

## **Urban**

Urban areas are constantly changing and many have developed over long periods of time (except for new towns), in a process called urbanization; some are getting larger, whilst some are disappearing (historic towns which have stagnated). Therefore the definition is, arguably, only valid at any one point in time.

Urban is a place based characteristic that incorporates elements of population density, social and economic organization and the transformation of the natural environment into a built environment (Weeks, 2010).

By defined Oxford English Dictionary as “having the qualities or characteristics associated with town or city life; especially elegant and refined in manners, courteous, suave, sophisticate”. Urban is a fairly complex concept. It is a function of sheer population size, space (land area), the ratio of population to space (density or concentration), and economic and social organization.

In Sri Lanka, "urban" status is conferred on an area by the Minister in charge of Local Government purely for local administrative purposes. However, Ministerial discretion seems to be based on "the nature of the development (of the locality) or its amenities and urban character" (Mendis, 1982).

At present, towns, cities, conurbations, municipalities and megalopolis, are commonly considered urban areas, whereas rural settlements are not usually considered urban in any way. Traditionally the concept of a city or town would be a built up area, with a core area that contained a sufficient number of varying services and a transportation network that attracted people to the area.

## **Urbanization**

Urbanization and urban spatial growth are the result of combination of natural increase of the urban population and net immigration to urban areas. Urbanization can be regarded from demographic point of view, in terms of the proportion of country population living in towns and cities. It is observed that urbanization is very closely linked with industrialization, commercialization or the overall economic growth and development; and the process of urbanization exhibits a pattern in which the rate rises steeply as the early stages of industrialization are reached, and tapers off gradually when the proportion urban beings to reach a saturation point. Finally as most of the populations become urbanized, urbanization falls to keep pace with economic development, which is a continuous process (Rahman, 2007).

Urbanization is the physical growth of urban areas as a result of rural migration and even suburban concentration into cities, particularly the very largest ones. The United Nations projected that half of the world's population would live in urban areas at the end of 2008 (The

Associated Press, 2008). By 2050 it is predicted that 64.1% and 85.9% of the developing and developed world respectively will be urbanized. (www.economist.com, Accessed on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2012)

Urbanization involves a significant shift in the distribution of population from rural to urban locations. Each year some 312 million more people are added to the world's towns and cities than its rural areas. Although at 0.54 per cent per annum the global rate of urbanization seems comparatively modest, it has profound implications for the long term distribution of population. Around 25 per cent of the world's population lived in towns and cities in 1950. It is likely to be 75 per cent by 2010 (Clark, 1996).

Urbanization refers to a process in which an increasing proportion of an entire population lives in cities and the suburbs of cities. Historically, it has been closely connected with industrialization. When more and more inanimate sources of energy were used to enhance human productivity surpluses increased in both agriculture and industry. Larger and larger proportions of a population could live in cities. Economic forces were such that cities became the ideal places to locate factories and their workers. (www.faculty.fairfield.edu, Accessed on 08<sup>th</sup> June 2012)

### **Urbanization in World**

Urbanization is a major change taking place globally. Urbanization is not merely a modern phenomenon, but a rapid and historic transformation of human social roots on a global scale, whereby predominantly village culture is being rapidly replaced by predominantly urban culture. The last major change in settlement patterns was the accumulation of hunter-gatherers into villages many thousand years ago. Village culture is characterized by common bloodlines, intimate relationships, and communal behavior whereas urban culture is characterized by distant bloodlines, unfamiliar relations, and competitive behavior. This unprecedented movement of people is forecast to continue and intensify in the next few decades, mushrooming cities to sizes incomprehensible only a century ago. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/urbanization>, Accessed on 04<sup>th</sup> August 2012)

The 20th century is related to the phenomenon of rapid urbanization. By 1900 13% of the world's population was urban. (International Federation of Surveyors (FIG), 2010). According to UN reports, the urban population increased from 220 million in 1900 to 732 million in 1950 (29% of the world's population). By 2007 50% of the world population was living in cities; further improvements in technology, medicine and prevention of disease allowed even larger urban densities. According to latest predictions, 4.9 billion people, or 60% of the world's population, are expected to be urban dwellers by 2030 illustrate by (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1

#### **Global proportion of the urban population increase**

Year	Urban population (million)	Proportion
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1900	220	13%
1950	732	29%
2005	3200	45%
2030	4900	60%

Source: UN Population Division, 2010

On the other hand investigations show significant differences in urban population change between the more developed regions and the less developed regions. The majority of the inhabitants of the less developed regions still live in rural areas, but in the more developed regions the population is already highly urbanized.

