CHAPTER III
CITY EXPANSION AND SOCIAL HISTORY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

The factors governing the creation and growth of cities are numerous. Favorable geographical condition is a vital growth element. The supportive system such as commerce, industry, transportation created for human existence is also an important element in catapulting the growth of a city. The favourable position facilitated by the transportation and communication services earns a city its own advantage as well as cosmopolitan nature. Political factors have been responsible for the mercurial rise and subsidence of many Indian towns (Smailes: 1986). Religious and social significance in a number of cases have proved instrumental in the growth of a city. (Singh: 1955; Sinha: 1978; Sivaramakrishnan: 1978).

The present day Delhi has been erected on the remnants and ruins of several other cities which were sacked and razed in subsequent wars. From the traditional Indraprastha of Hindu mythology through the seat of administration of the Muslim rulers to the capital of British and its transformation as the city of Luytens, Delhi has witnessed a panorama of cultural diffusion. The resultant impact has been evident in more than one way (Fig. 3.1).
The central and strategic location of Delhi.

(Based on Irving:1984)

Fig. 3.1

The cities of Delhi from 1450 BC.
3.1 LOCATION AND SITE

Situated in the great lowlands of North India, the city forms a narrow strip dividing the Indo-gangetic valley in the north-west and the south-east. Located on the bank of river Yamuna flowing north-south and with the Thar desert on the west, it is flanked by lesser Himalayas in the north and the Aravallis in the south-west. The present geographical extension of the city which is better identified as the Union Territory of Delhi, confines itself between 28° 25' and 28° 23' north latitude and 76° 50' and 77° 22' east longitude. Its political boundary adjoins the states of Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, the former adjoining the city in the north, west and the south while the latter in the east. The total area expansion of Delhi cover 1485 km² (Census of India: 1981). Its length and breadth are 51.90 km. and 48.48 km. respectively.

3.2 ORIGIN AND HISTORY

Delhi is one of the most ancient and historic cities of India. It has experienced administrative upheavals, seen the ebb and the flow of many a civilization. It has been the seat of administration for many a mighty empires and powerful kingdoms. The ruins of Delhi mark the sites of various cities - both ancient and medieval. Popular traditions mention seven cities of Delhi (Fig. 3.2 ). If smaller towns and strong-holds are taken into account, the number increases to fifteen. The area which embraces these sites extends from Shahjahanabad, the old Delhi of today, to
Fig. 3.2
After A.K. Jain: 1990
the city of Rai Pithora which is marked by celebrated Qutab Minar (Dayal: 1982).

The grandeur of Delhi, its magnificent forts, stately palaces, splendid Mausoleum mosques and temples have excited envy and wonder of the world. "Many a times, 'ts been therefore plundered of its wealth and needless to say, equal number of times its risen up in new majesty" (Hearn: 1974).

A study of the legends and historical records of the city, helps us trace its origin and then its evolution into a metropolis (Fig. 3.3).

a) Legend:

The earliest reference to a settlement as Delhi is to be found in the famous Epic Mahabharata. It was known under the alternative names of Yognipora, Indraprastha and Khandwapurastha (Sharp: 1928). The Epic refers to it as 'second heaven on earth'. There is no direct evidence to identify Indraprastha with Delhi except for the circumstantial probability. The city of Indraprastha retained its importance throughout the Epic period as it has been referred as the scene of many important events. Indraprastha seemed to have been one of the important cities of India during the Jataka period. This tradition seems to be corroborated by the Buddhist tradition of the first and the second centuries A.D. which refers to a line of Kaurava princes reigning in the old city.
Fig. 3.3
b) Ancient Period

Ptolemy, celebrated Alexanderine Geographer visited India during the second century A.D. In his map of India, he had marked Daidala near Indraprastha. However, there is no mention of Dilli in the works of the Greek writers who chronicled the campaigns of Alexander the Great in the 4th century B.C. (Hearn: 1974).

