

CHAPTER - V  
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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. Economic progress, technological efficiency and industrial growth are symbolized by the prosperity of an urban centres. Urban centre constitute distinctive foci of varying activities of human beings, with sharp internal differentiations and contain high densities of population.

Towns and cities are the objects of urban geographical inquiry. To the geographer, particularly to the urban geographer, the city is a unit of analysis and he studies the city as 'area and areas in the city'.

In present work the Miraj city of Sangli district in South Maharashtra is studied from the urban geographical point of view. Miraj (pop. 105,455 - 1981), a tahsil headquarter, a regional market centre, a transportational node with a railway junction, is a multifacet prospering urban centre of South Maharashtra and located at the boundary area of Maharashtra and Karnataka State.

Miraj is a very ancient city having long historical background. The historical records shows that the city was governed by various rulers such as Dravidians, Shakyas, Chalukyas, Mogals and Marathas. The evolutionary account of

Miraj shows that this historical and strategic centre was ruled by various dynasties. Particularly it was ruled by Yadvas of Bijapur for 250 years, Adilsah of Bijapur for 200 years, Mogals of Delhi for 60 years. Maratha Chhatrapati for 15 years, Peshwas for 7 years and Patwardhanas for 180 years. Miraj was princely state and was in existence upto 1947, it has merged into the Indian union after 1947.

The physical growth of Miraj was slowly and steadily during the 18th century. This is an old phase in the development of Miraj. During this phase the ancient sites like the Miraj fort, Mirasaheb darga, Jame masjid, the Ganesh temple and other temples and mosques were developed. At the end of the 18th century the boundaries of the city were extended very little with an area of 2.5 sq.kms.

The second phase of the growth consists the period of 100 years i.e. 1800 to 1900. During which the construction of Miraj Highschool building, Wanless Hospital, Ganesh temple and other several public buildings are completed. Several services including health, sanitation and education were developed and such developments expanded the city limit. In this phase the city size expanded from 2.5 to 5.9 sq.kms.

The third phase of the growth and development includes the period of 50 years. It is a pre-independence period during which the major development shows along the transportational lines. The city has developed as an important administrative

and commercial centre. Many commercial establishments, residential colonies and public buildings were emerged in this phase of development. The area of the city has grown to 10.4 sq.kms.

After independence Miraj flourished as a railway junction, regional market centre and a tahsil headquarter. The administrative, commercial, educational functions and medical facilities have increased the importance of Miraj. During this phase there is a noteworthy development towards north along Miraj-Pandharpur state highway and towards northwest along the Miraj-Kupwad road. The railway line in the south of gaathan act as a barrier for the further development of settlement and hence, the city is expanded in a north and northeast directions. The city limits were expanded from 42.40 sq.kms in 1971 to 42.68 sq.kms in 1981. The newly expanded areas includes the development of Laxmi Nagar, Sonali Nagar, Subhash Nagar, Vijay Nagar, Ganesh housing area and other housing areas.

The municipal records shows that the population of Miraj was 50,000 in 1762 A.D. which further decreased to 18,000 in 1901. This decline in the population trend is a result of the frequent epidemics of plague especially of 1898. A careful examination of decadal growth rates in the 20th century indicate that during the decade 1901-1911 the centre had nearly 15% growth rate. There was no increase in the population during the period of 1911-1921. For the decades 1921-1931, 1931-1941 and 1941-1951

the growth rates of population of Miraj were below 25 percent. The real growth of population of the city has started after the independence. The decade 1951-1961 registered 32.63 percent of growth, while the highest growth rate was recorded in 1961-1971. During the last three decades the population of the Miraj city had accelerated due to the growth in industries, commercial establishments, social amenities and public facilities and adequate water supply. The increase in the medical facilities is one of the root causes in the population growth of Miraj city.

