

GROWTH PATTERN OF SMALL TOWNS IN KOLHAPUR DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Small towns act as a link between villages and large cities. Small towns occupy an important position in the urban-rural continuum. They perform a number of important roles in overall development of our country. Small towns control the problems arising from the excessive growth of cities. In spite of the important role played by small towns in the total urban structure they are observed stagnant or even gradual declining. The present paper attempts to analyse the trend of growth of small towns in Kolhapur district. Analysis of the growth pattern of small towns in the study region reveals that the decennial variation (1901 - 2011) of urban population has an oscillation trend. It is clear that the number of small towns and the concerned urban population have shown upward tendency with an irregular fluctuation in growth and decline (in 1911, 1941, 1981 and 1991) is attached with change in the class rank of the towns.

Key Words: Small towns, growth, decline.

INTRODUCTION

As it is clear from its title that, 'small town', where urbanity has not yet reached in its full strength. It may be smaller in areal size or in population. Small town is neither a village nor a city. But small towns act as a link between villages and large cities. According to Munis Raza (1979) "small towns occupy an important position in the urban-rural continuum." In the country like India, where more than 70 per cent population engaged in agriculture and other primary activities, small towns play an important role. According to Mukharjee's (1968) observation small towns in India are rural centres, their main function being "collecting the

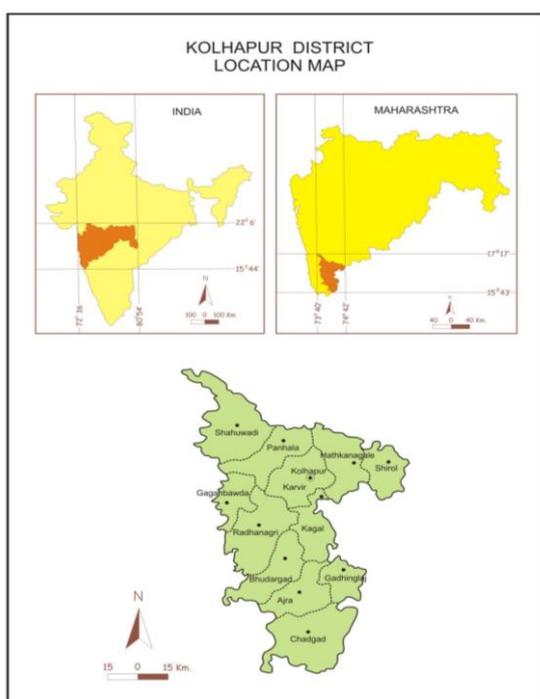


Fig. 1

agricultural produce from the entire region and distributing, directing and coordinating the sale of imports and manufacturing goods." As pointed out by Christaller (1933) "small towns act as central places for the countryside; that they come into being to carry out at central, accessible places the tasks which the life of countryside creates. However, small towns have not received more attention from researcher as well as government organizations.

STUDY AREA

Kolhapur district is the southernmost district of Maharashtra state. District lies between 15 degree 43' to 17 degree 17' north latitudes and 73 40' and 78 42' east longitudes.(fig1) It covers an area of 7,685 sq.km. It is bounded on the north by Sangali

district, on the west by Ratnagiri district and on the south and east the Belgaum district of Karnataka state. The district lies in the Krishna-Panchganga basin.(Fig1) As of 2011, the district has a population of 3,876,001 out of which 2,645,992 live in rural area and remaining 1,230,009(33 %) in urban centers. Of the 23 towns in the district, two Kolhapur and Ichalkaranji are class I and remaining 10 and 11 are medium and small towns respectively. Only 7.68 % population resides in small towns.

OBJECTIVES

- 1 To study the growth pattern of small towns in study region.
- 2 To examine the demographic characteristics of small towns.

DATA BASE AND METHODOLOGY

The data used for the present study have been obtained from secondary source like district census handbook of Kolhapur district of Maharashtra state for the year 1901 to 2011. The span of 11 decades is considered sufficient to understand the growth character of small towns. The data collected through various secondary sources have been processed and rearranged in tabular form. The urban centers up to 20,000 populations are designated as small towns, following Prof. R.L.Singh (Singh 1975) and Prof. Ashis Bose (1972). The small towns tally with class IV, V and VI.

