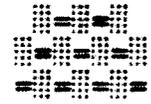


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1.1 INTRODUCTION :

An urban centre is essentially a settlement which provided services for the population of its hinterland along with its own. It provides goods and services to neighbouring area and population. These services includes administrative, banking, educational, profetional services and cultural facilities, further the wholesale and retailing trade and even employment opportunities. In this context the importance of urban centres and their significance depends upon the various kinds of urban functions which they perform.

The concept of hierarchical class system in urban geography begins with the theory of central places. A central place is defined "as a settlement that provides services for people living outside it." The classical central place theory is the result of Christaller's theorization. The concept of urban settlement hierarchy donotes a ranking of urban settlement into successive groups on the basis of size or on various other basis such as functions performed or facilities offered by the settlements. A hierarchical ranking is one that deals with different orders or levels of urban centres, with each hierarchy based upon certain criterias such as population size, urban area or number of functions performed.

In the case of rank size ordering of urban centres the single variable is population, and differences in magnitude of population distinguish different orders or levels in rank size

hierarchy. However, an urban hierarchy may be developed using different variable such as the number of functions performed in the urban centres of the region. In this case, one is dealing with functional hierarchy of urban centres within a spatial framework. Similarly the hierarchy of urban centres can be identified on the basis of the area served by these centres.

The hierarchy of urban settlements can be established on the basis of the centrality of the settlements. The centrality is the measure of importance of a place in terms of its functional capacity to serve the surrounding area and people. centrality can be expressed as qualitatively; such as low and high centrality, as well as quantitatively by centrality values which are obtained by converting the functional base of a place into score on the basis of frequency and specializations of the functions. Thus, centrality depends upon the central functions and hierarchy of urban centres closely associated with central functions.

The cities and towns have different population size, and importance, functional magnitude and various capacity to serve their surrounding regions. Here an attempt has been made to establish the hierarchy of urban centres of Maharashtra for the period of 1981 and further^s to findout the changes if any in the hierarchical orders of the urban centres.] 9

The rank size hierarchy of urban centres within study area has based upon the population figures for 1981 census year..

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY :

The objective of the present study, primarily is to unfold the comprehensive analysis of many fold features of the problems. Hierarchy of urban centres in Maharashtra more specifically the study aims to highlight on the hierarchic organisation of urban centres of the study region with the following objects.

- (1) To study the urban centres of Maharashtra with special reference to their class, status, population size, percent share of urban population in different class orders, mean size of average town and its growth.
- (2) To examine the geo-socio-economic factors in the distribution of urban centres and to find out spatial distribution at patterns of urban centres.
- (3) To measure the functional importance in terms of centrality of the urban centres and to study their hierarchic orders.
- (4) To analysis the centrality and hierarchy or urban centres.
- 9 (5) To highlight the changes in centrality and hierarchy of urban centres.

1.3 SOURCE OF DATA :

The present study is entirely based on secondary data. Therefore, the relevant data has been collected from the following main sources.

- (1) The basic data pertaining to the urban centres and demographic, socio-economic information of the region is collected through census reports published by Government of India i.e. Maharashtra General Population Tables (1981) and (1991) Socio-Economic Abstracts. The Municipal Year Books, District Census Handbooks and Gazetteers.
- (2) Vital Statistics.
- (3) Miscellaneous source, published sources and unpublished source.
- (4) The information about the functional establishments was collected by distributing a questionnaire, the field checks and general observation were helpful for the confirmation of the authenticity of the data.
- (5) Besides above, few data and information have been taken from the certain books and journals that have been mentioned under the heading of ' Bibliography.'

1.4 METHODOLOGY :

In the present study various methods and techniques have been used, however, it is not appropriate here to give details.

The details regarding various methods and techniques will be discussed in the text at appropriate places. The centrality and hierarchy of urban centres is determined by a new method devised by author. For comparison two traditional methods of Davies (1967) and Godlunds (1955) have also been used.

In the present study town has been taken as a basic unit of investigation for calculating the hierarchy of urban centres for the year 1981. On the basis of size class order of urban centres, the centres have been divided into three groups i.e. big towns, medium towns, and small towns.

For the analysis of census hierarchy of the towns based on population, the decadal year 1981 is selected. The total number of towns has been divided into six groups i.e. Class I, II, III, IV, V and VI towns.

For the analysis of hierarchy of urban centres based on area occupied, the decadal year 1981 is selected. And the towns of the study area have been grouped into seven groups.