The study of the characteristics of city population shows that the population of Miraj city was distributed over 31 municipal wards in 1971. In 1981 there were 9 additional wards within the city limit. The wardwise population distribution pattern shows the distinct picture as the census wards are different in their size. The intera-ward population distribution shows that the wards having commercial locations and shopping establishments are relatively thinly populated, at the other end of the scale the wards of residential localities are thickly populated. Thus, intra-urban distribution of population is affected by locational aspect and the functional magnitude of the urban space.

The urban population density study shows that the density is declining with the distance from the city centre. The density-distance relationship has tested with the application of Colin Clark's model and it has been observed that urban population

density declines in a negative exponential manner with increasing distance from city centre.

The wardwise study of the sex ratio reveals that the wards with industrial estate shows lower level of sex ratio, the wards having residential localities indicate balanced and higher level of sex ratio is typically associated with the wards where muslim community is residing.

The comparative study of general literacy shows that, in 1971 the general literacy of the city was 52.2 percent, it has raised to 59 percent in 1981. The analysis of literacy pattern at the ward level reveal that the highest proportion of literate persons are observed in ward nos. 33 and 36, which are the localities of Brahmin Community.

The study of occupational structure of city population indicate that in 1981 the labourforce engaged in agricultural persuit is 5.1 percent, 1.2 percent in household manufacturing and 22.2 percent in other worker's category. Broadly, out of the total population only 30 percent is a working population and the remaining 70 percent is non-working population. This clearly indicate that the dependency ratio is quite high. The analytical study of occupational structure reveals that the tertiary sector is found to be increase to a great extent. The proportion of workers in transport and communication, trade and commerce is increasing very rapidly due to the opening of Kolhapur-Pune broadguage railway line in 1971.

The study of morphological characteristics and functional areas of the Miraj city shows that the city is developed during different developmental phases and the imprints of different cultures have been reflected in the various old constructions. Miraj ground fort is looked upon as the most important historical relic. As the time progressed the city has areally expanded outward. The outward development is mainly observed along Sangli and Pandharpur roads. The intra-urban road pattern of the city is characterized by north-south orientation, hence the development of constructions and buildings are naturally governed by such orientation.

The internal structure of the Miraj city has characterized by the functional areas and the nature of the functions. The internal landuse pattern is the product of the interaction of one functional area with the other within the city.

Miraj city has a total geographical area of 42.68 sq.kms (4268 hectares) of which 721.73 hectares area is developed. The analysis of landuse statistics shows that out of the total developed area very high proportion of the land (34 percent) is devoted to transport and communication purpose. This is a good indicator that Miraj is a centre of transport and communication.

The study of the functional areas within the city shows that the different functional establishments are found concentrated at different localities. City centre is characterized by commercial areas. Residential areas of the city are mainly

found at Brahmanpuri, Nadi wes, Udgaon wes, Dhangar galli, Dhor galli, Tanaji chowk, Shivaji chowk, Kaman wes, Tasgaon wes etc. Very recently the new development of residential areas is found beyond the limits of ring road which includes Sanmitra housing society, Ganesh housing society, Maji Sainik wasahat, Indira nagar, Vijay Nagar etc. along Miraj-Pandharpur road. Acute shortage of housing has created the substandard housing pattern called slum localities. There are five slum localities in the city. Industrial profile of the city shows that the various industries are spreaded within the city, however, recently M.I.D.C. has acquired about 170 hectares of the land on the either sides of Miraj-Kupwad road where many industrial units are developed.

The urban zone, as observed, are not distinct and continuous in their extension. However, mixed landuse pattern is one of the characteristics of functional morphology.

The study of the sphere of influence of Miraj city shows that empirically demarcated zones for various parameters have great variations in size, range, population served and area served. The degree of urban influence calculated by theoretical method shows that there is a considerable dominance of Miraj city at 20 kilometer distance area. On an average Miraj city serves the entire Miraj tahsil and adjacent areas.

In view of rapid growth of Miraj city during the last two decades, it is estimated that by the end of 20th century



the city growth will cross two lakh population size. From the estimated growth point of view the infrastructural facilities and public amenities should be properly planned. The planning for industries, residential localities, internal transport transit and adequate water supply is most urgent need of the city and city dwellers.