CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

1. Definition and nature of suburbs:

With the growth of urbanisation, rural areas are constantly being engulfed into urban landscape, and villages in the immediate vicinity of cities and towns acquire eventually an urban character. The study of cities is, therefore, incomplete without a proper appraisal of the location, characteristics and development of these peripheral settlements, which have a potentiality of urban growth.

The Latin word "Suburbium" - i.e. the suburb, is used in a very broad sense. In the medieval period, the total area of a settlement effectively the town, apart from the fort, was being called 'Suburbium'. The term was also sometimes used for an extensive area around the town, including other smaller settlements. In modern time, the term 'suburbs' means the "transitional" zone, located between purely urban and purely rural areas around a city.

Many scholars of different disciplines have discussed this peripheral fringe region as suburbs, but no precise definition or characteristic has emerged as yet. The problem of definition arises from the characteristics of the fringe itself. Being a transitional area in different aspects, i.e. location, landuse, demographic composition, socio-economic status and behaviour of residents, various terms have been used to denote this area, viz: urban fringe, umland, hinterland, etc. These different terminologies have been used by different scholars, depending on the aspects of their study of the peripheral area.

The expansion of urban residential area in suburbs is a result of the increasing population pressure within the city
due to immigration from adjacent rural areas and various parts of the country. So, due to the high population pressure in the city, people start moving into adjacent fringe areas of the city to have spacious accommodation in peaceful localities. With the urbanisation of the countryside, the sharp division of landuse and life-style of residents between urban and rural areas are becoming less and less perceptible today. Due to development of technology, transport and communication systems, it is becoming difficult to draw the boundary where the 'urban' stops and the 'rural' begins. The contacts between the city and the country are varied and are getting multiplied. They are both direct through commuting and wholesale and retail trade, and indirect through radio and newspapers and television. There is also socio-economic interaction between urban and rural areas. It is the intensity of urban-rural interaction that determines the pattern of continuum or dichotomy in landuse, occupational structure, friction of distance, demographic characteristics, life-styles and social attitudes of residents. In short, the suburban area is transitional in nature and is under constant flux.

The change in the suburban landscape is two-fold: (a) change in structure and (b) change in behaviour of residents. The change in the type and pattern of housing structure of the new suburban residents is seen along with the traditional houses of the original residents in core villages, around which suburbs have developed. The landuse of suburbs also gets changed from purely rural, agricultural to partly non-agricultural, urban oriented one. The transitional nature of suburbs is also reflected in the life-style and behaviour of residents, i.e. in terms of occupation, interaction, material possession and attitude of residents of this region. Due to the presence of urban population in new suburban areas, the life-style of dual nature is seen among residents. The new suburban population has modern household items compared to those of traditional type in core villages. Infrastructural facility of suburbs is also transitional
in nature with new residential houses having sewerage system, water-tap, electricity, etc., while core villages in suburbs have neither any sewerage system nor any water tap in most of the cases. There is also much difference in demographic composition of the core villages and new suburban areas. The residential structure of core villages is caste oriented with relatively low income and education but the residential structure of new suburban areas is mainly class (income) oriented with higher level of socio-economic status.

The presence of these two groups of residents gives rise to a unique residential pattern mainly in the suburbs of non-western cities, having to some extent a continuum in spatial structure and landuse but a dichotomy in spatial behaviour of residents.

The term 'pattern' is related to a certain 'shape' or 'design'. Here, it refers to the manner in which various processes have given rise to a morphological design or a pattern of suburbs, that is arranged on space. Patterns may exist in their physical form. They may be observed in the arrangement of the houses, alignment of transport lines, layout of service centres and infrastructure. In their abstract form, patterns are derived and deduced from the interpretation of qualitative aspect of social status of residents, their life style, behaviour, perception and interaction.

