CHAPTER 1

Introduction

In India after the downfall of the Kuśāṇas and the Āndharas there was no great political power for some time. In the beginning of fourth century AD the Gupta rule was established in Magadha, Prayaga and Sāketa. Śrīgupta was the founder of the Gupta dynasty who was succeeded by his son Ghaṭotkachagupta. Śrīgupta and Ghaṭotkachagupta ruled over a petty kingdom in Magadha. Ghaṭotkachagupta’s son Chandragupta I was the important ruler and the founder of Gupta era. He strengthened his position by a matrimonial alliance with the Lichchhavis of Vaiśali. This alliance materially contributed to the political greatness of the Guptas. He died about 340 AD and was succeeded by his son Samudragupta, who waged a ruthless war of extermination against his neighbouring states in northern India. He advanced as far as the Chambal and incorporated the kingdoms into the Gupta empire. The eastern kingdoms like Bengal, Assam and Nepal and the western non-monarchical tribal states like those of the Mālavas, Yaudheyas, Arjunayanas, Madras and Abhirās in the Panjab and Rajputana and a host of minor ones in Mālwa and Madhya Pradesh accepted his suzerainty. They agreed to pay homage and taxes to him. His southern campaign started along the coast of the Bay of Bengal. Passing through the forest tracts of Madhya Pradesh, he proceeded to the Orissan coast. From where via Ganjam, Vizagapatam, Godavri, Krishna and Nellore district he reached south India. His son Chandragupta II succeeded him in 380 AD. He annexed western
Malwa and Saurashtra or Kāthiawara to the Gupta dominion and established matrimonial alliance with the Vakātakas and Nāgas.4 The rule of Samudragupta and Chandragupta II brought about the political unity of northern India.5 Chandragupta II was succeeded by his son Kumaragupta. He ruled from AD 415-455, who enjoyed a long reign of more than forty years. He was succeeded by his son Skandagupta, who ruled from AD 455-467. After the death of Budhagupta (AD 477-AD 495) Huṇās penetrated into India. The Hunas chief, Tormana ruled over a vast dominion in India comprising of Kāshmir, Panjab, Rājputana, Mālwa and parts of the Uttar Pradesh.6 He was succeeded by his son Mihirakula, who was defeated by Aulikara ruler Yaśodharman.

After the fall of the Guptas other provinces and feudatory states declared their independence and the whole of north India was divided into a number of independent principalities. The Maukharis and Later Guptas conquered part of Magadha and Gaya district and protected eastern India from Huna invasion. Maitrakas ruled over Saurashtra with Valabhi as their capital and Pushyabhutis of Thanesvara also emerged at the same time. In AD 525 an independent kingdom was established in Vanga (i.e. east and south Bengal) under the Gauḍa ruler. Half a century later, the throne of Gauḍa was occupied by Śaśānaka. His capital was Karṇasuvarna. He also conquered Orissa and established his supremacy over the Koṅgoda in the Ganjam district.7 He advanced against Kanauj in the west later. But Maukharis through matrimonial alliance with Pushyabhutis strengthened their position. Śaśānaka also established an alliance with the king of Mālavas to strengthen his position.
At the time when Rajyavardhana ascended the throne there were two political leagues in northern India under the leadership of the two most powerful kingdoms of Bengal and Thanesvara. Later on Harṣavardhana having alliance with Bhāskarvarman the king of Kāmrupa defeated Śaśānaka. He was successful in his military enterprise and conquered a great part of northern India. He conquered Magadha and carried his victorious arms through west Bengal as far as Koṅgoda in Ganjam district, which was the southern limit of Śaśānaka. The rest of Śaśānaka dominions i.e. north, south and east Bengal passed into the hands of Bhāskarvarman of Kāmrupa. His empire included eastern Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, west Bengal and Orissa. The area of Kashmir, western Punjab, Sindh, Gujarat, Rajputana, Nepal and Kāmrupa were still peacefully enjoying their independence.

After the death of Harṣavardhana Bhāskarvarman was overthrown by a barbarian named Sālastambha. About AD 675 Adityasena son of Madhavagupta assumed the imperial title, which suggests that he was independent ruler and Kanauj emerged as a dominant power in north India, in the eighth century AD, under Yaśovarmana. He ruled with glory till AD 740 and expanded his empire in the west towards Narmada, reached western Ghats, Rajputana and Thanesvara.

In the middle of seventh century AD, Durlabhavardhana founded the dynasty of Karkoṭa in Kashmir. The important king of this dynasty was Lalitaditya, who entered into an alliance with Yaśovarmana and defeated Tibetans. In later stages he also defeated Yaśovarmana and captured Kanauj and conquered other areas of his empire. He further marched towards the east and overran Magadha, Gauḍa, Kāmrupa and Kalinga. He marched
towards Chalukyas in the south, but it is not certain how far he reached and how successful he was. He later conquered Malwa and Gujarat. These extensive conquests made the kingdom of Kaśmira, the most powerful empire that India had seen since the days of the Guptas. Lalitaditya died about AD 760 after a reign of thirty six years and was followed by weak successors.

The Gurjara-Pratihara came into prominence in the fifth century AD and settled down in the west of the Aravallis and ruled independently even at the time of Harṣa. Later on they proceeded towards the east and south and one branch ruled at Broach and another at Mālwa. About AD 725 one of the chief Nāgabhaṭa of this branch saved northern India from western invaders and established his kingdom with Kanauj as his capital.

The Vakaṭakas were the most powerful among the ruling dynasties of Deccan after the fall of the Sātvāhanas. They were succeeded by Chalukyas who ruled over Deccan in the third quarter of the sixth century to eighth century. The forces of Chalukya king of Bādami defended south India from western invasion in AD 725.

