

CHAPTER-II

EVOLUTION OF URBAN SETTLEMENTS IN  
SOUTH MAHARASHTRA

Introduction

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Evolution of urban places

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Medieval Period

Modern Period.

### Introduction :

It is taken as an axiom in Geography that growth of urban population both in actual numbers and percentage share of a nations total is totally related with economic development in any country ( Brush 1982 ) . Urbanisation is a universal phenomena which has developed urban centres right from the ancient times. The systems of urban settlements are continuously under the process of evolution. In this chapter an attempt has been made to summarise briefly the evolutionary account of urban settlements which have developed in different periods of the history of human civilization.

### Factors of Urban growth :

It will not be out of place here, if the evaluation of factors promoting urban growth are discussed briefly. Physical factors play an important role in the development of urban places. Social and Economic factors play more important role in the growth of urban places ( Johnson 1967 ) . It is observed that the system of urban places in any particular area evolves through the combined effect of the physico-socio-economic conditions prevailing during a specific period. We know that urbanisation process occurred during the 19th and early 20th centuries in most of the developing countries. Comparatively India is poorly urbanised country where, according to 1981 census, only 23.73 % population is found to be urban.

Physical factors such as site, situation and location

play an important role in the development of urban places. While, social and economic conditions which are responsible for the growth of urbanization are related to the technological change and economic organization of the area. Social conditions like traditions, customs, religious and political ideas have always played important role in the development of urban places.

Localization of resources is another important factor which is related to the development of technology. ( Deshmukh 1979 ), Areas, where resources are found have always attracted more population and urban places have developed. The economic factors give rise to the origin and development of market centres, ports, transport towns and service centres. Industrial towns are the products of exploitation of economic resources.

In the present work<sup>an</sup> attempt has been made to study the evolution and growth of urban centres through various historical periods in which the social, economic, political and technological conditions were different. The entire period under study is classified in to three periods of time. The first period of evolution considers ancient time, which includes a period up to 1200 A.D. The second time period is from 1200 A.D. to 1818 A.D. It is called as medieval period. The third time period begins after 1818 A.D. and includes British rule and post-independence period.

### Evolution of urban places:

#### 1) Ancient period :

During the ancient period the Indian economy was completely dominated by agriculture and animal husbandry ( Gupta 1973 ) . The trade was developed in the form of barter system. During the pre historic times most of the places have developed as the places of religious and strategic importance ( Kamalapur - 1961 ). Physical factors have played important role in the development of urban places. Urban settlements were located at the most favourable sites where food water and defence was available. With the development of agriculture, surplus food was produced which was transported to central locations for distribution. It has given rise to market centres. Such market centres were the central places located at the junctions of transport <sup>o</sup> routes. Several settlements have developed as administrative centres. During prehistoric times administration, religion and distribution of food were the important activities of several urban places. With the development of technology, surplus food was produced which has relived many people from agricultural activities. These people were engaged in arts and cultural activities. The agglomeration of such people has given rise to <sup>a</sup> few art and cultural centres. With the further development in technology lines of communication have developed. Coins were introduced. These two aspects helped in the development of trade and commerce, Several trade centres were developed.

In spite of the development of technology, need for security and defence were the important factors in the location of urban settlements. Several important places have developed at the sites of strategic importance. Many of them have lost their importance in the modern period.

In south Maharashtra 10 urban centres were the important settlements developed in the ancient period. They include Chiplun from Konkan area and nine towns from south Maharashtra plateau namely, Phaltan, Satara, Karad, Miraj, Malkapur, Panhala, Kolhapur, Mangalvedha and Solapur.

#### Chiplun :-

Chiplun may be the oldest town of Konkan. In Indian mythology it is believed that when God Parashuram created the land of Konkan he founded this town. In medieval period there were 60 tanks and 60 gardens in the city. With the downfall of maratha power ( Peshawai ) the town was captured first by Ramoshis and then by British. Up to <sup>the</sup> medieval period the town was <sup>an</sup> important trading centre of Konkan. In the early British period it maintained its importance. Chipalun is situated on the bank of river Vashisthi. The river was navigable for the boats of considerable size. The town has nodal location. It has access to Arabian sea and to the town Karad through Kumbharli ghat. Chipalun is located on 17°30' N and 73°30' E. River Vashisthi and its tributary Shiv river runs through the heart of the town. The floods

of river caused serious damage and decline of town in 20th century. The floods of 1901, 1909, 1938 and 1965 were notorious.

#### Phaltan :

Phaltan is <sup>an</sup> important ancient town ( Fig. 2.1 ). It is situated on the bank of Banaganga river, the tributary of Nira. The town flourished during medi<sup>e</sup>val period and became a major town of Nira valley. Phaltan is called as ' Kashi of Mahanubhav Panth'. Their chief ashram ' is in Phaltan. The Mahanubhavas used to call it as ' Phaletan '. During maratha period the town was <sup>the</sup> capital of Phaltan State. In the present period the town has fast growth. The growth is attributed to the development of irrigation and agro-industries in the towns environ. At present Phaltan is <sup>an</sup> important market centre and taluka headquarter.

