CHAPTER: 3

TOPOGRAPHY
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Maharashtra State was part of Bombay Presidency during the British rule, subsequently, it formed part of Bombay state. Pune district is one of the well-known district of Maharashtra State and it is the headquarter of the district and of the division. Earlier, the district had its HQ at Poona or Punya and Punak as it was then called. Hence the word ‘Pune’ might have been originated from the word Punya or sacred. The sacredness might have been attached to the town because of the confluence of two rivers viz. Mulla and Mutha in its vicinity.

Location and Drainage

Location

Pune district is situated between 17 54’ and 19 24’ North latitude and 73 24’ and 75 14’ East longitudes and extends over an area of 15,643 sq. km and it has an elevation of about 591.43 m, above the mean sea level. The breadth of the district is about 120 km and it stretches to about 208 km southeast, sloping gradually from about 600 to 300 m. The rugged, western part of the district comprises the Sahyadri ranges, where many peaks rise to above 1000 m altitude, the highest one being Torna with 1404 m. However, Pune district is generally about 488 m above sea level whereas Pune City is at 570 m. The district has 14 talukas, namely: Junnar, Ghodegaon (Ambegaon), Khed, Shirur, Vadgaon (Mawal), Poud (Mulshi), Pune city, Haveli, Velha, Bhor, Sasvad (Purandhar), Baramati, Daund and Indapur. The Ghats region traverses through 11 districts and Pune district is one of these. Major Ghats here are Harishchandragarh (few areas), Bhimashankar, Khandala, Lonavala and Sivthar Ghats.
Drainage

Pune has shape of a triangle and have also a series of many rivers. The district has irregular nodules of kankar and gypsum occurring in the soil at a number of places especially in the eastern part of the district. Kankar on burning yields good lime and is locally used for the manufacture of lime for use in construction purposes.

Rivers: Many rivers drain Pune district in and near the Sahyadris and flow east and southeast across the district. During the rainy season all the rivers are flooded and carry vast volumes of materials including gravel and pebbles.

The district constituting a part of the Krishna valley is fed by many rivers like Ghod, Bhima, Indrayani, Yelwandi, Shivganga, Gunjawani, Nira and Mula-Mutha, of which only the last one passes throughout the length of Pune city and houses the dams of Khadakvasla, Panshet and Mulshi. The chief river of district is Bhima, which rises at Bhimashankar on the crest of the Sahyadris, flows in a general southeastern direction, forms more than 160 km eastern district boundary. Vel and Ghod are the main left bank tributaries of the Bhima. The Indrayani, Mula-Mutha and Nira are its main right bank tributaries. The Ghod rises near Aupe on the crest of the Sahyadris about 14 km north of the source of Bhima. The Indrayani rises near Kurvande village on the crest of the Sahyadris, about 5 km west of Lonavia, flows in generally east and southeast direction and joins Bhima near Tupapur after a course of about 95 km. The Nira has its source in Bhor tahsil, which is crowned by the fort of Torna, and flows in northeast direction.

The principal hill forts on the peaks and spurs of Sahyadris are Singad, Purandhar, Harishchandragad, Bhimashankar and Shivneri. The western face of the Ghats is cut by deep ravines and canyons. The Lonavala - Khandala plateau is ecologically a very important region in west of Sahyadris. The high wall of Sahyadris serves as a barrier for the migration of species on either side. The
mountain passes locally called as Ghats are useful for traffic, trade and commerce.

These ghats are often quite narrow and lie from plains at lower altitude to higher mountain plateau and vice versa. They are generally in weak sectors of mountains where the lava flows have been brittle and got easily disintegrated and washed away, than in harder core of the Deccan Traps. The rivers, brooks, or small streams follow labyrinths path by their side and open into a low altitude basin of river in the valley. Such valleys are well protected by two mountain spurs running parallel and fed by mountains streams. They provide unique climate and locations for plants to grow isolated. These are called “mawal” and are many. These are well-protected uplands, well drained valleys, well watered by hill streams. Their environment and flora are different and resemble like the Sholas in the Nilgiris. Humidity of mawal valley is conducive to the development of semi-evergreen forest types and to endemism.

In their canyons and trenches, ledges and chinks often rare species have been preserved due to their inaccessibility. Many ferns, liverworts and mosses grow on the fort walls. Pune is not only an industrially advanced district, but also a commercial and business center of Maharashtra State. Agriculture and small cottage industry continues to be the main occupation of people. The net irrigation area is c 2.5 lakh ha. and principal crops include rice, jowar, bajra, wheat, pulses, cotton, sugarcane, oil seeds, turmeric, onion and other vegetables and fruits.