After the fall of the Guptas there was a constant shift in centres of power and which led to the formation of new regional, political, economic and socio-religious order. Such formation resulted in the emergence of number of urban and rural settlements in India. With this settlement pattern the majority of tribes pursued their old occupation and were converted into tax paying cultivators. The emergence of major cult centres and temple complexes was another important development of the period. This process brought state formation from local through supra local to regional and then expanding into supra regional.
The growth of cities and the urbanization is one of the most impressive topics of modern times. Despite the significance of the city in our civilization, our knowledge of the process of urbanization is very meagre. It seems clear that the emergence and development of the city was necessarily a function of primary and secondary factors, i.e. the size of the total population; technological development; control of natural environment; and development in social organization. These four variables together explain the prevailing pattern of urbanization and indicate how that pattern emerged in the past. The town and village economy are interdependent but the general criteria to differentiate village and town economy on archaeological basis is mainly the size of the settlement. This can be defined through a single or numbers of mounds, measuring one square mile or more. By congestion of houses, abundance of tanks and ring wells, streets, shops, drains and fortification are important features of urban settlements. The most of the urban population pursue various arts and crafts and trading activities whereas the rural population mainly indulges in agrarian activities. The nature of artefacts found from the site throw light on the numerical dominance of agriculturalists or non-agriculturists in economy. The discovery of coins exhibits urban character of the site. The costly and luxury objects, tiled roofs, baked brick structures became trait of towns and richer class inhabited such establishments.

Many attempts have been made to isolate the distinguishing characteristics of urban life. The geographers, historians, economists and sociologists defined city in diverse ways. They consider one or the other factor contributing to the growth of urban centres. Sir Henry Sumner Maine’s theory is based on legal
institutions as the contributing factor in the growth of urbanization. The city in Maine’s analysis is a legal structure resting on contrast and according to territory rather than kinship and family.  

The German sociologist Max Weber defines city as a settlement, the inhabitants of which primarily live on trade and commerce rather than agriculture. According to him city is a market settlement. In his view it is not necessary that all ‘cities’ are dominated by trade but the relation of a city to agriculture has not been clearly defined by him.

Henry Pirenne introduced the economic and social phenomena in the history of early medieval Europe. According to him European medieval towns originated on the basis of trade and were transformed into Flemish towns. He states in his work that the influence of the Roman institutions continued to influence economic activities of the Mediterranean and city life remained active as before, even after the fall of Roman Empire in third century. The trade between east and west was not affected and Rome survived because of its administration and cultural prestige. According to him Merovingian period was more or less continuation of Rome and the real break in history came only in the seventh or eighth century, when Gaul was forced to fall back on its own means of existence.

In 1950’s V. Gordon Childe defined historic city and laid emphasis on sociological aspect of urban growth. According to him men’s adaptation to their environment, with the help of improved or new technology resulted in domestication of plants and animals, which led society towards surplus production and population agglomeration. Childe stated that

‘stock-breeding and the cultivation of cereals were revolutionary steps in man’s emancipation from
dependence on the external environment. They put man in control of his external environment. They put man in control of his own food-supply so far that population could and did expand beyond the narrow limits imposed by the naturally available supply of wild fruits and game, but the expansion of population led by its very conditions to the expansion of the revolutionaries themselves the primitive half-sedentary farmers-or their transmutation by a second revolution into a settled peasantry producing surplus food-stuffs for its own surplus offspring who had become artisans and traders, priest and kings, officials and soldiers in an urban population'.

According to him ‘urban revolution’ was the result of irrigation cultivation, which could produce a vast surplus enough to support the whole superstructure of literate civilization. He gave ten abstract criteria, drawn on the basis of archaeological data, which distinguished the earliest cities from villages. He emphasized on size, according to him the first cities must have been more extensive and more densely populated than any previous settlements. In his view the urban population must have been different from villages in occupation and contained specialized occupation. The surplus producer must pay tax or tithe to the imaginary deity or a divine king, monumental public building, existence of non-food producing class supported by surplus accumulated in temples or royal granaries, systems of recording and practical sciences, the invention of writing, development of symbolic art, importation of raw material, regular and long distance trade and specialist craftsmen from outside the kin group, differentiated urban centres from villages.
Eric Lampard while working on the demographic aspect of Victorian Britain in nineteenth century criticized Childe’s list of criteria. According to him ‘in light of Childe criteria and pertinent archaeological data, the ‘problem’ of urbanization can be restarted in terms of human ecology.’\textsuperscript{17} In his view urbanization is a social as well as cultural process, in which technology may be regarded as cultural variable and organization as a social variable and both are attributes of the population. He opines that organization is also the crucial ecological variable since, in its absence, regularities of interaction are reduced, technology is not applied and the aggregate disintegrates. According to him the presence of cities started with the societal process of urbanization, other features are equally important fragments of urban history, but ecological frame work is more fruitful in the study of phenomena of urbanization and social change.\textsuperscript{18}

Louis Wirth defined urbanism not only in the form of essential characteristics possessed by all cities, but also studied variations among them; for example an industrial city will differ significantly in social respects from a commercial, mining, fishing, resort, university and capital city.\textsuperscript{19} In his view it is not possible to take account of all the variations. He studied the outstanding features of the urban-social scene which vary in accordance with size, density and differences in the functional type of cities. According to him the larger, the more densely populated and the more heterogeneous a community is, the more accentuated characteristics associated with urbanism will be. Thus his main concern is to study the relationship between a number of populations, density of settlement and heterogeneity of inhabitants and group life. He explained city, not only on the basis of ecological perspective, but also as a form of social organization, urban personality and collective behaviour.
Lewis Morgan in 1947 laid emphasis on the growth of human development because of inventions, discoveries and primary institutions. He also highlighted the role of other contributing factors in the growth of human development such as subsistence, government, language, family, religion, house life, architecture and property.\(^{20}\)

Paul Bairoch while working on the economic development of the Third world since 1900 laid more stress on economic and demographic structure in the growth of urban centres. Fernand Braudel also distinguished town from a village on the basis of demographic anomaly, division of labour, fortification and town planning. He gives preference to the location or site. According to him ‘the site is favourable, to a greater or lesser degree; its original advantages and drawbacks stay with it forever’.\(^{21}\)

The location was whether liable or not to be superseded, it was indispensable to the prosperity of the towns. He gave the example of Cologne and Ratisbon two important centres for sea trade and Canton for short and long distance trade. He also refers to the importance of town market, relay towns and suburbs. These town markets provided daily necessities with in a small radius. In his view just as a strong tree is never without shoots at its foot, so towns are never without suburbs.\(^{22}\)

