

INTRODUCTION

I N T R O D U C T I O N

A systematic study of urbanisation is given due importance in the present century. The rapid growth of large urban centres is an important characteristics of developing countries. Cities being the focal point of economic, cultural, administrative and other activities of society, play an important part in the social and economic development of the region. Urban growth is the most important indicator of the development of country and its region. Urbanisation exercises a growing influence on all aspects of social life, affecting the nature of economic development.

The growth of urban settlement is largely influenced by their locational settings, historical evolution and their socio-economic linkage with the region. Exchange of goods, development of transport network and improvement of economic conditions also play important role in growth and rise of urban settlement.

The region under study is one of the progressive State in India where the highest degree of urbanisation (35.03) is found.

The present study deals with the growth, evolution and distribution of cities of Maharashtra. It also deals with study of their functional character, changes in

occupational structure, their centrality, hierarchy and their zone of influence.

The entire work is divided into seven chapters.

First chapter deals with an introduction to the study area, data base and methodology. The second chapter deals with the evolution of cities. In this chapter an attempt had been made to understand the socio-economic condition of the past, in which the cities have evolved.

Third chapter deals with the spatial distribution of cities in which, an attempt had been made to trace briefly the factors influencing the distribution of cities, their size relationship. The distribution is studied in relation to various factors of distribution.

Fourth chapter includes the study of the dynamics of urban growth and growth character of cities, where the account of growth since 1901 has been taken.

In the fifth chapter the study of occupational characteristics and functional classification of cities has been dealt with. The analysis of the functional classification and occupational structure of cities for 1981 poses several problems due to change in the classification system.

Chapter sixth deals with the centrality and hierarchy of cities. Basically cities are the central places who play an important role as service centres.

Last chapter is devoted to the study of zone of influence of cities. Zone of influence has been delimited by theoretical method because it is not possible to collect field information for all cities of Maharashtra.

In the style of presentation, the references are given in the end of each chapter. It was highly impossible to include in the thesis, all the data collected and processed. Only important information is included in the form of tables at the end of each chapter. Small tables are included in the text at proper places.

The maps and diagrams are prepared by author. All data have been processed by author. The author has tried to avoid errors, yet, through oversight, some errors might have occurred in the text for which author may be excused. It is hoped that this work adds very little to existing knowledge in the field of urban studies.

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