CHAPTER II

A CRITICAL REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Literature survey is absolutely necessary as it gives us an insight into how much work has been done on that particular field and in which direction we should progress.

2.1 Introduction

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 urbanization process, rural diversification and urban growth has always been a two way process and has operated concomitantly.

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

The transformation is continuous giving rise to a rural urban continuum situation. 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.

To understand the concept of a continuum or for that matter, the existence of a continuum, the urbanization process has to be understood first.
2.2. *Historical background*

Urbanization was initially a slow process which progressed from village life. The introduction of agriculture necessitated the immediate establishment of permanent and stable settlements. Before the domestication of plants the settlements were temporary and shifting. This was due to the fact that Neolithic hunters and herdsmen could not afford to settle down in one particular area. They had to be on the move constantly for the search of food. So the introduction of agriculture, led to the establishment of the first settlements. Following this came the division of labour which accelerated with the increase in the size of villages. With increased division of labour, greater economies of specialization became possible. Specialization produced marketable surplus. Large villages with large markets emerged which attracted people from the neighbouring villages. Gradually the market area, started to act as a magnet evolving the large village with the market into a market town (*Sjoberg, G.*, 1967). The process of urbanization had begun.

Gradually the market town with more specialization graduated to its climax form, the city.

But in this case, in the succession of settlement size categories, the climax category i.e. the city, is highly unstable and changeable. In other words, what happened with the rise of cities was that many functions that had been scattered and unorganized were brought together within a limited area, and the components of the community were kept in a state of dynamic tension and interaction (*Mumford, 1987*).
Therefore it could be observed that while hoe culture supported hamlets, the plough culture supported whole cities and regions.

The transformation of village into city was no mere change of size and scale, though both these factors entered into it, actually it was a change of direction and purpose manifested in a new type of organization (Mumford, 1987).

With the invention of the wheel, transportation became very efficient and became the very life blood in the existence of the city.

The industrial revolution reinforced the supremacy of the city over its vast surrounding areas. Industries were attracted to the cities as cities, offered agglomeration economies in the form of a large captive house market, supplies of both skilled and unskilled labour and the availability of supplementary industries. To the individual, the city was very attractive as it offered a variety of services, security and well paid jobs.

In many ways once the urbanization process had begun it became self sustaining; market forces favouring a continued flow of factors and population into the city. It has been, argued that urban life could never have evolved without the initial existence of agricultural surpluses to support the inhabitants and that cities are characterized by their sheltering of non-agricultural specialists (Sjoberg, 1967).

One point is for certain without agricultural surplus, the organization of urban settlements would have been impossible.
From the above description it can be seen that the process of urbanization itself explains the many facets of a continuum. The transformation of rural life to the urban way of life speaks of a cultural continuum. The gradation of settlements into different size classes speaks of a hierarchical size continuum. Organization of settlements over space and time speaks of spatial and temporal continuum.

2.3. **Theoretical perspective**

The organization of urban areas over space, implicitly or explicitly includes the continuum concept.

Christaller’s “Central Place Theory” attempted to explain the size and spacing of central places and the associated patterns and sizes of their trade areas. Central places are distribution points or settlements that provide central goods and services for consumption in the hinterland of the settlement. Their primary spatial organizing principle is efficiency which is defined in terms of minimizing consumer movement for goods and services.

In terms of the theory, two concepts define the limits within which efficiency can be sought: threshold and range. Threshold refers to the minimum amount of support necessary to make the supply of any goods or service viable. Range provides a spatial dimension to the concept of threshold. Any good or service has both an upper range, above which it is unable to attract support and a lower range, below which it can not be supplied viably. Different goods and services have different thresholds and ranges and as a general rule, goods and services will be supplied from a minimum number of
central places (Dewar, Todes and Watson, 1986). Space therefore is organized around a hierarchy of central places or it may be termed as a hierarchical continuum of central places.

