INTRODUCTION

The phenomena called urbanization in its tangible as well as abstract facets presents an arena for academic endeavours stemming from diverse subjects, the more common amongst which are Sociology, Economics, History and Geography. Geography owing to its interdisciplinary and correlative nature offers relatively more comprehensive approach for understanding this phenomenon. It is in the perview of geography to present the holistic view of this phenomenon rather than its piece-meal approach. A geographic study of towns primarily attempts to answer two basic questions: What forces have been operative behind the growth of urbanization in the region and how have the various characteristics of it taken the present form? More specifically, the relative dominance of systematic geographical factors vis-a-vis the historical accidental factors deserves to be evaluated, and their impact on the present urban situation of the region and further developmental prospect thereof to be ascertained. An attempt has been made in this work to present a geographical description and interpretation of urbanization, areally and temporally, in the Malwa Plateau.

THE THEME

The basic theme, under-current through the whole of the present work, is that the complex of transformational processes called urbanization was primarily motivated not by economic-technological change, popularly called industrialization, but by politico-historical developments and socio-cultural transformations, and the industrialization came much later, as only a secondary attendant feature in the region. The urbanization, therefore, took a different course in the region from the typical hypothesized cycle of urbanization, primarily through
industrialization, in the west. Urbanization is viewed as necessarily a multidimensional transformational process which is culturally, temporally and spatially differentiated; and which, therefore, is not likely to repeat in other areas the course it took in the West (Ginsburg, N.S. 1965, p. 311). Though politico-historical processes have been operative in a significant way in most of the important regions of the world, but the modern urbanization in the wake of the technological-industrial revolution of the West, wrought a radical modification in the total urban situation, so much so that the presordial urbanization, long fostered upon politico-historical factors, agrarian opulence, trade and commerce, and less frequently, upon the local renounced craftsmanship, was subdued to insignificance or utterly disfigured. This was because the tenets, such as the essentially fortuitously occurring industrial raw materials and inanimate power resources, upon which the industrial urban growth was supported, stand in obvious disharmony with the essentially ubiquitous and laminar patterns of the resource-base factors of agrarian prosperity, trade, and central functions like administration, of the pre-industrial urbanization.

However, in Malwa the force, or ferocity, of modern industrialization, itself very much belated, was very feeble, and the modification wrought by it upon the pre-mordial economic-urban situation has been very mild, due to a notably hospitable geographical background of the region, and a virtual lack of all major localised industrial raw materials, particularly the mineral and power resources. Consequently, the pre-mordial, pre-industrial urban situation is largely intact, and except for a notable development of cotton textile industry the urban economy heavily looms upon the tertiary functions like services, trade and commerce.

So far as the tertiary sector continues to predominate the urban economy and the bulk of the labour force shifts from
primary to the tertiary and not to the secondary sector, the towns emerging from villagehood find themselves heading towards what may aptly be called a 'pseudo past industrial stage' thus skipping over the industrial stage, which is a real formative stage and builds a solid bonny structure, while the tertiary functions only add flesh and blood to their economic physique. In the face of immigration from the country side under various negative features, there may come about a subsistence urbanization on one hand, and inflation of economy on other, and towns would tend to be parasitic rather than generative. The Malwa plateau seems to have reached to this stage of urbanization which has been tried to analyzed in the present work.

The second basic idea is the fact that owing to the hospitable geographical personality and to the long significant history, the latter has come to the foreground and has wielded the decisive influences on the urban situation of the region, pushing the geographical controls to the background. It is with these under-current notions, that the role of politico-historical factors has been investigated and evaluated in all major aspects of this study.

The host of urban characteristics of individual towns is essentially the result of intricate inter-play of these types of factors and forces, and may profitably be viewed as significant symptoms to diagnose the types of the forces and their variable dominance operative behind the urban evolution of the region.