Gideon Sjoberg opines that ‘the city and civilization are inseparable: with the city’s rise and spread, man at last emerged from the primitive state. In turn, the city enabled him to construct an ever more complex and we would like to believe more satisfying way of life’.\(^{23}\) Sjoberg describes and analyzes the social and ecological structure of the preindustrial or pre-industrial city in his work. In basic form everywhere preindustrial cities displayed strikingly similar social
and ecological structures, not necessarily in specific cultural content as the industrial cities. According to him the preindustrial cities based mainly on ‘feudal society’ had a more advanced agricultural technology that produced sufficient food surpluses to support large non-agricultural populations.\textsuperscript{24} While the industrial society in contrast to the feudal order, utilizes inanimate sources of energy, a complex set of tools and specialized scientific know how in the production of goods and services.\textsuperscript{25}

Ernest W. Burgess illustrates the process of the expansion of the city in the form of concentric circles and he called this aspect of expansion as succession and applied it to Chicago. He describes the growth of the city theory in terms of extension, succession and concentration.\textsuperscript{26}

Lewis Mumford in 1961 emphasized the role of the political factor in the growth of urban centres. He stressed that the most important agent in bringing the change from a decentralized village economy to a highly organized urban economy was the king, or rather, the institution of kingship.\textsuperscript{27} According to him, the rise of the city, so far from wiping out earlier elements in the culture, actually brought them together and increased their efficacy and scope. Even the fostering of non-agricultural occupations increased the demand for food and probably caused villages to multiply by bringing more land under cultivation within the city.

Robert McC Adams stressed on ‘societal’ variable rather than ‘cultural’ in the study of urbanization. He believes that the transformation at the core of the urban revolution lay in the realm of social organization. In his view

‘the onset of the transformation obviously cannot be understood apart from its cultural and ecological
context, it seems to have been primarily changes in social institutions that precipitated changes in technology, subsistence and other aspects of the wider cultural realm, such as religion, rather than vice versa.\textsuperscript{28}

Adams criticized Childe’s ten criteria as a mixed bag of characteristics. In his view characteristics given by Childe differ radically from one another in their importance as cause or even as indices of the ‘urban revolution’ as a whole.\textsuperscript{29} Childe himself divided his ten criteria into a group of primary variables and on the other hand, a larger group of secondary variables. According to Childe primary motivating forces for the transformation lay in the rise of new technologies and subsistence patterns. He argued that these two forces were the central causative agencies underlying the urban revolution. Adams studied the interrelated web of changes in society or social institutions that constituted the ‘urban revolution’ in the form of ‘ramp’ instead of ‘step’ changes. In his view in such conditions sequence of change are uniformly and perhaps quite wrongly regarded as relatively slow and smoothly developing rather than rapid and disjunctive. These changes resulted in construction of monumental buildings, appearance of new crafts and involvement of unprecedented geographical range of cultural-ecological interactions, of urban societies. He discussed the role and importance of agriculture or surplus produce in the growth of urban centres. According to him the surplus production was a ‘process’ which developed gradually over a considerable period and in different local conditions. Agriculture creates social problems and activities, which seem to have influenced the course of urban revolution. His main emphasis is on social organization. According to him, ‘the available evidence supports the conclusion that the
transformation at the core of the urban revolution lay in the realm of social organization.’ However the onset of the transformation cannot be understood apart from its cultural and ecological context.\textsuperscript{30}

Kingsley Davis opines that ‘the origin and growth of urbanization in the world’ examines the origin, growth and present rate of progress of urbanization in the world. According to him, the rise of towns and cities therefore required, first, highly favourable agricultural conditions; second, a form of social organization in which certain strata could appropriate for themselves a part of the produce grown by the cultivators and strata comprising of religious and governing officials, traders and artisans could live in towns, because their power over goods did not depend on their presence on the land as such. They could thus realize the advantages of living in town, which gave them additional power over the cultivators.

In his view the first cities appeared between 6000 and 5000 BC and about 3000 BC true cities started developing. From 600 BC to A.D. 400 towns and cities became more numerous and the degree of urbanization increased. The full potentialities of the ancient world to support a large city were realized only by the Romans and they were able to create in Rome the largest city that was known in the world until the rise of London in the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{31} The cities of India, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Persia, Greece and Rome have all been tied to an economy that was primarily agricultural, where handicraft played at best a secondary role and the city was still attempting to supplement its economic weakness with military strength, to command its sustenance rather than to buy it honestly. The dark ages, from AD 400 to about AD 1000, witnessed the collapse of cities in Europe and it was not until the development of trade and medieval towns after AD 1000 that urban
centres once again became significant. In his view from 1880 to 1950 urbanization had gone ahead much faster and reached proportions far greater than at any previous time in the world history. The main contributing factor in the growth of urbanization in this period was the industrialized and rationalized economy. ³²

Robert E. Dickinson laid emphasis on the economic and social change, which resulted in the growth of towns in Europe during the medieval period. He opines that, ‘the city is not merely an aggregate of economic functions. Throughout history it has been above all else a seat of institutions in the service of the people of the countryside.’³³

The urban settlement arises through the combination at a fixed place performing a variety of special functions which are needed in the service of a civilized society. These functions may be carried out individually and separately in widely scattered places. This was true of the beginnings of urban life in Europe. It is the coagulation of varied functions and particularly those of services and socio-economic cohesion, which gave rise to a ‘balanced’ settlement structure which began to assume the traits of a town. Such settlements vary in character and status from one place to another, from one area to another and from one cultural realm to another, as well as at different periods of cultural development. This was notably the case in western Europe. In his view city performed cultural, administrative and economic functions. The classification of towns based upon the relative importance of these functions leads to the recognition of variations among towns from one area to another.

The study of urbanization in India is a new field and growing rapidly. An important study of urbanization in India was carried out by Karl Marx. According to him, the urban process started with the
natural growth or need of clan community or unity in the families extended as a clan through intermarriage or through combination of clans. This natural community appears or originates for the communal appropriation and utilization of the land. This clan or community or society based on pastoral life started handling their activities to fulfill the objective conditions of their life. They managed their day to day affairs as they had managed before and fulfilled the requirement of the conditions of more specific reproduction and surplus production within themselves. Later on apart from their surplus labour as a tribute, they started paying tax-rent either to avoid war or live peacefully or for religion to the higher authority/community, which existed ultimately as a person.