The theory was originally developed in the 1930’s by a German geographer, Sir Walther Christaller, who focused, deductively upon the problem of finding optimizing patterns for three different functions – marketing (k=3); transport (k=4); administration (k=7); and amalgamating these (Here k refers to the number of places served i.e. the central place plus two nearest neighbours or the central place plus 1/3rd of each of its six nearest neighbours) (Haggett, 1965).

His theory was based upon five assumptions, which gave the final hexagonal pattern (King, 1984).

1. An unbounded isotropic plain with a homogeneous distribution of purchasing power.
2. Central goods to be purchased from the nearest central place.
3. All parts of the plain to be served by a central place. The complementary areas must completely fill the plain.
4. Consumer movement to be minimized.
5. No excess profits to be earned by any central place.

The ideal hexagonal pattern of settlement spacing was an important and influential study because it was one of the earliest attempts to seek an understanding of the order underlying settlement spacing.
Christaller had proposed that settlements with the lowest order of specialization would be equally spaced and surrounded by hexagonal shaped service areas or hinterlands. For every six of these, lowest order settlements he suggested that there would be a larger and more specialized settlement which in turn would be situated at an equal distance from other settlements of the same order and also surrounded by a hexagonal service area. Progressively more specialized towns with even larger hexagonal shaped hinterlands would be similarly located at an equal distance from each other (Everson and Fitzgerald, 1969).

While there can be no question of denying the basic importance of his work there are in fact certain limitations inherent in his model. The assumption of the isotropic surface is never fulfilled and therefore the theoretical arrangement of settlements in any area will inevitably be modified by local conditions.

Secondly, the model is concerned with the size and spacing of settlements supplying goods and services or providing an administrative function. It is particularly appropriate, therefore, to regions emerging from a subsistence economy in which there is a clear distinction between town and country, but in economically advanced regions, it is distorted by factors such as the presence of industrial concentrations and government policies for regional development. Criticism has been leveled in particular, at the fixed k value of Christaller’s model, which it is argued shows a very poor approximation with reality (Beavon, 1977).
In 1940, A. Losch, an eminent economist, presented an important, modification of Christaller’s model. Like Christaller he again used hexagonal serving areas, but allowed various hexagonal systems to co-exist. In Losch’s model the various hexagonal systems, $k=3$, $k=4$, $k=7$, and others, operate at different levels and are superimposed on each other. The application of a variable $k$ value produces a continuum of settlement sizes more closely in line with the theoretical result of the rank-size rule.

Thus, using the same basic hexagonal unit and the same $k$ concept as Christaller, Losch evolved a markedly different hierarchy. Christaller’s hierarchy consists of several fixed tiers in which all places in a particular tier have the same size and function and all higher order places perform all the functions of the smaller central places. In contrast the Loschian hierarchy is far less rigid. It consists of a nearly continuous sequence of centers rather than distinct tiers. So settlements of the same size need not have the same function (e.g. a center serving seven settlements may be either a $k=7$ central place or a center where both a $k=3$ and $k=4$ central place coincide) and larger places need not perform all the functions of the smaller central places.

Losch’s model represents a logical extension of the Christaller’s model. It is based on the same hexagonal unit and hence suffers from the same rigidity, but it yields a relationship between the size and function of central places that is continuous rather than stepped (Haggett, 1965) i.e. there is a spatial continuum in his model which is more in accordance with the observed distributions.
In 1949, G.K. Zipf proposed the rank-size rule, which attempts to express the relationship between the largest town with the next largest one, continuing in this way down to the lower ranking towns in precise mathematical terms. He states that, if all the urban settlements in an area are ranked in descending order of population, the population of the nth town will be 1/nth that of the largest town. In other words, the population of urban settlements in a region can be arranged in the series, 1, 1/2, 1/3, 1/4, ..., 1/n. This regularity can also be expressed by the formula $P_n = \frac{P_1}{n}$ where $P_n$ is the population of the town of rank n in the descending order and $P_1$ is the population of the largest city. Thus, if the largest city has a population of 2 millions, the tenth ranking town should, according to the rule have a population of 200,000 inhabitants (Richardson, H.W., 1976).