As urbanization tends to rise and as development increases urbanization is expected to rise as well in the future (Table 2.2). However, despite their lower levels of urbanization, less developed regions have more than double the numbers of urban dwellers than the more developed (2.3 billion vs. 0.9 billion). By 1968, the urban population of the less developed regions surpassed for the first time that of the more developed regions and continues to do so thereafter. Furthermore, according to UN predictions, the rapid growth of the population of the less developed regions combined with the near stagnation of the population in the more developed regions implies that the gap in the number of urban dwellers between the two will continue to increase, which shown in (Table 2.2).

Table 2.2  
**Differences in Urban Population Rates**

Year	More developed regions		Less developed regions	
	Population (billion)	Percent	Population (billion)	Percent
1900	0.15	–	0.07	14%
2005	0.90	74%	2.3	43%
2030	1.00	81%	3.9	60%

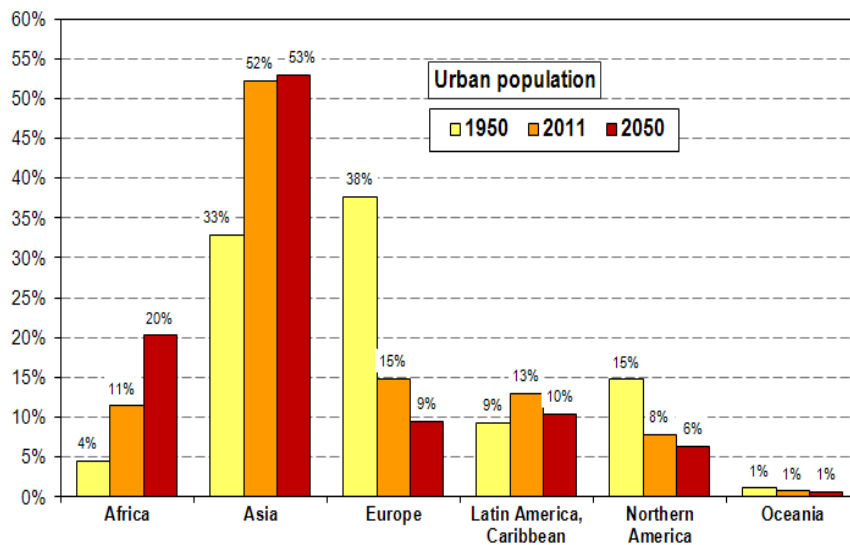
Source: UN Population Division, 2010

There is significant diversity in the urbanization levels reached by different regions. The transformative power of urbanization was felt earlier in today's more developed regions and they have reached high levels of urbanization. Thus, 78 per cent of the inhabitants of the more developed regions lived in urban areas in 2011, whereas just 47 per cent of those in the less developed regions did so. Urbanization is expected to continue rising in both the more developed and the less developed regions so that, by 2050, urban dwellers will likely account for 86 per cent of the population in the more developed regions and for 64 per cent of that in

the less developed regions. Overall, the world population is expected to be 67 per cent urban in 2050 (World Urbanization Prospects, 2011).

Today's 3.6 billion urban dwellers are distributed unevenly among urban settlements of different

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size. In discussing urbanization, focus often is cities, cities populations larger than many countries. In 23 urban

agglomerations qualified as megacities because they had at least 10 million inhabitants. Despite their visibility and dynamism, megacities account for a small though increasing proportion of the world urban population, 9.9 percent in 2011 and 13.6 per cent in 2025. At the same time, over half of the urban population lives and will continue to live in small urban centres with fewer than half a million inhabitants (World Urbanization Prospects, 2011).

When go through those (Figure 2.1), which emphasized that, the urban population of each continent. Primarily the urban population in less developed regions highly influences to gradually increase urban population. On the other hand in the developed region's urban population is normally decreased.

