

## PATTERNS OF URBAN GROWTH IN SRI LANKA, 1946-71

**P. Balasundarampillai**

*(Department of Geography, University of Peradeniya)*

The object of this paper is to analyse the spatial variation of the growth patterns of the Sri Lanka towns during the period of 1946-71. Sri Lanka has not experienced a rapid growth of urbanization. Usually, rapid urbanization is associated with modernization of the economy with expansion of industry and service employment. The economic structure of the country remained unchanged during this period and this prevented the rapid growth of urban centres. In 1946, the urban ratio was 15.3 percent and in 1971 it was increased to 22.4 percent. Some reason for the limited urban growth has been natural population increase within the towns, promotions of rural areas to urban status and the extension of boundaries of existing towns. The rural urban migration factor is relatively an insignificant one except for certain areas.

The different patterns of urban growth could be identified. (i) Rapidly developing urban centres of Dry Zone. (ii) Rapidly developing urban centres in the Greater Colombo Area. (iii) Slowly growing towns of the country.