Therefore, this theoretical model gives the idea of a continuum of urban sizes. Logarithmic scales on both axes are used on the graph to plot the theoretical relationships. The result; the logarithmic scales on both axes i.e. (X axis = Rank, Y axis = Population) converts a concave curve into a linear or almost linear result. Once the theoretical result is plotted, the observed results are plotted side by side. The curve of the observed values may not follow, the curve of the theoretical values, giving rise to primate or rank sized distributions. According to the rank-size rule, the primate city should be twice the size of the second city. The primate city is responsible for the regional functions of the lower order towns.
The beauty of the rank-size rule is that, it can be used as an effective policy of regional development, by being a diagnostic tool in regional planning (Knowled and Wareing, 1994).

Warwick Armstrong and T.G. McGee, in a simple model which is a representation of the world capitalist urban hierarchy continuum distinguishes the various components not by size classification but by their function in the accumulation process as undertaken by transnational corporations and local ruling classes. At the top of the pyramid are the Global Centres like New York, Tokyo, London (global cities), Singapore, Hong Kong (continental cities acting as major sub-accumulation centers). Global centers are the world’s major financial centers as well as being the national head quarters for the majority of the transnational corporations. Global centers are followed by National Centres in the hierarchy continuum. These centers dominate within their countries, acting as national accumulation centers and linkages through transnational enterprise to the global center. Nation centers play a pivotal role as it interacts and influence Regional Centres. The regional centers are linked to the Market Towns, rural and small town areas (Armstrong and McGee, 1985).

Therefore, this theoretical model not only acts as a hierarchical continuum in the organization of space but also acts as a cultural continuum, which is implicit in this model.

But this simplified model has been constructed keeping in view, Third World Societies. In a sense it is too oversimplified and explains a certain type of economic structures’ influence on the
organization of space. It has severe underpinnings of convergence urbanization patterns due to the impact of uneven penetration of corporate investment (Roberts, 1978).

Again, the model is based on the siphoning off of surplus from the base of the pyramidal structure to the global centers. But nonetheless it gives a simplified version of a world urban hierarchical continuum.

John Friedmann (1964) in his exposition of a regional theory implicitly emphasized the spatial continuum in the arrangement of settlements. His theory rested on eight propositions

1. Regional economies are open to the outside world and an object to external influence.
2. Regional economic growth is externally induced.
3. Successful translation of export sector growth into growth of the residentiary sector depends on the sociopolitical structure of the region and the local distribution of income and patterns of expenditure.
4. Local leadership is decisive for successful adaptation to external change. Yet the quality of leadership depends on the region’s past development experience.
5. Regional economic growth may be regarded in part as a problem in the location of firms.
6. Economic growth tends to occur in the matrix of urban regions. It is through this matrix that the evolving space economy is organized.
7. Flows of labour tend to exert an equilibrating force on the welfare effects of economic growth. But contradictory results may be obtained.

8. Where economic growth is sustained over long periods, its incidence works toward a progressive integration of the space economy.

Based on these eight propositions he postulated a sequence of stages in spatial organization.

Stage 1. Independent local centers, no hierarchy. Typical pre-industrial structure; each city lies at the center of a small regional enclave; growth possibilities are soon exhausted; the economy tends to stagnate.

Stage 2. A single strong centre: Structure is typical for the period of incipient industrialization: a periphery (P) emerges; local economies are undermined in consequence of a mass movement of would be entrepreneurs, intellectuals and labour to the centre ©; the national economy is virtually, reduced to a single metropolitan region with only limited growth possibilities; continued stagnation of the periphery may lead to social and political unrest.