Figure 2.1: **Distribution of the population in urban by continent 1950-2050**

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population

## Urbanization in Sri Lanka

Urban areas in Sri Lanka are defined on the basis of administrative boundaries. During early 1980's urban areas comprised of all Municipal Councils, (MC) urban Councils (UC) and Town Councils (TC). In 1987, Town Councils were abolished and absorbed into Pradesheeya Sabahs, which were essentially rural areas. Since then only MC and UC areas have been considered as urban areas. Urbanization in Sri Lanka is underestimated and does not actually reflect the ground situation. There are areas outside the administrative boundaries of MC and UC with highly urban characteristics. Hence it is very important to have a new definition of urban areas considering the current socio- economic set up (Gunasekera, 2011).

The distribution of urban population within the south-western quadrant indicates a large concentration in and around the capital city of Colombo, as well as the distribution of urban population in the city, its suburbs, and in the Colombo District. Main urban cluster of the country is in the Colombo District with a polarization on Colombo city. Distribution of urban population by administrative sensible that Colombo is the only district which has more than half of its total population as urban.

Considering the nature of urban growth and level of urbanization in Sri Lanka, previous data reveal that Sri Lanka has a slow tempo of urbanization and a low level of urbanization as well. As shown in (Table 2. 3) the urban population in Sri Lanka has slowly increased from 1871 up to 1981. In 1981 this gradual increase declined to 21.5 percent and dropped to 14.6 percent at the Census in 2001.

The major reasons responsible for decreasing trend of level of urbanization is the absence of an-island wide Census in 2001. The Census of population in 2001 enumerated only 18 out of 25 districts due to the war situation in the North and Eastern provinces.

Table 2.3  
**Urban Population in Sri Lanka (1891-2030)**

Census Year	Urban Population	Average annual growth rate of urban population (%)	Number of Towns	Level of urbanization (%)
<b>1871</b>	260,376	-	19	10.8
<b>1881</b>	281,065	0.8	20	10.2

<b>1891</b>	321,413	1.4	20	10.7	
<b>1901</b>	414,046	2.9	28	11.6	
<b>1911</b>	537,666	3.1	37	13.1	
<b>1921</b>	631,871	1.7	42	14.2	
<b>1931</b>	737,273	3.4	42	15.0	
<b>1946</b>	1,023,044	1.9	42	15.4	
<b>1953</b>	1,239,133	2.1	43	15.3	
<b>1963</b>	2,016,285	6.2	99	19.1	
<b>1971</b>	2,848,116	4.1	135	22.4	
<b>1981</b>	3,192,489	1.2	134	21.5	
<b>2001</b>	2,467,171	1.0	45	14.6	
<b>2011</b>	-	-	-	30	UDA estimate
<b>2030</b>	-	-	-	65	UDA projection

Source: Department of Census and Statistics, 2005

On the other hand the province wise urban growth of the country into consideration, it is obvious that significant differences exist in urban growth rates, the number and the level of urbanization among provinces of the country, which depicted in (Figure 2.2) Western Province, all other provinces still experience a low level of urbanization. Western Province being the urbanized core region in the country consists of the highest percentage of urbanization and the highest number of urban centers. All the other provinces of the country have not gained a significant urban growth even today.

The clear observation in terms of the levels of urbanization in other provinces in plantation regions and Dry Zone areas is their slow growth or stagnation during the last 20 years. However, one noticeable features of the level of urbanization of the provinces where the level of urbanization in Dry Zone is somewhat faster than that the level of urbanization of plantation areas. Currently, the level of urbanization of the North-Central Province is higher than that of the Uva and Sabaragamuwa Provinces. This is directly due to the relationship of colonization schemes and the urban development of the Dry Zone areas.

