CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

GENERAL OUTLINE

India is now passing through a rapid phase of urbanization. This urban trend has been particularly apparent since the beginning of this century and more particularly after the World War II. During 1901-1971 when the total population of the country had recorded an increase from 238 to 537 million, the urban population had increased from 26 to 109 million. In other words, about one-fifth of the total population live in urban areas. Since the World War II, the growth of the urban areas has attained to colosseum dimensions. During the first half of the century, the quantum of increase of urban population was less than the number added during the last 25 years. The spurt in urbanization may be attributable to the overall economic development of the country, resulting from the growth of agriculture and industry and diversification of other sectors of her economic activities. Lured by the modern amenities and opportunities of urban life, the people from the villages which in many cases are experiencing the strains of population pressure and underemployment, are increasingly congregated in towns and cities of India. If the recent trend is maintained, the demographers predicted a three-fold increase of the urban population of this country by the end of this century.
According to the census definition of 1971, there were 2641 urban units in India. Of these, 142 were classified as cities having a population of 100,000 and more and 9 of them attained to the status of million cities. The spurt in the growth of the cities has become apparent in recent years. The process of metropolitanization has also resulted in the multiplication of the large urban agglomerations thereby encouraging the growth of million cities to even greater dimension than before. With the industrialization and complexities of functions, Indian cities are presently attracting more people from the rural areas. The employment potentialities of the urban areas of the country have also been considerably widened. This is an additional impetus for the rapid growth of Indian cities. The number of class I cities (with population 100,000 and more) has gone up from 26 in 1901 to 142 in 1971. Moreover, the first ranking cities are also growing at a very fast rate. Since independence, the growth rate of these cities has increased by about 2 times than the average urban growth rate. More than half of the total urban population of India live in these cities. The smaller towns with population of 10,000 and less now support only less than 6% of the total urban population. On the other extreme are the million cities which are increasingly being overcrowded, accommodating one-fourth of the total urban population of the country in 1971.
The metropolises of India along with their regions show patterns of complexities and contradictions. The metropolitan regions are distributed in the most urbanized parts of the country. Thus, the growth of the traditional metropolises of India (for example, Calcutta, Bombay, Madras) was not generally preceded by the growth of the industries. In fact, the so-called industrial urbanization is initiated in India after independence (for example, Kanpur, Bangalore, Poona etc.). The new metropolises are uni-nuclear regions where the high level of urbanization is linked with the growth of single city. The growth of the city-region is yet to take a concrete shape. Recent studies reveal that the metropolises of India are not independent variables, but rather functions of economic, social and political forces, accentuating or impeding their developing processes.

The metropolitan cities at the beginning of the 19th century were primarily based on administrative considerations, political decisions and advantages of geographical locations. Of the 9 million cities, only Calcutta, Delhi and Bombay were most ancient than the others and were endowed with several functions. Madras, Kanpur and Bangalore rose to eminence after the independence, mainly due to government policies of setting up new industries outside the parameters of the already existing industrial regions. It is interesting to note
from the recent studies that most of the urban areas of the country with the exception of the port cities were not primarily attached to the primate city. In case of Delhi and Hyderabad, fortresses were the base of power. Professionals, artisans, businessmen and even farmers have a marked degree of mobility. Within the metropolises, the relationships are flexible. Each group had their own spheres of interests, and they prefer to congregate in particular localities, which is reflected in the division of Indian cities into mohallas, where individual groups prefer to live in clusters separating from the other. The metropolises of India have no single pattern of development. Their growth and development are intimately associated with the shifting balances of power and opportunities.

The massive growth of metropolitan regions of India is, however, not supported by a corresponding growth of urban amenities. Most of the towns are about to grow sporadically in an unplanned way with little provisions of decent living. The urban environment is characterized by acute housing shortage, proliferation of slums, progressive diminution of open spaces, traffic congestion, encroachments on public thoroughfares and utter inadequacies of other urban amenities. Mounting unemployment and increasing poverty of the urban population have made the situation even worse. Gradual accumulation
of filth and inability of metropolitan administration to cope with them are exposing the city dwellers of India to diseases and pollution hazards. Despite all these hazards and difficulties of city life, people are increasingly concentrating in the metropolitan regions of India because of their better opportunities and promises compared to the undeveloped or underdeveloped conditions of her rural areas.

