

INTRODUCTION

The process of urbanization has reached its maxima during the last few decades in the western world. In the developing countries like India, this process of urbanization has been accelerated during the last thirty years. The social structure of contemporary India is undoubtedly different from what it was at the time of British rule in this country. The emerging field of urban studies present several paradoxes to any one interested in understanding its scope and contents. The dynamic processes of urbanization is constantly changing the urban land-scape of any region affected by socio-economic and geographical factors. Urban growth is a most important indicator of the development of a country and its regions. Since independence, the growth of urbanisation in Maharashtra is faster than in any other state. The rapid growth of urban population in the overwhelming majority of the developing areas is due to both, to its high natural growth and high rate of internal migration flows from rural areas.

Socio-economic development is a complex phenomena. Society is organized to produce - in order ultimately to consume. Both these aspects are related to the economic organization of population. People are engaged in different activities. In urban areas the functional character of town is identified by studying the occupational classification of population. The dominance of a particular activity at urban

centres indicates its importance and relation with the hinterland of the urban centre. The occupational structure of cities is not static but dynamic and the changes brought in the occupational pattern of a city indicate close relationship with the economic development of the area.

The present study deals with the post-independence trends of urbanization and changes in occupational characteristics of towns in south Maharashtra and includes the evolution and growth of urban centres, their spatial distribution, changes in occupational characteristics and functional association. The data used in the present work is based on various published and unpublished records and census publications. The entire work is organized in to five chapters.

The first chapter deals with an introduction to the study area, data base and approach to the present study. In this chapter the general economy and industrial structure of the region has been elaborated in details.

The second chapter deals with the evolution of urban settlements in south Maharashtra, where, an attempt has been made to understand the factors of urban growth. The evolution of urban centres has been studied in relation to social, economic and political conditions prevailing during the various periods of historical past, through which the urban centres have evolved.

In the third chapter the study of trends of urbanization and patterns of urban growth has been attempted. To study the

trends of urbanization comparative trends of urban growth, spatial analysis of urban growth, degree of urbanization, rank fluctuation of urban centres and growth characteristics of towns have been studied.

In the fourth chapter spatial distribution of urban centres has been studied, where, factors influencing distribution of urban settlements, their relationship, rank-size distribution and levels of development related with the degree of urbanization have been studied.

Fifth chapter deals with dynamics of occupational characteristics, where author has tried to give a brief history of changes in classification system since independence. It also includes the study of trends of changes in occupational characteristics and the changes in functional character of towns.

In the style of presentation, references are given at the end of each chapter. Foot notes, where ever necessary, are referred to the source of information. It is highly impossible to include in this thesis all the data collected and processed. Only important processed tables are given in the text or at the end of the chapter. The maps and graphs have been drawn by author. All concerned data has been processed by author.

As far as possible errors and repetitions have been avoided, yet through oversight some errors might have crept in the text for which author may be excused. The author will be satisfied even if this work adds very little to the existing knowledge in the field of Urban Geography.

Kolhapur.



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