The history of urbanization is also the history of civilization. From Mesopotamia to the Indus Valley and China, from Egypt to Greece and Meso-America, urbanization has always been a part of ancient culture. But it has not been uniform all over the world. Different ages have witnessed localized growth. Although it is an age old process, the ways in which it takes place and the rate with which it happens have been changing over time. There are many disagreements among scholars about exactly where, when, how, and why the first cities began. It is probable that they began independently in various parts of the world over a range of time and for somewhat different reasons. If the periodisation of world history is taken into consideration, the ancient cities were mainly found in the area between the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean region. The old Biblical lands, Egypt and later, Greece and Rome had a large number of cities, some of them big enough to be called a ‘metropolis’. The first cities were mainly the seats of political power. Whether it was the city states of Greece, the walled city of Babylon or the ornate cities of Egypt, urbanization became the product of the concentration of power. Administration together with religious control and military power emanated from these early cities. With the second phase of city growth commerce and trade became more important. This was due to the generation of more and more surplus with better technology and improved communication. The larger cities became trading centres not only for the immediate region but also for the lands away. Pataliputra, Taxila, Rome and Constantinople were such ‘international’ cities.

The medieval urbanization of Europe initially suffered a setback with the fall of Rome. The new cities that emerged were different from the ancient ones. The urban community now was mainly composed of merchants and artisans. With the changing socio-economic organization and with improved technology the city structure also changed to a
great extent. There emerged guilds and cooperative associations and trade was enhanced with goods coming in from hitherto unknown places. The Renaissance brought about the rise of cities like Naples, Florence and Venice and the growth of the ports of Antwerp, Lisbon and Amsterdam. The Renaissance movement allowed the fine arts to flourish in the cities and it was then that the idea of urban culture took shape. Consequently, the major shift in social values turned man’s attention to the things of this world and freed man’s intellect from its medieval outlook. The spirit of enquiry generated by the Renaissance stimulated science, and the philosophy of humanism spurred the understanding and well-being of man. When we analyze the advancement of urban development in Western civilization, it occurred not only in response to the technological aspects of industrialization of eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but also as a consequence of the transformation of the social structure where renaissance values contributed in building up a civilization more complex and far-flung than any one that preceded it. London and Paris, the two major metropolises were also growing rapidly by this time.

A watershed in the history of urbanization was reached during the late eighteenth century. With the Industrial Revolution, the nature of urbanization itself underwent a major change transforming the very concept of a city. It was a real breakthrough as the implementation of inanimate energy and machinery in the newly established industries brought about an enormous growth in productivity. From the morphology dominated by religious and feudal power, from a society dealt with administrative, religious and limited market activities, the city got transformed into one in which economic activity took over in importance where a capitalistic system possessing distinct class segregation started

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functioning. Thus its significance was that it immensely broadened the economic capacity of the society and the basis was laid for the growth of large cities. During this period, in countries like India the whole process assumed a different shape due to colonization. The Portuguese, Dutch, English and French set up towns and cities in the areas they colonized. Thus grew a number of cities like Johannesburg, Colombo, New Amsterdam (New York), Batavia, Calcutta etc. From localized growth the spread of cities now became more even. By the mid nineteenth century all the continents had a large number of towns and a high percentage of population. San Francisco, Vancouver, Baltimore, Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, Nairobi, Cape Town, Addis Ababa, Sydney, Bombay, Madras and Hongkong were a few of these new cities.

Beginning with the Indus Valley civilization until the end of the Mughal era and the coming of the British, the Indian subcontinent experienced several stages of its urbanization process. Nevertheless the story of urbanization in India in historical times is a story of spatial and temporal discontinuities. The earliest urban developments were confined to the Indus Valley and the adjoining parts of Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana and to some extent western Uttar Pradesh. Other parts of the country remained outside the realm of urbanization. This spatial discontinuity in urbanization is visible again when we study the early historical phase which represented a long period of urban growth stretching from the sixth century B.C.E to the third century C.E. During this period urbanization took