GROWTH AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION

The total area covered by small towns of the region is 69.66 sq. km. (2011), and the urban population of the region is 94,486 resides in 11 small towns. Only 7.68 per cent population resides in small towns. For the analysis of growth characteristics of small towns it is important to examine the growth rate of population as well as towns. Table 1 show that the decennial variation of urban population has an oscillation trend. The decade 1921, 1931, 1951, 1961 and 1971 and 2001 shows increase in their population growth, while the decade 1911, 1941, 1981 and 1991 recorded decline in population growth. In the year 1901, there were 38,219 persons living only in 5 small towns and these towns were either taluka headquarters or service centers of surrounding area. In 1911, the small towns of the region had a population of 32,922 persons. Although, new town Kagal emerged in this decade, all the towns of the region recorded negative growth and show decline of -16.80 per cent. In the decade 1921, the small towns had an urban population of 36,987, marking a slight rise of 12.35 % over the 1911. During the census of 1931, the region had an urban population of 42,218 in six small towns. The census of 1941 recorded only one small town (Murgud) with 38,441 people. A decline of -8.95 % in population is recorded in this decade.

There were 7 small towns in 1951 having population of 51,268 persons, recorded the increase of 33.36 %. In this decade one town Jaisinpur added in the list and one town Ichalkaranji were dropped due to rise in population and subsequent change in class rank according to the definition of the census. During the census of 1961, the region had an urban population of 69,355 in nine small towns, of which two Gandhinagar (5744) and Panhala (1948) developed as new urban centers and classified as towns for first time in this census year. The growth of urban population in this decade (1951-61) recorded to 35.27%.

TABLE 1: Variation in Growth of Population of Small towns in Kolhapur District

Year	No. Of Towns	Total Urban Pop.	Decade Variation	% Decade Variation
1901	5	38219	–	–
1911	6	32922	- 5297	-16.80
1921	6	36987	4065	+12.35
1931	6	42218	5231	+12.39
1941	7	38441	- 3777	– 8.95
1951	7	51268	12827	+33.36
1961	9	69355	18087	+35.27
1971	9	93464	24109	+34.76
1981	8	93377	- 87	- 0.09
1991	6	55416	-37961	-40.65
2001	8	84228	28812	+51.99
2011	11	94486	10258	+12.18

Source: compiled by author

In 1971, the small towns of the region had an urban population of 93,464. During 1961-71 the urban population of small towns increased by 34.76 % and it was due to natural growth in the population of existing towns. The decade 1971-81 brought a loss of changing class rank of Jaisingpur town and recorded decline of only -9.09 % in population had an urban population of 93,337. In 1981 Jaisingpur town dropped out from the list but new town Kabnur added in the list of urban centers. In the next decade (1981-91) the same trend was observed, therefore a sudden decline of -40.65% populations was observed. Two towns Gadhinglaj and Kurundwad were dropped out due rise in population and subsequent change in class rank according to the definition of census.

A remarkable increase in urban population of small is seen during 1991-2001. In 2001 there were 8 small towns having an urban population 82,228 persons. In this decade 5 new towns, Pachgaon, Ajara ,Kalambe turf thane, Korochi and ujalaiwadi have also been added. Living In 2011, there were living 94,486 persons in 11 small towns, recording an increasing of 12.18 % over 2001. Among 11 towns, 5 towns are new small towns emerged as census towns. In this decade also two towns (Korochi and Pachgaon) dropped out as they got rise in population and subsequent change in class rank according to the definition of census. The spatial distribution of small towns reveals that within 11 decades (1901-2011) their number doubled from 5 in 1901 to 11 in 2011. The distribution of small towns in the region is highly imbalanced. Out of 11, six towns newly emerged as residential satellite towns of Kolhapur city. Remaining five towns are distributed in hilly region. It is clear that the number of small towns and the concerned urban population have shown upward tendency with an irregular fluctuation in growth and decline (in 1911, 1941, 1981 and 1991) is attached with change in the class rank of the towns.



CONCLUSION

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