.

The period under review witnessed the emergence of the land owning class. Their rise presuppose the development of agrarian economy which consequently promoted the process of
urban growth. Land lords had their sway on the peasant class whom they forced to produce more surplus to meet the requirements of the increasing population, and also their own needs. The land lords controlled the economy of their land and exercised almost total control on the peasants. The increase in agricultural production under them created congenial conditions for the development of crafts, trade and commerce which are pre-requisites for urbanization. Some of the villages granted to them in course of time grew into big towns. In brief, their efforts necessarily gave fillip to the rise of market economy, and urban process was encouraged gradually.

Religion plays an important role in the rise of cities. In early historical period many of the important cities were connected with Jainism and Buddhism. The religious ideologies and the concept of bhakti led to the emergence of different religious institutions during this period. Most important religious institution was the brahmanical temple which had influenced the every aspect of human activity. The temples assumed great socio-economic importance. Being considered an important part of the dwelling, it was considered the most important constituent of the city. The temples did not only confine to urban areas but they were also constructed in the rural areas as well.

The temples became great landed magnates. They received grants from kings and nobles in the form of land, cattle, gold and money which was invested in different festivals, feeding of
brāhmanas and other ascetics, and very rarely investment was made in trade. Temples had various tenants under them who looked after temple lands and cultivated them. They also managed schools and colleges run by the temples. The temples had their own treasuries, archives and administrative machinery.

They attracted a large number of pilgrims who visited them for spiritual merits, which in fact, contributed to the rise of various markets to meet the daily needs of the teeming population. Tiruviḍai marudūr was one such place which was an important centre of Śaivism during the Cōla age. It developed into a supra-local centre of consumption due to the frequent mobility of the pilgrims. Similarly in Kuḍemūkku and Paliyarai, the temples played an important role in the development of these urban centres. The markets grew in these areas and itinerant trade was encouraged. Many artisans and craftsmen also settled in these areas and brought prosperity to these places. The epigraphic reference in the Vasantgadh inscription of Pūrṇapāla of eleventh century mentions a town Vāṭanagara famous for the temples. On account of this description in the epigraph we can presume that it developed into a town mainly because of its religious importance. Similarly temple at Somnāth in Gujarat was of great religious importance during this period and the idol enshrined in this temple was considered to be the greatest of all other idols. The temple was visited by many hundred pilgrims every year. It had a large amount of landed property under it. The religious
importance of the place contributed to the economic development of the town and consequently it developed into a prominent urban centre which was later plundered and destroyed by Muhmud Ghazni in A.D. 1024-6. The city of Khajuraho was famous for the temples which were built by the Chandellas. The religious importance of the town, accompanied by other requisites, contributed to the development of this place into a capital town of the Chandellas. Other towns in which temples played a crucial role in bringing them to the rank of urban centres were Banaras, Mathura, Tanjore, Kāñchī, Mount Abu, Madurai, Kiradu and Pushkara in Rajasthan. The temple-cities always evolved from within and unconsciously, and the temple became the marker of urbanization in the early medieval India.

Religious congregations and periodical markets were quite common. Such gatherings always do not suggest their association with the urbanization. But basically the town, market or fair aimed at the concentration of surplus then dispersion of the concentrated goods, which is the very basis of economic life. In the fairs and periodical markets, buying and selling of goods was a common practice. This kind of periodical and seasonal markets definitely added to the importance of the place, which was visited by all and sundry during such gatherings. An inscription of tenth century refers to a hatta organized within a week at Ahar for the sale of goods. An another inscription of ninth century records a horse fair at Pehowa where traders and customers came from thirty-four towns and villages. They
brought their merchandise for sale there. This fair suggests Pehowa's contacts with other places. If Pehowa was not a permanent settlement of horse-traders, yet it might be an evolving town and had an intermediary position between a big village and a developed town. An inscription of twelfth century refers to a weekly market fair in Karnataka, in which elephants, horses, wares, pearls, etc., were bought and sold. The celebration of different festive gatherings had wider functions and were arranged for finding big markets for agricultural produce, and also other rare articles of merchandise. This also helped in the diffusion of cultural ideas and ethos among people and encouraged regular trade contacts with different parts of the country. This becomes clear from the above analysis that such activities helped in the development of temple complexes into urban centres.

