Chapter 6

URBANISATION AND SPATIO-SOCIAL STRUCTURE:
A SYNCHRONIC RELATIONSHIP

We have already discussed, in the previous two chapters, the relationship between urbanisation and spatial structure on one hand and between urbanisation and social structure on the other in all the three localities under study. We shall also analyse in this chapter the relationship between spatial structure and the social structure and the impact of urbanization on that in the studied localities. We shall examine how the existing spatio-social structures are shaped by the differential levels of urbanisation in the given localities. We shall finally see how the increase in degree of urbanisation in the localities over a period of time has contributed to change, if any, in the nature of spatio-social structures found there.

Spatio-Social Structures of Localities

The close relationship between the spatial structure and the social structure is a fundamental assumption in
the growth of an urban centre.\(^1\) It also suggests that the two structures may affect each other. This mutual relationship has an important bearing on the nature of social integration of the community in the given spatio-social structure. The spatial segregation may exist in a city in terms of one or more of the numerous social factors. For instance, a population may be segregated in space in terms of economic, religious, linguistic or any other socio-cultural factors as discussed in the previous chapter. In such cases, the spatial segregation has the effect of deepening the social cleavages because the existing physical or spatial barriers inhibit interaction between the various socio-cultural segments.

Park\(^2\) suggests that an increase in population size within a given area, together with an extension of transportation and communication networks, results in greater specialisation of functions. This functional specialisation or differentiation expressed spatially for competition not only results into a division of labour but also distributes the different economic groups to

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2. Park, R.E., Human Communities, 1952.
different regions in the urban environment. Burgess\(^3\) in his concentric zone theory concluded that the physical process of succession results in the segregation of different social groups in different parts of the city according to their suitability. He further stated that in expansion of the city a process of spatial distribution takes place which sorts and relocates individuals and groups by residence and occupation. This is especially marked in the inner-city zone of transition. Here, mobility is pronounced and the area is in constant state of flux, and this is seen as the expansion for the social disorganisation. Duncan and Duncan\(^4\) also suggested that the dissimilarities in the residential patterns of the city were due to the dissimilarities in the occupational pursuits of the people living therein.

In view of the above, our data from the three localities suggest that the bases for residential location or segregation of population were income and occupation. For instance, since R.K. Puram is a


\(^4\) Duncan, O.D. and Duncan, B. in "Residential Distribution and Occupational Stratification", in Ceri Peach (ed.), Urban Social Segregation, 1975, p.32.
government residential locality, the bases for residential location or allotment of houses to the respondents are the type or group of the government job in which they are employed and the level of their income or salary as stated in chapter 3. In other words, the respondents (Government employees) employed in the similar jobs and receiving the same income or salary reside in the same type of houses. Contrary to this, the respondents from the posh housing locality of Safdarjung Enclave can easily afford to live in the palacious houses as most of them are engaged in various types of business as mentioned in the previous chapters. But the situation in Mehrauli, a third locality in our study, is different as a majority of the respondents engaged in small-level unskilled works cannot afford to live in somewhat better spatial localities. Hence, they continue to live in here although the intra-locality variations exist in the case of a few respondents with higher income and employed in petty-business who live in better structured spacious houses as mentioned in chapter 4.

Going by the occupational pursuits and income levels of the respondents drawn from all the three localities, it may be said that the locality of R.K. Puram is dominated mainly by the middle class people though a
sizeable number of them belong, in strict sense, to the lower middle class as is evident from their socio-personal background, pattern of their social interaction and also from their belief system and cultural practices. Against this, the people from Safdarjung Enclave fall largely within the middle and upper middle class background. And finally, the people living in Mehrauli mainly belong to the lower middle class though a few of them do belong to the middle class background as mentioned in the previous chapter.

Rex and Moore are of the view that the city in course of its historical development becomes differentiated into distinct sub-communities which are spatially segregated into various zones or sectors. They further state that these zones or sectors are associated with particular types of residents which collectively exhibit distinct cultures or cultural patterns. We have found this in the case of the locality of Mehrauli where people belonging to various sub-communities or castes and religious communities live separately in Christian colony, Islam Colony, Balmiki Colony, etc. which, in a way, possess distinct cultures and life style.