It is evident from the historical records that Delhi was a city of little importance during the time of the imperial Mauryas whose capital was Pataliputra, the modern Patna. Even when Ashoka, the third Mauryan Emperor (273-236 B.C.) began his campaign for the exposition and enforcement of the 'Law of Piety' or Dharma, he did not consider Delhi worthy of his exhortatory epigraphs. The Chinese pilgrims who visited the Buddhist shrines in India do not mention Delhi at all. Thus, Delhi was for several centuries little more than a hinterland under the Mauryas and the succeeding dynasties. However, remains of the Gupta period have been found at the site of Purana Qila. To the same period belongs the Iron Pillar now at Qutab Minar. It is believed to have been transferred to this site of Delhi at a later period. This, however shows that Delhi was increasingly growing in importance as a seat of political power (Sharma: 1974).

Delhi is more reliably believed to have founded by the Tomaras, a clan of Rajputs who ruled over the country now denoted as Haryana with Dhillika as their capital. The inscription of the
Parthihara King Mahendrapala I and another inscription of 1328 A.D., found in the village Sarkan, five miles south of modern Delhi, concur that 'Dilli' was founded by Tomaras. The Tomaras seem to have ruled Delhi till middle of the 12th century when they were overthrown by Chahamanas or Chauhans who extended their kingdom up to Shivalik Hills in Uttar Pradesh. The greatest monarch of this dynasty was Prithviraj III or Rai Pithora of Muslim historians, who reigned during 1179-92 A.D. He proved his strength as last great Hindu ruler of Delhi by defeating Mohammed Ghori, the first Muslim invader in the year 1191 A.D. However, the crushed invader, attempted the following year with better reorganisation and laid the stone of Muslim rule in India. Delhi had not yet become an important town. Though its strategic location proved its worth in the years to come.

c) Medieval Period:

Delhi became the seat of power of the Mamluk dynasty better known as the Slave dynasty founded by Qutb-ud-din Aibak. He was one of the generals in Ghori's army when the latter defeated Prithviraj in the battle of Tarain (Taraori) in 1192 A.D. Qutb-ud-din was succeeded by Iltutmish who formally made Delhi the capital of the Muslim empire (Haq: 1959; Majumdar: 1960).

Ever since then Delhi continued to grow in importance. The Khilji rulers brought about its transformation from a fortified

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1Delhi Museum Inscription (1328 A. D.)
camp of the Mamluks to an effective metropolis of India (Haq:1956). The social and the cultural nuances were reflected in the form of patronage given to the poets of the likes of Amir Khusrou and Amir Hasan. The architectural exquisite was manifested in the famous Alaidarwaza an extension of Qutbi mosque (Quwat-ul-Islam mosque constructed by Qutb-ud-din).

The Tughlaqs who succeeds the Khiljis, contributed extensively to the spatial change of the site of Delhi. They showed interest in architecture and each of the three important rulers added a new capital city in Delhi. Ghiyas-ud-din Tughlaq laid the foundation of a fortified town at Tughlaqabad in 1321. It was located five miles to the east of the old city (Chandra: 1969). His successor Mohammed Tughlaq planned to transfer the capital from Delhi to Devagiri renaming it Daulatabad because of its more central location. But the project, however failed. Numerous deaths took place in the process of shifting the capital. To quote Ibn Batuta, the African traveller who visited Delhi during this time, 'the metropolis which was a vast and magnificent city, uniting beauty with strength, the largest city in India did not regain its former glory for many years to come' (Gibb: 1953).

Firoz Tughlaq (1351-88 A.D.) succeeded the throne after Mohd. Tughlaq. He devoted his energies towards improving the lot of people. He constructed a canal from Yamuna to the dry country west of Delhi on which he founded the town known as Hisar Firozah (Haq: 1956). Firozabad or Firoz Shah Kotla was his new capital about eight miles to the north of Qutb Minar. The two cities flourished
at the same time, at a distance of a few miles - old Delhi at Qutb and the new city at the Firozabad (Hearn: 1974). Cunningham (1966) estimated the population of the new city to be about 1,50,000 while not less than 1,00,000 still resided in the Old City at Qutab.

The Timur invasion caused an end to the Tughlaq rule over Delhi. The Sayyads took over the reigns of Delhi in 1414 A.D. The kingdom of Delhi at that time was flanked on the east by the Sharki Dynasty of Jaunpur, on the South by Malwa and on the west by revived Rajput states. However, it had been reduced to a mere principality.

