CHAPTER IV
THE RISE OF URBAN CENTRES

A major development during the early historical period in Andhra was the growth of urbanism. Urbanization had taken place in the Gangetic plains of north India around the middle of the first millennium B.C. But it was only during the early centuries of the Christian era that the fundamental socio-economic pre-conditions necessary for the rise of urban centres came into existence in parts of Andhra. Most of these causative factors have been separately examined in the last three chapters. An accumulation of surplus was crucial to the growth of the village into a city. Childe has suggested certain abstract criteria for distinguishing the earliest town from any older or contemporary village. Of these, the first two are basic to any general definition of an early town, and therefore, may be stated here.

1) In point of size the first cities must have been more extensive and more densely populated than any other previous


The problem of urbanization in India relating to the early historic period, from the sixth century B.C. onwards has been discussed in D.K. Chakrabarti, 'Concept of Urban Revolution and the Indian Context', Puratattva, No. 6, 1972-73, pp. 27-32. See also, R.S. Sharma, 'Iron and Urbanization in the Ganga basin', The Indian Historical Review, March 1974, Vol. I, No. 1.
settlements, although considerably smaller than many villages of today.

2) While there might be peasants cultivating lands outside the city, all cities must have accommodated in addition non-food-producing classes -- full-time specialist-craftsmen, transport-workers, merchants, officials and priests -- supported by the surplus produced by peasants.

The above two criteria thus bring out the broad distinguishing features of an urban-centre, namely, 1) population density and a more extensively settled area, 2) utilization of only a limited part of this area for agricultural purposes, 3) the overwhelming presence of non-agricultural occupational groups which are dependent upon the rural hinterland for the supply of food and raw materials and 4) the consequent presence of merchants to supply the urban population with the necessities of life. 3

Judged by these criteria, a number of early historical settlements in Andhra would not be surely termed as villages or even as large, flourishing villages. They seem to have constituted a different and larger unit of settlement and may be held to have had an urban character. This phenomenon was possible, because the necessary preconditions for the development of an urbanized economy as enunciated above, were evidently present in a large part of Andhra. There existed numerous

surplus-producing settlements particularly in the lower Krishna basin, which enabled the growth of population and the development of large scale diversified crafts-production and of organized trade and commerce over long distances. Economic self-sufficiency was, therefore, bound to give way gradually to a new economic structure accommodating the increasing number of non-agricultural professionals at many of the existing settlements as well as at new sites. Simultaneously, the need for a political organization to appropriate this surplus and channelize it into the process of urbanization came to be fulfilled by the imposition of the Sātavāhana suzerainty and administration over most of the Andhra country.

Apart from the capacity of the hinterland to supply surplus food and provide the raw material for the crafts, there were certain other ecological factors that influenced the selection of sites for the growth of urban-centres. These were 1) the availability of other ingredients for city-building like water, fuel, constructional material consisting of timber, stone, etc., and 2) good communications. Compared to the rest of Andhra, the lower Krishna valley and to some extent the entire coastal area possessed all these resources in a very large measure. This regional disparity in respect of socio-economic development has been stressed repeatedly in the previous chapters, while discussing the growth of set-

4. See Map 2.
tled agriculture, crafts-production, trade and trade-routes. Hence, it was inevitable that the urban economy of Andhra should have encompassed mainly this very region i.e., eastern Andhra, with the Krishna-Guntur region acting as the nerve-centre; there were only limited—though important—extensions in the interior, mostly along the principal trade-routes in the proximity of sources of raw material and isolated fertile pockets.

It is interesting, therefore, that the earliest of the early historical settlements was at Dharanikota in Guntur district which, with the help of archaeological evidence, can be proved to have had a large non-agricultural population consisting chiefly of artisans and traders, as also a more extensively settled area than the contemporary villages would have had. Situated about half a kilometre from Amaravati on the right bank of the Krishna, this site has yielded some material which helps in analyzing the dynamics of urbanization in Andhra. The remains of the extensive township that arose here between the third-second century B.C. and the third-fourth century A.D., show two main stages of growth. The settlement appears to have had a definite commercial orientation from its earliest days. This is clearly suggested by the digging of a navigational channel and later the