In studying the urban hierarchy based on functional base, the decadal year 1981 is selected and towns of the area have been grouped into eight groups.

For calculating the centrality^q hierarchy is identified for the year 1981. The centrality score is computed by using the formula as given below.

$$C = \frac{TP}{RTP} \times 100$$

Where C = is the Centrality Index

TP = is the Tertiary Population of
a town

RTP = is the total tertiary population
of all towns of the study region

For the analysis of functional hierarchy based on centrality index the modified Godlunds method has been used, i.e.

$$C = \frac{STpt}{STpr} \times 100$$

Where, C = is the Centrality Index

STpt = Secondary and Tertiary population
of a town/place

STpr = Secondary and Tertiary population
of the study region

While for the analysis of rank size relationship of the urban centres, the decadal year 1991 is considered.

Number of choropleth maps are prepared for supporting the analysis of selected aspects of urban centres. Few graphs have been prepared for showing the concentration of urban population and various aspects.

In the study of presentation, the references are given at the end of each chapter.

1.5 OVER-VIEW OF LITERATURE :

The studies relating to the hierarchy of urban centres and exchange system received a considerable attention from various social scientists i.e. from Sociologist, Economists, and Geographers. During the last two decades there has been a great surge of literature on the study of population including both rural and urban. References of relevant studies has been mentioned in each chapter of the present work. However, a selected brief review of important work has been just mentioned for understanding the trend of geographical research on urban phenomena. The work on urban geography by Brush (1953), Deshmukh (1979), Datta and Bannarjee (1970), Smalies (1944), Smith (1970), Dixit (1968), Reddy (1970), Barge (1984), Hartshorne (1980), Christaller (1933), Davies (1967), Berry and Garrison (1968) have referred.

In India various geographers focused their attention through various research papers on the following factors of urban centres. The role of urban centres, origin and evolution, location, and distribution, transportation network and development of urban centres, typology, centralítý and hierarchy, urban area, urban structure or morphology.

Some important studies in the field of Urban Geography have been completed by researchers for their doctoral dissertation in different research centres, institutes and universities. Some of them are Brush, J.E. (1953) : The hierarchy of central places in South Western Wisconsin, The Geographical Review, pp.380-420.

Vijayraj N.C. (1972) : The growth trends in urban settlements in the Tungabhadra Basin, in urban system and rural development University of Mysore. Diddee Jayamala (1978) : Central places in Upper Bhima Basin. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Poona. Deshmukh P.W. (1979) : A study of central places in Upper Krishna Valley. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Shivaji University, Kolhapur.

In the State of Maharashtra no Geographer has made an attempt to study of the hierarchy of urban centres. Therefore it is an attempt to shade some light on hierarchical organization of towns of Maharashtra.

1.6 THE STUDY REGION :

Researcher has selected the State of Maharashtra for study purpose for some reason, as the researcher is born and brought up in the Maharashtra. He has live-mental map of his spatial experiences and has better perception of the region. The whole study region is heterogeneous in nature which has a greater bearing on the location of the urban centres. The entire region is socio-economically developed. Agriculture is the backbone of the regions economy. Under such situation urban centres are most important and immediate service centres which are functioning as the levers of development. These are some of the reasons that researcher has selected the said region for the study purpose.

1.7 AN OUTLINE OF PRESENT WORK :

The present study deals with the 'Hierarchy of Urban Centres in Maharashtra - A Geographical Appraisal.' It includes the study of urban centres with special reference to the hierarchic order and functional set up. The study also encompasses the centrality and hierarchic structure of the urban centres in the region. The entire work has been organised into seven chapters.

Chapter first deals with an introduction. An attempt has been made to account for urban settlements, hierarchy of urban centres. The objectives, data base and methodology and a brief review of literature etc. are included in this chapter.

Chapter second presents the geographical profile of the region under study. The geo-socio-economic landscape and its related aspects have been highlighted.

Chapter third deals with urban hierarchy of the state of Maharashtra based on population for the year 1981. Further it also includes the urban pyramid of the state.

The area occupied by urban centres has been considered as a single factor for establishment of urban hierarchy of the state in chapter number fourth.

Chapter fifth deals with the functional hierarchy of the towns in Maharashtra. A comparative analysis of rank size relationship study is subject matter of sixth chapter. The summary and conclusion has been accounted in the seventh chapter.

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