In 1450 A.D., Bahlol Lodi governor of Punjab seized Delhi by a coup and laid the foundation of Lodi dynasty. His son Sikander (1489-1517 AD) removed his capital to the neighbourhood of Agra and called it Sikanderabad. The third and the last in the line, Ibrahim Lodi (1517-26 A.D.) was defeated by Babar a descendant of Timur in the battle of Panipat in 1526 AD. With this came an end to the Lodi rule over Delhi. From Babar sprang the long line of Mughal Emperors under whom Delhi reached the height of her glory (Chopra: 1976). When Babar ascended the throne of Delhi in 1526 AD, the revenue of Delhi was estimated to be Rupees 3 crores 69 lakhs and 50,254 tankas. He died in 1530 AD leaving behind vast but unstable and disorganised empire which extended from Kabul in the west to the borders of Bengal in the east. His son Humayun (1530-40 AD - 1555-56 AD) succeeded him. He built a fort called Din-i-Panah on the site of ancient Indraprastha. The fort came to be known as Purana Qila (Majumdar: 1960). The reign of Humanyun
was interrupted in 1540 AD for 15 years during which the Sur dynasty, founded by Sher Shah Suri the great Afghan monarch, established its domain over most parts of northern India.

Delhi undoubtedly reached the zenith of its glory during the rule of Mughals. During Akbar's rule Delhi formed part of the 'Suba' of Delhi comprising eight 'Sarkars', subdivided into 232 parganas. It extended from Palwal to Ludhiana (165 kos) on one side; Rewari to Kumaon hills (140 kos) on the other, and from Hissar to Khizrabad on the third side (130 kos). Its revenue was estimated by Abul Fazal to be about Rs.150,40,388. His description of Delhi in his well known work Ain-i-Akbari is curiously suggestive of its secondary importance during Akbar's reign. He described Delhi only as one of the greatest cities of antiquity. Delhi however figures in the early years of Akbar's reigns.

Under Jahangir (1605-27 AD) Delhi was one of the 15 provinces and a subedar was in charge of it. A bubonic plague during his reign took a heavy toll of lives in Delhi (1616-24 AD). Delhi was found to be a ruined city. Delhi was but a town of secondary importance till the reign of Shahjahan, who succeeded the throne in 1628 A.D. He proved his worth as a great Emperor and prodigal builder, thus restoring to Delhi its former glory and prestige. Narrow and congested streets of Agra led Shahjahan to build his capital at Delhi, equipped with the citadel and royal residence which took 10 years (1638 A.D.-1648 A.D.) to be constructed. The new city of Shahjahanabad grew around it with a number of fine palaces built by the nobles and merchants.
He constructed Jama Masjid, the largest mosque in India. The Peacock throne was brought to Delhi from Agra. It was during Shahjahan’s reign that the power and splendour of Delhi reached its zenith. It became the premier city not only in India, but also in Asia. The old cities of the Qutb region disappeared. But Humayun’s Din-i-Panahi continued to shelter a large population for another hundred years and became old Delhi to the new city of Shahjahanabad (Dayal: 1982).

Delhi experienced religious fanaticism during the reign of Aurangzeb (1658-1707 AD). With the death of Aurangzeb came the decline of the Mughal Empire. There were quick and weak successions to the throne of Delhi. The Marathas were gaining supremacy. The Deccan kingdoms were also raising their heads. The great Moghal Empire of yesteryears had virtually shrank within the walls of the Red Fort.

While these internal dissensions were on, Nadir Shah the emperor of Persia invaded and plundered Delhi in 1739 AD. The ignominious occasion is estimated to have costed about 30,000 lives according to Von Orlich, the German traveller who visited India in 1843 (Hoyt: 1939) and 20,000 by another estimate (Sarkar: 1932). Delhi’s evolution into a model city by this time is evident from the fact that the Indian artisans and craftsman were taken to Persia by Nadir Shah to erect a city on the pattern of Delhi (Chopra: 1976).

