CHAPTER - XI

CONCLUSIONS

1. Main findings

An examination of data and an experience of field work of various aspects of the suburbs of Ahmedabad city have revealed many interesting facts of the process of development of the suburbs. This includes changes in landuse, land value and population, infrastructural facilities, residents' socio-economic status, their behaviour and life style, interaction pattern and housing characteristics. The major findings can be outlined as follows:

(a) This study has formulated a generalised model of step-wise migration of suburban population. This model shows that the suburban population have gone through different stages of migration within Ahmedabad city and study area before settling in their present location. Most of the people of the present study area are from other parts of Gujarat, different parts of Ahmedabad city and a few of them are from the core city of Ahmedabad and other parts of India.

(b) In the study it has been found that all core villages have traditional socio-economic status, behaviour and life style and housing characteristics, but housing societies in most of the maujas have modern socio-economic status but relatively traditional behaviour and life style.

(c) This study has also formulated a model, i.e. 'Socio-Demographic Model' which has been represented by a three dimensional rectangular parallelopiped and depicts the residential pattern of the study area. A suburban typology has been evolved with the help of the model in terms of household and housing. Ranip, Chandlodiya
and Thaltej situated in the extreme north, north-west and west have traditional pattern, whereas maujas Vejalpur and Jodhpur in south have modern pattern. Vastrapur, Memnagar and Ghatlodiya situated in the central part have mixed pattern. So this model has formulated a slope of modernity in the residential pattern from south to north. This model implies that behaviour and life style do not change as fast as socio-economic status or housing characteristics. It means people take longer time to change their behaviour and life style but external factors like housing, education, income can be changed faster. This model also implies that the conflict of philosophy of modernity and traditionality is more in areas where mixed type of residential pattern is present, i.e. transitional zone, than in the areas of modern or traditional pattern of social organisation.

(d) This study has also formulated slopes of various morphological factors from south to north. The northern side with low accessibility and connectivity has low residential area with low land value. The growth rate of population is low here, but the density of population per room is high and the level of infrastructural facilities is low. This side is far from the city-centre and have industrial landuse with blue-collar workers.

(e) The southern side with higher level of accessibility and connectivity has high residential area with high land value. The growth of population is high and the density of population per room is low. The level of infrastructural facilities is high. Here, the suburb is nearer to the city-centre and has people of high socio-economic status in the core villages as well as in the housing societies.

(f) The central portion of the study area, which has mixed type of residential pattern, also has transitional nature
in various morphological factors. One mauja of this portion, i.e. Ghatlodiya, has high residential area with high growth of population and the level of infrastructural facilities are also high than other two maujas, i.e. Vastrapur and Memnagar of this area. But Ghatlodiya has high concentration of persons per room, low land value and high distance from the city-centre than Vastrapur and Memnagar.

2. Problems of residential suburbs

The rapid sprawl of the modern city outside its political boundaries possesses several problems.

(a) Administrative problem

Suburbs consist of a number of villages or maujas which are administered by different village panchayats. So the growth and development of a village depends mainly on the desire and outlook of local administrator. Due to the lack of a single administrative authority in the suburb, it is not growing in a continuous, uniform manner. Though in some places the development of infrastructure is taken care of, it may not be so at other places.

(b) Problem related to landuse

Due to the conversion of agricultural land, a large portion of fertile agricultural land is also converted to non-agricultural use. The loss of agricultural land in suburbs has increased the cost of vegetables due to the shortage of supply and extra transportation charges for carrying them from a longer distance to the city-centre.

Due to the mixed landuse pattern, i.e. agricultural and non-agricultural, the fertility of agricultural land has decreased, which on the other hand, has caused low productivity of agricultural products in suburbs. A large amount of agricultural land is left
vacant in the suburbs which are purchased by speculators at the initial stage. This land speculation creates artificial scarcity of land in the suburbs and it also increases the price of land exorbitantly.

Though the Government has introduced the Urban Land Ceiling Act in 1976, it has no effect on the study area. According to this Act, conversion of agricultural land within 5 km from the periphery of city is prohibited, but this Act has failed to stop speculation in suburban land market. Speculation has started beyond 5 km leaving large area undeveloped between the city limit and the suburb.

(c) Infrastructure

The residential suburbs face various infrastructural problems related to housing, transportation, shopping, medical, banking, education and other services. These problems are ignored by municipal authorities as the region is outside the limit of Municipal Corporation and the residents do not pay any municipal taxes. Rural authorities also ignore these problems as the development of suburb is beneficial for city dwellers only.

Considering the housing facilities in the suburb, a number of problems become apparent, such as those of water supply, sewerage and electricity, as this belt is beyond the municipal limit.