#### Satara:

Satara is <sup>an</sup> important ancient town of the region. It is an important administrative centre right from its origin and at present it is district headquarter. It evolved in the rule of Andhra Bhrytyas i.e. 90 B.C. Then up to 1000 A.D. it was ruled by Chalukyas and Rashtrakutas. During 1190 A.D. Silahara King Bhoj II built the fort of Satara. In the first half of medi<sup>e</sup>val period Satara was ruled by Bahamani Kings and Adilshahi. Its importance as an administrative centre increased in the second half of medi<sup>e</sup>val period when Shivaji conquered it. Its location is commanding in upper Krishna valley. During Shahu's regime Satara was <sup>the</sup> capital of Maratha

# SOUTH MAHARASHTRA

## EVOLUTION OF URBAN PLACES

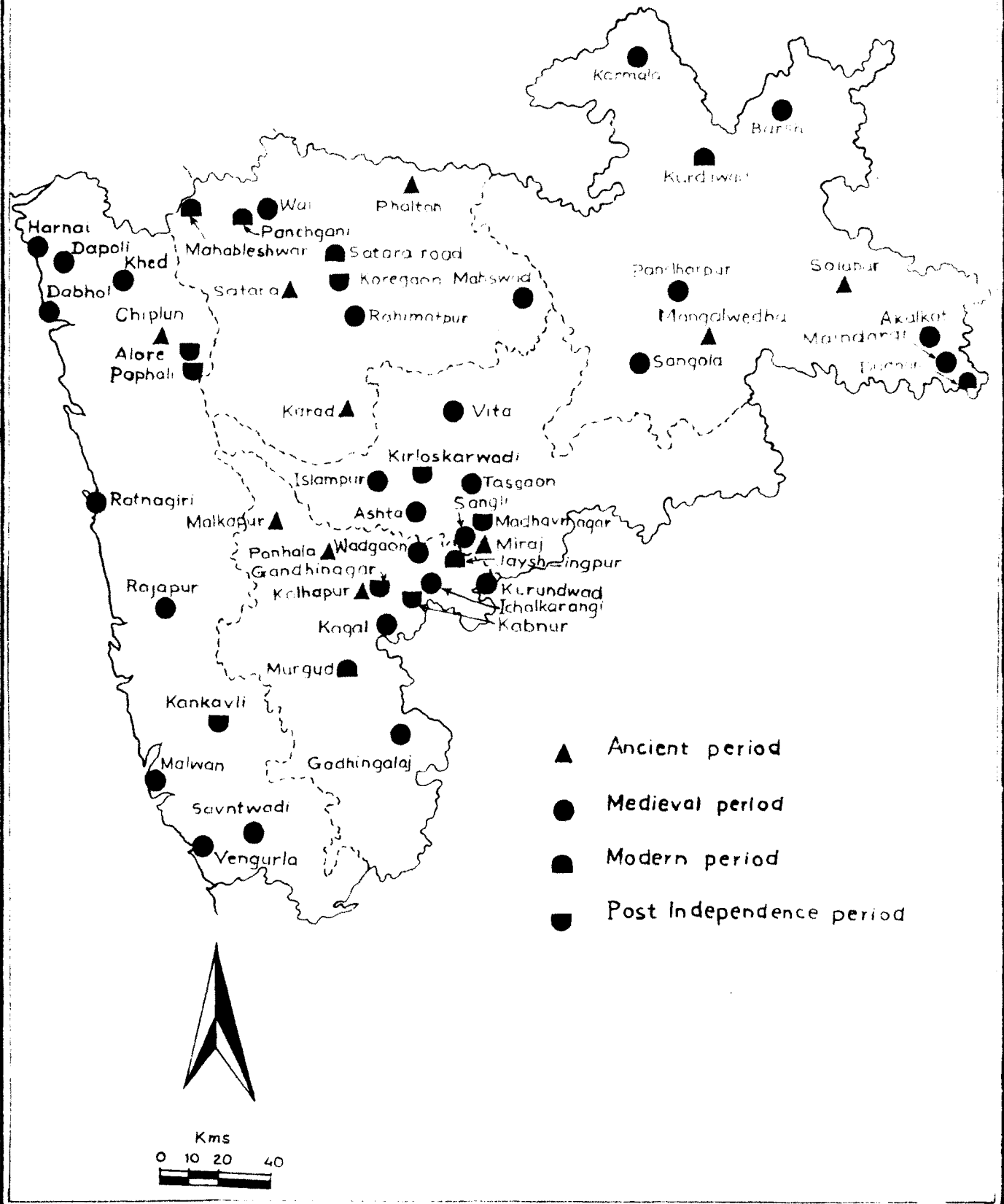


FIG - 2.1

State. From British period Satara's importance declined. In the last 20 years industrialization is going on here with fair rate.