Stage 3. A single national center, strong peripheral subcentres: The first stage toward a solution during the period of industrial maturation; strategic subcenters (SCn) are developed, thereby reducing the periphery on a national scale to smaller more manageable intermetropolitan peripheries (Pn); hypertrophy of national centre is avoided while important resources from the
periphery are brought into the productive cycle of the national economy; growth potential for the nation is enhanced but problems of poverty and cultural backwardness persist, in inter-metropolitan peripheries.

Stage 4. A functionally interdependent system of cities: Organized complexity is the final solution to be aimed for during the period of industrial maturation but it will subsequently give place to other configurations; major goals of spatial, organization are fulfilled, national integration, efficiency in location, maximum growth potential, minimum essential inter-regional balance (Friedmann and Alonso, 1964).

He has interlinked the settlement structure with industrialization. As the industries mature the system of cities become functionally and spatially interdependent.

It is an ideal situation for which countries aim, where the spatial organization of settlements become evenly distributed. Criticisms may be labeled at the propositions.

The eight propositions so set aside may not be operating all at once in the same regional sphere. Regions differ from one another and the same medicine can not be doctored to different patients. Therefore, though the spatial pattern is well brought out in the theory, it is an ideal situation. Of course examples all over the world can be found for each stage if seen and dealt separately. For stage-2 Dhaka, Manila, Bangkok may be taken as examples.
For Stage-3, Calcutta, Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai can be taken as examples. For Stage-4, the North-Eastern Sea Board bordering the Atlantic Ocean in the U.S.A. can be taken as an example.

2.4. Empirical works

A number of empirical work has been done by eminent persons. A survey of these empirical works will bring forth to light some of the macro issues in the study of a continuum.

K.D. Sharma (1985) in his doctoral thesis on the study of urban development on Rohtak, has pointed out that any spatial continuum, is influenced by its site, situation, history, the urbanization process and the prevailing cultural practices. For example Rohtak belongs to the genre of ancient settlements in Haryana. The growth of Rohtak during various periods of history was initiated and sustained by the locational advantages of its site, specially the proximity of Delhi. The location of the city on important ancient routes connecting Delhi to other parts of the country helped its growth as an economically important trading centre and a strategic frontier post during the Ancient and Medieval periods. In any continuum study transport lines play a very important role, because the forces of urbanization tend to follow major arterial routes. In, Rohtak, over spilling of population to the adjoining areas have occurred but the over spilling has extended farthest along the Railway Road, one of the major access roads.

The post-independence administrative and economic developments have helped in a greater integration of the city with its umland. The major promoting factors have been an, increased functional relationship with Delhi, expansion of the road
transportation network and strengthening of the region building efforts around the traditional focus of southern Haryana. Presently, in addition to being the district head quarters, Rohtak serves as one of the major agricultural markets of Haryana and the best medical and educational centre of the state.

Consequently, it serves, the entire Rohtak district and parts of the adjoining districts, the head quarters of which are located immediately below the city in the hierarchy of central places.

The attributes of the umland of Rohtak reveal broad similarities with the external functioning of high order central places in other parts of India and also exhibit attributes postulated in the Central Place Theory, which has been discussed in the previous section. The shape of the service area is influenced by the isotropic surface of the region except for those elements which are directly influenced by the transportation network. The central places reveal a hierarchical pyramid. The apex of the pyramid is formed by Rohtak and the base is comprised of the lowest order rural central places. The hierarchy of central places also reveal a close association with the administrative, commercial and public policy functions and historical factors involved in their evolution. The levels of hierarchy of the central places are closely related to the population size and the area and population served by each of these.

Prasad, L. (1985), in his sociological study of Ballia (U.P.) town has made certain observations. Ballia town by and far is surrounded on all sides by large villages. It is a class-III town. The study indicates that the growth of Ballia town has been mainly at the
cost of the adjacent towns. The Primary Index Analysis of Gibbs was used and it was concluded that Ballia town was growing at the cost of Ghazipur, the nearest town. Pirating of regional functions, distorts the spatial organization of settlements. The spatial and hierarchical continuum seen in this regional context is completely different from the spatial and hierarchical continuum seen in Southern Haryana which has been discussed before.