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3 Prof. M.D.N.Sahi in his study on excavations at Jakhera argues that urbanization of the Gangetic Valley did not take place in 600 B.C.E., but much earlier by about 1000 B.C.E. at least. For details see, M.D.N.Sahi, ‘Process of Urbanization in the Upper Gangetic Valley in the Light of Excavations at Jakhera’ in S.N.R. Rizvi(ed.), *Studies in Indian History*, (New Delhi, 1999), pp.34-38.
place in the middle Ganga plains and in the southern part of Indian peninsula, while the areas in between had no known cities\(^4\). Thus urbanization in ancient India had two distinct phases. The first phase characterized by the emergence of Harappan cities which collapsed after about 600 years without leaving any surviving urban centres. It was only after another thousand years or so that we find towns emerging in ancient India for the second time. The second phase of urbanization emerged and flourished in an altogether new socio-economic milieu generated by the widespread use of iron technology\(^5\). In South India, however, this early historical phase of urbanization is represented by its end phases as the evidence of its extent appeared at slightly different chronological points in the Deccan, the Andhra region and the Tamil country. Hence strictly speaking, this phase represented only the early phase of urbanization in South India\(^6\). As the littoral space of Peninsular India was utilized to a large extent for maritime trade, the internal growth process of second urbanization was contributed by this enormous expanded trade networks when India’s early contact with Central Asia and the Roman world was at its zenith.

Prof. Brajadulal Chattopadhyaya marks the urbanization in the early medieval period as the beginning of the third phase of the phenomenon in India\(^7\). According to him the only kind of material the historian has to depend on for information on early medieval urban centres is the epigraphic sources\(^8\). Prof.Champakalakshmi locates the period of early medieval urbanization in South India within a broad time span of six centuries i.e. seventh

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\(^7\) Brajadulal Chattopadhyaya, *The Making of Early Medieval India*, (New Delhi, 1998), P.158.
\(^8\) Ibid., p.161.
to thirteenth centuries. She discusses the changing character of two royal cities, Kancheepuram and Madurai of Pallava- Pandya period, as a result of the new institutional forces of integration (*brahmadeya* villages and temples), which brought them into a much closer relationship with their hinterlands in the northern and southern parts of the Tamil country as well as with their ports located on the coast.

The urbanization in medieval India depended largely on the existence or creation of general economic and social infrastructure and the investments in public utilities by the ruling elites. In south India, urbanization is closely identified with the rise and decline of kingdoms and dynasties and also of the capital cities. From the beginning of the seventh century of Christian Era, South India witnessed the great urban development during the period of Pallavas of Kanchi, Chalukyas of Badami, the Pandyas of Madurai, the Hoysalas of Belur, the Kakatiyas of Warrangal and so on. The land and resources were used or exploited in another way for the construction of huge fortification, structural temples and amenities, and the maritime environment was largely utilized for overseas trade and commerce during this period. In other words, urbanization in South India from eleventh to thirteenth century, often described as ‘temple urbanization’, is the direct result of organized commerce through the *Nagarams*, merchant bodies and craft organizations. As the maritime trade brought the much-needed luxury items as resources for socio–political dominance and patronage, it became important for the rulers to gain monopoly control over the coastal region, adjacent to their mainland through which they could regulate their trade with distant lands. Equally important was their attempt to control areas with rich trade and

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9 R.Champakalakshmi, *op.cit.*, P.37-38.
10 For more details, see James Heitzman, *Gifts of Power: Lordship in an Early Indian State*, (New Delhi, 2001), pp.82-120.
resource potential belonging to others. Thus prior to the colonial period, administration, trade, commerce and religion were the key urbanizing elements.