Southall Aidan while working on Pallavas, Cholas and Vijaynagara empire accepted that a development with some continuity over more than a millennium showed definite economic growth in the increasing intensity. According to him agricultural expansion was in these regions accompanied by greater development of crafts, trade and urban centres influenced economic growth.

R.S.Sharma’s work entitled Urban Decay in India (c. 300-c. 1000) is important for the study of urbanization in the Gupta and post-Gupta period. His work grew from the research paper ‘Decay of Gangetic Towns in the Gupta and post-Gupta Times’ published in 1972. The main thrust of his work is on the decay of urban centres and decline long distance trade. Feudalism according to him resulted in self-sufficient economy in which things were mainly produced for the local use of the peasants and their lords and not for the markets. He refers to one hundred and thirty excavated sites which show decay in the Gupta and post-Gupta period.
In his view certain political and administrative developments were peculiar to India's during the Gupta period. The practice of making land grants to the brāhmanas and temples became common. These grants resulted, in transfer of all sources of revenue and the surrender of police and administrative functions to the donees. The widespread growth of land grants in the Gupta and post-Gupta period paved the way for the rise of brāhmana feudatories, who performed administrative functions not under the authority of the royal officers but almost independently. Whatever might be the intentions of the donors, the grants helped to create powerful intermediaries wielding considerable economic and political power. As the number of land-owning brāhmanas went on increasing, some of them gradually shed their priestly functions. But above all, as a result of land grants made to the brāhmanas, the ‘comprehensive competence based on centralized control,’ which was the hallmark of the Maurya state, gave way to decentralization in the post-Maurya and Gupta periods. In his views, the function of the collection of taxes, levy of forced labour, regulation of mines and agriculture together with those of the maintenance of law and order and defense which were hitherto performed by officials, were now step by step abandoned, to the priestly class and the warrior class. Similarly during the times of king Harsha revenues were granted not only to priests and scholars but also to the officers of the state that resulted in feudalization of administration. In his view the practice of land grants was intimately linked to the decline of trade and commerce which resulted in the decay of towns and with lesser use of money. Sharma opines that there is a causal link between urban decay and the emergence of feudalism. However he admits that the monasteries and temples formed wider economic units in the Gupta
and post-Gupta period. His thesis on urban decay is not accepted and there are many contradictory viewpoints. R.Champakalakshmi questions his point of emphasizing only economic factors in the rise of urban centres and ignoring other factors, which played equally important role in the rise of cities. In her view, ‘economic criteria are no doubt basic, often dominant and uniformly significant in urban genesis and particularly useful in distinguishing spaces allotted for rural and urban functions. Yet, a predilection for economic criteria, as capable of explaining urban forms and patterns in different periods, often resulted in a partial understanding of the processes and structures. The cultural and ideological forces could bring about new institutional foci for economic activities and could induce processes different from one phase of urbanism to another, or even play a dominant role in determining the city’s ultimate character and morphology by leading to the genesis of its institutions ‘effective space’ i.e. the organizing and regionalizing principle, which is the essence of urbanism.’

It is not necessary that all the sites with the similar material remains were urban centres. Thus it is important to carefully look into the nature of sites and role of agricultural settlements and rural-urban linkages during this period. The contention of urban decay has been strongly contested by V.K.Thakur. He has analyzed the twin issues of pattern of urban growth and emergence of cultural nuclei in the peripheral regions of Gupta period. He has given region wise data on the urban traditions in north India and variant pattern of urbanization during the Gupta period.

James Heitzman explores the evolution of ceremonial sites as central mediating institutions of growing complexity. While working on south India, he states that, a new type of urban development
began under the Pallava dynasty. In which religious institutions especially temples played important role. In the similar fashion small urban sites emerged around temples in medieval Tamil Nadu under the Chola kings. The religious donations were instrumental toward political integration and the establishment of local power in the realm of Cholas. The temple endowments served as foci for commercial transactions and agrarian development as well. Various corporate groups (nāṭṭār), important individual men and the Chola kings were the main agents within the central places and their changing relationships to each other and to the temples set the direction of temple urbanism. His study is based mainly on three sites of central Tamil Nadu i.e. Vadakadu, Tirukkoyilur and Tiruvidaimarudur. These three sites progressed in size from the single village to a multi-centered complex in the heart of the Kaveri river delta. In his view the temples played important role in the expansion of south Indian urbanism and the agrarian economy.

The model for understanding agrarian expansion through religious foundations is based on the kings or others high-ranking personages’ grants of wastelands or underutilized lands to communities of brāhamaṇas and encouraging them to supervise cultivation there by tax incentives and perhaps by coordinating the construction of new irrigation facilities. The foundation of brahmadēya was a technique for expanding cultivation on the borders of the nadu. Later, the uncultivated borders of the brahmadēyas were subjected to more modern techniques of expansion by integration into networks of temple lands. In this way the areas coming under irrigation and cultivation in the neighborhoods of religious foundations expanded through official donations of land ownership and taxes on lands that were, at the
time of the donation was unproductive. This model confirms the pattern seen already at Vadakadu and Tirukkoyilur, where the early association of the local agrarian economy with the brahmadéya slowly gave way to a framework of temple control, as irrigation agriculture in the vicinity of sacred shrines expanded in two stages.\textsuperscript{38}

The study of temple landholding reveals that temples in central Tamil Nadu grew from small bodies into larger ritual centres integrating within their administrative frameworks the major religious institutions of the later Chola period and the agrarian resources from local and even distant lands. The expansion of the ritual centres coincided with a ‘temple urbanism’ focused within adjacent settlements. Urban development remained closely bound to the agrarian interests of temples and temple donors.

After AD 1000, secular donors, brāhmaṇas and the king added to the growing networks of temple administration and land control by more gifts of land in places within the temple villages and outside the boundaries of temple villages in more extended networks of temple estates. The expansion of local temples occurred alongside and interacted with, the growth of commercial networks which was focused on the mercantile communities (nagaram) scattered amid the numerous agrarian zones of central Tamil Nadu. Early nagaram were the heart of the small-scale exchange networks in some basic commodities such as metals, salt and oil, some manufactured articles like cloth and luxury goods, which penetrated, if only in small amounts, even to the village level. The growth of the ritual endowments of the Cholas coincided with and must have stimulated the growth of commercial networks on the local and regional level, with an associated growth of artisanal activity. The specialists in
commerce and manufacturing lived alongside the brāhmaṇa ritual specialists, the cultivating groups and the agricultural labourers who congregated in larger numbers around the land of religious institutions.