The urban growth is closely associated with the political system and the power structure of the kingdom or empire. The political apparatus requires the king, the officials, and a system of government for the proper administration. The administrative necessities play a crucial role in the rise and development of towns.

The period under review did not witness a centralised bureaucratic form of government. The country was divided into small principalities and there was no single government in India. The continuous struggle among different powers continued to spread lawlessness in the country as a whole. Same situation
prevailed in south India till ninth century when Cōlas rose to power and formed a powerful empire.

The most important agent of administrative machinery was the king, though his power was mitigated and even weakened by the powerful nobles. He was considered the most important unit who transformed the rural economy into an organized urban economy by selecting a capital, by establishing military camps or skandhāvāras, by founding new towns, by improving relations with the adjacent countries, and establishing trade relations with them. The kings resided in the palaces which used to be constructed in the centre of the town; and it also had houses of different officials clustering around it. The king established his palace at a strategic point from where he could administer his empire properly and effectively. The selection of a town heavily depended on other factors such as natural fortifications, fertility, easy access to the river so that the water requirement of his officials and other inhabitants are easily met with. Dutt rightly remarks that in India "every town of note was, so to say, once a capital of some kingdom or another". The inscriptional sources of the period refer to many capital cities which developed into metropolises later. Manyakheṭa, in many inscriptions of early medieval period, is mentioned as rājadhānī or capital town of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas. This place had a commercial importance, and had a famous market for the jewellery. An Arab traveller,
Al Masudi of tenth century describes it as a great centre of India. Similarly, Kanauj developed into an important centre of power and commerce in the Gupta period when Harshavardhana made it his capital in the beginning of the seventh century. Hiuen Tsang refers to Kanauj as very strongly defended, having lofty structures, beautiful gardens, tanks of clear water and it was a place where rarities from strange lands were collected. It had many temples also and developed into a big city when Pratihāras made it their capital and the place became a bone of contention among the Pālas, the Pratihāras and the Rāṣṭrakūtas because of its strategic importance. Al Masudi, in the tenth century, describes it as the capital which is big and commercially a rich town. Similarly, Sudi, which was earlier called Sundi, situated somewhere near Bombay was the capital of the Chālukyas of Kalyāṇi. The details given in the inscriptions show that Sundi was a metropolis which had many merchants, markets, administrative officials, temples, merchant guilds; the arrangement of periodic markets were the capital features of the town. The sources also mention different quarters in the capital town inhabited by merchants and others citizens who also participated in the administration of the town. Thus capitals grew into big cities as most of the time these were inhabited by the king and his entourage. From time to time they encouraged different cultural and economic activities in the capitals which helped them to develop as prosperous towns.
The sources, both epigraphic and literary, suggest that skandhāvāras or military camps were established at such places which fulfilled all the requisites of a city as well. The king with his officials and nobles lived there. They were accompanied by their wives also. Prostitutes also lived there and successfully carried on their trade. Merchants made the life of soldiers easy by making available to them all essential commodities that they could have in a town. It is further mentioned that garland makers, jewellers, cloth-dealers, grain-merchants, fruit and curd sellers all had their stalls in the camps so that the above mentioned commodities could be made readily available to the inhabitants.

The epigraphic evidence of eighth century suggests that skandhāvāra of the king at Vāraṇḍa had gardens, groves, bowers, attached to temples. It has many trees watered by many springs, they produced fruits and flowers of various kinds in great abundance. This description suggests that it was not only a temporary camp but was actually the capital town of the king Nettābhāṇja of Drumarājakula of about eighth century. In another inscription of eighth century Mayūrakhaṇḍī has been mentioned as a military camp. It is mentioned in as many as five records, it could not have been a temporary camp but was a capital of the Rāshṭrakūṭa king Govinda III, who ruled from A.D. 794-814. It becomes clear from the above records that it was a flourishing place in the time of Rāshṭrakūṭas.
Many epigraphs of the Pālas of the eastern India refer to numerous jayaskandhāvāras such as Pātaliputra, Mudagiri (Monghyr), Rāmāvati, Vilāsapura and Vaṭaparvataka. Similarly, the records of the Sena king also refer to the military camps established by kings. The records of king Vijayasena of Sena dynasty refers to Vikramapura as the skandhāvāra from where the donations were made by the king. It seems that these settlements were fortified and permanent royal units provided with all essentials of a town. The Chālukya inscription of seventh century describes Puligere as a skandhāvāra, but an inscription of tenth century refers to it as a nagara; and in the record of the twelfth century as rājadānīpattana.