6. Indian Archaeology - A Review, 1962-63, pp. 1-2; ibid., 1963-64, pp. 2-4; ibid., 1964-65, pp. 1-4. A full length report of the excavations at this important site is yet to be published.
the raising of a wooden wharf abutting it — activities connected with the building of a riverine harbour — in the earlier phase, spreading over the last two centuries B.C. The commercial aspect of the settlement at this time is also reflected in the find of numerous glass bangles and earrings of great variety from the later part of this phase, characterised as Period II, which were probably obtained through distant trade-contacts. Again the presence of craftsmen at this time, i.e. Period II, is indicated by the occurrence of a goldsmith's mould. At the same time the earlier remains of habitation, in the form of hearths alongside the channel mainly, were succeeded in Period II by regular activities as represented by post-holes and drains or cut-channels. All this evidence is sufficient enough to give credibility to the identification of Dharanikota with Dhāmānakaṭaka nīgama (market centre), mentioned frequently in the contemporary inscriptions from Amaravati. Furthermore, a rare scene of Dhāmānakaṭaka depicted on a recently discovered sculptured stele from Amaravati, belonging to the beginning of the second century B.C. also supports this identification. Headed by an inscription

6. There is also an Amaravati inscription of the second century B.C., which records the donation of an āvesani, i.e. foreman of artisans; Cf. A. Ghosh, 'Early Inscriptions from Amaravati', No. 38.


8. A. Ghosh and H. Sarkar, 'The Beginning of Sculptural Art in South-east Asia', Ancient India, Nos. 20-21, 1964-65, pp. 175f and pl. XLII.
saying, "the gosthi called Vanda at Dhamnaka" it shows a number of structures including walled chaityas and a building with a staircase, as well as a part of the river Krishna enclosed by an embankment. The embankment is interesting since it suggests the existence of a harbour, reminding one of similar structural remains at Dharanikota at this time. During the last two centuries before the beginning of the Christian era, therefore, Dhamnaka was not a mere village, but rather a settlement with distinct religious and commercial activities.

It was during the second phase i.e. Periods III to VI that Dharanikota emerged as a regular urban centre. The use of brick as the building material was a new feature of this site from Period II onwards. Thus, better arrangements were provided at the harbour in the shape of a brick warf instead of the earlier wooden one in Period III. At the same time drains and soak-pits were constructed, thus indicating the development of a sanitary system and by inference, of some measure of town-planning. Among the associated finds were

9. The importance of the commercial activities of this settlement is also brought out by the fact that a hoard of 8000 silver punch-marked coins was found at Amaravati which, as already noted earlier, appears to have been deposited in this period only; Cf. P.L. Gupta, Amaravati Hoard of Silver punch-marked coins. That merchants resided at this place is proved by the donation made by a sethi to the stūpa at Amaravati in the second century B.C.; see A. Ghosh, 'Early Inscriptions from Amaravati, South-East Asia'; loc.cit., No. 3.

again the presumably imported glass ornaments. These remains coincide significantly with the first appearance of the Rouletted Ware, so that the expansion of trade during the first century A.D. can be directly related to the urbanization of the riverine market-centre. Thereafter, the process of urban growth may be traced to some extent through the extensive additions and repairs made at the embankment-cum-wharf abutting the navigational channels in the successive periods of occupation. It seems that Periods V and VI, particularly the latter, were a time of greater commercial prosperity. While important structural activities besides those associated with the harbour are noticeable in Period V, the next period is also significant because of a number of later Sātavāhana coins of the second and early third centuries A.D., ivory seals and fragments of a Mediterranean amphora. Simultaneously, the Buddhist site of Amaravati, adjacent to Dharanikota and a part of Dhāmānakaṭaka at this time,11 also witnessed the most extensive constructional works of its time.