Roads are generally in a poor condition in suburbs. There may be only one or two metalled roads which serves as main thoroughfares. Other roads of the suburbs are unmetalled and sometimes they are brick built or semi-metalled. Most of them get water-logged during the rainy season. The transport problem is also acute due to the lack of sufficient cheap public transport facilities. Frequency of buses are very low. Thus the suburban dwellers, who have high interaction with the city area for work, education, shopping, recreation, etc., commute in buses with great difficulty. In most of the areas of the residential suburbs
buses generally run through one or two main roads. So it is very difficult for people who are living in the interior areas, to catch buses mainly in summer and rainy reasons. At times of emergency residents depend on autorickshaws which is the only alternative transport service available in suburbs. But the fare on this mode is high and are not easily available. Drivers of autorickshaws sometimes charge more to go to the suburban areas.

Medical facilities too are not adequate in the suburbs. In most of the places there is no public hospital. There may be one or two private nursing-homes present in the suburb. The charge of these nursing-homes is generally very high. There are few qualified doctors who are reluctant to go to the suburbs leaving the city-centre. They think that suburban people can go to city for treatment but city dwellers will not go to suburbs for medical services. The same applies to chemists and druggists. Medical shops are generally established near municipal boundary to capture customers from the suburbs and the city. Thus the condition deteriorates in areas far from the city boundary.

There are also insufficient number of other shops in the suburbs. Cloth, utensils, ornaments and other luxury goods are purchased in the city but daily purchase of food items and consumer goods should be available in the suburb itself. As the number of shops are very few in comparison to the number of customers, the prices are very high. Sometimes even ordinary goods are not available in the suburb, and people have to cover a long distance to purchase them. The problems faced in times of need are enormous.

So far as education is concerned, there are very few high schools and colleges. For colleges and university education, students have to commute to the city, but in the case of high school and good primary school also there is scarcity. There may be some primary schools but they are of very low standard.

Lack of proper recreation facilities like park, cinema, restaurant etc. create many problems. New suburban residents
are urbanised in nature, so they are used to travel to the city for recreation mainly on holidays. Due to the lack of sufficient public transport system, there is generally great crowd in the city going buses during holidays.

The core villages of suburbs like other villages of India are devoid of any basic amenities like sewerage, sanitation, etc. and these are posing a contrast in comparison with newly developed areas of suburbs. Gradually these core villages will develop into urban slums when the density of population will increase and when these suburbs will be engulfed within the city limit.

(d) Social aspect

Due to the presence of people of various background, social problems are also present in the suburb. The original residents of the core villages have their social interaction within the villages while suburban people who are from the city core have their attachment very close with the city-centre, socially as well as economically. Immigrated people also make their own group by language etc. in various parts of the city or within the suburb. But none of the suburban population mix with the villagers. This type of interaction creates a dual character of suburbs and this dual character hampers the growth of understanding based on cultural diffusion and participation of all residents in development programmes is not possible.

3. Policy Implication

It is obvious from the study that there is a disparity within the study area in terms of various physical and behavioral aspects. This is bound to happen as the process of growth and development of suburbs are not properly planned. The government has taken up the challenge to control the haphazard growth of the city. In order to control this growth, Urban Land Ceiling Act was introduced in 1976 which stopped the transaction of land within 5 km from the periphery of the city. The government also introduced Urban Development Plan which will control the landuse
pattern of the city and suburbs. But the main problem is that all these Acts were introduced in 1976, but transaction of land is still going on in the suburb. The government plans have changed from time to time. For example, the Green Belt, an area of 2 km around the city periphery was introduced in the seventies to check the urban growth but the government has abolished that idea in June 1983, and has kept it for the use of building houses for various government and semi-government organisations.

So, a number of rigid action programmes is needed which should be implemented in a comprehensive manner to have a well-planned residential suburb:

i) All maujas which have potential for development must be administered by a single authority like suburban corporation to have equal distribution of facilities all over the area;

ii) The government must implement all the landuse Act in a rigid manner;

iii) All the future government urban land must be controlled by a government department which will sell land at the price to be fixed by the government;

iv) Administrative authority must keep an eye on the growth of the suburb. The development of the suburb must be done in various phases in relation to the distance from the city limit. The administrative authority must provide good shopping, education, medical, recreation and other facilities in the suburban area. It will decrease the pressure of amenities on the city-centre. Each suburban house must have minimum facility fixed by the authority. Along with the new residential area, authority must provide facilities like water, electricity and sanitation to core villages to minimise disparity between housing societies and core villages and also to control the development of urban slums in core villages in the near future.
v) Both the government and the residents should come forward to implement all plans rigidly. Awareness and perception of all residents in suburban planning are essential elements of long term progress by which the whole community will be benefited.

4. Scope for Future Study

There is enormous scope in the study of various aspects of suburbs. This study has focussed only on a few aspects. Understanding of the city and suburbs will be useful if in future research is done on the suburb at various points of time. If it is studied at various points of time - socio-economic status and behaviour and life style of residents will give an idea of change in the human characteristics along with the change in the human physical characteristics of the suburb. Future study can also be done by comparing suburbs of various level cities. Detailed data are necessary at mauja level about various aspects of population. Similarly, detailed data are necessary about the core villages and housing societies separately to understand the problem of unsystematic pattern of suburbs so that future planning can be carried out in a meaningful manner.