The next important contribution on urbanization in India is made by Amita Ray. She stated that, ‘the nature of urbanization in Bengal had its core in the village economy, basically the crop-producing centres.’ She emphasized primarily on social process in which rural agricultural base contributed to the growth and expansion of urbanization in the post-Gupta period. In her view during the Gupta and post-Gupta period a number of small and big centres grew up in ‘in total symbiosis with rural peripheries’. These towns emerged out of the māhāgrāmas of the earlier period, depending primarily on agriculture and supported by small-scale manual crafts.

Brajadulal Chattopadhyaya explores that land grants, with irrigational facilities, resulted in the growth of urban centres in Rajasthan in seventh–eighth centuries. He mentions that this was the period when tribal and pastoral groups started getting either marginalized or began figuring, at least in epigraphic records, as cultivators. While working on trade and urban centres in early medieval north India he cites the example of Siyoḍoni near Lalitpur in Jhansi district, Tattānandapura, identified with Ahar near Bulandshahar and Gopagiri or Gwalior as important political centres. Siyadoni was a political centre assigned to feudatories which gradually developed into a pattana centre. The town is referred to as paribhujyamāna a number of times.

R. Champalakshmi in the context of south India refers to the land grants to brāhmaṇas (brahmadēyas) and temples (devdānas),
by ruling classes and socially important groups like the vēḷāla landowners leading to the extension of cultivation, increase in agricultural activities and a more intensive agrarian organization. This resulted in emergence of organized trade centres, dependent on a degree of agrarian expansion. She accepts that agrarian organization and expansion was the base of Pallava-Pāndya rule and continued to be so in Cōla period as well. She further adds that religious ideology and the institutions created ‘effective space’ and played important role in the growth of pre-industrial or traditional cities in south India.

Satya Joshi in his work *City Life during Gupta Period* refers to various factors responsible for the socio-economic growth of the cities. His main emphasis is on technology. In his view improved technology resulted in the growth of agriculture and surplus production. According to him surplus food, currency, increase in population, religion, education, defence, geographical system, individual initiative, knowledge of script and administration all contribute to the rise of cities but these factors are not adequately addressed by him in this monograph. His study does not mention the functional variation among settlements. Moreover his work does not deal with the town-planning.

R. N. Nandi’s work on feudal south India studies the process of agrarian growth leading to the revival of urban places. In his view, dispersal of a section of urban population and the rise of a surplus appropriating class in the hinterland was the principal factor in initiating a whole series of developments. The cumulative effects of the growth of private farming and a servile labour force, improvements in the technique of agriculture and increased in crop-
production resulted in the ultimate growth of a market-economy during the eleventh century.  

Renu Thakur examines the pattern of urbanization in early medieval India. She classifies towns on the basis of main functions performed by them. Elsewhere in ‘Mechanism of Urban Growth in India: AD 600-1200’ she discusses various factors responsible for the growth and sustenance of urban centres in early medieval India. She discusses the role of economic, technological, ecological, institutional and political factors playing varying role in the growth of urban centres in three separate phases i.e. first phase form AD 650-750, second phase from AD 750-1000 and third from AD1000-1200. Thus several urban settlements with multiple functions emerged in different parts of India. She concludes that causative factors contributed in different orders of primacy in creating different type of urban centres and no single factor was responsible for the growth of urban centres in the early medieval India. Her work is important for the study of urbanization in early medieval period.

Recent researches throw much light on the role of agrarian expansion in the emergence and sustenance of urban centres in India. James Heitzman, Amita Ray, B.D. Chattopadhayaya, R. Champakalakshmi, R.N.Nandi and Renu Thakur while working on various regions throw light on the role of agricultural expansion and intensification of commercial activities. The agricultural expansion is a necessary pre-condition to change rural economy to urban economy in which improved technology played important role in the form of better irrigation techniques, method of crop rotation use of, better manure and seeds during this period.

The Gupta and post-Gupta rulers and their feudatories made land grants in the form of agrahāras and brahmadēyas. Their main
motive was the expansion of land under cultivation and to initiate organized distribution of surplus production, which later emerged as the primary causative factor in the growth of urban centres during this period in the north India. The land was sometimes granted for specific purpose and sometimes simply to increase the religious merit of the donors. The terms and conditions were clearly stipulated in the records available. In some cases the land is granted or handed down from generation to generation under bhūmichchhidrānyāya as referred to in the Valabhi grant of Dhruvasena III, dated Samvat 334 (AD 653-54). The epigraph refers to a village of Paṭtapadraka which was granted according to the mode of bhūmichchhidrānyāya, to last as long as the moon, the sun, the ocean, the earth, the rivers and the mountains exist and to be enjoyed by the sons, grandsons and (further) descendents. The second kind of grant was akshaya-nīvī, in this kind of grant the endowment was to be maintained perpetual or indestructible from generations. The reference of akshaya-nīvī is found in Bihar stone pillar inscription of Skandagupta. In the third category the land was granted as per nīvī-dharma or tenureship. This is referred to in the plate number 1, of the time of Kumāragupta (I), dated 124 (GE). In this inscription it is clearly mentioned that the member of city council made a gift, according to nīvī-dharma, of khila land, as yet unploughed and not given to anyone. The apradā-dharma or the custom of perpetual endowment is the other important category under which land was granted. There is a reference to apradā-dharma in the plate number 5, of the time of Bhanugupta, dated 214 (GE), in plate number 4, of the time of Budhagupta (date lost). These grants allowed brāhmanaśas to settle down in the area and utilize the land properly to incur surplus from the land.
Thus the nature of land gifted is clearly defined in the inscriptions. These are aprahata-khila or nīvī-dharma or untitled land, khila or uncultivated land and kshetra or cultivated land. In the five Damodarpur copper-plate inscriptions of the Gupta period, the plate number 1 of the time of Kumaragupta I., dated in 124 (GE),\(^5\) plate number 3 is of the time of Buddhagupta (date in year lost from the upper left corner of the plate),\(^5\) plate number 5 of the time of Bhanugupta, dated in 214 (GE)\(^5\) refer to the khila or uncultivated land granted to the donees. It is clearly stated that the land is yet unploughed, not given to any one before this and was free from revenue. While in case of kshetra, land was granted with the level (sam), marsh (audaka) and forest (jangala), together with their inhabitants, as given in Nirmand copper-plate inscription of the Mahāsāmanta and Māhārāja Samudrasena.\(^5\) It is clearly mentioned that the land is cultivated or to be cultivated by the donor. The large kshetra or cultivable land was also given to the brāhmaṇas, in view of the fact that donee might be able to make it more productive. Such grants of land led to increase in crop production. Varāhamihira mentions nine varieties of rice.\(^5\) Bāṇa refers to land full of corn heaps and adorned with rice crops.\(^5\) There is a reference to the rice fields with tanks (taṭāk) for irrigation in Salem plates of Ganga Sripurusha: Śaka 693 (AD 771).\(^5\) Similarly Nalanda stone inscription of the reign of Yasovarmmadeva (undated),\(^5\) the two Salankayana charters from Kanukolu (the first plate of Nandivarman I, Year 14)\(^5\) and the Mundesvari inscription of Udayasena, Harṣa year 30,\(^5\) also throw light on the surplus production of rice, which must have definitely given boost to trade in rice.