The period from 1000 C.E. to 1526 C.E. marks a major cultural shift in the Indian urban scene. For the first time, the Islamic influence made its distinct impact on the urban landscape. Architecture appeared in the forms of Mosques, forts, palaces and tombs reflected the essence of Islamic art, values and traditions of Central Asia, the Arabs, and more specifically the Persians. Prof. R. Ramachandran argues that the society of this period was divided into two camps - the Muslims and the non-Muslims and a cultural hiatus have come into existence in India’s urban landscape. With the advent of the Mughals (1526-1800 C.E.) the cities were decorated with gardens and magnificent structures and saw the revival of some older established cities and the addition of few new cities. The overall urban system of this time was dominated by 16 large cities. They are Agra, Sikri, Delhi, Ahmadabad, Cambay, Ellichpur, Burhanpur, Ajmer, Ujjain, Mandu, Awadh, Lucknow, Varanasi, Jaunpur, Bihar and Cuttack. At the southern fringe of the Mughal Empire, the rise of the Marathas, the Vijayanagar Empire and the Bahmani kingdom, and finally the Nizam of Hyderabad, stimulated the urban growth. Golconda, Hyderabad, Bijapur and Aurangabad are outstanding examples of urban development during this period. In addition, Pune became the centre of Maratha power and the city developed into a metropolis of great cultural and political importance.

The “Vasco da Gama epoch of Indian history”, as Sardar K.M. Panikkar calls it, started with the landing of Gama at Calicut in 1498, marked a new epoch in the history of

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11 R. Ramachandran, op.cit., p.51.
12 Ibid., p.53.
Indian urbanization\textsuperscript{13}. The European phase of India’s urban history has its beginnings, ironically, in the period during which Mughal supremacy was at its height. This period witnessed the growth of several minor and major port cities having the presence of several European trading groups and other indigenous merchant classes. Subsequently, these new port cities became the centres of control and absolute dominance where the authority of the colonial power could be more secure. With the concentration of goods and services and the construction of transportation and communication networks along with western model layout of roads, these port cities soon emerged as a ‘metropolis’. A large number of British and other European and non-European residents together with the educated and affluent Indians, formed the urban elite of colonial period in India. Another aspect of colonial urbanization was the change in the architectural design of buildings and the introduction of modern utilities. So the nature and process of urbanization during this period is qualitatively different from the nature and type of urbanization during the medieval period\textsuperscript{14}. The impact of industrialization, of world market, of colonialism, and of imperialist drain is very clearly noticeable. The course of urbanization after 1800 AD in all parts of India was determined by British colonial economic policies and social attitudes.

The urban situation took a different turn from the second half of the eighteenth century when East India Company emerged as political power in India. Europeans had been domesticated into the Indian scene since the early seventeenth century. A critical condition for British success was the naval dominance in the Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea. This study concerns the period when the British were establishing their administrative

\textsuperscript{13} K.M.Panikkar, \textit{Asia and Western Dominance}, (New Delhi, 1999), pp.21-29.
and commercial system between Calcutta and Delhi, the way in which conditions in Indian society determined the emergence and form of British India. Bengal, probably the wealthiest province of Mughal India, proved an extraordinary prize for the British so as to deal with other states and economies in the subcontinent. The Company started dominating trade and industry of eastern region with the gradual emergence of British entrepreneurship in industries of indigo, salt, tea, coal, jute, cotton, iron and steel, textiles, sugar, cement, paper, matches etc. British entrepreneurship further created a favorable atmosphere of trade and industry in the western region providing adequate infrastructure in transport and communication such as roads and railways, ports, telegraphs, electricity, insurance, banking, etc. There they induced Indian industrial entrepreneurship which essentially came from Parsees, Gujaratis, Marwaris, and Bengalis who largely concentrated on consumer goods industries. The major effects of the British rule on the Indian urban scene are (a) the creation of the three metropolitan port cities namely, Calcutta, Bombay and Madras; (b) introduction of plantations and hill stations or resorts such as Darjeeling, Conoor and Mahabaleswar; (c) The Cantonment towns and ‘Civil Lines’ which contained the military and administrative offices as well as the bungalows of the British officials; (d) the introduction of railways and modern industry which led to the creation of industrial townships such as Jamshedpur, Asansol, and Dhanbad; and (e) the improvements in urban amenities and municipal administration.