THE REGION

Malwa has always been an important name in the history as well as in the geography of India. Originally ethnic name of a highly important people, Malwa came to connote a territory occupied and largely controlled by this people— a large plateau
surface of northwestern Madhya Pradesh, north of the Narmada Valley, including adjoining parts of Rajasthan and Gujarat. It has always been a well recognised region physically and culturally, and is marked by a high degree of geographical homogeneity. The Malwa Plateau falling in Madhya Pradesh State has been considered in the present study.

**Demarcation of the Region**— As the tenor of investigation lay on various aspects of the towns and radiant influence thereof into the country side, it is not the exact boundary of the area covered that is of critical importance, but the coherence and completeness of the area as region. As such, the hair splitting demarkation of the regional boundary was refrained, and whole districts were taken. That is why, though the Vindhyan Scarp marks the abrupt termination of the plateau surface of Malwa, the boundary is taken to be marked by the Narmada river, which also marks district boundary over almost the whole of its length in Malwa. Moreover, not before long, it marked the boundary between the Central Provinces and Central India. On the north and west, the regional boundary approximately coincides with the present boundary of M.P. It is only on the east that the boundary of Malwa has been quite vague. Sagar district, located on eastern fringe, was part of the Central Provinces under the direct British rule, and is culturally regarded as a part of the Bundelkhand. However, it has been included in Malwa Plateau, out of the following considerations:

Geographically, western Sagar district is a part of eastern Malwa, particularly the whole basin of Bina river. While delineating the physiographic provinces of India, Chatterjee, S.P. (1964) also puts much of Sagar district including Sagar town, in his Malwa Plateau. Some standard works already done also include Sagar district in Malwa (Ayyar, N.P. et al., 1971 p. 565 and Singh, R.Y., 1974).
It extends from 21°55' north lat. to 25°07' north latitude and from 74°2' east long. to 79°21' east longitude. Stretching from northern state border to the Narmada river and from the western state border to Sagar district, it covers an area of 10,4,990 Sq.km. encompassing 14 districts of Indore, Bhopal, Sagar and Gwalior divisions (Plate 1). Total population of this plateau is 11045 thousands in 1971, living in 19304 villages and 84 towns, the latter ranging in size from well below half a myriad to well over half a million. These towns contain little below 24 per cent of the total population of Malwa. The premier city of the State Indore and its capital Bhopal are located in this plateau (Plate 2). The distribution of rural population is fairly even, density being slight over 105 persons/Sq.km. Similarly, the distribution of towns is also remarkably regular.

In M.P., it is essentially a somewhat undulating plateau surface covered by thick piles of lava, on which developed the typical, rich black soils, dotted here and there with flat-topped, 'mesa' like hills. For one thing, it is almost devoid of all major industrial mineral and power resources, which cripples the prospect of heavy industries in the region. It slowly merges in the dissected alluvia in the north, and in the forested hills on the west. On the south the plateau is abutted by the bold Vindhyan Scarp over-looking the deep, structural Narmada Valley. This region, with moderate rainfall is well drained by several medium sized rivers, mostly originating in the Vindhyan Scarp and flowing northwards.

Malwa occupies from historic times, an important 'en route' position between the Gangetic plains in the north and the Deccan and its important sea ports on the southwest. The Agra-Bombay National Highway is the cardinal artery of road network and is essentially the old route between north India and the
Deccan. Most of the other important routes generally are in north-south directions. Even at present, except Sagar-Bhopal-Indore route, there is no significant east-west transport line.

Except for the Sagar district, the whole region was under the Central India Administration under a jumble of princely states, and lacked a coherent central administration. Resulting from the peculiar course of the history, this feature has had profound imprints on the urban situation of the region.

**Plan of the Work:**

The present work is divided into nine chapters in succession on different aspects of the region and its towns, and a concluding part, besides some appendices in the end.

The first chapter describes, in bold outlines, the elements of geographical personality of the region. Some most significant elements of the physical geography are underlined and their specific bearings on other aspects delineated. It also describes the economic and human aspects of its geography and their imprints on towns.

The second chapter traces the history of the region, in some greater detail for certain important recent epochs. It particularly emphasises the profound bearings that certain historical factors and developments have had upon the total urban situation of Malwa as it stands today. The course of history is seen as more directly an inherent force behind many aspects of the region.

