CHAPTER I

Introduction

Settlements are usually categorized into two dichotomous groups - rural and urban. An area should be either rural or urban. It presumes that there should be a clear demarcation between rural and urban areas, however, in reality that is usually not the case.

Census data have always been presented for rural and urban areas separately. The basic unit for rural areas is the revenue village which definite surveyed boundaries. The revenue village may comprise more than one surveyed hamlets but the entire village is treated as one unit for presentation of data. In unsurveyed areas like villages within forest areas, each habitation area with locally recognized boundaries within each forest Range Officer’s beat is treated as one unit.

The following criteria are adopted for treating a place as urban for the 1991 Census which is similar to that adopted for the 1981 Census:

(a) all statutory towns, i.e. all places with a Municipal Corporation, Municipal Board, Cantonment Board, Town Committee or Notified Town area etc.

(b) All other places which satisfy the following criterias:

(i) A minimum population of 5,000

(ii) 75% of the male working population engaged in non-agricultural (and allied) activity and

(iii) A density of population of at least 400 persons per sq. km. (1000 persons per sq. mile)

A town with a population of one hundred thousand and above is treated as a city. However, a place may also be treated as an urban area if
the Director of Census Operations, based on his personal knowledge and on available data is satisfied that a place, though with a population of less than 5,000 has all the urban characteristics, recommends treating of the place as a town in consultation with the State Government or the union territory administration concerned and with the final approval of the Registrar General, India (Census of India, 1991, p. xi).

The gradual transformation of rural areas to urban areas down the ages has been associated with complex dynamic forces. This is generally understood as the process of urbanization.

In the process of development of settlements from rural to urban, the change has been gradual as understood by the changing relationships between a whole series of variables like land use, land ownership, occupational structure, population composition, social and community structure (Bryant, Russwurm and McLellan, 1982, p. 11).

The transformation is continuously giving rise to a rural urban continuum situation. In reality, it is the intensity of urban rural interaction that determines the pattern of continuum (Rao, Prakasa, 1983). The spatial spread of settlements merge into one another in a continuous process due to gradual increase in settlement size classes, i.e. from hamlets to million cities. In every situation there is a continuity and specially so in the spatial context (Ramachandran, 1989). The urbanization process itself is not abrupt but it implicitly has a spatial, hierarchical, temporal and cultural continuity which can be termed as rural urban continuum.

A continuum is an expansive concept, encompassing, the rural, urban, fringe, hinterland, city, umland areas, in one sweeping stretch.
Thus, the concept of a continuum implies open endedness (Herbert, 1972).

The categories rural and urban exhibit a continuum rather than a strict compartmentalization and that they are open rather than closed systems (Gyawali, S., Schwank, O., Thappa, I., and Zurcher, D., 1993, pp. 1-3).

Populations and activities described as either rural or urban are more closely linked across space and sectors than is usually thought and that categorizations are often misleading. Households may be multi-spatial, with some members or individuals residing in rural areas and others in towns, and engage in agriculture within urban areas or in non-farm activities in the countryside. At a different level, many urban enterprises rely on rural produce or rural demand for their profitability (Tacoli, C., 1998, p. 160).

1.1. Objectives
1. To redefine the concept of a continuum in a more broader perspective.

2. To highlight that a continuum can only be explained through linkages, flows, interactions, and diversifications. That is space can not be defined by itself; it has to be defined by the existence of other components: their occupation of a particular piece of area or by the linkages, pattern of linkages and human activities operating in a certain spatial context.

3. To highlight the spatial continuity of rural and urban settlements as against, dichotomy between the two.
4. That spatial differentiation or spatial categorization occurs essentially due to a-spatial activities i.e. human activities.

5. To emphasize the crucial and pivotal role played by transportational network, in the shaping of a continuum.

6. To negate the overemphasis placed on the influence of large cities on the shaping of a continuum. Equal importance has to be given to the impact of small and medium towns on the continuum.

7. To highlight sectoral diversification in relation to the spatial dimension.

1.2 Hypotheses
1. There is a dichotomy between rural and urban settlements.

2. With distance from the CBD (Central Business District) sectoral diversification is taking place.

3. There will be tertiarisation of villages away from the CBD along the main arterial road.

1.3 Methodology
A. The method followed is through collection of secondary data from the census *(District Census Handbook of South 24-Parganas Primary Census Abstract)*. Data of the IX fold classification of main workers have been collected. Work Participation Rate of the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors (percentagewise) has been
calculated and categorized into less than 25%, 25%-50%, 50%-75% and more than 75% and arranged tablewise for Bishnupur P.S. (Figure-1.2), Table-3.1 Mograhat P.S. (Figure-1.3), Table-3.2 Falta P.S. (Figure-1.4), Table-3.3 Diamond Harbour P.S. (Figure-1.5), Table-3.4, Kulpi P.S. (Figure-1.6) Table-3.5, Kakdwip P.S. (Figure-1.7) Table-3.6, and Namkhana P.S. (Figure-1.8) Table-3.7.