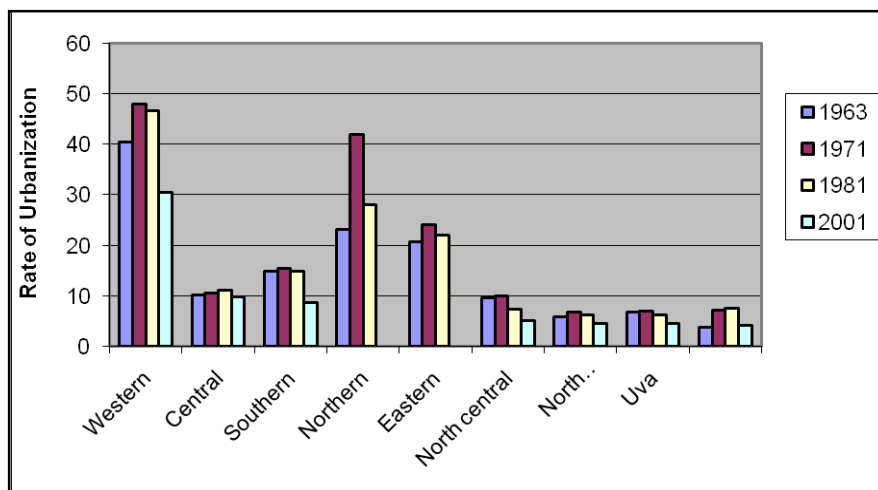
**Figure 2.2:** Level of Urbanization by Province

Source: Department of Census and Statistics, 2001

Consequently in the demographic point of view urban growth is the increase of proportion of population living in “urban areas” of a country and urbanization is the percentage of population who live in urban areas out of the total population in a country. Accordingly, urbanization offers increased opportunities for specialization, production and goods and services. This process is cumulative and moreover increases the general scale of settlements due to the progressive concentration of people and activities in urban areas, changes the economy where by non agricultural activities become dominant, change the structural characteristics of demography, spreads the urbanism beyond the built-up areas of towns (Uduporuwa, 2010). As finally the increase of population and the development in an area gradually changed the original form of land and all development activities leads to change the use of land in urban area.

According to World Bank (September, 2015) Sri Lanka’s urban areas appear unattractive to potential migrants from rural areas. However, unlike the rest of the region, in Sri Lanka this is not so much because of poor urban living conditions as because of the country’s impressive progress in

achieving equity rural and areas in provision public and living Sri Lanka’s “messy”



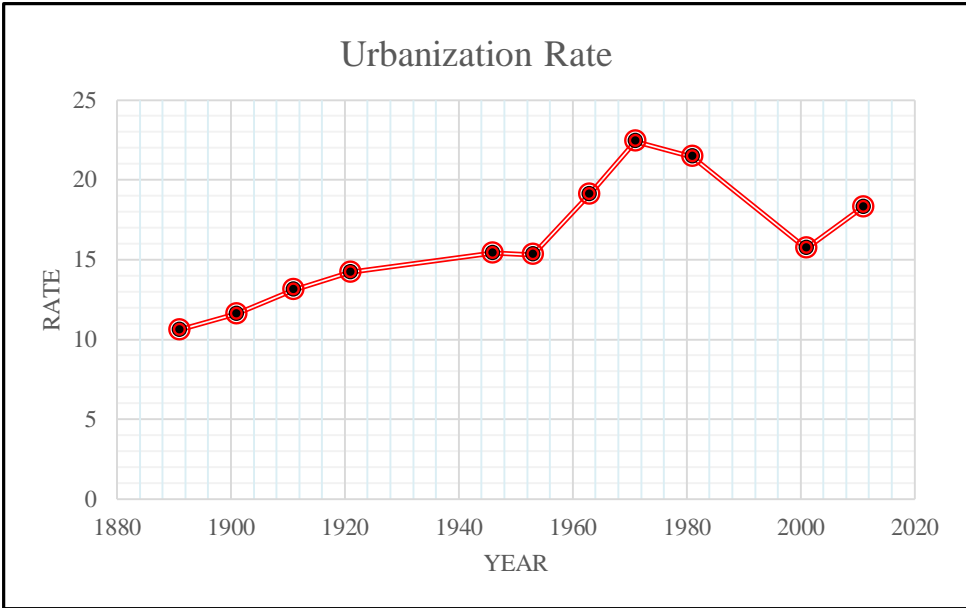
urbanization is reflected in patterns of sprawl and ribbon development with evidence of rapid growth on the periphery of, in particular, the Colombo metropolitan region and along major transport arteries.