The transitional and dual characteristics of suburbs of non-western cities is also reflected in the residential pattern of suburbs, as these areas are developing into a modernised society with many traditional characteristics. In fact, it is not very easy to define the concept of "modernity" which is a very dynamic concept and it changes not only with the place and time but also with intellectual status of the people. According to Webster's dictionary, the term "Modern" means, "practices to adopt the conditions or tastes of the present time" whereas, the term "Tradition" means, "practices to posterity, a convention
established by habitual practice or a belief or practice thus handled down”. The concept of modernity in non-western countries has been generated through western contact, which means anything western is modern. However, it is not correct to say that, everything involved with Western contact has contributed to the process of modernisation. Similarly, everything traditional should not be termed as "antimodern". The idea of modernity is related to an enlightened framework of mind and technological sophistication. But changes due to technology may or may not go hand in hand with changes in attitude and behaviour of people. It is quite possible that, external pattern of housing of non-western suburbs can change faster due to technological development, but the internal behavioral pattern of residents may take longer time to change. This type of dual residential pattern with residents having traditional behaviour in modern housing in suburbs need to be studied for the understanding of the process of growth and of social organisation of suburbs. The suburban pattern in the western countries is different in the sense that, the residents with modern attitude try to maintain a rural appearance by their houses externally, whereas it is reverse in case of non-western suburbs.

2. The growth and characteristics of suburbs in Western countries

In Western Europe and in America, during the World War II and afterwards, it was noticed that, due to industrialisation the city was extending at a fast rate and there had been changes in landuse. Though in recent years the agricultural land is changing to residential areas very fast, suburbs were also present in pre-industrial cities. Suburbs of pre-industrial cities were inhabited by poorer groups. In this location they were remote from the city-centre which was the main hub of socio-economic and political activities. Gradually, in the second half of the nineteenth century those people who could afford to bear the cost of a relatively long journey to work and who had the desire to have spacious house in a peaceful environment, had moved to suburbs from the city centre. Along with the population, there
was a shift of amenities and infrastructural facilities also. So in this period, sites for those activities which could not be reasonably located within urban area due to their requirement of large space, were also located in suburbs, e.g., warehouses, sewerage pumping stations, oil storage stations, slaughter houses, airport, radio station etc. In this period, suburbs of the western cities were situated relatively nearer to the city limit and to the main transport routes, and suburbanisation implies then a separation between home and work place which was located at the core-city.

In the twentieth century, there has been a decline of population at the city centre in western countries and an outmigration of richer and younger group to modern suburbs. This was associated with the growth of per capita income, improvement of transportation and communication, introduction of car and need of private space per person in a peaceful unpolluted environment. So in this period, in western cities, suburban developments are not closely seen nearer to the city limit or on main roads. As a result, the suburbs of western cities are zones where more scattered urban expansion is taking place in interior locations.

In this type of scattered suburban development, the pattern of daily activity of residents are less directed towards a particular city-centre. Journeys to the city-centre for employment, shopping are considerably reduced; instead new shopping centres, new suburban employment, and new foci for recreation have made the city-centre only one of many possible destinations in the Western countries.

The growth of dispersed urban residential suburbs has reached its peak in late sixties with the expansion of ownership of vacation home in the more distant environment of large cities. In Western countries, at least a section of the urban population can afford to own two houses due to greater leisure time, increased affluence and the widespread availability of cars. As a result, the suburbs can be thought of as an extension of
upto one hundred miles, of late, from the metropolitan cities. This countryside is easily accessible by road for a weekend and summer visit. This observation is based on conditions in the United States, although, even there "working class suburbs" have been established. These are associated with the growth of suburban manufacturing employment. The inhabitants of these suburbs, however, are rich enough to buy their own houses.

Elsewhere, in other Western countries, different types of social groups are found in the suburban location due to the involvement of government in the provision of housing. In Britain, the council estates are government sponsored urban growth, which have brought bluecollar working class to the suburb. But the inhabitants of these council houses are rarely the poorest in the community. They are employed in suburban factories in skilled or semi-skilled jobs, rather than in unskilled occupation. The poorest in the society cannot afford to move to the suburbs even with government subsidy because bluecollar jobs are available in the city centre. Nevertheless, the suburbs of Britain and Western European Countries have residents with various economic status than is usually the case in the United States.

Suburbs of Western countries have a typical residential pattern, which can be identified by the presence of low density single family houses with accessible roads and recreation facilities. Some of these houses have traditional housing structures which is purposely constructed, with all modern facilities.