The feudatories during this period also initiated the growth and development of urban settlements. Here we can refer to a Belgami, a small town as the headquarter of the feudatory in the eleventh century but by the early twelfth century the place developed into a big trade centre. This shows that these minor kings or feudatories worked for the overall development of their capitals which in turn developed into first-rate centres of culture and economy.

Many kings laid the foundations of towns on personal initiatives. After founding the towns they also encouraged different art and craft activities so that people should settle there. They also beautified newly established towns with temples, various buildings, lakes etc. King Bhoja Paramāra
is credited with the foundation of the town Bhojapura, and he also got constructed there a Bhojapura lake which was the most beautiful sheet of water in India. The city of Anahilapattana was founded by Vanarāja in the eighth century which later developed into an important political and commercial centre under the Chālukayas of Gujarat in eleventh century. Rajendra Gaūla built a new capital city named Gaṅgaikōṇḍacōḷapuram in Trichonopoly district, beautified it with temples and palace complex, lakes and enriched it with walls and ditches which protected the city. The archaeology confirms that this city was big and had many notable buildings in all parts of the town. Similarly, a king Rājarāja I who ruled from A.D.985-1014 made Tanjore his capital and got constructed the great Bṛihadiśvara temple at Tanjore which is even intact now and is an exquisite example of the artistic accomplishments of artisans and craftsmen who were engaged in its construction.

Special attention was paid towards the defence system of the city. The king's every effort was to protect city from foreign interventions, so various walls, ditches and forts were constructed to protect the cities as stipulated in the architectural treatises mostly composed during the period. The forts were the most important element of defence in the country. A large number of forts were constructed in all parts of the country. They served many purposes other than defence. The fort-towns encouraged trade for meeting the requirements of the population living thereby making available to the residents the articles of daily consumption which were not locally produced.
They also met the demands of the villages clustering around. They are referred to as durga, pura and nagara in the sources which meant a town. The Jodhpur inscription of Pratihara Bauka of V.S. 894 mentions the fort of Mandvya with an epiteth having high ramparts. Another inscription of Gaṅgā Śrīpurusha of Śaka 669 mentions a royal camp as Koṇīgul nagara. An inscription of A.D. 875-6 refers to Gwalior as a fort-town of the period, but mention of hattas, śreṣṭhis and sārthavāhas in the epigraphs indicate that such settlements were of commercial and administrative nature as well. In brief it can be stated that construction of a large number of forts definitely helped urban activities to gain momentum.

Trade and commerce undoubtedly plays a crucial role in the rise and development of urban centres. It has been regarded as the most important factor which brings urban activity. In early medieval period trade and commerce played a significant role in the growth of urban centres. Epigraphic and literary sources, suggest flourishing internal and external trade, which facilitated urban activity. The people of this period had well-developed commercial sense is evident from the various hattas, vīthis, nagaram in and around cities and villages. These were the centres for trade and served as exchange centres for the foodstuffs and other merchandise articles. Each of these exchange centres was linked to and supported by the other through the mobilization of traders from one place to another. Regular and periodical markets were arranged in the cities.
The kings and the members of the royal families took initiatives in laying the foundations of new markets in the cities, which served as centres of exchange, where things were bought and sold. The inscription of tenth century mentions Tattāndapura or Ahar as an important centre of trade where there were various hattas, and a merchant community was engaged in active trade transactions. The merchants came there from Bhinmal, Mathura and Apāpura (a place not yet identified) for trade purposes. Similarly, an epigraph of tenth century refers to Siyādoni in Jhansi district which had a number of hattas along with the custom house attached to them. This suggests that Siyādoni was an important commercial centre of the period. Kalhana also mentions hattas in the city of Pravarapura, which indicate that inland trade was carried on through regularly arranged hattas. In Bengal also hattas were the special features of towns and big villages for the regular purchase and sale of numerous articles. The Dāmodarpur plate no. 2 mentions a market in connection with the purchase of a plot of land in Bengal. Another inscription of ninth century refers to kambali-hatta or cattle market in the city. This suggests that different commodities had separate markets in the cities.

