

CHAPTER - VIII

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Sindhudurg district is the southern part of the greater track known as the "KONKAN" which is historically famous for its long coast line and safe harbours. The district is located south of the west coast line of Maharashtra state. It covers an area of 5207 sq.kms., which accounts for only 1.69 per cent area of the Maharashtra state and has a population of 8,32,152 persons according to 1991 census. In this district has 4 towns and 736 villages spread over seven talukas. Physiographically, this area is very rugged and complex one. The total area under forest in this district is about nearly 11.67 per cent.

The distribution of rural settlements is influenced by various factors. Out of the several physical, social, economic and political factors a few factors are more responsible for the distribution of rural settlements in Sindhudurg district. However, the settlement distribution is not only determined by the natural conditions but it is also influenced by socio-economic factors.

Physiography plays an important role in the distribution of rural settlements. It is observed that out of the

total study area nearly 51.16 per cent area has an average height below 150 metres where, 86.41 per cent of the total rural settlements are located. Nearly 36.14 per cent area has an average height between 150 to 450 metres where, 11.55 per cent rural settlements are located. The height of region is above 450 metres, covers 12.7 per cent area and only 2.04 per cent rural settlements are located. In any part, more number of rural settlements are found in the areas where the drainage density is high. In the study region it is observed that, where the drainage density is found between 50 to 100 kms. per 100 sq.kms., covers an area about 92.22 per cent of the total, where 91.71 per cent rural settlements are located. The drainage pattern also affects the distribution of rural settlements in Sindhudurg district.

Climate affect the human habitat, settlements pattern and occupation of the people and their activities. Of all the climatic factors, rainfall plays an important role in the distribution of rural settlements in the study area. It is observed that the amount of rainfall and number of rural settlements have a low positive correlation. In the study region, the rainfall between 300 to 400 cm. covers 63.01 per cent area where 66.17 per cent rural settlements are located.

The density of rural population and the density of rural settlements have a high positive correlation. It is observed that eastern part of the study region in the hilly area, where the density of rural population and density of rural settlements is very low. The western part of the study region where the density of rural population and density of rural settlements is very high.

Agriculture is the most important activity in the study region because nearly 76 per cent of the population directly engaged in agricultural activities. Agricultural practices are also affected on the distribution of rural settlements. It is observed that, where the percentage of land under cultivation is found between 10 to 30 per cent, covers an area about 65.85 per cent of the total and accounts for 63.45 per cent rural settlements are located. Hilly areas, where limited land is available for cultivation possess small size settlements with low density of population while in the plain areas where more land is available for cultivation, more settlements are large in size.

Sindhudurg district has a very small scale potential of development in irrigation facilities. It is also observed that, the agriculture is mainly depend on the mansoonal rainfall only. In the study region there is no effect of land under irrigation and the distribution of rural settlements, because this area has

absence of irrigation facilities. In the study region, where the land under irrigation is found less than 2 per cent, covers an area about 85.21 per cent of the total and accounts for 76.90 per cent of the total rural settlements.

The road transportation network play an important role in the distribution of rural settlements. In the study areas, it is observed that, more number of rural settlements are developed on the road or on the nodal points. The area where the density of road is observed above 60 km per 100 sq.kms. covers 64.76 per cent area and accounts for 74.18 per cent of the rural settlements. This area has the dominance of medium to large size settlements and density of rural settlements is high. In the areas where road network is better developed large size settlements are found.

The spatial analysis of rural settlements distribution indicates that physiography, availability of cultivable land and growth of transport facilities are the important factors which influence the spatial distribution of rural settlements. The Random distribution of rural settlements is observed in Southern Part of Vaibhavwadi and Vengurla talukas central part of Kankavli, Devgad and Malvan talukas and major part of Sawantwadi taluka. Near to Random distribution of rural

settlements occupies nearly 34.03 per cent area and 36.96 per cent of the total rural settlements. Uniform pattern of rural settlements is found very small area covering 4.77 per cent covers an area, where only 2.17 per cent of the total rural settlements are located.

The dynamics of rural growth is related to various geographic factors and changing economic situation. Some times negative trend of growth in the population as well as in the number of rural settlements is observed. The study of growth pattern clearly indicates that the areas which developed road transportation network, agriculturally prosperous and economically better developed, indicate more growth rate of rural rural population and these areas have an addition of more new villages which have been carved out of the old large size villages. Due to this reason many villages in the economically prosperous area indicate decrease in their population size.

Population is the most important elements of cultural landscape. According to the 1991 census the rural population of Sindhudurg district is 769,002 persons (92.41 per cent) having 357,773 males and 411,229 females. The rural population has increased by 55.61 per cent during the 1901 to 1991 period. The 1921-32 decade a very high rate of increase is observed

(13.12 per cent) in the rural population of the region. For the last 40 years, out of seven talukas of the district, six talukas have a positive growth (except Vengurla in 1961-71) rate of rural population and only one taluka i.e. Malvan has negative growth rate of rural population. It shows that in Malvan taluka there is more out migration than other talukas of the district.