Sri Lanka was the country in the region of South Asia with the fastest expansion of urban area, as measured using nighttime lights data, relative to urban population, with a ratio of more than seven. While the country’s total urban area grew at a rate close to that for the region overall, its urban population growth rate was much slower than for the region overall.

The rapid expansion of urban area relative to urban population reflects the sprawl and ribbon development that are characteristic of Sri Lanka’s urban development.

There are indications that as much as one-third of Sri Lanka’s entire population may be living in areas that possess urban characteristics, but are classified as rural (World Bank, 2015). Beyond differing definitions of “urban,” complicating cross-country comparisons is the fact that definitions of “urban” within a country can change over time.

In Sri Lanka, "urban" status is conferred on an area by the Minister in charge of Local Government purely for local administrative purposes. However, Ministerial discretion seem to be based on "the nature of the development (of the locality) or its amenities and urban character". In this connection those area which are declined as "urban" are classified administratively as Municipal, Urban and Town Councils. in July 1981, the newly established Development Councils came into operation and have included the Town Councils and Village council in them. Hence, since that date, a redefinition of "urban areas" may be required. In all Census years, including the 1981 Census, the urban population has comprised all persons living in Municipal, Urban and Town Council areas. In 1987 Sri Lanka tightened its definition by reclassifying town councils as rural areas (pradeshiya sabha). This contributed to a fall in the country’s official urban share to from 21.5 percent in the 1981 census to 15.7 percent in nearest census in 2001. The rate of the urbanization in Sri Lanka was gradually increase from 1891 to 1981 (Table 4.1). Compare to 1981 census data, the urbanization in Sri Lanka decrease very fast and from 2001 to 2011 period it can be increase gradually from 15.7 to 18.3.



4.1: Population in Sri Lanka From 1891 to 2011

Source: Wanasinghe, 2006

Figure Urban



#### 4.1.1 Inter-regional disparities in urban growth and urbanization

Within the two main agro-ecological zones several micro regions that have unique urban characteristics can be easily identified. The ability of urban centers in each region to act as catalysts in regional development varies from region to region. In the wet zone lowland, the most significant is the highly developed urbanized centres around Colombo.

Urban Centres have played a vital role in the development of this Metropolitan region. Another micro region with a high development potential is located to the south of the CMR. Several urban clusters have developed in this southern-region, but at present only a few urban centres have contributed to regional development. The majority of urban centres in the tea and rubber plantation areas has experienced slow growth or stagnation in recent years and has not succeeded in attracting economic activities. In contrast to the plantation region in the hill country, urban centres in the dry zone lowlands, particularly those in close proximity to colonization schemes, are growing at rates far above the national urban average. The area developed under the mahaweli development project in the dry zone is of special importance, since several incipient urban centres have emerged. Within the dry zone another region stands out viz., the Jaffna district which has the second highest level of urbanization in the country. The number of towns in the district increased from one in 1953 to thirteen in 1971. Due to out-migration and suburbanization taking place around the city of Jaffna, the city growth rate is at present low.

Table 4.1

#### Growth rates of Urban Population by Climatic Zone in Districts

Intercensal	Average Annual growth rates (%)	
	Wet Zone	Dry Zone
1953 - 1963	5.2	11.1
1963 - 1971	4.9	6.0
1971 - 1981	1.2	1.5
1981 - 2001	1.2	1.2

Source: Wanasinghe, 2006

#### 4.1.2 The Core Area

The Colombo Metropolitan Region (CMR) can be described as the core area of the country. It is composed of Colombo; seventeen suburbs that are arranged in the form of two crescents (inner and outer suburbs); nine coastal towns and nine inland towns<sup>16</sup>.