In view of the tendency of such massive urban growth, it has become imperative to make a thorough analysis of the basic morphological character and structure of the metropolitan regions of the country. A comprehensive analysis of this nature can help in identifying the zones of metropolitan influence and also their role in the growth of their immediate hinterlands. The problems of the various metropolitan regions cannot be assessed unless they are analysed to their entirety. Unless the morphological structure of these metropolises is identified, their functional complexities are deciphered, their existing landuse patterns are studied in relation to spatial distribution pattern of population and their interdependence with the outlying areas recognised, it is very difficult to have a proper understanding of the exact geographical character of the metropolitan regions of the country. Once the character is determined,
plans of urban renewal can be chalked out and the economic revival of the hinterland can be made feasible. The problem of urban renewal of the giant metropolises of India is, therefore, intimately linked up with the growth of metropolis as well as its outlying regions.

OBJECTIVES

Identification of the complex geographical character of the metropolitan regions of India is the principal objective of this analysis. This is indeed a difficult task to make a proper delimitation of the metropolitan regions of the country, due to dearth of data, and absence of detailed maps of comparable nature of the metropolises. Moreover, the last census data have not yet been finalised in respect of most of the metropolises of the country. To fill in these gaps, field works have been undertaken. But to cover the vast regions, for a single research worker and to do justice to the problem appear to be a colossal problem. Hence, generalizations are to be made.

Notwithstanding these handicaps, an honest attempt has been made in this analysis to focus on the following principal issues, namely:

(1) the nature of metropolitanization and urbanization in this country,
(2) evolution and identification of the metropolitan regions with special reference to million cities of India,
(3) structure and morphology of the million cities,
(4) demographic composition and functional characteristics of the metropolitan regions,
(5) delimitation and identification of the regions lying within the sphere of metropolitan influence,
(6) the growth of the metropolitan regions vis-a-vis to their industrial development,
(7) overall survey of the existing environment of the metropolitan regions particularly in relation to their existing urban amenities.

A case study of the Calcutta Metropolitan District (CMD) has been made with particular reference to the above-mentioned points and their associated problems. An overview of the future programme of urban renewal as chalked out by the different metropolitan organizations has also been portrayed. The analysis may not be considered to be a very comprehensive one but despite such limitations, it has been able to depict the various facets of the metropolitan landscape of the million cities of India of today.

METHODOLOGY

A work of this nature naturally entails study of the census reports and records, their statistical representations and cartographic plotting of the data in maps,
charts and diagrams. Preparation of detailed maps forms an important adjunct of this analysis without which on-the-spot investigations or field checks are difficult to carry out. Detailed maps are drawn from the plans of metropolitan government and also from the maps of the Survey of India and National Atlas Organizations. Intensive field-works have been undertaken to find out the morphological structures and functional zones of the metropolises of India. The data thus collected have been collated with the government records and records of the metropolitan administration, so as to enable them for incorporating in maps and diagrams. Other agencies connected with the various facets of the metropolitan life have also been consulted and their viewpoints have also been considered in making a perspective analysis of this problem.

After independence, a number of government organizations, like Calcutta Metropolitan Development Authority, Town & Country Planning Organisation of the Government of West Bengal, Delhi Development Authority, Bombay Metropolitan Regional Planning Board, Rural Development & Local Administration Department, Government of Tamil Nadu, Planning Commission, various Chambers of Commerce & Industry, Department of Planning of the various Institutes of Technology (I.I.T.) have conducted
useful survey works and published valuable monographs on various aspects of metropolitan landscape and metropolitan life of this country. The report of the Calcutta Metropolitan Planning Organizations (C.M.P.O.) \textit{The Basic Development Plan - Calcutta Metropolitan District, 1966-86} may be cited as an example. Reports of various National and International seminars on the ecology and morphology of Indian cities also give valuable information on the multi-variate characters of the Indian metropolises. The Berkley Seminar as embodied in the publication entitled \textit{"India's Urban Future"}, (ed. Roy Turner, Oxford University Press, Bombay, 1962) is one of the best examples. These publications naturally provide the essential base on which this present analytical structure is built. Valuable works have also been carried out by individual workers in respect of small cities of the country, but very little work has so far been carried out covering all the metropolitan cities of India along with their regions. As such, this work may be considered to be the first of its kind and can claim originality.