The distribution of population is uneven and mostly influenced by the physiography of the region. There is a greater concentration of population in the central part of the study region. According 1991 census the density of rural population in Sindhudurg district is 149 persons per sq.km. Vengurla taluka has the highest rural population density of 272 persons per sq.km., while Vaibhavwadi taluka has the lowest density of rural population i.e. 117 persons per sq.km. In the hilly area have a lower density than the average density of the area.

It is observed that more than half (52.25 per cent) of the region's population is in the working age group (15.59 years), while 38.59 per cent of the region's population falls in the age group of 0-14 years and 9.16 per cent population is above 60 years of age. In the rural areas of district the number of females per thousand males was 1149 as compared to 972 for Maharashtra state. This is significantly higher than that of the

state average. This relatively high sex ratio is caused by the migration of male folk to industrial and urban areas.

Working force constitutes 48.78 per cent of the total rural population, of which 51.41 per cent is male, while non workers group is dominated by females (53.51 per cent). It is observed that out of the total working rural population nearly 80.89 per cent rural workers are dependent upon primary occupation. Nearly 6.61 per cent population is engaged in secondary activities and 12.50 per cent population is engaged in tertiary activities. The agriculture is the main economic activities in the study region.

The religious composition of population clearly shows that pre-dominance of Hindus in the region who constitute 93.44 per cent of its total rural population of the district. Buddhists is the second largest religious community, which is 2.83 per cent of the district total rural population. Muslim have third largest community (2.07 per cent), while Christian (1.52 per cent) and Jains (0.13 per cent) are very few in number.

Where region under study is marked by a higher level of literacy particularly in rural areas. As regards rural area of the district the total literacy rate is 74.80 per cent with male

literate having 85.60 per cent and female literates accounting for 65.67 per cent. Vengurla taluka has the highest literacy rate of 79.67 per cent and the lowest literacy rate in Vaibhavwadi taluka (64.53 per cent).

Rural settlements is a relatively small and simple agglomeration of houses at a favourable site, primarily associated with agriculture and related phenomena. The types of settlement is a system of functionally interrelated settlements. Four basic patterns of rural settlements have been observed in the study area, they are :

- (1) Dispersed type of settlements
- (2) Compact type of settlements
- (3) Composite type of settlements
- (4) Fragmented type of settlements.

The physical and cultural factors such as relief, fertile soil, land tenure, transport network, security and density of population also control of the settlement types.

The compact type of rural settlements are located in the areas where agriculture is developed and accessibility is high. Such settlements are more common in plain fertile region of Sawantwadi and Vengurla talukas. The composite type of

rural settlements are dominantly found in the plain fertile region of Vengurla, Kudal, Malvan, Kankavli and Sawantwadi talukas.

The disperse type of rural settlements are commonly observed in Kankavli, Sawantwadi and Vengurla talukas, where most of the area is covered by rough topography. The fragmented form of rural settlements has developed in the interior parts of Kudal, Kankavli, Devgad, Vaibhavwadi and Malvan talukas. Most of the fragmented villages are commonly found in the small river valleys.

The internal and external forms of rural settlements are closely related to various geographical and cultural conditions. The village site, water availability, nature of soil, vegetation, agricultural practices, farm size, field pattern, roads and religious institutions are the important aspects which influence the pattern of rural settlements.

Rural service centres are the central place, to provide goods and services to surrounding rural areas. The rural service centres serve the primary needs of villages. When identifying rural service centres in an underdeveloped region, one must take great care. Very small functions like Kirana shop, a dispensary or weekly market are of great significance in the

under developed economy. It is observed that most of the rural service centres are small size in respect of their population and functional capacity. The most rural service centres grown near roads or nodal point and surrounding taluka head quarters in the study region. In the areas where the rural service centres more developed the density of villages is high in the study region. In the Sindhudurg district there are 100 rural service centres of which four rural service centres are urban places. Of them 53 percent have three service group 33 per cent four service group and only 14 per cent rural service centres five service group.

The hierarchical structure of rural service centres in Sindhudurg district classifies them in to six orders of hierarchy. The first order is occupied by only one centre namely Sawantwadi, it possesses several important functions and services and serves the major part of the study area. Second order hierarchic rural service centres includes taluka head quarters, namely Kudal, Malvan, Kankavli and Vengurla. The lowest order of hierarchy includes small villages having limited functions. They only provide the basic services to near by villages. The lower order rural service centres depend on higher order rural service centres for their functional needs.