The third chapter traces the growth trends of towns in the present century. Trends of growth of population for Malwa and for the state are traced and compared. The decennial growth trends of individual towns are then analysed and relations with important contemporary vicissitudes, economic
developments and with towns size are investigated. Malwa is then divided into regions on the basis of these growth trends.

The fourth chapter comprises the analysis of migrational streams, and particularly evaluates their role in spatial pattern of urban growth in the region. The lakh cities have been discussed in detail in this respect.

Locational patterns of towns have been analysed in the fifth chapter, in terms of site and situation. Some important types of locations in the region are ascertained, and the relation between locational patterns on one hand and growth and distributional aspects on the other hand, are traced.

In the distributional aspects investigated in the sixth chapter, spacing patterns of towns are analysed employing the established quantitative approaches, and their relation with certain geographical factors are established. The role of politico-historical factors on it is also investigated. In the last section, the rank-size rule of Zipf is applied to the town gradation of the region.

The seventh chapter focuses upon the functional structure and degree of specialisation therein, of the towns. Subtle relations between function and geographical setting are also studied. In order to establish the sectors of economy congenial to urban dynamism, changes in functional structure of towns over the last decade is also investigated.

The eighth chapter studies some of the more important characteristics of towns, such as sex and age composition, literacy, economic composition of labour force and the density of population in the towns, with the prime objective to determine the levels of urbanization.

Finally, in the ninth chapter, the organisation, structure and functioning of towns as an urban system has been
brought into focus. Particularly, a suitable method was
developed to ascertain the relative stature of towns as
centres or nodes in an urban system in the region, and a
hierarchy of towns was thus established. Hinterlands of towns
at various levels of centrality in the hierarchy have also been
delineated.

The major findings of the observation and analysis
are summarised in the concluding part.

APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

Towns and cities may be viewed from a close-up angle in
which individual towns are studied in detail and their internal
patterns— their structure, morphology, land use and umland etc.
are analysed in relation to local conditions; they may also be
viewed from a panoramic angle in which a whole town is looked
upon as an entity, and all such entities of a region collecti-
vely are regarded as a set or system (Mayer, H.M., 1954, pp.
148-9). This latter approach focuses upon external relations
of each town, and its various characteristics. The present
work has adopted this latter approach of a holistic view of
regional urban situation, and towns are looked upon essentially
as sub parts of system of cities, and as cardinal functional
and focal sub parts of the whole regional geographical frame
work, itself, in turn, working within a much larger national
frame work.

For all the ingenuity and wisdom of interpretation and
deduction, on the part of the old, qualitative theorists, no
study today can be deemed methodologically sound and rigorous,
unless it is based upon modern quantitative methods. In the
present study standard statistical techniques are employed
at every step. At some critical steps, where none of the
available methods was satisfactory, either a new method was
evolved or old ones were modified significantly so as to suit the purpose. Almost invariably the grouping and categorisation was done on the basis of mean and standard deviation and correlation regression analysis is used extensively to investigate the strength and nature of relationship between variables. Particularly, more rigorous methods were employed, in the analysis of distribution, growth, functional structure and hierarchy of towns, as these aspects are of pivotal importance in the present work.

However, one should always pay a meticulous heed to 'Huxley's dictum of 1869... ' (that),"Mathematics may be compared to a mill of exquisite workmanship which grinds you stuff of any degree of fineness, but what you get out depends on what you put in" (Wooldrige W. and Morgan, 1961,p.393), i.e. the data base. As such, wherever the data were rather crude or inadequate, no superfluously refine method was adopted.

Thus, a delicate balance and harmony is maintained between the sound theoretical interpretation and the rigorous objective methodology. Statistical dalliance was carefully refrained from in the treatment of certain aspects of only secondary importance, however. At the same time cartographic techniques have been extensively utilized for the purpose. Where strikingly similar or otherwise interesting, the findings are matched with those of other major studies in this field, which too are reproduced for a ready comparison.

REFERENCES