In the absence of a competent ruler, political upheaval continued. Delhi experienced another invasion by Ahmad Shah
Abdali in 1757. After the departure of Abdali, Delhi was left in a totally chaotic condition. The Marathas took advantage of the situation and overpowered the Mughal ruler.

d) British Period

The continuous weakening of the Mughal head helped in the growing supremacy of the British who had entered the country as traders during the reigns of Jahangir. They overpowered the French who were fighting for the Marathas. Realising the importance of the Emperor as a political asset, they were determined to bring him under British control. A new phase of metamorphosis started for Delhi. The structural layout, the architecture the plan everything underwent a change during the British (Gupta: 1981).

Though the British respected the dignity of the Mughal Emperor of Delhi, in reality he was a shadow ruler. His powers were being curtailed gradually. The British Resident had taken up the collection of revenue and administration of justice, thus restricting the civil and the criminal jurisdiction of the Emperor to the four walls of the royal palace (Haq: 1956; Gupta: 1981). During Lord William Bentick, (1828-35) the authority of the Emperor was further curtailed by refusing an increase in the stipend advocated by Raja Ram Mohan Roy. He was also deprived of his authority to confer honorary titles as he had been doing before.

Gradually, a resentment was growing among the people due to exorbitant taxes levied by the English. The British
started using oppressive measures against the natives. This simmered into the revolt of 1857 with which started the freedom struggle. The population of Delhi which stood at two million in Aurangzeb’s time and 500,000 after the sack of Delhi by Nadir Shah, had shrunk to 100,000 in the early years of nineteenth century (Spear: 1951). Von Orlich the German traveller who visited Delhi in 1848 gave the figures as 2,50,000 Hindus, more than three times the number of Muslims. Since then there was a steady fall. A census survey in 1845-57 put it at 166,000. Another estimate of Simon Fraser puts it at 1,82,000 in 1856 (Chopra: 1976). The former walled city was disappearing and the new suburbs were growing outside the walls. The city was overcrowded and there was acute shortage of accommodation though the commodities were cheap. Wheat was sold at 40 seers for a rupee and ghee 4 seer for a rupee. Merchants thronged Delhi from every part of the world and there was brisk trade. The artisans produced best of their arts be it wood, terracotta, gold or stones. The Mughal court was the centre of cultural and literacy activities. Among its celebrities were poets like Ghalib, Zauq and Mali, Ram Chandra, the mathematician, Mukund Lal, the first Indian in the North-West with European medical training and Nazir Ahmed, the Urdu prose writer, were some of the leading literacy figures who adorned the Mughal court.

The struggle for freedom from the British rule gained momentum in 1857. Its subsequent events brought an end to the East India Company rule. The census conducted in 1858 estimated the population to have reduced to one quarter of its former size. India
was henceforth to be governed by and in the name of Her Majesty. The seat of government remained at Calcutta and Delhi was relegated to a secondary position. However, Delhi remained an attraction for the visitors because of her monuments and many dramatic episodes in the history of the country (Majumdar: 1957). The city also extended its areal expanse over the years.

On January 1, 1877, Queen Victoria was declared ‘Kaisari-Hind’ or Empress of India in Durbar held on the plains of the historic ridge. Another Durbar was held in 1903 to proclaim Edward VII as the King Emperor. Viceroyalty earned severe criticism by the Indian as well as the British press for huge expenditure incurred on these Durbars. On December 12, 1911 another Durbar was held in which Emperor George V made the historic announcement of transfer of the capital of India from Calcutta to Delhi. The British found it eminently desirable to withdraw their capital from the provincial environment of Calcutta to the more central Delhi on geographical, historical and political grounds (Chopra: 1976).

Thus, from a town busy in money making, Delhi was changed into the imperial capital by royal proclamation (Chandra: 1969). Temporary buildings were erected in old civil line north of the city, in 1912. The Victory was lodged in a building beyond the ridge. A new site, previously called Raisina about two and a half miles to the south of the northern wall of Shahajihanabad was selected for the new capital. The new capital was planned by Sir Edwin Lutyens and Sir Herbert Baker on the initial layout prepared by Lanchester in 1912 (Fig. 3.4). Its construction was delayed due
New Delhi, initial layout, with extensions to Shajahanabad, by Henry Vaughan Lanchester, July 1912.

