

A careful and systematic study of the process of urbanisation and related factors is essential in understanding the city system. Cities have an important role in the overall development of a region. Urban growth is the most important indicator of the development of any region. Exchange of goods, development of transport and communication network and overall economic conditions also help in the growth of urbanisation.

Urbanisation is normally associated with industrialisation. Sometimes people use this term with the casual degree of association, because industrialization and urbanisation go hand in hand. Urbanisation is also closely linked with the developmental process. The 'development' means a 'change' but this change is always positive. Change in positive direction is a basic component of development.

Maharashtra ranks first in urbanisation in the country. It has both highly industrialized developed area and extremely poor regions with agrarian base. The proportion of urban population in our country has changed from 10.85 percent to 25.72 percent in last ninety years, while in Maharashtra it has changed from 16.59 percent to 38.73 percent. When we look into the locational and spatial pattern of urbanisation in Maharashtra, then we find that the number of towns has not increased much in proportion to the actual increase in urban population. It means, growth of urbanisation in Maharashtra is not only due to increase in number of towns, but mainly because of the

growth of existing urban centres. In Maharashtra, the rate of growth of urbanisation has been accelerated after the independence. It means the development of industries, agriculture, transport and communication must have played crucial role in accelerating the rate of urbanisation.

Considering the above factors the present study has been undertaken with the following objectives.

- (i) To study the growth of urbanisation since independence and to analyse the trend of growth.
- (ii) To study the economic levels of development in Maharashtra.
- (iii) To correlate the levels of development and growth of urbanisation in Maharashtra.

Maharashtra today ranks first in manufacturing activity. It has a industrial sector with different activities. In view of the rapid growth of industrial sector, it is considered to be one of the leading industrial region of India.

At present the State of Maharashtra has 38.73 percent population living in urban areas. 1951 till 1991, there is a continuous growth in number of towns in class I to class IV towns. On the other hand the number of towns in class V and class VI indicates steady decline. This clearly indicates that towns are gaining more population and they are elevated to higher order class.

Patterns of Urbanisation :

The patterns of urbanisation, which has emerged in Maharashtra, indicates that there are few regions, where the rate of urbanisation is very high. Bombay, Pune and Nagpur districts show more than 50 percent urbanisation while 30 to 50 percent urbanisation is found in Nashik, Aurangabad and Amravati districts. Twelve districts of Maharashtra - Solapur, Jalgaon, Kolhapur, Akola, Dhule, Nanded, Chandrapur, Sangli, Parbhani, Buldhana, Latur and Wardha indicate 20 to 30 percent urbanisation and remaining eleven districts of Maharashtra have less than 20 percent rate of urbanisation. This clearly shows, highly industrialized districts having super class I cities have high rate of urbanisation. The districts having cities of regional importance have moderate rate of urbanisation. Low and very low rate of urbanisation is observed in most of the districts, where industrial progress has yet to make its mark.

Considering all above facts, the entire work is organised in three chapters. First chapter deals with the introduction to the region, its socio-economic and industrial profile.

Second chapter deals with the growth of urbanisation and trends of urbanisation.

Third chapter highlights the changes in development in different parts of the state since independence. It also

correlates the level of development and level of urbanisation in different districts of Maharashtra.

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

The maps and diagrams are prepared by author. All data have been processed by author. The author has tried to avoid errors and repetitions, 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 existing knowledge in the field of urban studies.