In similar fashion nagarams in south India functioned as points of distribution of local commodities, and redistribution of not locally produced articles, to both urban and rural population. Every city had a nagaram where there were many stalls and shops. These were inhabited by agriculturists, merchants, fishermen, carpenters, blacksmiths, goldsmiths and
leather workers, who participated in the different trade activities within and outside the nagarams. By this, trade became more specialized as artisans and craftsmen entered into direct relationship with merchants as their intermediaries.

Beside this a great amount of business was carried on through the ports. The port-towns were generally referred to as pattana and pattinam in the sources, wherefrom international commerce was carried on. An inscription of ninth century refers to Tengapattanam situated on the sea coast as important port-town of the period, where large scale trade transaction was carried on. Kaveripattinam was important port town of south India, where merchants from different countries came exclusively for trade purposes. Nagapattinam was another port town where foreign and local merchants conducted trade transactions and made donations to the temples. Somnāthpatṭana was a flourishing port town in Gujarat.

Besides this a small amount of business was carried on in the villages also. The sources of the period refer to the existence of shops (hattiya-griha) and big markets (hatta-vara) in the villages. The Khalimpur copper plate of Dharmapāla refers to grant of villages along with their hattika which means "market dues" according to Keilhorn. This clearly suggests that some kind of trade was definitely carried on in the villages. In some cases these villages were colonized by more and more merchants and developed into big trading centres. An inscription of twelfth century mentions Aruviyur, a village near Śivapuri.
which developed into a desī-uvavandapattanam when merchants of other localities colonized this settlement. Similarly, another inscription of A.D. 1166 refers to an agrahāra village Huligol which developed into one of the foremost trading centres of south India.

Trade further got impetus when the regular and periodical markets were established by the ruling elites. The Ghatiylala inscription of Kakkuka Samvat 918 mentions a construction of market place decorated with variegated streets and establishments of large number of mahajana folk at Rohimsaka. Similarly an epigraph of the time of Cōla king Rajendra I speaks of establishment of nagaram Kunamenagaipuram, where he made artisans, merchants and craftsmen to settle down. The bronze image inscription from Nalanda of ninth century records a foundation of hattas by the king Devapāla of the Pāla dynasty at Nalanda.

The existence of brisk internal trade is further indicated by a regular mention of settis, nagaratāras, vaniks, sārthavāhas in the sources. They not only traded in food-stuffs but also in cotton cloth, pearls, wood and horses. An inscription of ninth century refers to a market in Kollam where the merchants from foreign countries such as Arabia, Egypt and Europe came every year to purchase famous spices of Malabar. An inscription from Tamralipti in Bengal (eighth century) refers to trade transactions on larger scales within and outside Bengal.
The Dubkund stone inscription of Kachchhapaghata Vikramasimha of A.D. 1145 refers to a town Chandobha now called Dubkund which has excellent markets and thriving trade with all quarters for sale and purchase of goods which were locally produced, and also the products of other areas. The merchants of Rajasthan carried on trade with different parts of the country, and the merchants of Malabar in south India traded with Tiruvadandri and the merchants of Mylapore in Tanjore. Belgaum was important centre of commerce where merchants from Gujarat and Malayaalam country came and settled. Foreign trade suffered a setback with the fall of the Roman empire during the Gupta period. However, Indians did enjoy external trade relations with some other countries. The Arabs were the chief trading communities in India, though India had also developed maritime commercial activities with China and South-east Asia. The Arab chroniclers mention different port-towns which carried on trade relations with the neighbouring countries. Al Idrisi describes Broach as a port-town accessible to ships from China and Sindh. It is further mentioned that in the eleventh century brisk foreign trade was carried on and merchants from every country came to the ports of Gujarat. The local products from Gujarat were exported all over the world. Jirapatan was another port town which supplied rice and grain to Ceylon. Similarly Kaveripattinam is mentioned as a port-town of Golas where articles of merchandise were brought from distant lands and were then exchanged with local products. Nogapatnam was another Gola port which had regular contacts with South-east Asia.
Kollam was an important port town which enjoy brisk trade with foreign countries.

