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The tremendous growth of urbanization and the diffusion of urbanism is one of the most conspicuous characteristic feature of the modern world. Cities are economically, socially and politically important of all proportion to the areas they occupy. The modern city is the product of an extremely long process of development. Urban centres constitute distinctive foci of varying activities of human being with sharp internal differentiations with their habitat and contain high densities of population.

Towns and cities are the objects of urban geographical enquiry. They are of interest in so far as they vary from place to place, are differentiated internally and evolved over time. To the Geographer, particularly to the Urban Geographer, the city is a unit of analysis consisting of a collection of buildings, activities and population cluster together in space. It can be distinguished from other forms of the settlements in terms of the density of concentration of these attributes. Indeed, it is by specifying and mapping such indices, that the urban patterns can be identified and urban processes studied.

The city is a collection of symbols and values based upon familiarity, impression and personal experience. An understanding of urban cognition is important since it exercises

a major control upon urban spatial behaviour. An individual image of the city determines whether it is liked or disliked, and where within it onw will choose to live, shop, work and play. Indeed cities are focal points through which the spatial interchange of peoples, goods, services and ideas takes place between the region and within the region.

Considering the above facts, the objectives of the present work is to study Miraj city of Sangli district in South Maharashtra. Miraj (pop. 105,455 - 1981), a tahsil headquarter, a regional market centre, a transportational node with a railway junction is a multifacet prospering urabn centre of South Maharashtra and is located at the boundary area of Maharashtra and Karnataka States.

The present study deals with urban geographical aspects of Miraj city. In this work particularly attempts are made in the direction of the evolutionary account and growth phases of the city. The city population and its characteristics are analysed. From the urban morphological point of view Miraj city landscape has been studied. The study also attempts to highlight the delimitation of the sphere of influence.

The work has been divided into five chapters. Chapter I, deals with a geographical setting and historical background of the Miraj city along with the study of physical aspects. The main emphasis in this chapter is given to the evolutionary account of the city in which the ancient sites within the city and growth and development of the city have been studied through

different growth phases. This chapter also incorporates the population growth of the city for the last hundred years and analytical study of variations in the growth rates (1881-1981).

Chapter II, attempts to highlight the characteristics of city population. It includes city population growth, ward-wise population distribution and the density of population. An attempt is made to study density of population in terms of density-distance relationship. The other demographical aspects like sex ratio, birth and death rates, literacy and occupational characteristics of the population are studied in this chapter.

Chapter III, is devoted to the study of morphological characteristics and functional areas of the Miraj city. Particularly it deals with the present landuse analysis and land under different functions. Urban morphological account has been represented by mapping the landuse and functional areas as well as by studying case studies of commercially important city squares and roads.

Chapter IV, represents a delimitation of sphere of influence of the Miraj city. The sphere of influence of Miraj city is delimited by empirical as well as theoretical method. While selecting the parameters to delimit sphere of influence due care is taken in the selection of the parameters. The different attributes show the different zones of influence of the Miraj city and these zones are cartographically represented through mapping.

The last chapter is the summary and conclusion of the work. It includes the significant observations and conclusion of the study. The basic data pertaining to the population, area, functions and of relevant aspects have been collected through different sources like census reports, population tables, socio-economic abstracts, census handbooks and gazetteers and other government publications.

The primary data have been collected through intensive fieldwork. The data collected through primary and secondary sources have been processed, tabulated and presented in a revised form and used for the purpose of preparation of maps and their interpretation. It is rather difficult to include all the data collected and processed in the dissertation. Only significant and relevant information is included in the form of tables.

In the style of presentation various geographical and quantitative techniques and statistical methods have been used. The references are mentioned at the end of each chapter. A brief bibliography is attached.

The maps and graphs are prepared by the author. The cartographic work has been completed in the departmental cartographic laboratory.

It is hoped that this work will be an addition to the existing knowledge in the field of Settlement Geography.