11. There is no clear evidence to suggest that the Buddhist centre at Amaravati was a part of Dhāmānakaṭaka nīgama during its pre-Christian stage. On the other hand at least three inscriptions of about c. A.D. 100 and after from Amaravati speak of the mahāchaitva at that place as belonging to Dhāmānakaṭaka; cf. Lüders, List of Brahmi Inscriptions, No. 1225; Sivaramamurthi, Amaravati sculptures in the Madras Government Museum, pp. 281-82, Nos. 40 and 45; Chanda, loc. cit., p. 272, No. 48. It may, therefore, be tentatively suggested -- archaeological evidence being meagre in this respect -- that the town of Dhānyakaṭaka at Dharanikota had spread by this time to the extent of including Amaravati, half a kilometre away.
The two phases of urbanization at Dharanikota should be recognised as the broad stages of urban development in Andhra generally. While archaeology has yet to reveal any settlement comparable to that of Dharanikota or Dhāmānikaṭaka in its initial pre-Christian phase, inscriptions of the same period have supplied some information regarding the existence of one or two more. Thus, an inscription from Bhātiprolu speaks of a committee formed by the nigamaputās i.e. inhabitants of a nigama. The nigama in question may or may not refer to Dhāmānikaṭaka. Another inscription from the same place mentions a place called Nāḍapura the name-ending pura probably indicating its urban or quasi-urban nature. The main phase of development however, began from the first century A.D. onwards, with the consolidation and expansion of the early historical economy. This phase could perhaps be further divided into two sub-phases - 1) the first-second centuries A.D., and 2) the third century A.D. The first sub-phase saw the formation of a widespread urban-economy comprising almost the entire coastal Andhra with its centre in the Krishna-

12. Lüders, *op. cit.*, No. 1335; see also *ibid.*, No. 1337. Interestingly enough, the former inscription speaks of a committee (gothi) formed by these nigamaputās, the head of which was a king (rājan) called Kuberaka, the earliest known ruler in this region. The other inscription gives the names of the inhabitants of the market-centre (negama; skt. naigama), out of whom were chosen the members of the committee mentioned in the previous inscription.

Guntur region, and parts of the rest of Andhra. By the third century A.D. it achieved enough maturity for the individual urban settlements to assume distinct characteristics on the basis of their relative dimensions and functions in the contemporary literary records.

The emergence of new towns contemporaneous with Periods III, IV, V and VI at Dharanikota is well-attested by archaeology. In western Andhra, Kondapur was the site of an early historical town that first came into prominence under the Śātavāhanas during the first-second centuries A.D. The antiquities from the uppermost strata belonging to the Śātavāhana period generally indicate its urban nature. These consisted of old walls, houses built of brick as well as rubble, shops and workshops with furnaces and large earthen basins, religious structures comprising stūpas, chaityas etc., numerous iron objects, a great variety of pottery, terracotta figurines, terracotta and semiprecious beads, gold and other ornaments, punch-marked and Śātavāhana coins, coin-moulds. Not far from Kondapur, Peddabankur also appears to have been an urban centre, although the short descriptions of its excavations published so far lack clarity.


two cultural sequences were recognized, the first termed as megalithic and dated to the third century B.C. and the second to the Sātavāhana period between the second century B.C. and second century A.D. Although the dates are rather debatable, there seems to be no doubt that Peddabankur was a town of some consequence during the early centuries A.D., if not earlier. The rubble and brick-built structures were once again of two types - religious and secular. The latter included rubble foundations of houses, walls, cisterns, etc. Amongst the minor antiquities were numerous iron tools and implements, copper and silver ornaments, terracotta and semi-precious beads, terracotta figurines and seals, gamesmen, hoards of coins - silver punch-marked and Sātavāhana - as well as a Roman gold coin.

In eastern Andhra, apart from Dharanikota, the only other major early historical site excavated scientifically is Nagarjunakonda, where Vijayapurī(a), the Ikṣvāku capital once stood. Unlike Dharanikota this city assumed importance at a later date. Yet some evidence for its existence as an urban centre in the pre-Ikṣvāku period is forthcoming.16 Vestiges of the time of the later Sātavāhanas, the second and early third century A.D., are represented by pre-Ikṣvāku deposits at some places in that area including particularly the ones below the Ikṣvāku rampart. The most significant objects to have been found amongst the deposits were two

hoards of coins belonging exclusively to the later Sātavāhanas, besides stray, occurrences of the coins of Vāsiṣṭhiputra Pulumāvi, Vāsiṣṭhiputra Satakarni and Yajña Śrī Satakarni. There was also an interesting baked clay coin-mould, identified as that of silver portrait coins belonging to Vāsiṣṭhiputra Pulumāvi; the fact that it carried a legend, apparently in early Telugu, has been interpreted by one scholar as one of the points proving the existence of a Sātavāhana mint at Nagarjunakonda. In-as-much as this suggestion is acceptable, Nagarjunakonda's position as a town of some importance as early as the time of Vāsiṣṭhiputra Pulumāvi seems certain. There is again the inscription dated to the reign of Vāsiṣṭhiputra Vijaya Satakarni, one of the last Sātavāhana rulers, from this place to testify to its continued occupation by this dynasty till the rise of the Ikṣvākus.