V.S. Phadke and K. Sita (1986) have concluded that the physical framework of the Mumbai Metropolitan Region has had a strong influence on the diffusion of urban characteristics. This influence is evident directly in the form of its absence in hilly areas, and indirectly through the orientation of route ways which in turn have played an important role. Even along the route ways, the spread of urban characteristics is not a continuous phenomenon but is focused on urban nuclei and railway stations. Hence accessibility rather than mere geographical distance appears to be the major factor affecting the spread of urban attributes.

Therefore, from the spatial continuum point of view, accessibility plays a very major role.

P. Bore Gowda and P.D. Mahadev (1986) has pointed out that the transformation of rural habitats in different cultural and technological environments manifest themselves in various forms such as economy, culture, demography and land use etc. The transformation and its rate usually depend on various forces that operate in this area such as urbanization, economic development,
innovations introduced in the area and the perception of the people of the area.

The study reveals, that metropolitan cities have high degree of influence in transforming the rural areas in respect of landuse, land value and occupational structure. Usually the villages in the immediate vicinity either get incorporated or get merged with the city both functionally and physically. The villages in the zone beyond five kms show and maintain their identity as separate villages but undergo transformation at accelerated rate depending upon factors such as accessibility, land value, etc.

The occupational structure changes as urbanization progresses from primary to the secondary sector or to the tertiary sector as the case may be. Land use changes dramatically from agricultural to non-agricultural.

There is a change in land use in all those areas where the sewage water is let out. From dry crop farming they have shifted to irrigated pasture for dairy cattle all along the flow channels. Fruit orchards have been developed mainly along highways where wealthy farmers have converted fruit farming into commercial proposition.

Thus this study is of great significance from the continuum viewpoint. Land use changes, occupational shifts, are one of the many characteristics which are visible. By and far the most important aspect in any continuum study is the transport linkage. Accessibility is of key importance in the spatial organization of the settlement
Transport lines, therefore, become a resource factor and of crucial importance in the study of continuum. J.L. Jain (1986) has pointed out that almost all towns of Malwa (the region covers the portion of Malwa Plateau falling under M.P. only) are essentially only central places which in their entirety make an urban system in close harmony with the central place theory. Notwithstanding this close harmony between the actual urban system of Malwa and the theoretical central place system, the region furnishes an excellent example of the static and therefore, inadequate nature of the Christaller-Losch model of central place system, as it does not incorporate dynamic factors like the differential growth of towns. Thus, due to the very fast growth of Bhopal into a major city recently, the whole regional urban system has come to be structured about two cities – Indore and Bhopal – rather than around a single first order centre. These two cities command the western and the eastern parts of Malwa respectively.

In the operational structural organization of spatial system the western and the eastern parts show notable differences, with a much greater degree of over-lapping or intermixing and competition among hinterlands in the western part. This is to a great, extent, the legacy of the peculiar, recent history of that part, resulting in a highly intricate and intertwined territorial organization of numerous petty states in that part of the region. The same part also displays a larger degree of attenuating effects of major route orientations upon the size and shape of hinterlands, exemplified by the 2nd and 3rd order hinterlands of Indore.
The development of this urban system of Malwa in close consonance with the parameters of the central place theory was augmented and facilitated in a large measure by the fact that (a) Malwa has a notably hospitable geographical background, highly congenial to the flourishing of agriculture, trade and related central services; and (b) that the towns are located essentially on the most accessible, central locations, rather than at strategic locations with restricted approach, which was made feasible through peculiar historic processes and situations obtaining in Malwa over the last two centuries.