#### Karad :

Karad is the oldest town of South Maharashtra. It is situated on the typical confluence of Krishna and Koyana rivers. Karad is a pilgrimage centre of Hindus. The town is surrounded by fertile river plain and it is connected to Konkan through Kumbharli ghat. It is an important market and trade centre. Karad was known as 'Karhad' or 'Karhakad'. In Bahamani period it was administrative centre. It was a district place in Adilshahi regime. Due to its rich agricultural environ, Karad is a growing trade centre of the present period.

#### Miraj :

Miraj is a historic town. It is located on  $16^{\circ}45'$  N and  $74^{\circ}35'$  E, only 6 Km. to the east of Sangli. In Bahamani period the town was very important. Before 1216 A.D. Miraj was under the rule of Silaharas of Kolhapur. Then it came under the rule of Yadavas and Bahamani dynasty. During this period Miraj was a strong ground and a base for operations against South Konkan and Goa. In 1490 the town came under Bijapur Sultanat. In his early times Chha. Shivaji tried to conquer Miraj. During Sambhaji's times and after Miraj was a safe custody for Maratha families. ( Gazetteer of India ). The importance of <sup>the</sup> town increased during Patwardhana's 'Jahagir'. In British rule, Miraj became a railway junction and its



importance in trade, administration and communication increased. Miraj is also a religious and cultural centre because of dargah of Mira Sahib and Abdul Karim Khan , the famous singer. Miraj is important musical instrument production centre.

#### Malakapur :

Malakapur is on the border of Konkan and Desh. Its importance was increased in 1488 when administrative head - quarter was shifted from Vishalgad to Malakapur. This ancient town was under the rule of Shri Pant Pratinidhi, jahagirdar of Vishalgad and then under Kolhapur state. At present it is headquarter of Sheduwadi taluka.

#### Panhala :

Panhala is an ancient hill fort town situated on a massive super of Sahyadri enchr<sup>o</sup>ching in to Panchaganga and Warana valleys. The town has a strategic location commanding Panchaganga basin and adjoining part of Karnataka. During 1191-92 it was site of Silahara king Bhoj II. Due to its strongest fortifications it was me<sup>j</sup>or fort in Bijapur Sultanat. Its importance increased in early maratha period. It was bel<sup>i</sup>ved that one who rules Panhala, commands south Maharashtra. This historic town has witnessed many important events in Chh. Shivaji's times. At present it is a taluka headquarter and me<sup>j</sup>or hill resort of study area.

#### Kolhapur :

Kolhapur's history dates back to very ancient period because its original name ' Karveer ' is mentioned in

' Hariwansha'. Ptolemy has described it as ' Hipocurpos'. Up to 550 A.D. Kolhapur went through rule of Vakatakas, Kadami, Shendrak and Mauryas. Then it was ruled by Badami Chalukyas, Rashtrakutas and then upto 1210 Siliharas. Karaveer was called ' Mahatirtha ' or ' Dakshin Kashi '. Silahara Kings completed the construction of Mahalaxmi Temple. During Silaharas and Devagirian Yadavas period the town flourished. Then upto 1659 the town was ruled by muslims. When Chh. Shivaji conquered Kolhapur, its growth rate accelerated and continued upto 1947. The city has rich agricultural surrounding. It is, at present, a growing industrial and educational centre, and it is a divisional administrative centre.

#### Mangalvedha :

Mangalvedha is ancient town of Bhima basin. It is believed that the name ' Mentulingpuri ' given in ' Skandha Purana ' was the former name of Mangalvedha. But recent research works discard it. By the remnants found at various places which are dating back to the period of Chalukya King of Kalyani, it is found that this town was important during ninth to eleventh century. Mangalvedha is situated in draught prone area and so it has remained nearly stagnant during the present century.

#### Solapur :

It was believed that the name solapur was derived from two words i.e. 'Sola' meaning sixteen and ' Pur ' meaning a village. But recent research works which are based upon

inscriptions, discard its authenticity. The town was called as ' Sonnalage ' and was pronounced as ' Sonolage ' . In the times of Yadavas, it was called as ' Sonolagi ' . Sanskrit inscriptions dating back to shaka 1238, indicates that this town was called as ' Sonalapur' . So there is probability of the thing that name ' Solapur ' must have come by dropping ' na' from ' Sonalapur ' in the course of time. British called it as ' Sholapur ' . In ancient period Solapur has gone through rules of Chalukyas, Rashtrakutas and Yadavas. In medieval period it came under <sup>the</sup> rule of muslims, Bahamanies and marathas. In modern period, under the British rule, Cotton Textile industry was flourished here. At present it is a railway junction, industrial city, district head-quarter and top ranking urban centre of the study area.