When we try to locate the exact period of the emergence of urban trends in the history of Kerala it would be a very difficult task. Though several ports and exchange

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16 R.Ramachandran, op.cit., p.62.
centres existed in ancient period, the paucity of relevant sources hinders in identifying a major urban centre in ancient Kerala. But the recent Pattanam excavations undertaken by the Kerala Council for Historical Research reveals the existence of an urban centre with a wharf complex resembling a port and with Early Historic ‘urban’ architectural features belonging to the first millennium B.C.E\(^\text{17}\). The important port cities of Kerala during the period of the Perumals were Kodungallur, Kurakkeni Kollam and Pantalayini Kollam. The Jewish Copper Plate of 1000AD refers to Kodungallur as Muyirikkodu which is perhaps a derivative of the old name Muciri. This place is more famous under the name Mahodayapuram, the capital of the Kulasekhara rulers. The Tarisappalli Copper Plates give details about the city of Kurakkeni Kollam or the Port city of Quilon\(^\text{18}\). Sulaiman, who is believed to have visited Quilon in the mid-ninth century AD reports that the Chinese ships that anchored at this port had to pay a fixed amount of tariff of one-thousand Dirhams to the local ruler\(^\text{19}\). In the northern side it was Pantalayini Kollam where foreign trade was conducted. Apart from these maritime centres of trade, the well organized internal trade resulted in the rising up of urbanized marketing centres called ‘Angadis’ which are well illustrated in Sandesakavyas of Manipravalam works\(^\text{20}\). We can observe that a subsistence sector and a commercialized sector operated side by side in pre colonial Kerala.


\(^{19}\) M. H. Nainar, Arab Geographer’s Knowledge of Southern India, (Madras, 1942), p.105.

The four centuries between the decline of the Perumals of Mahodayapuram in about 1125 A.D and the advent of the Europeans on the western coast of Malabar in 1498 remain less illumined than the preceding and succeeding periods. This long interval is significant in the history of Kerala since it witnessed a series of changes in the economy, society and culture of the region. It was during this period that Kerala became a distinctive entity with a regional idiom of linguistic and cultural expression. Political life of this epoch is characterized by the supremacy of the lineages of extended ruling families known as Swaroopams. The ascendency of these Swaroopams coincided with the emergence of a number of intermediary positions in the hierarchy of power with specific duties, rights and privileges at various levels of desam settlements, tara localities and the nadu units. This form of power structure needed a large number of functionaries and this resulted in the formation of several new sections in society with specific functions and status of that some were to become castes or sub-castes at a later date. At the base of these changes were some crucial economic transformations, in the forms of spread of agrarian settlements to new areas, increased emphasis on the cultivation of spices and other cash crops, proliferation of new inland markets and towns, development of a number ports and harbours on the western coast as entrepot in the East-West trade and the availability of raw materials including metals like copper, tin, lead etc., increased volume of long distance trade and the resultant advancement in alloy technology and so on. The growth of the territorial principalities with their Swaroopam ruling families and their commercial policy went a long way in determining the nature of various developments in the region for at least the four centuries.

Spatial organization of the urban areas has shown some new developments in the urban form. The earlier centres retained the features of medieval towns where a farming element was present. The same characteristic of the absence of a clear-cut demarcation of rural and urban boundaries is shared by centres like Kodungallur, Kurakkeni Kollam and Pantalayini Kollam\(^{22}\). While commenting on the medieval urban centres in India, scholars have noted this feature in other parts of the country\(^{23}\). This study while pondering on colonial Calicut, also involves an attempt to trace out the characteristic features of Calicut as a pre-colonial urban centre where all the parameters of a medieval urban centre like circulation of coins, transport and communication facilities, markets and towns, separate streets and merchant quarters and a well functioned city administration existed.

**Aims and Objectives**

The present study entitled “Urbanity and Spatial Processes: A Study on the Colonial City of Calicut” seeks to explore the growth and development of the city in a colonial situation, its social implications and its economic ramifications. The prime aim of this research venture is to study how the power structure inherent in the colonizer-colonized/dominance-dependence relationship influences the urban development of the cities within the colonial space [Antony D.King:1990]. The study also attempts to examine the nature and extend of colonial influence upon the city of Calicut, particularly in respect of the social, political, economic and psychological development of this city. On one hand, the study analyzes the multiple spatial processes that went into the shaping of the city of