The trade was carried on by merchants bound up in corporations called guilds or gremios. These guilds seem to have carried on integrated religious as well as secular activities of the merchants and artisans. The guilds became very popular and participated in the foreign trade relations. They became so important that at several places they represented in the city council with a chief person as their head.

Industrial growth also added to the urban economy during this period. Different industries such as stone-work industry, metal-work industry, textile industry, wood-work industry and ship building industry all flourished. The industrial products were of good quality and so were exported to other countries. The sources refer to beautiful ornaments made up of gold, silver and pearls which were worn by the people and also gifted to the temples as gifts by kings and feudals. The craftsmen fashioned exquisite bronze images which were exported to other countries. It is stated that south India was the major centre of bronze production, where the western countries sent raw material to be refashioned and it was then sent back to them. The great amount of temple building activity suggest that stone-work and wood-work industry was much developed. Textile industry progressed and the cotton made in Malwa, Gujarat, Khāndesh and Bengal was exported to other countries.
The coins, as media of exchange, afford a poor substitute for the coins of ancient India; yet there are enough proofs to testify that the metallic currency was in vogue during the early medieval period. The coins and cowries were simultaneously used in trade transactions. The sources refer to coins of different denominations and names. But archaeology has not been of much help in yielding the coin and coin moulds of this period. Inscriptions testify to the flourishing internal and external trade, which definitely had some media of exchange by which things were bought and sold. In some instances cash payments were made is also recorded in the sources. This suggests that some media of exchange definitely existed for trade transactions.

We can sum up that trade activities necessitated the growth of markets which are necessary for the distribution and redistribution of the surplus. With the growth of new markets and development of small markets into big led to the process of urbanization, which got further momentum from frequent cultural contacts, long-distance trade contacts and technological innovations.

The technology plays an important role in the evolution and development of urban culture. The use of iron technology in the early historic times facilitated tremendous progress in agriculture by innovating new iron tools and implements for the peasants, which had no comparison with the earlier implements.
More precise knowledge of metallurgy helped and provided firm foundations for new economic organisations. The technological advancement initiated urban activity during the early historical period. In early medieval times technological innovations further contributed to the rural and urban economy. Better agricultural techniques, knowledge of the use of good manure, cultivation of new crops yielding more produce, better irrigational facilities, new agricultural implements, all brought unprecedented agrarian expansion. The expansion of agriculture certainly provided a congenial atmosphere for the urban growth in the country.

Technological advancement in other fields is also exhibited by the huge monumental structures. They comprised forts, colossal temples having exquisite wood and stone carvings, and enshrining beautiful bronze and stone images. The large scale construction of monumental structures was made possible only when the use of not only iron technology spread widely but the science of other metals also developed. Consequently the artisans through their artistic skills created unique structures, many of them are still intact to date. Geometrical formulae have been used with vigorous skill in laying out the plans of temples.

Various aeroplanes and machines used by the people are referred to in the *Samarāṅgasūtradhāra*, a text of eleventh century. These include wooden-*vimāna* machine flying in the air (*akāshgāmidārumayvimāṇayantre*), wooden-bird-machine
(vomchārīvihāngayantra),
door keeper-machine (dvārapālavant- 
ra),
soldier-machine (yodhayantra), and water lifting 
machine (vāriyantra). This machine was used for lifting water 
from the vāpis. The Yuktikalpataru, a work of eleventh 
century, refers to different kind of ships made by the people. 
These ships were mainly made up of wood as stipulated in the 
literary sources. The Jain texts make special reference to 
traders using ships for trade purposes. From the Tilakman.jarlı, 
also we learn that ships were used by traders for the trade 
transactions with foreign countries, and before the ship was 
set sail various rites and formalities were performed. The 
Pallava and Cōla sources also refer to prosperous foreign trade 
carried on with a number of ships laden with different articles 
of merchandise, which were mainly exported to China and South-
East Asia. The Indians had trade contacts with Indonesia. 
Indian merchants had friendly relations with the Muslims of 
Sirāf. Despite all this, the techniques of Indian shipping had 
by this time fallen behind those of the Arabs and the Chinese. 
However, the wood used for the construction of ships by these 
countries was mainly imported from India.