5 Rex, J., and Moore, W. Race, Community and Conflict, 1967. 128
The social structures is the key to the spatial structure and vice-versa. Pahl\(^6\) has systematically examined the relationship between these two structures in the case of British cities where he has found that social structure partly reflects and partly determines spatial structure. He has examined their reverse relationship also. In his opinion, there are some very scarce urban resources, such as housing, which are available to only a different section of people who are differentially placed in the social structure. The occupational structure is still a very important aspect in the determination of a person's life chances. The changes in the occupational structure are related to the changing pattern of residential location. The various types of constraints in achieving these scarce resources produce a distinctive styles of life of the people living in cities. For instance, those whose work place are away from home are tired and they take less part in domestic activities. Thus, the differences in the types of work and work conditions, job security and career prospects within the occupational category are reflected in the behavioural patterns of the people.

Today, the city is a focal point of productive activities. It exists and grows on the strength of the economic activities existing within itself. It also provides goods and services to its hinterland. It is the hinterland that is economically dependent on the city though the city as such also gets benefited from its hinterland in many ways. A wide range of activities such as production, consumption, exchange and administration are found in the metropolitan region. Castells states that some of these activities are concentrated in one or several zones of the region. The internal organisation of the metropolis involves a hierarchized interdependence of different activities. For instance, the distribution of consumption items is organised on mass scale. The internal movement of these items is determined by the differential location of the activities. Castells further states that the social relations in the production system reflect a relationship between space and technology. These also determine a connection between a given social structure and a new urban form.

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7 Ramachandran, R. Urbanization and Urban Systems in India, 1992, p.82.
Thus, the diffusion of houses and provisioning at the shopping centres is not a hurdle as these can easily be reached by means of rapid communication system as already discussed in Chapter 4. Because of this, people have no hassles in daily commuting in and even outside Delhi for work to places like Gurgaon, Gaziabad, Noida, Faridabad, etc.

There is diversification and hierarchical arrangement within the social category. The spatial segregation is built in terms of status or position of the people by separating them into different residential sectors. This has been pointed out by D’Souza where he has concluded that the Scheduled Castes tend to be increasingly segregated even in urban localities of lower socio-economic status. We have also found in our study that the Scheduled Castes are largely housed in the Ward 7 of Mehrauli locality. Similarly, in the locality of R.K. Puram, the residential segregation is witnessed on the basis of job-category and thereby income level of the people in general and of respondents in particular. Thus, we see that the spatial structure is an indicator of the

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social structure. Conversely, since we find the respondents with low level of jobs and income living in less developed localities or parts of a locality, it may also be said that social structure determines the spatial structure in the city.

The spatial structure of the urban poor settlements is very closely related to the pattern of social organisation of the rural migrants. The overall emergent physical pattern of these settlements depends on the social composition of the inhabitants. They reproduce though with some variations, use of space or spatial structure which they have had in the village. In other words, their organisation of space indicates the housing patterns that are found in the villages of the various regions of India as already mentioned in the previous Chapter. The cases of two localities of R.K. Puram and Safdarjung Enclave are entirely different where houses have pucca constructions. But houses in Mehrauli are with pucca, kutchcha and mixed constructions. This partly suffices the point stated above due to the fact that most of the respondents from this locality are not well employed with better income level as mentioned in the previous chapters. A relationship of caste with housing structures in all the three localities may be seen in the table given below:
Table 6.1: Showing caste/community background and housing structures of the respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caste/community</th>
<th>Not Mentioned</th>
<th>Puccka</th>
<th>Kutch</th>
<th>Mixed</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Mentioned</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>16 (100)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Castes</td>
<td>2 (1.2)</td>
<td>160 (96.4)</td>
<td>2 (1.2)</td>
<td>2 (1.2)</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Castes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>34 (73.9)</td>
<td>4 (8.7)</td>
<td>8 (17.4)</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Castes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12 (40)</td>
<td>12 (40)</td>
<td>6 (20)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2 (.8)</td>
<td>222 (86)</td>
<td>18 (7)</td>
<td>16 (6.2)</td>
<td>258 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures in paranthesis are percentages

*Note:* Since caste like groups also are found among Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, etc., a few respondents belonging to these religious denominations have been included in the three caste categories.