This system was remarkably saved from the distorting impact of industrialization because of the conspicuous feature of Malwa that it has a virtual lack of all major localized industrial raw materials and inanimate power resources whose inherently fortuitous occurrence bears heavy constraints upon a central place system, and renders the growth and distributional pattern of towns notably erratic.

Therefore, in his study he has emphasized that the nature of the continuum depends on historical factors, accessibility, geographical background, central locations, agriculture, trade, central services et. al. Also he is of opinion that the close correspondence with the theoretical framework of central place has remained undisturbed because of the absence of the industrializing forces.

But it is not always that industrialization, distorts an urban hierarchy; the spatial continuum will change and the urban hierarchy will adjust itself to the present condition.
G.K. Chadha (1986) in his study has observed that Punjab has a highly concentrated land distribution at the middle level which is in sharp contrast to most other states, which are characterized by a pronounced concentration of holdings towards the very bottom and of area towards the top size classes.

Urbanization in Punjab has had its roots in the rural areas. A growing agriculture has provided a strong stimulus for urban marketing and trade. It has followed the classical pattern of urbanization where agriculture has developed first and then industries. A very large majority of the Punjab towns serve as agricultural marketing centers, trade centers and agro-industrial centers.

The percentage of very small and very big villages is extremely small. Majority of the villages of Punjab are of medium size. Villages are well connected with towns through a wide network of village-town link roads, so much so that urban life and culture remain closely linked with their rural counterparts. Moreover village town link roads and the quick expansion of road transport facilities in recent years have enabled many workers to commute daily to urban centers from their homes in the village.

Though a large proportion of Punjab’s urban population lives in the cities, none of its seven cities have assumed the character of a metropolitan city. There is a complete absence of primacy in Punjab.

Therefore the spatial continuum is developed on healthy lines with no one centers assuming over importance and pirating the
regional functions of the surrounding area. The Punjab scenario has resemblances with the Loschian model.

Deshpande, C.D., B. Arunachalam and L.S. Bhat (1980) has pointed out that the evolution of a settlement hierarchy as a natural process of functional organization of formal region in South Kolaba is influenced in the first instance by the physical structure, the resource base, and human response and subsequently moulded to suit the macro economic forces centred on Mumbai.

Applying the basic tenets of the central place theory to the South Kolaba region, they observed that there is a sharp break between Mumbai and the highest order settlement of South Kolaba reflecting a weak organization of the space economy and a lack of spatial integration of economic activities at any level. The regional settlement hierarchy within the framework of the larger meso-region of Maharashtra is subdued which is established from the fact that

a. even the largest settlement of the South Kolaba region ranks only the 143rd in the state set up;
b. the rank size has been steadily declining over the years;
c. even the larger settlements have only a third of the population size that they ought to possess to broadly fit into a rank-size relationship.

The central place hierarchy for South Kolaba region, based upon the number of socio-economic and administrative functions performed by these places, reveal that though some of the smaller settlements having lower order functions have grown in population,
they have not acquired the necessary levels of facilities and amenities. Middle order of the settlement hierarchy which is relatively weak poses problems in the diffusion of growth impulses from the higher to the lower levels.

The central place hierarchy for the region, according to functional scores also reveal that the lower and middle order of settlements are functionally weak. This may be due to the importance placed to higher order places for administrating functions. It may also be indicative of socio-political overtones and pressures working even in planned social inputs.

Spatially, a quasi-transport principle to a larger degree influenced by relief and administrative policies in road development especially in relation to the Bombay-Goa Highway seem to be in operation in determining the settlement hierarchy of the region.

Therefore, in this case study, the spatial organization of settlement hierarchy, is imbalanced, weak and lopsided making the hierarchical and spatial continuum fragmented.

S. Manzoor Alam (1986) has concluded that, distortions in the settlement system of the developing countries and particularly that of India were the direct outcome of the colonial policy to concentrate investments and administrative and political power in a few large urban centers which resulted in their hypertrophy.