Calicut in visual form and on the other, it examines the images and symbols constructed about the city in the minds of the colonized, a real-and-imagined place where the colonizers fantasizes the urban image for facilitating and legitimizing their multiple political and economic interests. In short the study involves a combination of three processes: colonization, spatialisation and urban growth. Calicut is taken as the locus of research in order to analyze the various mechanisms behind the transformation of an urban landscape from a small harbor and market-place surrounded by hills to a sprawling city. The phenomenon examined here is considerably a widespread one----if Calicut’s status as a provincial capital made it the focus of more than ordinary activity, most cities and towns in India underwent related changes during the same period. Looking in detail at one city highlights the fact that urban change in colonial India was not a monolithic process. Pre-existing peculiarities of history and culture, of climate and resources, and of the role a city played in the abstract hierarchy of broader state interests all mattered to the subsequent history of any particular city. Here the argument is that the changes experienced on Calicut’s spaces of colonialism are the result of a complex processes involving ecological, economical, social, political and psychological bearing. Hence it provides a laboratory situation for examining the aforesaid aims of the present research.

**Review of Literature**

It seems pertinent here to review some of the works which are related to the subject under study. Though many general works dealing with the period of Zamorin rule in Calicut are available, only a very few deal with the history of British period in Calicut. The significant general works on Calicut are *The Zamorins of Calicut* (Calicut: 1938) written by Prof. K.V. Krishna Ayyar, *Kozhikodinte Katha* (Ottapalam: 2001), and *Calicut: The City of*
Truth Revisited (Calicut: 2006) by Dr. M.G.S. Narayanan, and the Samuthiri Charitrathile Kaanapurangal (Sukapuram: 1987) by Dr. N.M. Nambuthiri. As these works presents an impressionistic survey of the history of Calicut and related events during the period of about 700 years from c.1100 and to c.1800 A.D, they are standard works that accounts for the preparation of the background part of the present study. To this general category, one could add K. Balakrishna Kurup’s Kozhikodinte Charithram (Calicut: 2000). A good introduction to the urban space and city planning of Calicut is given by N.M. Nambuthiri in his most elaborated work titled Samuthiri Nadu (Thiruvananthapuram: 2008). Many works produced by the colonial authorities like Gazetteers, Manuals, Memoirs, and Survey Reports provides ample sources to reconstruct the colonial urban history of Calicut. These include the Malabar Manual of William Logan, Graeme’s Report on Revenue Administration of Malabar, Joint Commissioners’ Report on Malabar, A Descriptive Memoir on Malabar by Innes and Evans etc. Though these works throw light on the historical developments in Calicut over time, they apparently do not dwell upon the problems and the diverse processes involved in the colonial spatialisation of Calicut.

**Period of Study**

The period of study begins with circa 1792 AD, when Calicut fell into the control of the British colonial rule as a part of Seringapattanam treaty and the terminal point of the study is circa 1947 AD, the end of colonial rule in India. Though the period between 1792 and 1947 is comparatively a longer period, it is selected for this particular study because this period for all practical purpose forms a feasible single chronological unit for the study of a theme like colonial urbanity. A break in the time periods would fail to bring home the
change over time as far as Calicut’s urbanization process during the colonial regime is concerned.

**Identity of the Area of Study**

The urban area chosen for this study is limited to Calicut and its hinterlands. The study proceeds according to the expanding boundaries of the then Calicut Municipality. In general, the urban history of Calicut has three development stages: (i) as a medieval port city, (ii) as a colonial city (iii) and the expansion of the city as a result of the Gulf boom in the post-independence period. Calicut is a medieval port city endowed with a pleasant geography since it lies along the coast of Arabian Sea, which had been a great international highway of trade. Under the patronage of Zamorins, Calicut developed into a major seaport on the coast of Kerala by declaring it a Freeport and it became the melting pot of various cultures including Greeks, Romans, Persians, Syrians, Chinese, Arabs, Egyptians, Gujarathis, and Chettis thus reflecting a cosmopolitan nature of an urban centre. The continuous accumulation of capital at Calicut as result of intensive trade, both internal and external, incorporated this port-city to world economy. The Eurocentric view of integrating the Indian Ocean trade with the world system only with the advent of European capitalism cannot be accepted in the case of Calicut, because the travelogues of various foreign explorers\(^2^4\) certify that the Indian Ocean trade network emerged at Calicut was well organized long before the emergence of European capitalism. The expanding trade encouraged the spread of urban life in Calicut and that marked the beginning of spatial