Education plays a crucial role in the growth and develop-
ment of urban centres. It helped in the diffusion of urban 
ethos and ideas to distant places by frequent coming and going 
of scholars to places of educational importance. It is pertinent 
to mention here that the places of educational importance were 
not alone capable of transforming them into developed townships 
unless other requisites for city building accompanied them.
Many educational centres of high repute developed into prosperous towns. Sarnath attained fame as a good centre of learning where scholars came for attaining education from far and near. Anandapura in western India was another educational centre and an important town. Similarly in an eighth century inscription Nalanda has been described as excelling in all other towns and cities on account of its scholars who were well-versed in philosophy and sacred texts. The great monastic structures have been unearthed by archaeologists here indicating that it was a great centre of Buddhist learning. Valabhi had many universities and schools and has been described as rich town, whose wealth amounted to many millions. It is presumed that Valabhi grew into an important centre of culture owing to its educational importance. Vikramśilā was famous centre of international learning during the early medieval period. The Pala king Dharmapāla built various monasteries and temples there which enhanced its cultural importance. The teachers of this university were distinguished scholars which attracted students from foreign countries. Continuous cultural intercourse was going on between India and Tibet. The monasteries of Odantapuri and Jagadalla were famous centres of learning, which were famous in India and abroad. Keshmendra refers to Kashmir where scholars came from Bengal for receiving education. Apart from universities, temples had colleges and hostels managed by them where students came from different regions for receiving education. Tirumukkudal temple-college during the eleventh century was one such institution in the Chingleput.
district which had many scholars, hostels and hospitals for the teachers and students. Temple college at Salotgi in Kaladgi district was attached to the temple of Trayā-Purusha. Owing to its fame, the college attracted students from different parts of the country. It appears from the tenth century inscription that in the hostel two hundred students were offered free boarding and lodging and twenty seven more houses were constructed for accommodating them. These temple colleges definitely helped temples to grow and they played crucial role in educating the masses.

The practice of gifting villages to brahmanas also helped those villages to grow as centres of learning. For example, the agrahāra of Kadiyur in Karnataka district developed as a famous centre of learning in tenth-eleventh century. These village centres developed into centres of great repute and scholars came there from different parts of country for educational pursuits. In brief, the frequent mobility of scholars and students from different parts of the country and abroad gave necessary stimulus to other activities such as art-activities and trade transactions. The traders visited these places along with their merchandise for sale, which helped in the development of these centres into famous towns.

The geography of the region also plays a crucial role in the rise and development of important towns. In ancient times
when the system of transportation was not much developed, the
cities depended for their sustenance on the hinterlands attached
to them from where easily available food-stuffs and other items
of daily use could be brought in carts or on pack-oxen and
camels or in other carriages. The location, of the place
fertility of soil, easy access to nearby rivers, natural
fortifications and natural sources of water were the seminal
factors kept in mind before laying out the towns. This is amply
borne out by the architectural treatises devoting special
sections on types of towns and town-planning. 

Different categories of the towns in early medieval India
refer to peculiar geographical locations. Such as fort towns
or durga, usually existed on hills or near rivers which had
natural fortifications. Similarly pattana towns were mainly
situated on the river and sea-coast or on the important trade
routes. The capital towns or rājadhānī in similar fashion
existed in the centre of the empire from where the king could
easily control his empire.

The central location of Kanauj helped it to grew into a
capital town and a trade centre during this period. The
prosperity and growth of Kuḍamūkku and Paḷaiyāṟai as urban
centres under the Cōḷas, to a large extent, depended on the
peculiar geographical location. 

Triuviḍaimarudūr grew into
important urban settlement because of its strategic location on
an important intersection of the Kaveri communication network.
Gopagiri or Gwalior, a fort town under Pratihāras, was an important politico-military town because it had natural frontiers being situated on a hill and was not approachable. Kālanjar was an important fort town of the Chandellas because the natural frontiers of the fort made it almost impregnable. Similarly, Cambay, Bhroach, Quilon, Somnāth, Kāńchī, Māmmallapuram and Nāgapaṭṭinam all developed into big commercial centres because of their strategic locations on the coastal areas. Thus it can be suggested that geography of the place plays an important role in the emergence and development of towns whether they are military camps, commercial or industrial centres.