All above towns have emerged during the ancient period, most of them especially those in Konkan and hilly area, have declined in their importance. Only those towns having rich agricultural surroundings like Kolhapur, Karad and nodal centres like Satara, Miraj and Solapur have kept pace with the time and flourished.

## 2) Medieval Period :

The medieval period of Indian History has witnessed several changes in the political powers and also in the technology ( Dixit 1970 ). In the present study the medieval period includes the span of nearly 600 years from 1200 A.D. to 1818 A.D. The first half of the period is dominated by

muslim rule while the second half, is dominated by the Maratha rule. Various Socio-economic conditions of this period has influenced the rise and fall of several urban centres. During this period roads were developed, Cart-tracks were built and trade was protected. These two aspects have increased the mobility of people, which promoted the development of trade and commerce. Many ancient settlements of the area have increased their importance during this period. At the same time several new settlements were added as market centres, trade centres, religious centres and administrative centres.

In south Maharashtra 28 new settlements have developed, they include 9 settlements from Konkan area namely Harnai, Dapoli, Khed, Dabhol, Ratnagiri, Rajapur, Vengurla, Malwan and Sawantwadi. In the upper Krishna valley 12 settlements namely Wai, Rahimatpur, Vita, Tasgaon, Islampur, Ashta, Sangli, Vadagaon, Ichalkaranjee, Krundwad, Kagal and Gadhinglaj, have developed during the medieval period. Seven towns, i.e. Mhaswad, Sangola, Pandharpur, Barshi, Karmala, Akkalkot, and Maindargi have developed in the part of Bhima basin. Most of the towns developed in medieval period are parts, trade centres administrative head-quarters and the places of religious importance.

In this period Wai, Pandharpur and Mhaswad, these three places have developed as important religious centres. Harnai, Dabhol, Ratnagiri, Vengurla and Malwan have developed as port towns. Khed, Sawantwadi, Rahimatpur, Vita, Tasgaon, Islampur, Ashta, Sangli, Ichalkaranjee, Krundwad, Kagal, Gadhinglaj,

Sangola, Barshi, Karamala, Akkalkot, Maindargi and Rajapur have developed as trade and administrative head-quarters.

## 2) Modern Period:

The modern period of Indian history begins from 1818 when the British established their rule in India. The British rule has completely transformed the political, social and economic setup of the country ( Roy 1971 ). Under the British rule new innovations and technology has changed the way of life of the people in India. Development of roads, railways and river navigation has increased the mobility of people. Development of agriculture and irrigation has completely changed the social and cultural way of life of the people. During the British period several ancient and medieval towns have also grown in size and change their functional character. During the British rule seven towns namely, Panchagani, Mahabaleshwar , Satara , Jaysingpur, Murgud, Kurduwadi, and Dadhani have developed. Out of these towns Panchagani and Mahabaleshwar have developed as hill resorts. Jaysingpur, Murgud and Dadhani, these three towns have developed as trade centres. The town Kurduwadi is a combination of two villages ' Kurdu' and ' Wadi, which is developed as transport town and Satara Road, due to its railway importance have been developed as industrial town.

During the British period only seven places have been developed as important settlements. But several medieval and ancient towns like Kolhapur, Solapur, Sangli and Ichalkaranji have developed their trade, industrial activity

and social structure. The town Miraj has flourished as important transport centre.

After independence with the development of technology several urban centres have emerged on the landscape ( Mulik 1982 ). Development of industry, irrigation and agriculture has given rise to 8 new towns in the study area. The include Pophsli, Alore, Kankawali, Koregaon, Madhavnagar, Kirloskarwadi, Gandhinagar and Kabanur. After independence in Ratnagiri district 6 towns namely Redi, Nate, Shirgaon, Alore, Pophali and Kankawali have developed. But in the passage of time Redi, Nate and Shiragaon could not keep their existence as towns. On the South Maharashtra plateau, in Satara district several towns have emerged after independence. Of these towns Bhade, Patan, Humbarli, G.T. Helwak and Sadashivgad these towns could not maintained their existence. Madhavnagar, Gandhinagar, and Kabnur are the satellite towns of Sangli, Kolhapur and Ichalkaranji cities respectively, which have emerged after independence.

Concluding the salient features of the evolutionary account of towns in south Maharashtra, it is observed that most of the ancient towns were developed as administrative centres, religious centres or defence centres. During the medieval period several towns have developed as trade centres, transport centres, administrative centres and cultural centres. During the British period many towns have developed as trade centres, industrial centres, transport centres and

cultural centres. Further it is observed that most of the industrial towns of South Maharashtra have developed during the post-independence period. A few towns, which were developed as dam site towns have lost their importance after the completion of construction activity.

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