PREFACE

Land is scarce, what and where is urban encroachment, a conception of social milieu or a spatial dilemma that develops through time in the urban fringe areas of a city. In reality it is a consequential phenomenon of urbanization characterized with predominance of non-agricultural pursuits, high density of population; fast pace of life, availability of improved civic amenities and affluences. However, urban encroachment is seen as urban sprawl which includes the spreading of a city outwards and its suburbs to its outskirts to low-density and auto-dependent development on rural lands. Therefore, as a result of urban encroachment, a city spreads out irregularly over large areas through the conversion of prime agricultural lands into urban lands.

Research work presented in this thesis comprises an evaluation of environmental impact and socio-cultural factors in urban-rural environs as a result of encroachment of Aligarh city into its urban fringe areas. The entire work acquainted in the thesis has been presented in six chapters in conjunction with introduction, conclusion and some suggestions.

The first chapter deals with the geographical setting of the study area and describes the physical setting of Aligarh and its surrounding environs such as: location, relief and structure, drainage, climate, soils and natural vegetation. This chapter also presents a historical panorama of the evolution of urban settlement and legends of Aligarh. The socio-economic and cultural setting of the study area has been explained at the end of the chapter.

In second chapter, an attempt has been made to present a conceptual frame of urban encroachment on agricultural lands. The presentation has been initiated with the concepts and definitions considering land as a resource, and urban encroachment as a form of urban sprawl. The chapter has also acquainted the general agreement of relationship between urbanization and urban encroachment, and also tries to explain various issues associated with environment and urban development.

Chapter third has been devoted to deal with the meaning and characteristics of urban-rural fringe and concept of rural-urban continuum in the light of certain empirical models, and perception of places in the rural landscapes around the cities. At the end of chapter various approaches, methods and models have been presented by flashing out delimitation of urban fringes.
Urban growth and encroachment of agricultural lands in urban fringe of Aligarh city are the main components of chapter fourth in which urban growth in Aligarh city has been evaluated from initial stage and upto post-independence changes. Further, an enumeration of process and parameters of urban encroachment on agricultural lands in the fringe of Aligarh city are presented. In this chapter an attempt has also made to examine the loss and abandonment of agricultural lands in urban fringe of Aligarh city.

The Fifth chapter deals with environmental degradation and ecological changes which are taking place in urban fringe of Aligarh. These have been studied by raising the issues related to land degradation and resource utilization, destruction of wetland ecosystems and loss of biodiversity. These problems have also been dealt with concerning environmental pollution, climate change and formation of urban heat island.

Chapter sixth is the last chapter of the thesis. An analytical discussion has been attempted on the impact of urban encroachment on socio-economic frame of the urban fringe. The first discussion presented in the chapter relates to socio-economic profile of selected villages for the survey belonging to three development blocks namely, Jawan, Lodha and Dhanipur, where Aligarh city amidst and truly forms the urban fringe of the city. Secondly, land use characteristics in three development blocks and selected villages of the urban fringe have been described. Thirdly, the discussion describes the impact of new agricultural technology on farming. Lastly the impact of urban encroachment on economic frame of the urban fringe has been presented.

Finally, the sixth chapter ends with a discussion on planning and governance of fringe area through a diagnostic approach by the creation of a separate governing body as ‘Urban Fringe Development Authority’ (UFDA). It argues to adopt sectorwise zonation of city and its metropolitan area, and to develop Agro-Processing Clusters (APCs), which will be helpful in empowering the rural masses by encouraging agri-entrepreneurships at village level, preserving the local agriculture, and providing sustainable livelihood and habitat resource utilization.

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