18. Ibid., Sarma is, thus in agreement with D.C. Sircar (Studies in Indian Coins, pp. 107-15) and P.R.K. Prasad ('Silver Portrait Coins of the Sātavāhanas', in A.M. Shastri(ed), Coinage of the Sātavāhanas and Coins from Excavations, pp. 68-74) who have also made similar conclusions regarding the legends on other silver portrait coins of the later Sātavāhanas. To support his contention regarding the existence of a Sātavāhana mint at Nagarjunakonda, Sarma further points out that all the issues in the two hoards of Sātavāhana coins are of a single type only-circular with Elephant and Ujjain symbol, and are of the same size and weight standards.

The spectacular growth achieved by Vijayapurī under the Ikṣvākus is, however, amply proved by the fact that most of the numerous religious and secular structures found there belong to their time. The well thought-out plan of the town at this time was certainly an index of urban development. Reflecting its hierarchical social organization, Vijayapura was divided into two main parts -- the citadel proper, the walls of which enclosed the royal residential area, and the rest of the town, lying outside it. The rampart-walls of the citadel were at first made of mud, but were later reinforced with burnt brick. Traces of a moat surrounding the rampart were also visible at certain places. Inside the citadel were located residential buildings, barracks, stables, cisterns, baths etc. Here again the actual palace-area appears to have been set apart from the rest of the citadel by a thick wall. The bathing establishment attached to this palace-complex -- the only surviving structures -- was well laid-out, with ornamental tanks having an efficient underground drainage system. That the residents of this area belonged to royal or aristocratic families is also strongly suggested by the exceptionally rich collection of portable antiquities found here. The bulk of the population lived outside the fortifications all over the valley. There was, however, a greater

density towards the east of the citadel. Evidence of good
town-planning is encountered in this area too. The rubble-
built houses followed a linear pattern in their arrangement;
they were constructed along broad roads, intercepted by cross-
roads and by-lanes, the measurements of which were apparently
standardised. The main street practically divided the town-
ship into two halves. Shops or centres of craft such as that
of gold-working were also located in this part of the town.
Vijayapura evidently had a developed civic life as the rem-
nants of many places of recreation and entertainment would
suggest. The most imposing amongst these buildings was the
Amphitheatre with tiered gallery on all the four sides that
could accommodate about a thousand spectators. More exclusive
was probably another building - identified as a kind of club -
on the pillars of which were carved scenes of drinking and
dancing with Sāka men and women figuring prominently. Besides
these secular buildings, there was a very large number of
Buddhist and Brahmanical shrines. As for the minor antiqui-
ties, the numerous semi-precious and terracotta beads, orna-
ments terracotta figurines, coins of the Ikṣvākus, etc. give
extensive corroborative evidence for the urban maturity of
Vijayapura during this period. Thus, the city at its prime
under the Ikṣvākus eclipsed the position of Dhāmānakaṭaka as
the foremost urban centre of Andhra.

Gudivada, in Krishna district, may have been the site
of another town contemporary with Dhāmānakaṭaka, Kondapur etc.
The excavations of this site by A. Rea, though conducted haphazardly, yielded not only Buddhist monastic structures but also a rich collection of numerous later Satavahana lead coins, a hoard of silver punch-marked coins, semi-precious beads, bricks etc. In the opinion of one scholar, it used to be the capital of the Kudura country, a coastal region near the mouth of Krishna, which is mentioned frequently in inscriptions and has also been referred to by Ptolemy. Other possible sites for early historical towns include Bezwda (Vijayawada) in Krishna district and Chebrole in Guntur.