Migration plays a major role in the decay and growth of towns. There are several references in the inscriptions and literary sources of the period which refers to brāhmaṇas, merchants, artisans migrating from one place to another for better avenues where they started business for acquiring greater profits. The Ahar inscription of ninth century refers to the migration of merchants from Bhilamāla and Apāpur to Ahar, where they settled and carried on their business efficiently.\footnote{140} Similarly, an inscription of eleventh century A.D. refers to a corporation of merchants, whose centre was at Aihole which was a market town but originally they came from Achichchhatra (U.P.) for trade purposes.\footnote{141} Their corporation grew stronger and spread over the greater part of southern India, and Aihole developed into an important centre of commerce. Varanasi is
mentioned to have many avenues for earning money. The place might have definitely attracted traders and brāhmaṇas who successfully took up different professions and settled there for earning profits. The land grants to brāhmaṇas as brahmadeyas agrahāra not only led to the acculturation of backward people but also founded new avenues for them by the cultivation of virgin and fallow land, which in the long run did help to increase the momentum of urbanization.

The importance of surplus produce, different art and crafts, trade and commerce, religious ideologies, as essential ingredients of urban growth, consequently encouraged social stratification. The society had two broad divisions as producers and exploiters of the produce. This division is the very basis of urbanization. In addition to this the society had four different groups of people which comprised of the brahmana, a learned class; kṣatriya, a warrior class; vaiśya, a trader and śūdras were assigned menial jobs in society. In early medieval period the society underwent a great change and there was a sharp rise of many new castes and sub-castes. The agricultural expansion widened the scope of castes, as brāhmaṇas, other than performing literary and ritualistic activities, participated in trade and commerce. Similarly kṣatriyas took to trade and agriculture. Vaiśyas, other than trade activities, took to agriculture which was the most profitable.

A great upliftment is specifically seen in the condition of sudras who were agriculturists, oil-masters, garland-makers
and goldsmiths. Among the other urban communities potters, smiths, artisans and kāyasthas were most important ones who carried out different duties indispensable for the sustenance of an urban culture.

What becomes clear from the survey presented above is that no single causative factor initiates urban growth. To understand the growth mechanisms of different urban settlements which vary from region to region and time to time absolutely depended on several factors.

Notes and References


3. Ibid., p.75.

4. A Ghosh lays much more emphasis on the role of mercantile community and political authority, constituting an important element for the urban growth; for example, see The city in early historical India, Simla, 1973, pp.20-1.


10. Ibid., vol. v, no. 137; MAR, 1926, p. 40.


12. Ibid., V, 116-17; khāri (176 lbs.).


20. SII, vol. iii, no. 205.


22. Ibid., vol. xiv, pp. 176 ff.


24. V.K. Jain, "Trade and traders in western India (c.1000-1300)", Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Delhi, 1983, has prepared a map showing distribution of vāpīs in western India from the eleventh to the thirteenth century.


29. Rājatarāṅgini, IV, 191.


33. K. A. N. Sastri, Foreign notices of south India, Madras, 1939, p. 119.

34. Rāmacarita, V, 17b, p. 91 cited in Pushpa Niyogi, Contributions to the economic history of northern India (from the tenth to the twelfth century A.D.), Calcutta, 1962, p. 29.

35. Kāvyamīmāṃsā, ch. XII.


37. Ibid., p. 136.

38. N. G. Majumdar, Inscriptions of Bengal, vol. iii, Rajshahi, 1929, pp. 140 ff.

39. Ibid., pp. 141, 178.

40. EI, vol. xvi, p. 74.

41. EC, vol. xi, no. 327.

42. Ibid., vol. v, nos. 77-8.

43. CII, vol. iv, no. 126, v. 5.

44. Rājatarangini, IV, 192.


49. R. N. Nandi, op. cit., p. 49.

51. Elliot and Dowson, History of India as told by its own historians, vol. 1, Allahabad, n.d., p.4.


53. Chau Jua Kua, op.cit., p.93.

54. Ibid., p.96.


56. Ibid., vol. xxii, pp.146-7; SII, vol. iv, no. 223.

57. ARMAD, 1947-56, p.43.

58. Ibid., 1939, p.88.

59. EC, vol. xi, nos. 139-41.

60. R.S. Sharma, Indian feudalism, p.203.

61. Thakur, Urbanisation in ancient India, p.54.

62. Architectural treatises of the period stipulate that temple should be constructed in the centre of the city, always which would bring peace and prosperity to the place.