The Amarakośa classifies fields fit for different kinds of crops, such as wheat, rice, barley, seasmum and pulse.\(^5\) In the
Amarakośa there is a reference to seven agricultural products, which farmers sold in markets after meeting their own needs. In Kālidāsa’s Raghuvamśa, there is a reference to the ārāhīs utilizing land for the purpose of cultivation and producing different kinds of corn in the fields adjacent to their āśramas.

In the Amarakośa there is a reference to the oil made from mustard seeds, black and white sesamum, linseed and ingudi. Sesamum and mustard are the best example of crop rotation and mixing techniques used in north India. Sesamum was sown in early season followed by other crops and mustard was sown with wheat because of tall growth and compact branching. The large scale production of oil led to increased trade in oil. The existence of the guild of oil-men (tailika-sīrēṇi) is referred to in Indor copper plate inscription of Skandagupta, the year 146 (AD 465-66) which shows the large scale production of oil and the importance of oil industry during this period.

Sugarcane is the best example of using and importing high variety of seeds to increase sugarcane cultivation. Bāṇa mentions fields full of Pundra sugarcane in the Harṣacarita. There is a reference to the fields of sugarcane in the Ritusāmphara also. According to Hiuen-Tsang in Kiau-Shang-Mi or Kausāmbi sugarcane was cultivated in plenty. This suggests that cultivation of sugarcane was encouraged during this period which resulted in the growth of sugar making industry in the north India.

Apart from harvesting cereals the cultivation of other crops was also practiced. The cultivation of betel-nut, plantain trees, pepper and śyāmaka, a kind of corn is referred to in the Salem plates of Ganga Śripurusha Śaka 693 (AD 771). The Amarakośa mentions cultivation of cucumber, betel, betel-leaves, onion, garlic,
pumpkin and gourd. Similarly in south India also many new varieties of sugar-cane, betel leaves and arecanuts were introduced during this period. The *Ritusamāhāra* of Kālidāsa mentions sowing and reaping of various crops, according to season mainly paddy, barley and sugarcane. The sources suggest surplus production of rice, barley and pulses achieved by the method of crop rotation. Different type of dishes made of rice like *bali* and *chāru* were offered to the gods and goddesses referred to in the inscriptions of that period. From ancient period to this day pulses are prominent in the crop rotation practiced by the farmers. The crops such as rice, wheat, barley, peas, lentil, pulses, spices and vegetables were grown by the people for personal use and also for trade.

The success of agriculture as the main source of income in India depended principally on the monsoon rains. The area where rain was insufficient there tanks and wells were constructed for irrigational purposes. The use of rivers for irrigating fields is referred to in the *Meghadūta* of Kālidāsa. Similarly in Junagadh Rock Inscription of Skandagupta, the year 136,137 and 138 (AD 457-58), there is a reference to Sudarsāna lake as important source of water. The king Skandagupta restored the Sudarśana lake and also built an embankment, so that water could be utilized for irrigation. The crops like rice required an abundant supply of water for growth. Literary and archaeological references of this period refer to surplus production of rice due to improved technology and adequate supply of water. Reference to the rice fields with tanks or *taṭāk* in the Salem plates of Ganga Śripurusha: Śaka 693 (AD 771) suggests increase in rice production. Reference to the nine varieties of rice in the *Brhatasmhitā* further suggests not only surplus produce but also throw light on cultivation of different
varieties of rice for consumption. The excavation of tanks was considered a popular form of public service as mentioned in the *Kāmasutra* of Vatsyayana a work of sixth century AD.\textsuperscript{88} The wells, reservoirs and canals were main source of irrigation in less fertile areas. There is a reference to the construction of series of water wheels for irrigation by the king Lalitāditya Muktapida of Kāśmīra.\textsuperscript{89} There is a reference to the *ṛhaṭ* and *bāwṛi* two types of wells used for irrigating fields.\textsuperscript{90} In the second Damodarpur copper-plate inscription of Kumārgupta (AD 448-49),\textsuperscript{91} there is a reference to the gift of land measuring 5 *drōṇas* with *araghatta*\textsuperscript{92} and *pānaka*, in the *bhukti* of Pundravardhana. The continuous use of Persian wheel for irrigation in north India further led to increased crop production.\textsuperscript{93}

The different types of wells (*vāpi*), tanks (*taḍāga*), drinking wells (*ōdupāna*) and long pools (*dirghikā*) have been referred to in the Gangdhar stone inscription of Visvarman, the year 480 (AD 423-24).\textsuperscript{94} Fa-Hian mentions the construction of clean water well.\textsuperscript{95} While referring to the tower of Rāmagrāma, Fa-Hian mentions that, ‘by the side of the *vihāra* is a tank’ possibly for public use.\textsuperscript{96} Bāṇa while referring to Ujjaini mentions *kūpa*, *prapā*, *setu*, *jalghaṭi* as important constituents of planned city or *vāstu-sthāna*.\textsuperscript{97} Hiuen-Tsang also makes mention of tanks and reservoirs which were fed by nearby rivers and the water was used both for agricultural and drinking purposes.\textsuperscript{98}