Core  
suburbs

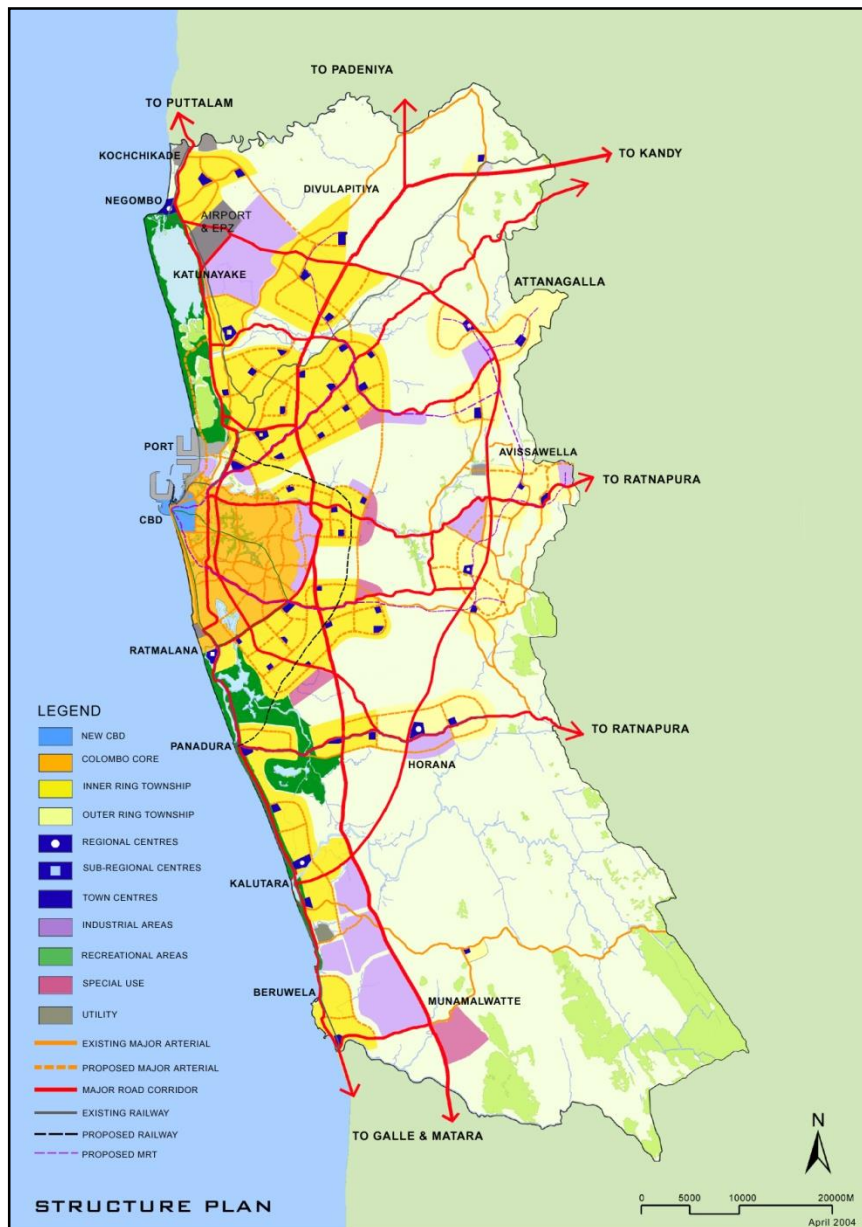


Figure 4.2:  
and the  
in the

### Metropolitan Area - 2004

Source: National Physical Planning Department, 2004

The majority of the remaining settlements in the CMR exhibit mixed urban and rural characteristics and perform dormitory or residential functions. The population of the CMR increased from 3,250,000 in 1971 to 3,633,900 in 1981. In 1971, 50 per cent of the population in the CMR lived in urban centers which is expected to increase to 62 per cent by the year 2001.

As much as 57.0 per cent of the total urban population in the country is concentrated in the CMR particularly in Colombo and its suburbs which contain 46.0 per cent of the total. The growth and expansion of the CMR is closely linked to that of its central city, Colombo. In the latter half of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, the city grew as a result of in-

migration and horizontal expansion. The development of the port; the construction of roads and railway lines radiating from Colombo to all parts of the island; the rapid growth of the export trade based on plantation agriculture; the concentration of industrial, commercial, communicational, business and financial, administrative, health, educational, recreational functions in Colombo, attracted migrants to the city. Between 1921 and 1931, 91.8 per cent of the population increase in the city was due to in-migration. After 1931, the role of in-migration in population increase declined (between 1931-1946, only 21.2 per cent of the increase was due to in-migration), and natural increase became more important. The city also expanded horizontally from 24.47 km<sup>2</sup> by 1881 to 37.29 km<sup>2</sup> in 1981. Within this period there has been a five times increase in the city population from 110,502 to 587,647.