\(^2^4\) R.H.Major (ed.), *India in the Fifteenth Century: A Collection of Narratives of Voyages to India in the Century Preceding the Portuguese Discovery of the Cape of Good Hope: From Latin, Persian, Russian and Italian Sources*, (New Delhi, 1992).
changes on physical and social environment of Calicut, which was earlier only a slushy and marshy insignificant land. By the end of the fifteenth century, Calicut witnessed the arrival of the Portuguese and then of the Dutch, English, French and Danes. Subsequently, the competition increased and after securing some spaces inside the city from the then ruler, these European commercial groups established their settlements erecting flagstaffs. Thus a European town was formed on the beach area of Calicut and located near it were the quarters and settlements of the native population and other non-European commercial groups. By 1792, Calicut fell into the control of British colonial rule as a part of Seringapatam Treaty. Between 1792 AD and 1800AD, it was under Bombay Presidency and in 1800, Calicut came under Madras Presidency as the capital of Malabar district. From then it was a period of transition in the history of Calicut, a change from a medieval port city to a colonial city, accompanied by a number of developments, which had both positive and negative effects, that always happens in the case of any developing urban centre.

**Design of the Thesis**

On the basis of material collection and processing the researcher has designed the thesis on thematic basis. While urban events are generally narrated according to a time sequence in order to allow a better understanding and comparison of historical episodes, a chronological description is not the main theme here. The thesis contains five chapters along with an introduction and conclusion. The first chapter concentrates on the philosophical and theoretical interpretations of various concepts on which the thesis is based upon. That is it contains the conceptual framework of the thesis. Attempts are made to describe the concepts of urbanization, colonization, city, urbanity, space etc. The second

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chapter forms the historical background of the thesis which narrates the emergence of Calicut as a seat of an expanding State structure under the Zamorin rulers and how the various tools and channels were utilized to build up a capital city that became a visual symbol of the power exercised by the rulers of this dynasty. The third chapter traces the ways and means by which city of Calicut attained its commercial prosperity and evaluates the pre-colonial urban forms on which the colonial city was constructed. The fourth chapter contextualizes the colonial administrative space of the city where a wide range of colonial personnel such as Collector, Magistrate, Judge, Police Superintendent, Surgeon and the like held their offices and dispensed the ideologies of a colonial empire. How the economic space of the city was designed according to the colonial requirements also forms the subject matter of the fourth chapter. The central theme of the fifth chapter is about the restructuring of the social space of the city by incrementing the colonial urbanity. When the whole thesis is considered it is broadly based upon three major themes, i.e., urbanization, colonial urbanization and spatial processes and the evolution of urbanism inside a colonial city.

**Methodology and Sources**

The aim, therefore, is to attempt a comparative analysis of the essentially cross-cultural data inherent in a colonial urban development, and to do it within an interdisciplinary framework, where appropriate theory is taken from Human Geography, Urban Studies and Cultural Studies. The methodology of the study gives due emphasis on hermeneutics supported by the empirical study mainly based on the primary sources available at various repositories in different forms and the data so far collected (some of them hitherto left untapped) are corroborated with the help of an extensive field study
carried out in the geographical area under study. However, the object is neither to attempt a comprehensive account, backed by a battery of empirical data nor to fill up a lacuna, but rather, to make some revelations in a different perspective on this grey area in the history of Calicut and also to suggest certain different approaches and methods to stimulate further research endeavors. Spatialisation with its application in a colonial context is the central interpretative method employed in this study. Like any other conventional study it seeks to adopt any techniques that come under heuristics, i.e., collection of data, processing of data, external criticism, internal criticism etc.

Archival materials available in the various repositories of Kerala, Karnataka, TamilNadu and West Bengal have been utilized for this study. The secondary sources like Handbooks, Government Publications, contemporary literature and theoretical works relevant to this study obtained from various Indian Libraries have also been made use of.