The Mandasor inscription of Malava Samvat 524 (AD 467-68),\textsuperscript{99} mentions Dattabhaṭa appointed as commander-in-chief, by the king Govindagupta, who got dug a well full of water as deep as those of the ocean. In the Mandasor fragmentary inscription of Gauri (c. AD 490-500),\textsuperscript{100} there is a reference to the excavation of a tank by *Māhārāja* Gauri, during the reign of the king Adityavardhana. In
Charter of Vishnushena, Samvat 649 (AD 592), there is a reference to the prapâpûraka-gōpālāḥ, a person who filled cisterns with water in a place for cattle, watering fields and supplying water to travelers.101 Similarly the Talagunda pillar inscription of Kakusthavarman refers to the construction of great tank (tadākam), a reservoir for the supply of abundant water to the city so that fields could be fed properly.102 There is a reference to the construction of kūpa and prapā, in Mandsor inscription of Malava Samvat 524 for supply of water to the fields.103 The Lunsadi plates of Siladitya II, Gupta Samvat 350 (AD 669-70),104 refer to the pond or vāpi located at the eastern border of the village, a another pond and drinking well to the west of the village (grāma-nipāna-kūpaka) for proper supply of water. The Apsasad stone inscription of Adityasena dated seventh century AD105 and the Mandar hill rock inscriptions of Adityasena106 refer to the construction of tanks by the queen Kōṇadēvi. The Maliya copper plate inscription,107 refers to the grant of village Dombhigrāma with vāpi (an irrigation-well) with an area of twenty-eight pādāvartas to the donee. The same inscription refers to the land of the cultivator Bōṭaka with an irrigation-well. The two Palitana plates of Dhruvasena I, Valabhi Samvat 206 and 210 (AD 525-26 and 529)108 also refer to the brahmadēya grant of the village Madkana having an irrigation-well with an area of sixteen pādāvartas. The Palitana plates of Simhaditya, the year 255 (AD 574)109 refers to the grant of a field with a pond in the village Darbhachara. In the Palitana plates of Dharasena II, Gupta Samvat 252 (AD 571)110 there is a reference to the pond or vāpi and a tank or tataka in the fields. These references suggest that the fields were provided with vāpis, wells and reservoirs to retain the fertility and to get better yield from the cultivated land. The excavation reports also
reveal various types of wells existing in the Gupta and post-Gupta period. The excavation at Sanghol in district Ludhiana, Punjab, revealed a circular well-like structure of 6.35 meter diameter and 92 centimeter width, of the Gupta period.\textsuperscript{111} Similarly in period III (dated from first to sixth centuries AD) at Eran in district Sagar, Madhya Pradesh ring-wells were noticed.\textsuperscript{112} During excavation at Rajghat in district Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, excavators found a massive circular structure, dated to circa fourth-fifth century AD. This structure was a brick-lined well having inner diameter of 2.35 meter and outer as 7.76 meter.\textsuperscript{113} The well was constructed on the edge of the habitation site. An excavation at Mahet in district Bharaich, Bihar, also revealed two community wells and two ring-wells of the Gupta period.\textsuperscript{114} These wells were used for both drinking and irrigating adjoining areas. In the inscriptions while demarcating the boundaries of gifted land the irrigational wells and ponds are referred to as landmarks. The first Palitana plate of Druvasena I, Valabhi Samvat 206 (AD 525-26),\textsuperscript{115} boundaries of donated land is clearly demarcated. It refers to a donated brahmadēya land in the Hastavapra-āharani, in the village Madkāna, hundred and forty pādāvartas belonging to the householder Isvara with an irrigation-well having an area of sixteen pādāvartas; further in the Tāpasīya village, hundred and forty pādāvartas, the holding of Ḏhinḍaka; on the north-eastern border of Tinishaka village hundred pādāvartas, together with an irrigation-well, to two inhabitants of Šaṅkaravāṭaka, the brāhmaṇas Kumarsārman and Jarabhajyi. The second Palitana plate of Dhruvasena I, Valabhi Samvat 210 (AD 529),\textsuperscript{116} there is a reference to the land donated to the brāhmaṇa Vishṇusārman, in the Bhallara village. The village was surrounded on the south-western border by the Karada field formerly enjoyed by the brāhmaṇa Visākha and
the irrigation well Āmrilika extending over twelve pādāvartas, on the northern frontier of the Vasukiya village, by the king Dhruvasena I.

The second Valabhi grant of Dharasena II from Mota Machiala, year 252 (AD 571), in Maharashtra refers to the piece of land measuring 200 pādāvartas in northern border of the village Bhaṭṭivaṭa, with a step-well, irrigating thirty-two pādāvartas of land on the eastern border of the same village. A step-well irrigating twenty pādāvartas of land in the southern border of Śavinipadraka and a plot of tilled land known as Pēraka in the northern border of the village of Bahudhanaka as also a piece of hundred pādāvartas of land in the western border of Bhabbāla-paṭaka. This shows that state was aware of the fact that how much land could be watered by a single irrigational well and if sufficient water was being provided for irrigation to have better yield from the donated land.

The Maliya copper-plate inscription of the Māhārāja Dharasena II of the year 252, refers to the boundaries of land granted, at Antaratrā, in the common land (padraka) called Śivakapadraka, in the west of which lies the village of Dombhgrāma. In the eastern side of the common land is the village of Vajragrāma. The reference to other common land Bhumbhusapadraka is there in this inscription. In Siwani copper-plate inscription of the Māhārāja Pravarsena II (undated) there is a reference to the grant of village Brahmapūraka, in the Beṇṭakārpara bhāga. The boundaries are specified that it is located on the bank of the river Karaṇjaviraka, on the north of the village of Vaṭāpuraka, on the west of Kiṅhikhēṭaka, on the south of the village of Pavarajjavāṭaka and on the east of the village of Kollapūraka. The Kendur plates of Kirtivarman II, Śaka Samvat of 672 refers to the village of Beppatti granted to a brāhmaṇa. This village was located in the centre of the villages of
Penbasaaru, Kisumanagalam, Sullam and Perballi, in the district of Velvolo. Such surrounding villages in the peripheral areas supplied items which were not available in the donated villages.