The colonial capitalistic system also induced the growth of monopolistic production and finance capitalism which have taken
control of the primate metropolitan hierarchy in India. Hence, it is subjected to behave exactly according to law of the capitalist accumulation and concomitant forms of urbanization (*Chakroborty, 1975*).

The control of monopolistic production and finance capitalism on metropolitan economy has continued even after independence and therefore the pattern of urban and metropolitan development in independent India is not much different from colonial times. Such a metropolitan growth arrests wider diffusion of technology causing stagnation of hinterland economy and prevents the adequate articulation of a hierarchical system of settlements. To generate a more dynamic system of urban and metropolitan economy and to rectify the distortions in the system of settlements, the government must intervene to restrain the role of finance capital, prevent polarized development of metropolitan centers, accelerate the growth and development of the middle order urban centers, and initiate a public policy to promote the percolation of developmental impulses to the lowest level of settlements in the system (*Alam, S.M., 1986*).

Therefore to have a balanced hierarchical and spatial continuum in India, concerted efforts has to be made by the government. This fact is explicitly explained by S. Manzoor Alam. From his analysis it is evident that the middle and lower level settlements of the hierarchy are very important for a balanced hierarchical and spatial continuum.
2.5. *Issues*

This view of a dichotomous relationship between the rural and urban economies must be rejected as the two are interdependent and complementary (*Baker, 1995, pp. 117)*.

The rural and urban universe gradually merge into one another. There is no physical barrier separating rural from urban – it is in a continuum situation.

A continuum may have a town followed by its hinterland, then a rural area then again a hinterland followed by a fringe area and a city. Again, it can be followed by a town. Therefore, in a rural urban continuum, there is no definite boundary zone demarcating the rural from the urban. A town may be present in a rural surrounding, functioning as a service centre.

Therefore, for the proper development of any continuum small and medium towns play a critical role. To confine the concept of continuum to a mere fringe area or transitional zone is to define a term in a very narrow sense.

Therefore, one of the most important issues is at the conceptual level. The development and growth of small and medium towns for the healthy and balanced formation of a continuum is again related to the conceptual issue.

The development of continuum is related intimately with the process of urbanization.
As the urbanization process proceeds, the proportion of workers engaged in the secondary and tertiary sectors increase while the proportion of those engaged in the primary sector declines.

Participation rate in agricultural occupation declines with urbanization particularly for women.

With urbanization, land devoted to agriculture will decline and land occupied in non-agricultural activity will increase. There will be an increase in the proportion of long distant migrants.

The most important issue would be the pattern of decision making at various levels from local level panchayats to district authorities. The availability of civic infrastructure and the change in the use are other issues correlated with the main issue.

Transport linkage as a Resource Base is one of the most important issues in any continuum study.

Majid Hussain (1994) has opined that the reorganization of space accompanying the urbanization process is based firstly, on the transformation of a uniform surface of settlement into the multilayered surfaces and secondly on the strengthening of the interactive mechanism operating both horizontally among settlements at the same level and vertically among settlements at different levels.

The current fragmentation of the urban-rural continuum in India is the direct consequence of the historical hiatus between the twin processes of industrialization and urbanization.
The process of rural-urban transformation is weak beyond certain distances from the city or the urban agglomeration corridor (Kundu, A., 1992). This also brings about the fragmentation of the urban rural continuum in India today.

The essential weakness of the Indian urban system lies in its economic base, which is characterized by a significant primary, a weak secondary and a bloated tertiary sector. The large non-productive super structure of the Indian urban system rests on a weak productive base (Hussain, M., 1994).

According to Dr. Biplab Dasgupta (2001) in pre-colonial Bengal, the city along with the adjacent countryside from which it drew food and other supplies was probably a single economic unit. Villages flowed into towns as easily as towns extended to the villages. The territorial divisions were blurred.

“Ambiguity remains in searching out the demarcation line breaking the rural-urban continuum particularly in developing countries” (Singh, R.Y., 1998, p. 15).

References