21. A. Rea, *South Indian Buddhist Antiquities*, pp. 18-20. The author refers to a tradition current among the local people according to which the ancient settlement had been important in the grain-trade between Bezwada and Elluru. In the light of the antiquities found at the site, Gudivada's active role in trade does seem possible. Furthermore, both Bezwada and Elluru (or more specifically Peddavegi which has been identified as Vangi and Benagouron of Ptolemy) were inhabited during the early historical period, so that in all likelihoods a trade route connecting all these places had existed at this time.


24. *Indian Archaeology - A Review*, 1960-61, p. 1; ibid., 1962-63, pp. 66. This is a particularly rich site where surface exploration alone has yielded pottery including the Northern Black Polished ware of the pre-Christian period and Rouletted ware of the first century A.D.; a large number of terracotta figurines, Satavahana coins, beads, inscribed sealings, toys and limestone sculpture of the Ikshvaku period. In this connection attention may be drawn to another potential site for an early historical urban centre. This is Chandavaram in Podili taluk of Ongole district located
district where early historical coins and other antiquities have been found; regular excavations at these sites could prove to be fruitful.

Inscriptions supply the names of a few more towns of the second-third century A.D. The place-name Kaṭakasola has been identified with modern Ghantasala, 13 miles west of Machlipatnam. Ptolemy's description of Kontakassyla as a mart fits with archaeological findings at Ghantasala in the shape of later Sātavāhana coins, Buddhist structures and a donative inscription containing a reference to a mahānāvika or master mariner. A mid-second century A.D. inscription from Amaravati mentions the 'righteous townfolk' (bhadanigama) of Chadakicha (Chandakṛtya) headed by merchants (sethipamukha). Chadakicha was, therefore, a market-town, possibly in the vicinity of Amaravati-Dharanikota. There also occur the names

Cont'd... f.n. 24. apparently in the ancient Pūkiraṭha, where the remains of an early historical settlement in the shape of Buddhist structures, earthen bunds and fortifications have been found; cf. Indian Archaeology - A Review, 1965-66, pp. 3-6.


26; McCrindle's Ancient India as described by Ptolemy, ed. S. Majumdar Shastri, pp. 66-68.


of a number of places—ending with the term pura, which on the analogy of Vijayapura, may denote their urban character. Thus a place called Aampura is known from a second century A.D inscription from Amaravati. Another inscription from the same place records the place-name Virapura. It is possible that both of these towns were situated near Amaravati-Dharanikota. Similarly, adhithāna or the chief city in Puki district (i.e. the territory near the Gundlakamma river in Ongole district) — mentioned in another inscription from Amaravati was also not very far away. An inscription from Rentala (Palnad taluk, Guntur district) dated to the reign of Siri Chāntamūla, the earliest Ikṣvāku King, gives the name of another city called Gaṁjikūṭa, which was possibly Chīnna-Ganjam or Pedda-Ganjam in Bapatla taluk of Ongole district. Such towns seem to have formed clusters round the bigger cities like Amaravati-Dharanikota or Nagarjunakonda. Finally, a town called Hālāmpura mentioned in an Ikṣvāku inscription from Gurzala in Guntur district. This place has been identified


30. Fergusson, Tree and Serpent Worship, p. 262; Luders, op. cit., No. 1224.


33. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, 'Gurzala Brāhmī Inscription of King Rulapurisadata', Epigraphia Indica, XXVII, p. 135.
with Alampur in Kurnool district at the junction of the Krishna and the Tungabhadra river. 34

Knowledge of early historical urban settlements in the second century A.D. is considerably enriched by the geographical work of Ptolemy. It has been remarked earlier that compared to the Periplus Ptolemy's work records a much wider and detailed description of the peninsula in general, with special reference to the east coast. While this was partly due to the physical expansion of Indo-Roman and, especially, Andhra-Roman trade in the second century A.D., it also indicated the rapid pace of urban development during the period of about a hundred years following the writing of the Periplus. Here is, therefore, more evidence to corroborate the existence of the formative first-second century A.D. phase in the process of urbanization.