A little more than 50 percent respondents living either in kutch or mixed houses in Mehrauli belonged to the lower caste like Jatavs, Dhobis and Balmikis. This is so as they are usually economically not well-off and they still carry with their traditional occupational.

This state of relationship is, however, not fixed or permanent. It was McKengie's\(^{10}\) contention that any

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particular type of community tended to increase in size until it reached its climax point at which the size of population was most perfectly adjusted to the capacity of the economic base to support it. The community would then remain in this state of equilibrium until some new elements like technological innovations disturbed the balance at which point a new cycle of biotic adjustment would begin involving movement of population, differentiation of functions, or both of these processes. This may be true in the case of Mehruali in our study. In other words, if an institution of higher education or an office is started in the locality of Mehrauli, the value and the environment of it may change radically reflecting the basic change in its socio-cultural ethos and life patterns of the people living there.

We have mentioned above that there not only exists relationship between social structure and spatial structure but the former influences the latter. In other words, the social structure changes the spatial structure of the locality. It is clear from our data that all the respondents from both R.K. Puram and Safdarjung Enclave are well aware of the inconveniences existing in the areas. For instance, they know that if the fused road

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bulbs are to be repaired, they would go to the maintenance office and get it immediately done or if there is a power failure, they would ask for an answer to it. Unlike that, the people in Mehrauli are least bothered if there is any such problem as they have got used to it. Moreover, the MCD or the enquiry office gives a deaf ear to their queries or complaints. That is why, of the total of 86 respondents from this locality none was satisfied with the existing civic amenities. The fact of the matter is that the social structures in both R.K. Puram and Safdarjung Enclave are well developed and that is why the spatial structures found there are easily changed to the required level unlike that in Mehrauli where both the social and spatial structures are relatively less developed.

Amidst all this, the process of cultural change also takes place which changes the life-style of the people. The cultural change consists of change in dress, food-habits, rituals, vocabulary, material culture, customs etc. This happens through the emulation of the ways of life of the more urbanised and better-placed social groups. This phenomenon is distinctly seen in the case of
the urban poor, especially the Scheduled Castes and the lower castes. The reference model comprises for them of many social groups with which they come into contact in the city. Thus, such patterns of cultural change have frequently been observed in the locality of Mehrauli where respondents belonging to almost all castes and communities have adopted customs, food habits, dress patterns, etc. in the recent years.

Urbanisation and spatio-social structures in localities

As already discussed in Chapter 1, the concept of urbanisation has been analysed both from the perspectives of demography and social sciences. In demography urbanisation means a mere increased population agglomeration in a city or town due to migration or natural growth. From the social science perspective, urbanisation has been viewed as socio-cultural process with new forms of social interaction and relationship. It is also explained in terms of structure and functions of new social institutions and change in those of the traditional ones. Besides being analysed as a process of

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11 Majumdar, Tapan K. "The Urban Poor and Social Change", in De Souza, Alfred (ed.), The Indian City, 1978, p.58.
change in the worldview\textsuperscript{12} of the people about traditional institutions and patterns of life, the urbanisation process has been accepted to replace the caste-system by the class structure, the joint families by nuclear families and the sacred by profane or religious belief by secular outlook and behaviour. Similarly, Davis\textsuperscript{13} has looked at urbanisation as a process of change from rural way of life to the urban life patterns and as a shift from agricultural economy to the industrial economy.

We have also mentioned in Chapter 1 that the core of Louis Wirth's\textsuperscript{14} essay on urbanism contained three main assumptions from which other assumptions were drawn. The main assumptions for him are centered around size, density and heterogeneity. With increase in population, the interaction and social relationships of the urbanites are more definite and purposive. Superficiality and anonymity are the distinctive features of interpersonal relations in the urban milieu.


