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Kakoli Tah Dutta

Urban-Centres of Early India and the Role of Womenfolk: An Analytic Discussion

At the outset, we must have an idea of the changing definitions of urban centre and of the process of urbanism in History. Historians would consider urban centre as a unit of settlement, established by man, influenced by several, historical factors. The Archaeologists take any settlement as urban which expose few streets and one or two public buildings. The Anthropologists and Sociologists consider urban growth as a natural process and take into account population and ecological factors as of prime importance in the growth of towns. Similarly an economist would look into the growth of towns mainly through economic factors.

Childe has listed monumental building, large settlements with dense population, non-food producing classes (including rulers, artisans and merchants) and the cultivation of art, science and writing as the basic traits of the urban revolution which took place in the bronze age.¹ According to him, craft specialists as well as role of surplus which supported non-food producing classes were important to enliven a city. But according to Adams increased size and density of population are crucial to urbanism and the contribution of specialized crafts is negligible to primary urban needs.² Among Indian historians, A. Ghosh was one of the pioneer archaeologists to tackle the problem of urbanization in early historical times. He considered an administrative and mercantile organization to be the pre requisite for a city.³ In R.S. Sharma's opinion, a town is not distinctified by mere size and population, but also by the quality of material life and nature of occupations.

Through agrarian surplus from hinterland is needed to boost city