Some of the coastal marts or market-towns viz., Melange, Manaliarpha, Kantakassyla, Koddoura, Allosygne etc., which are placed by Ptolemy in the countries of the Arvarnoi (Arouarnoi) and the Maisoloi have already been discussed. 35 Ptolemy has also recorded the names and locations of towns and cities lying in the hinterland of these areas. In the inland part of Maisolia were placed five cities called Kalliga, Bardamana, Koroungkala, Pharytra as well as Pitundra, the

34. Yazdani, Early History of the Deccan, parts I-VI, p.11.
metropolis. 36 Besides these places, there were three more towns in the same region, which were under a tribe called the Salakanoi 37 - the Sālankāyanas of later times. Many of these settlements are identifiable. Kalliga probably formed a part of Kalinga. 38 Bardamana has been identified with Vardhamānapura, known from an inscription of A.D. 1163 from Hanamkonda in Warangal district, and is now represented by either Vardhanpet or Waddamari near Anmakonda in the same district. 39 Korungkala appears to be Warangal itself. 40 As regards the identification of the metropolis Pitundra various theories have been put forward. Levi identifies it with Pihunda of the Jain text, Uttarādhyāyanasūtra, and Pithuda of the Hathigumpha inscription of Khāravela. 41 According to Barua, Pithuḍa lay in the interior of Srikakulam and Kalingapatnam towards the course of the Languliya river. 42 But H.C. Raychaudhuri locates it in the heart of Maisolia either at Dharanikota or in its vicinity. 43

37. Ibid., pp. 171-73.
39. Ibid.
41. Raychaudhuri, ibid.
42. Quoted in P. Gupta, Geography in Ancient Indian Inscriptions (Delhi, 1973), p. 95.
43. Raychaudhuri, op.cit., p. 22.
To the south of Maisolia lay the territory of the Arvarnoi which is held to have comprised the region of Tamil Aruvalar near the mouth of the Krishna.\textsuperscript{44} However, many of its places have been traced as far south as the Penner river. Ptolemy mentions as many as ten inland cities of this area.\textsuperscript{45} Of these the only three which have been identified were all in the Anantapur-Cuddapah region: Karige at Cuddapah itself,\textsuperscript{46} Pikendaka at Penukonda\textsuperscript{47} and Iatour at Yetur, a degree to the west of Cuddapah.\textsuperscript{48}

Thus, with the rise of numerous urban settlements as attested by archaeological remains, epigraphical and literary references, the general contours of the early urban economy in Andhra became discernible by the second-third century A.D. Logically the increasing maturity attained by this new economic pattern would also gradually confer distinctive characteristics on the different urban centres. Thus a clear categorization of these settlements vis-a-vis their relative sizes and functions came to be recognized in the third century A.D., when the process of urbanization ostensibly entered its advanced stage. In a Nagarjunakonda inscription

\textsuperscript{44} R.C. Majumdar, \textit{Classical Accounts of India}, (Calcutta, 1960), pp. 364-66.

\textsuperscript{45} Majumdar Shastri, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 185-87.

\textsuperscript{46} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{47} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{48} \textit{Ibid.}
dated to the reign of king Ehuvula Chāmtamūla who ruled towards the end of the third century A.D., a lay Buddhist follower is described as the bestower of many religious gifts at various nagaravaras, girivaras and negamavaras. This statement recognizes the existence of firstly, many nagaras or towns as distinct from nigamas or merchant towns and secondly, different sizes of nagaras and nigamas as implied by the use of the suffix vara. It is evident, therefore, that in the late third century A.D. Andhra had a large number of cities, towns as well as big and small market or merchant towns. The basic differentiation between a nagara and a nigama, with the latter placed after the former and before a gāma or village, was a concept that originated in connection with the rise of early town and cities in north India. Thus, while the nigama was a town engaged primarily in trade and commerce, the nagara - a term commonly denoting a town - often appears to have performed more than one specific function. A prominent nagara could have even been a combined religious-political-industrial-commercial urban centre. As such, the kind of urban life implied by the existence of nagaras and nagaravaras could only have been the product of the mature stage in the formation of the early historical urban economy. From this point of view nigamas seem to have