65. EI, vol. ix, pp. 10 ff.

66. Elliot and Dowson, op.cit., vol. iv, p.54.

67. C.P.V. Ayyar, Town planning in early south India, p.6.

68. G.S. Dikshit, *Local-self government in medieval Karnataka*, p.140. A village in which a fair came to be held was destined to become a town. Cudi, Puligere, etc. were such towns where periodical markets were organised.

69. SII, vol. xv, no.175.

70. Sjoberg, *The pre-industrial city of past and present*, p.69.


72. EI, vol. vii, p.27.


77. EI, vol. xv, pp.80 ff.

78. Māgā, *Śīśupālavadha*, V.


81. Ibid., vol. xxiii, p.12.

82. Ibid., p.13.

83. Ibid., vol. xv, p.283.


84. IA, vol. vii, p.112.

85. EC, vol. vii, nos. 97, 167.

88. *EI*, vol. xviii, p.98.
90. *Ibid.*, vol. i, pp.154-9; in the inscription Gopagiri is mentioned as *sthāna* which meant a town as known from the description of Kautilya's *sthānīya* which was an important administrative centre and at times could serve as a capital also; cf. *Arthasastra*, book II, ch. III, p.50.
92. *EI*, vol. xix, pp.52-4; the urban character of the place has been confirmed by archaeology too, see *ASI AR*, 1925-6, pp.56-8.
95. *EI*, vol. xvi, pp.133-44.
99. The *pattana* town was generally situated by the sea, where the products from other countries were bought and sold, cf. *Mayamata*, ch. X, p.40. Similarly, a word *pattinam*, used in the south Indian sources represents the similar kind of centres which were either situated on the coastal areas or important centres of inland trade.
100. *TAS*, vol. i, pts. 1 and 2, p.5.
103. *SII*, vol. xiv, p.133.
106. *SII*, vol. iv, p. 223; *ARIE*, 1888, no. 188.
111. *ASIAR*, 1916-17, pp. 18-19.
117. K.A.N. Sastri, "Takuapa and its Tamil inscription", *JMERAS*, vol. xxii, pt. 1, pp. 25-30, refers to the activities of manigrāman, a trade guild of south India, in South-east Asia; the other guild was nānādeśī merchant organisation which participated in the overseas trade; cf. *EI*, vol. vii, pp. 197-8.
118. *SII*, vol. iii, pt. 3, p. 263. In the Kachhipedu city, nāgarattār, a strong guild of merchants, represented the city.
120. The sources refer to dramma, viṁśopaka, gadMāiyā, paṇa, rūpaka, kalaṇju, kāśu etc.
121. A few excavations conducted in the sub-continent have revealed some specimens of coins from Bengal, U.P., M.P. and Panjab. They include the coins of Kalachuris, Chedis, a Gāhāḍavālas and Chāḷukyas but these are in very small in numbers and of comparatively poorer in quality.
123. Samarāṇaṇaśūtradrāma, ch. XXXI, 97; also see preface, p.vii.
124. Ibid., 94.
125. Ibid., 106.
126. Ibid., 107.
127. Ibid., 109.
128. The two Jain texts namely Kuvalayamāla and Samarāccakaśā of eighth century refer to merchants boarding ships for the trade purposes.
136. A village Vēgūr or Bāhūr was visited by scholars from different parts of country in connection with the education, see El, vol. xviii, p.14.
137. Dhāra, Arāhilapatāla, Malkhed, Tanjore, Kāriçhī etc., all developed into big centres of commercial activities along with retaining their educational importance too.
139. Kudamukku was situated between the river Kaveri and the Arasalaru and formed the most fertile area whereas Palaiyarai grew on the banks of Tirumalarajan and Mudikondan rivers; for details, see Champaklakshmi, op.cit., p. 2 ff.

140. EI, vol. xix, p. 57.

141. Ibid., xvi, p. 332.


143. EI, vol. i, p. 185. The brāhmaṇas took part in horse trade (which was earlier forbidden to them) in a fair held at Pehowa.

144. Ibid., vol. i, pp. 159 ff.; vol. iii, p. 266, refers to kṣatriya agriculturists and a trader.