3. The growth and development of suburbs in India

Unlike Western countries, life in Indian cities is based on city-centre. In India, until recently, the decentralisation of population and economic activities from the city-centre has remained low. The socio-economic reasons for people to live at city-centre are as follows.
The majority of the people in India belongs to the low income group. They save time & cost on transportation when goods and services are available at one place, that is at the city-centre. Sellers want to have shops at a central location so that the total number of buyers may not be divided into smaller suburban shopping centres. Residents also prefer the shops at the city-centre from the point of view of low price, variety and freshness of goods. Social reasons are also responsible for such a landuse pattern. Residents have developed a strong sense of attachment for ancestral houses and they enjoy social status and social interaction with friends and relatives and hence they do not like to leave the core-city. As a result, commercial activities, light industries are also found together with residential landuse at the city-centre.

Since the Second World War or so, the city limit in India has started to progress externally. This process of growth of residential suburbs in Indian cities is not exactly the same as that of Western cities in all respects.

In Western situation, there has been a decline of population at the city-centre and an outmigration of richer section of population is responsible for the growth of suburbs. This was accentuated with the growth of per capita income, transportation and communication, introduction of car and need of private space per person. In India, also richer and younger population have outmigrated to the suburb for want of more personal space and peaceful environment. But unlike the Western situation, a large number of rich people is still living in their ancestral houses at the city-centre, along with the incoming unskilled, migrated, rural population of low income group. So both the city core and suburbs of Indian cities are inhabited by rich and poor sections of population and it creates a double standard of lifestyle in these areas.

In Indian suburbs, new suburban residents consist of the people from various parts of the city and not just from the
core area. Here two-step migration is noticeable. In the first stage, immigration of people from different parts of the state and the country takes place to the various parts of the city. Then in the second stage, most of these people, along with some people from the core-city, migrate to suburbs by building own houses or getting house at cheaper rent. In short, the process of suburbanisation is not direct; people change their residence a couple of times before they settle down in the suburb in the form of housing societies.

Unlike the Western situation, the suburb in India is an extension of the continuous built up area of the city. This suburb includes the original villages which were situated outside the city limit, and also agricultural land. People living in these villages are engaged in primary activities, but when the demand of these rural land for non-agricultural residential purposes is increased, then these villagers sell their land to land developers or individual buyers, who are either outmigrating population from the city centre or from various parts of the city. In the suburbs of Indian cities, land located nearer to the city limit and transportation routes has more demand due to accessibility. So the richer section of people, who want to migrate in the suburb first, has settled near the city limit, then along the transport line and also around core villages which have people of higher socio-economic status. The people of the middle income group who migrate later in suburbs, generally settle in the interior where land value is less and around villages with people of low caste or near industrial centres. The low demand of land away from the city limit is mainly due to the low development of infrastructural facilities like, transport, shopping, education etc. in the interior of the suburb.

The people of the suburb depend on the city-centre for their daily needs and for their economic and social interactions and hence the demand of accessible land is more. Some of the new
residents of suburbs have their friends and relatives in the core-city, so they commute frequently for social interactions to the core of the city to meet friends and relatives. But this journey to the city is not a very easy job, because due to fewer private vehicles, suburban population depends mainly on insufficient public transport system for commuting to the different parts of the city.

In suburbs, where government housing schemes are organised by income, viz: high, middle and low, residents get automatically segregated by economic class. But in private housing societies, sometimes groups of the community by language or religion get together to have their own area of community life. Three levels of interaction pattern are seen: interaction within the core village, interaction between the suburb and the core city and interaction among the suburban population.

Unlike Western suburbs, in Indian suburbs, original core villages are still existing. The people of these core villages still have their traditional culture but they now face the crisis of identity due to the infiltration of modern urbanite population. So, the pattern of the suburb in India is gradually becoming complex as it is changing to an urban area from a rural environment. The people, especially the older generation of the original villages like to keep traditional identity as much as possible regarding their occupation behaviour, life-style, interaction pattern and housing structure. There is very little interaction between the people of core villages and those new suburbs. These groups have much difference regarding socio-economic status, behaviour, life-style, material possession, interaction pattern and housing structure, which have given rise to a dual residential pattern in Indian suburbs.