However, the degree and range of urbanisation differs from area to area with varying spatio-social structure. Within the time frame, we may also observe some major changes both in spatial and social structures of an area. For instance, sector 13 of the locality of R.K. Puram in our study came up merely 15 years ago. Before that almost the entire area of the present locality of R.K. Puram was barren and full of ridges. In fact, people were scared of visiting the area even in the day light. Similarly, the locality of Safdarjung Enclave with its present posh residential colony came into being in the 1950's and also the DDA flats were constructed in the 1960's. Contrary to this, the locality of Mehrauli has been in existence since the ancient days though the people in this area were displaced and again re-settled in the post partition period. The area has remained devoid of many types of development in the city. It lacks basic infrastructures like roads connecting its all parts, proper and adequate tap-water, electricity, etc. It is more of an urban village unlike the other two localities of R.K. Puram and Safdarjung Enclave. Thus, in all the three localities under study not only there has been differential increase in the degree of urbanisation but also a spurt of availability of basic civic amenities though the locality of Mehrauli obviously lags behind
R.K. Puram and Safdarjung Enclave in both respects. This is also true in the case of transportation but R.K. Puram and Safdarjung Enclave are linked with the main roads. Hence, these have better transportation network to move in and out.

Education is associated with the socio-economic milieu of an urban area or locality. As discussed in Chapter 3, the localities of R.K. Puram and Safdarjung Enclave are educationally well developed and the residents are socially and economically better off. This is also evident from the fact that a majority of the respondents from these two localities were graduate and belonged to the middle and upper middle classes unlike those from Mehrauli who were illiterate or semi-literate and who belonged to the lower and lower middle classes as stated above.

We have stated earlier that urbanisation has greatly affected structure and functions of institutions like family, marriage, caste, etc. As a consequence, it has been found out by several studies that there is preponderance of nuclear families in urban areas. However, number of studies including the present one suggest that change in the structure and functions of
family is not solely governed by urbanisation. Instead, there are several factors which facilitate retention of the traditional form of family as an institution, though organically it may be bifurcated into a number of nuclear family type units.

More specifically, it is clear from our data that the respondents from R.K. Puram live in the nuclear families against those from Safdarjung Enclave and Mehrauli where their majority live in the joint families. Since the locality of R.K. Puram is inhabited by government employees, they largely migrated after leaving behind the other members of their parental families. The similar situation is observed in the case of a number of respondents from Mehrauli where both the spouses are employed in either unskilled or semi-skilled jobs mostly in un-organised sectors. They also live in single room tenements and it is not possible to bring other members of their parental family to live with them. Unlike these, the respondents from Safdarjung Enclave are engaged in numerous types of business enterprises and live in palacious houses of their own as stated earlier. Joint family is a necessity for them to share emotions and household responsibilities.
The urban family especially of middle and upper middle class people is now added with a new dimension of helping hand which is both as a necessity and a status symbol. Even in joint families where the households chores may easily be shared among members the helping hand both as necessity and status symbol is frequently and regularly hired. In certain families the helping hands are hired even on permanent basis and thus become, though, in limited ways, member of family either joint or nuclear. Moreover the helping hand is an essential feature of a nuclear family particularly that in which both the spouses go out for work. Such dimension of urban family is a clear indication of impact of urbanisation as is evident from the table given below:

Table 6.2: Locality-wise helping hands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locality</th>
<th>Helping hands</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.K. Puram</td>
<td>74 (86.0)</td>
<td>12 (14.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safdarjung Enclave</td>
<td>86 (100.0)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mehrauli</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>86 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>160 (62.0)</td>
<td>98 (38.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures in paranthesis are percentages.
We have stated earlier that all the localities under study have differential spatial-structure and so also vary their social structures. In absence of quantification of other indicators of spatial structures, the locality may be accepted as its important indicator. Likewise, the helping hand being part of structure of family both as an institution and organisation may be accepted as part of social structure. Since nature and degree of urbanisation both in demographic and social science perspectives vary in all the three localities, it has positively affected their social structures also as is clear from the above table.