50. A. Ghosh, The City in Early Historical India, pp. 45-47.
preceded *nagaras* in Andhra. Epigraphical references to the former predate the statement regarding *nagaravaras* etc. The close causal relationship between the development of widespread trade and commercial contacts and the growth of urban centres in Andhra is also stressed by Ptolemy's references to coastal markets including ports, some of which are corroborated by archaeological evidence. Further, since his work was an outcome of the vigorous trade with Rome, it may be supposed that most of the other towns and cities mentioned by him would have been actively involved in this trade. The *nigama* could even represent a transitional stage in the development of a *gāma* into a *nagara*. For instance, Dhamnākaṭaka is referred to only as a *nigama* in the third-second century B.C. inscriptions from Amaravati, and archaeological remains at Dharanikota show that it achieved a regular urban status in the first-second century A.D. By this time it had become the foremost Buddhist pilgrimage in Andhra, to which worshippers paid visits from far and wide. Simultaneously, it is generally believed to have been made the eastern headquarters of the Sātavāhana Kingdom. On the other hand, it had important crafts of its own, of which gold working appears

51. The earliest epigraphical references to market-centres are those of the third-second century B.C. regarding Dhamnākaṭaka *nigama*. Another inscriptional reference implying the same type of town, viz, the *bhada-nigama* of Chadakicha, belongs to the middle of the second century A.D.

On the other hand, the only other use of the term *nagara* is to be seen in another Ikṣvāku inscription of the first half of the third century A.D. which speaks of a merchant from the town (*nagara*) of Gāmjikūṭa.
to have been the most well-established. That Dharanikota's commercial activities continued to expand is implied by Amara-vati inscriptions indicating the presence of local and visiting merchants at this place. But, the multifarious functions performed by it would not allow it to be regarded any longer as a mere market-town. Dhāmṇakaṭaka now certainly qualified for the category of nāgaravāra.

With the political ascendancy of Vijayapuri, however, Dhāmṇakaṭaka invariably lost some of its pre-eminence, though still occupying the position of a prominent religious and riverine market-centre. On the other hand, if the evidence of the Sātavāhana coins, inscriptions etc. found from Nagarjunakonda is taken into account, Vijayapuri also arose from the status of a market-town to that of the royal seat of the Ikṣvākus. That it became simultaneously an important centre of art and Buddhist and Brahmanical faiths is clearly proved by the construction of innumerable shrines within a hundred years.

52. Burgess, op. cit., pp. 82, 97 and 102, No. 27.


54. From this point of view the identification of Ptolemy's Pityndra with Dharanikota is quite acceptable; the term metropolis would suitably describe Dharanikota during its periods V and VI in the absence of evidence suggesting the existence of any contemporary settlement of larger dimensions in the same region.

In the north-west Kondapur played a somewhat similar role during the first two centuries A.D. By virtue of its location on or near the main trade-route of the time running between the eastern and western parts of the Deccan, this urban-centre was evidently an important trading town, while also having prominent industries of its own, such as those of iron-working, bead-making etc. But that it was at the same time an administrative centre, is proved by the discovery of numerous punch-marked and Sātavāhana coins, together with their moulds indicating the local existence of state-controlled mints. Kondapur has some remains of religious structures as well; but they are not spectacular enough to place the town on an equal footing in this respect with Amaravati - Dharanikota, Nagarjunakonda or any other Buddhist sites of coastal Andhra.

Compared to Kondapur, Peddabankur appears to have played a limited role. This settlement seems to have thrived mainly on trade, since it was also located near a trade-route running northwards from Andhra. Its commercial activities are well-represented by the profuse coins and other antiquities that arrived through trade channels. On the other hand, the large number of agricultural iron tools discovered at the site such


as sickles, hoes etc. 57 may indicate the presence of many agriculturists amongst its inhabitants. This would have modified to some extent the urban character of Peddabankur. This settlement, therefore, must have been regarded as a nigama.

Nigama also had a sub-category in which were included the large number of port-towns along the eastern coasts, the rise of which has already been noted. It is interesting that these were apparently given recognition as another variety of towns during the third century A.D., as is attested by the occurrence of the place-name ending in patana in an inscription from the coastal site of Uppugunduru. 58 It is evident that patana (Skt. paṭṭana or pattana) has been used in the sense of a port or coastal market town rather than in the usual sense of a city. 59

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59. For a discussion of this term in the sense of a city see A. Ghosh, The City in Early Historical India, pp. 45ff.