In India, suburbanisation is related to the shift of population in newly developed areas with new housing structure and new pattern of interaction. But even in modern suburban societies
there are certain ways of traditional life-style, e.g. caste system, which has regulated Indian rural life for several centuries and which plays an important role in the growth of the process of suburbanisation. Not only caste system, but various traditional beliefs (superstitions), rigid food habits, age-old social values related to the low level of female education, early marriage, belief in fatalism are sensitive issues both in rural and urban life-style in India. So like other non-Western countries, external pattern of Indian suburbs has changed faster due to technological development. But the traditional behaviour of residents has not changed to that extent. So one can expect to find duality in modern housing societies with traditional households in the suburbs of the Indian cities.

4. Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to understand the residential pattern of the suburbs of Ahmedabad city during 1961-1981. But this residential pattern, is not just the morphological or structural pattern of the suburbs but also of the social organisation or pattern as depicted in the attitude and behaviour of residents. This study also aims at searching for processes that are responsible for such a pattern. This study has focussed on the suburbs of Ahmedabad in terms of processes of growth, morphological changes, demographic composition, and the behaviour of suburban residents in order to find out a composite residential pattern of the suburbs.

The study has demarcated residential suburbs from the total suburbs of Ahmedabad city, based mainly on landuse, demographic composition and connectivity (Figure No. 1.1). The study area is located on the western side of the river Sabarmati.

Total suburbs of purely residential area of Ahmedabad city have been divided into four groups. Two subdivisions of this
A SCHEMATIC DIAGRAM OF TYPE OF SUBURBS

TOTAL SUBURBS

MODERATELY URBAN

URBAN

MODERATELY RURAL

RURAL

SEMI-RESIDENTIAL

NON-RESIDENTIAL

PURELY RESIDENTIAL

RESIDENTIAL (STUDY AREA)

SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY BY THE AUTHOR.
primary division are further subdivided into three groups and two of which have been grouped into 'Residential Suburb' (methods of divisions have been discussed in Chapter-III).

The residential pattern of suburbs is a complex phenomenon of interacting processes of various morphological, demographic and behavioral aspects of residents (Figure No. 1.2). These factors are analysed below to understand the growth of a pattern. The morphological factor is the combination of some physical variables like landuse and housing structure on space and the behaviour factor is the combination of perception, interaction attitude and life-style of population living in the suburbs. Both morphological and behavioral factors have relationship with socio-economic status of residents, i.e. their level of income, education and occupation.

The change in landuse pattern is a major variable of the morphological factor which controls the growth of residential pattern on space in the suburbs. In the suburban area, change in landuse pattern is mainly associated with the transfer of agricultural land into various urban uses, i.e. residential, commercial and industrial land uses. Urban residential landuse in suburbs is seen initially near the city limit. People generally select the areas which are nearer to the city limit and are accessible and also have people of high caste or high social status in original villages. So changes in the pattern of suburbs start taking place around the villages having people with high social status.

Landuse pattern also has some relation with the behaviour of suburban residents, mainly their interaction pattern. The suburban population have high interaction with the city centre for work, education, shopping etc. The high interaction pattern of suburban residents with the core city is mainly due to the insufficient development of commercial landuse in the suburbs. On the other hand, new suburban population who have migrated from the city centre have high interaction with the core city.
A SCHEMATIC DIAGRAM OF THE PATTERN OF RESIDENTIAL SUBURBS

FIG. No. 12.
Housing structure of suburbs changes very rapidly with suburbanisation. Original houses in core villages are of traditional type, built-up of materials like brick, stone, mud, tiles, etc. while houses in the suburban areas are made out of burnt brick, cement and concrete. The difference is not only in terms of building materials, but also in size; housing facility, like separate toilet, bathroom, kitchen, water tap and internal density of houses. Housing structure of the suburb is related to the socio-economic status and life-style of residents. Higher income of the new suburban population enables them to have big modern houses. But not only the higher income but their modern life-style is also responsible for modern spacious houses in suburbs, with modern facilities. Higher socio-economic status of the new suburban population also enables them to possess modern goods, e.g. refrigerator, television, vehicle and other modern electrical gadgets. Though the life style, i.e. possession of sophisticated goods and housing structure of suburban population, may have changed at a very fast rate, their behaviour and culture do not necessarily change in the same rate. This aspect need thorough investigation. So these uneven changes of physical and behavioral status of the suburban population create a unique mixed type of residential pattern in suburbs.