Villages have been chosen along Diamond Harbour road and away from Diamond Harbour road for 1971 and 1991 (two decades). 1981 could not be taken as the data set given by the census department was truncated. The shift of villages, sectorwise and percentage category wise have been recorded.

B. Primary data from field surveys have been collected from selected villages of Bishnupur P.S. (Figure-1.2), Mograhat P.S. (Figure-1.3), Falta P.S. (Figure-1.4) and Diamond Harbour P.S. (Figure-1.5). Household surveys using socio-economic questionnaires have been done. Stratified Random Sampling taking 10% survey sample from the total occupied residential houses have been done. 2% survey sample from the total occupied residential houses of Diamond Harbour municipality has been taken for Stratified Random Sampling.

All distances have been calculated by scale conversion from Census maps.

The collected data have been tabulated, quantified and analysed and synthesized into an understandable whole, supported by adequate reference material available from libraries and different organizations.
SOUTH TWENTYFOUR PARGANAS
LOCATION MAP OF THE STUDY AREA

International Boundary.
--- District Boundary.
----- Police Station Boundary.

Study Area.

Source: Census of India, 1981.

FIG.-1:1
SOUTH TWENTYFOUR PARGANAS
STUDY AREA DELINEATED BY C. D. BLOCKS

--- International Boundary
- - - District Boundary
- - - - - - - C. D. Block
--- Road
- - - - - - - Railway
DH --- Diamond Harbour

Bay of Bengal

Source: Census of India, 1991.

FIG.-11A
Location of Secondary data with J.L.No.

Location of Primary data with J.L.No.

Source: Census of India, 1981.

FIG.-1:2
POLICE STATION MOGRAHAT

Source: Census of India, 1981.

FIG. - 1:3

- Location of Secondary data with J.L.No.
- Location of Primary data with J.L.No.
Location of Secondary data with J.L.No.

Location of Primary data with J.L.No.

Source: Census of India, 1981.

FIG.-15
POLICE STATION KULPI

Location of Secondary data with J. L. No.

Source: Census of India, 1981.

FIG.-1.6
Villages has been selected taking distance from Diamond Harbour Road (i.e. accessibility as a criteria) for making the impact study. Therefore, accessibility index has not been computed as it would be a repetition. Basically an impact study of the resource base Diamond Harbour Road on the continuum is being made.

For reasons of comparability of data set and maps P.S. i.e. Police Stations has been selected.

Perception studies are the most important components for any study of rural urban continuum. This is so as you can make out how much of the continuum has rural and how much of it has urban components. Infrastructure may be urban but the perception may remain rural in some cases.

1.4. Area of study

The study area has been taken just beyond the control line of Kolkata Municipal Corporation. This area has been chosen so that the continuum aspect can be thoroughly expoused.

This type of study is absolutely essential for the overall development in the regional aspect. Here the impact of Diamond Harbour Road is being studied.

The area of study is beyond the southern part (Figure-1.1) of Kolkata Municipal Corporation. For primary survey villages have been selected from Bishnupur P.S., Mograhat P.S., Falta P.S. and Diamond Harbour P.S. Diamond Harbour Municipality has also been selected as it is a medium town.
For secondary data villages have been selected from Bishnupur P.S., Mograhat P.S., Falta P.S., Diamond Harbour P.S., Kulpi P.S., Kakdwip P.S. and Namkhana P.S. (Figure-1.1) Location Maps of different police stations has been incorporated. In the 1991 census the police stations have been delineated or demarcated by C.D. Blocks (Fig. 1.1A).

1.5. Limitations

It is difficult to collect completed data as desired in the questionnaire survey because of ignorance of the villagers. The reports and other information are not readily available from the administrative officers.

Perception of individuals are the most viable form to explain the continuum. But perception studies has an inherent vagueness as human beings give their opinion.

In the 2001 Census, the nine-fold classification of workers is not available. Therefore, the village level analysis of diversification of economic activities cannot be done.

References