Further, it is a fact that urbanisation has brought about positive change in the attitude and behaviours of the people towards marriage of children, mate selection, gender-equality, etc. We have already analysed such changes in the previous chapter. It may, however, be said here that these changes are necessarily guided by differential degree of urbanisation found in all the three localities under study. For instance, the respondents from all the three localities are in favour of giving equal education to both boys and girls and sending them for employment of their choice. But it may easily be inferred that the respondents from Mehrauli
where there is less degree of urbanisation did have some reservations in these respects. For instance they would not be allowing the girls to go for higher education and mix freely with boys. Similarly, the respondents from other two localities where the degree of urbanisation is comparatively more were willing the girls to interact with boys but with certain restrictions. Such restrictions were more clearly seen in all the three localities in case of mate selections and marriages of children where we have found some contradictory situations. More specifically less than half of the respondents from R.K. Puram and more than two-third respondents from Safdarjung Enclave which are highly urbanised localities have preferred their children to marry on caste lines. As expected all respondents from Mehrauli have stuck to caste lines in this matter. However, on probing further regarding choice of spouse by children themselves, we have found more than 80 percent respondents from R.K. Puram giving this freedom to their children. Ironically, a little more than half of the respondents from Mehrauli have given their affirmative opinion in this matter which simply means some influence of urbanisation on them which has not yet transcended their consideration centered around primordial loyalties to the institution of caste.
Table 6.3: Locality-wise approval of childrens' marriage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locality</th>
<th>Approval of marriage on</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Caste lines</td>
<td>Not</td>
<td>Choice of</td>
<td>Not</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>mentioned</td>
<td>choice of</td>
<td>mentioned</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.K. Puram</td>
<td>38 (44.2)</td>
<td>46 (53.5)</td>
<td>2 (2.3)</td>
<td>74 (86.1)</td>
<td>10 (11.6)</td>
<td>2 (2.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mehrauli</td>
<td>86 (100)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>46 (53.5)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>40 (46.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safdarjung Enclave</td>
<td>62 (72.1)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>24 (27.9)</td>
<td>40 (46.5)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>46 (53.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>186 (36.0)</td>
<td>46 (8.9)</td>
<td>26 (5.0)</td>
<td>160 (31)</td>
<td>10 (2.0)</td>
<td>88 (17.1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures in paranthesis are percentages.
In the social-structural analysis of a collectivity in a locality the institutions like caste, religion, etc. enjoy privacy as is evident from a number of studies of urban centres in India. We have mentioned above that urbanisation accelerates changes in such institutions. It is, however, clear from our data that the institutions of caste and religion are not completely absent in the locality of R.K. Puram and Safdarjung Enclave. In fact, people in these localities live with these institutions in private domain of their life though these also occasionally get manifested. Unlike these, the caste and religion are very much alive in the locality of Mehrauli as is evident from a number of colonies largely inhabited by people belonging to separate caste and religious groups. Even large majority of the respondents from this locality have not favoured inter-caste or inter-community marriages. Thus, the institutional change often go hand in hand with the differential degree of urbanisation in different urban areas or localities.

Generally speaking, changes in spatial-social structures, culture and cultural practices are attributes of urbanisation. But there is reverse relationship also in which such changes do occur due to some other reasons like people’s own initiatives, aspirations drawn from
others, the role of other traditional and modern agencies, etc. Such changes, in turn, contribute to increase of urbanisation in a given space. Although we have not measured such reverse relationship between spatio-social structures and differential degree of urbanisation in the studied localities, it is guessed that such relationship is also tenable there. This is evident from the fact that the residents in general and respondents in particular from all the three localities frequently interact with people in other parts of the city. Therefore, there is every possibility that the changes in social structures, and culture and cultural practices of the people in all the three localities would have been governed by their interactions and social relations with others outside these localities. These, in turn, would have contributed to increase in the degree of urbanisation of the localities themselves.

**Conclusion**

Urbanisation has, thus, greatly affected both the spatial and social structure of the three localities but it has not evolved a cosmopolitan culture in true sense of the term where urbanites are not guided by any primordial considerations but by a fully civic oriented
culture and value system. It may be inferred from the analysis of our data in this chapter that the respondents specially from R.K. Puram are somewhat closer to possessing metropolitan or even cosmopolitan culture in which perhaps not urbanisation but their divergent socio-economic background and occupational diversification have contributed a lot. Out of the other two localities of Safdarjung Enclave and Mehrauli, the former is more urbanised than the latter. But the cultures and cultural practices found there are not fully devoid of one or the other types of primordial considerations though the locality of Safdarjung Enclave may be said to have a metropolitan culture unlike that of Mehrauli.