This study intends to analyse some aspects of the above-mentioned residential pattern and residential behaviour along with the morphological changes of the residential suburbs of Ahmedabad city during 1961-81. It is hoped that a general picture of Indian suburbs can be evolved through this case study. The main objectives of this study can be specified as follows:

(a) To demarcate the suburban zone with special reference to residential suburbs;
(b) To find out the step-wise migration of suburban population, by evolving a generalised model;
(c) To analyse various aspects of suburban landuse, demographic composition and distribution of infrastructural facilities which are responsible for the morphological growth of suburbs;

(d) To find out characteristics of suburban population regarding their socio-economic status, behaviour and life-style and housing characteristics;

(e) To evolve a 'Socio-Demographic' model which will combine the socio-economic status, behaviour, life-style and housing characteristics of suburban population into a three dimensional parallelopiped which will help in the classification of suburbs on a micro level.

This model provides an analytical framework to understand and to classify the residential pattern of structure and behaviour of the study area. The main purpose of this model is to measure the level of modernity of suburban population and their organisation on space. Suburbanisation is not modernisation in all respects, especially in India, where people have faith in ageold traditional belief and customs. So the main significance of this model is to bring out a complex combination of a pattern of traditional values of life in modern suburbs.

5. Relevance of the Study of the residential pattern of suburbs

The study area comprises of eight maujas (revenue villages) adjoining the western periphery of Ahmedabad city. This area has experienced an enormous growth of population, a decrease of agricultural land and a consequent increase of non-agricultural land in last two decades (1961-1981). Though most of these maujas (except one) are just across the city limit, all of them have not grown at the same rate. This growth and development is influenced by various morphological factors, socio-economic status and behaviour of residents.
This study helps us to understand the growth and development of suburbs, as follows:

(i) It has helped to throw light on the problems of the definition and demarcation of suburbs;

(ii) This study has helped to understand the process of growth of suburbs through migration in various stages. It also gives an idea of the composition and nature of suburban population;

(iii) This study indicates the uneven and unplanned growth of suburbs which will be parts of the city in future and it has also given suggestions to solve these problems, e.g. government control over land transfer and also the control of land value;

(iv) The inadequate facility of infrastructure of the suburbs also has been indicated in this study. So this will help planners to plan for the future development of infrastructure in suburban areas;

(v) This study has shown that there are differences regarding socio-economic status, behaviour and life-style and housing characteristics, not only within the maujas, i.e. core villages and new suburban housing societies but also between the maujas, with the help of the 'Socio-Demographic' model. So a proper planning is needed to remove variations between core villages and housing societies so that core villages do not become urban slums in future;

(vi) This study evolves the concept of the 'Modernity Index' by which it classifies the suburbs by housing and households in terms of structure and behaviour. The concept of the 'Modernity Index' is the main contribution of this study and it shows that, suburbanisation is not associated with modernity in every aspects of life. The term, 'Modernity' used in this study, is to understand
the level of changes in social, economic and behavioral aspects and how these changes are associated with industrialisation and westernisation. This study concludes with the help of the model that the physical changes of the suburbs are more rapid than the behavioral changes of residents.

The relevance of studying this residential pattern of suburbs lies in understanding the growth of suburbs in Indian cities, not only in terms of composition and behaviour of residents and how people organise themselves on space but also which factors control such a distribution of population. The classification of suburbs by housing and households can be helpful in planning the needs of residents on a micro level, so that the variation in housing and infrastructural facilities over space can be minimised. The findings of this study will be useful to planners and decision makers who can develop the suburb to develop in a comprehensive manner by controlling the development of landuse, by providing necessary amenities to residents - both to those of the core villages and to those of new suburbs by understanding their behaviour, attitude and life-style.