A hundred years ago, the city contained nearly 40 per cent of the country's urban population. Gradually its share began to decline and in 1981 the population appropriated by Colombo fell to 18.3 per cent of the total. The demographic primacy of the city reached its peak in the 1930s. since then, the primacy index shows a declining trend and in 1981 it stood at 3.4.

In 1998, seventeen suburbs have emerged around Colombo. Most of the older suburbs in the inner crescent have reached the mature stage in suburbanization and their growth rates have begun to decline . Due to the lack of developable land for expansion, and consequent high land values and high rents in the suburbs migrants are more attracted to the new suburbs in the older outer crescent and to settlements beyond this. Hence, they are experiencing very high growth rates.

Due to spontaneous and planned suburbanization, there has also been a decentralization of industrial, administrative and commercial activities. Several suburbs have therefore been transformed from "residential" to "employing" suburbs.

With the establishment of the Urban Development Authority (UDA) promotion of urban development became more active. These promotional efforts were complemented by massive outlays of public investment in urban areas and the liberalization of trade policies in respect of imports. They were further encouraged by the generous tax incentives that were subsequently introduced under the inland revenue (Amendment) Act of 1980, for those companies engaged in property development.

Table 4.2  
**Growth Rates of Colombo and Suburbs**

Town	Population 1981	Population change (%) 1971-1981	Population 2001	Population change (%) 1981 - 2001
Colombo (M.C)	587,647	4.49	647,100	10.12
Old Suburbs				

Dehiwala-Mt.Lavinia (M.C)	173,529	12.54	210,546	21.33
Kotte (U.C)	101,039	7.86	116,366	15.17
Moratuwa (U.C)	134,826	40.05	177,563	31.70
Kolonnawa (U.C)	41,005	9.55	56,396	37.53
Wattala-Mabola (U.C)	19,466	4.36	28,740	47.64
New Suburbs				
Battaramulla (T.C)	56,535	27.87	Not a TC	-
Ragama (T.C)	22,238	26.65	Not a TC	-
Hendala (T.C)	36,927	24.50	Not a TC	-
Welisara (T.C)	26,770	28.70	Not a TC	-
Maharagama (T.C)	49,765	19.18	185,193	272.14
Dalugama (T.C)	47,723	12.12	Not a TC	-
Kandana(T.C)	21,662	14.13	Not a TC	-
Ja-Ela (U.C)	24,485	12.75	30,791	25.75
Kotikawatta (T.C)	48,262	10.20	Not a TC	-
Kelaniya (T.C)	36,738	42.46	Not a TC	-
Mulleriyawa (T.C)	26,071	8.92	Not a TC	-

Source : Wanasinghe, 2006 and Gunawardena, 2005

Table 4.3  
Average Annual Growth of Urban Population in Colombo Suburbs and Colombo District

Period	1946-1953	1953-1963	1963-1971	1971-1981	1981 - 2001	Source: Gunawardena, 2005
Percentage increase in Colombo city	2.5	2.0	1.2	0.4		
Percentage increase in Colombo Suburbs	4.5	3.4	3.7	1.5		<b>4.1.3</b>
Percentage increase in Colombo District	3.2	4.4	5.5	1.2		<b>Characteristic</b>
Percentage increase in National Urban Population	3.0	6.3	5.2	1.2		<b>s of Suburb</b>

s

According to Martin (1956) refers to 2 definitive Characteristics that differentiate suburbs from non-suburban communities. They are a (the unique ecological position in relation to the larger city and b) the high rate of commuting to the central city. Although suburbs lie outside the limits of the central city they remain dependent upon it as a source of necessary goods, services and employment. Hence its ecological position is said to differ from those of urban

and rural settlements. The second definitive Characteristic (the high rate of commuting) is a direct out-growth of the ecological position.

In 1958, Kurtz and Eicher, summarized the Characteristics of suburbs and considered the following as typical of a suburban area, such as location, land use, Population density, growth rates and occupation structure.