The agriculture not only supported non-food producing class in India, but agricultural and dairy products were used for trade as well. Kautilya mentions that king shall exercise his right of ownership (swāmyam) with regard to fishing, ferrying and trading in vegetables (haritapanya) and in reservoirs or lakes (sētushu). In the Arthasastra rate of interest on various commodities is given and the rate of interest on gold, clothes and grain was twice, thrice and four times of the principal. In Naradiya Dharmaśastra there is a list of fifteen items which a brähmana could sell and thirty six items which he could not sell, most of which are agricultural and dairy products. Hiuen-Tsang throws light on the relationship between towns and villages. About Ghazipur (Chen-Chu) and Kosala (Kiao-So-Lo) he mentions that towns and villages in these two areas were close to each other.\textsuperscript{121}

According to the Māhābhārata the gods cause rain and rain produce grains and herbs, which are useful to man.\textsuperscript{122} One of the duties of government superintendent was to bring land under cultivation, confiscating the land of those who do not cultivate and give that to others; so that it could be cultivated by village labourers (grāmabhṛtaka) and traders (vaidehaka).\textsuperscript{123} The superintendent of agriculture was to employ slaves, labourers and prisoners (daṇḍapratikartr) to sow the seeds on crown lands. Kauṭilya further states that the work of these men shall not suffer on any account such as due to any want in ploughs (karshanayantra) or other necessary instruments or of bullocks. Nor shall there be any delay in procuring them the assistance of blacksmiths, carpenters, borers (medaka), ropemakers, as well as those who catch snakes and
similar persons. Any loss due to the above persons shall be punished with a fine equal to the loss.124

In this period cattle supported man in the fields for ploughing and other agricultural work. The importance of cattle in agriculture is clear from the Māhābhārata as well. It refers to the lean cattle which was never yoked to the plough, the cart or engaged in carrying merchandise, they were well-fed and fattened.125 There is a reference to plough farming in the Amarkośa. In the Harṣacarita, there is a reference to plough farming and irrigational work done with the help of animals (rhat).126 The Kauṭilya’s Arthasastra mentions that the king offered facilities for cattle-breeding. Fa-Hian mentions that land granted to the vihāra, with gardens, houses, men and oxen for cultivation in Madhya Deśa.127

Thus it can be concluded that agrarian surplus is a primary requisite for the growth and development of urban centres. The settlements in the form of agrahāra and brahmadēyas ensured agrarian expansion and surplus production, which later developed into important centres of production and distribution. These agrahāra and brahmadēyas were politically and economically better organized and paved the way for urban expansion in the Gupta and post-Gupta period.
Notes and References

1 As referred to in the Vayu Purāṇa and Vishṇu Purāṇa that kings born of the Gupta family will enjoy all these territories; viz., Prayaga (Allahabad) on the Ganges, Sāketa (Oudh) and Magadha (south Bihar).

2 K.K.Thaplyal, The Imperial Guptas: A Political History, Delhi, 2012, p. 5.

3 R.C.Majumdar, Ancient India, Delhi, 2003, p. 231.


5 R.C.Majumdar, op. cit., p. 235.

6 Ibid., p. 242.

7 Ibid., p. 250.

8 Brajadulal Chattopadhyaya, The Making of Early Medieval India, New Delhi, 1994, p. 29.


36 V.K. Thakur ‘Decline or diffusion; constructing the urban tradition of north India during the Gupta period, in *Indian Historical Review*, Vol. XXIV, No 1-2, (July 1997-January 1998), pp.20-69; also see V.K Thakur, ‘The post- Kusana urban decline in India; Implications of


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63 H.D.Sharma and N.G.Sardesai, eds., Amarakośa, Poona, 1941, pp. 201-02.

64 Ibid., p. 118.


67 M.S.Randhawa, Agriculture and Animal Husbandry in India, New Delhi, 1962, p. 141.

68 Ibid., p. 142.

69 J.F.Fleet, CII, No. 18, pp. 68-72.

70 E.B.Cowell and F.W.Thomas, op. cit., p. 79.


73 S.K.Maity, op. cit., p. 81.

75 H.D. Sharma and N.G. Sardesai, *op. cit.*, pp. 95 and 189.

76 R.N. Nandi referring to the south India mentions that the effect of this development can be inferred from the additional surplus offerings to non food-producing consumers in the fiefs, free holdings and temple *devadāna*.


78 *bali* is the offering of ghee, grain, rice etc. to the gods and all creatures and *charu* is the oblation of rice, barley and pulses boiled with butter and milk for the deceased ancestors are referred to in the Khoh copper plate inscription of the Māhārājā Samkshobha, The year 209 (AD 528-29); in other Khoh copper plate inscription of the Māhārājā Jayanatha, The year 177 (AD 496-97), Khoh copper plate inscription of the Māhārājā Sarvanatha, The year 193 (AD 512-13) in J.F. Fleet, *CII*, pp. 116, 121-29.


83 Water from Vetravati and Sarasvati were used for irrigating fields in Vidiśa and Kuruś in M.R.Kāle, *The Meghadūta of Kālidāsa with the Commentary (Saṃjivani) of Mallinatha*, Bombay, 1947, pp. 47 and 86-87.


85 M.S.Randhawa, *op. cit.*, p. 98.


92 Ibid., fn. 3. as ghaṭṭa. Ghaṭṭa was used for drinking-places having Persian wheel, V.S.Apte referred to *ara+ghatṭa* as a wheel or machine for raising water from a well, in V.S.Apte, *The Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, Delhi, 1995, p. 143.

93 Similarly R.N.Nandi while talking about peninsular region mentions that *araghāṭṭa* device was introduced there roughly from seventh-eighth centuries, R.N.Nandi, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

94 J.F.Fleet, *CII*, No. 17, pp. 72-78.

95 Samuel Beal, *Travels of Fa-Hian and Sung-Yun Buddhist Pilgrims from China to India (400 A.D. and 518 A.D.)*, London, 1869, p. 75.

96 Ibid., p. 90.


111 *Indian Archaeology, A Review*, 1977-78, p. 44 (here after *IAR*).
According to the glossary of Indian terms, H. H. Wilson explained it as a common land, land adjacent to a village left uncultivated in


Samuel Beal, *op. cit.*, pp. 61 and 209.


126 V.S. Agrawal, *op. cit.*, p. 49.