Fig. 3.4

(Based on Irving:1984)
to First World War. It was formerly opened in 1930 though it had been in occupation some years earlier.

e) Politico-Administrative Set Up

Delhi became a centre of political activities during the freedom struggle. There had been considerable unrest in Delhi since 1907. In the process Delhi became the centre to regulate the revolutionary activities (Chandra, 1969). Owing to its history, its size and its importance as a railway centre and an advanced centre of foreign goods and other wholesale trade, the city proved ideal for every form of propaganda good or bad. Delhi by now had emerged as an important city in the whole of country. Important decisions were taken in Delhi. Gandhi-Irwin Pact regarding civil-disobedience movement was held here on 5 March 1931. Many congress sessions were held. Many party activities were structured and mobilized in this city. The famous 'Quit India Movement' of 1942 was also launched from this city. India was declared independent in this city at the last stroke of midnight of August 14, 1947.

Delhi was first constituted as a territory in 1803 when Gen. Lake defeated Marathas in a battle at Patpargunj consequent of which Delhi came under the British control (Gupta: 1981). The city together with the districts of Hissar, Rohtak, Gurgaon and Karnal was placed under the charge of an officer designated as Resident and Chief Commissioner of Delhi.

The regular division of Delhi into districts was done on 1819. As then constituted, it consisted of two portions - the
northern and the southern which comprised of Delhi Tehsil, northern portion of Ballabgarh Tehsil and a small portion of Rothak district. In 1832 the territory of Delhi was added to the north-west provinces and its administration was entrusted to a Commissioner in correspondence with the government of North-West Provinces. Between 1848 and 1853 a considerable tract on the eastern Yamuna consisting of 160 villages and an area of approximately 500 sq.kms. from the districts of Meerut and Bulandshahr was added to Delhi. This acquired territory known as the Eastern Paragana remained a part of Delhi till 1858. After the Revolt of 1857, the Delhi territory was annexed to the newly formed Punjab and the Eastern Paraganas reverted to the North-Western Provinces. In 1861 the Sonepat Tehsil was transferred to Delhi and from 1862 onwards Delhi consisted of three Tehsils - Sonepat, Ballabgharh and Delhi. In 1881, the first regular census in different provinces of the country was carried out. The administrative changes which occurred have caused the Delhi unit to vary from census to census, thus making the figures difficult to compare. For the first four censuses from 1881 to 1911, the census operation in this area was done as a part of Punjab. Till then, it was included in the 'Delhi District' which comprised the tehsils of Delhi, Sonepat and Ballabgharh. With a total area of 1276 square miles, 1912 saw the formation of separate Delhi province, comprising Delhi tehsil and small portions of Ballabgharh tehsil. In 1915, an area of 46 square miles on the eastern bank of Yamuna was transferred to Delhi from Ghaziabad tehsil of the United
Provinces (Rao and Desai: 1965). Thereafter, this unit has not undergone any change except for marginal modifications, because of which the area of Delhi has changed from about 1536 sq.kms. in 1921 to 1434 kms. in 1931, to 1487 kms. in 1941, to 1497 kms. in 1951 and 1484 kms in 1961 respectively. On December 12, 1911 when the change of capital from Calcutta to Delhi was announced, Delhi tehsil and Mehrauli Thana were separated from the Punjab and organized into a separate ‘Province of Delhi’ headed by a Commissioner. With effect from October 1, 1912, Sonepat was transferred to Rohtak and bulk of Ballabgharh (725 sq.km) to Gurgaon in the Punjab. In 1915, Shahadara with 65 villages of the Ghaziabad Tehsil of Meerut district was transferred to Delhi.

Under the provisions of the Government of India Acts of 1919 and 1935, Delhi continued to be a centrally administered territory up to January 26, 1950, when Delhi became a part of ‘C’ state under the new Constitution”. It then consisted of only one district and one tehsil. Under the states Reorganization Act, 1956, Delhi was constituted as a Union Territory. The legislative assembly was abolished and the President through an administrator governed the territory. This constituted till a new set up was contemplated in 1966 under the Delhi Administration Act. A Lieutenant Governor, a Metropolitan Council, and a Executive Council were then provided for Delhi.

Under the Part C States Act, 1951 Delhi was granted legislative assembly with 48 members and was administered by the ministry responsible to the local legislature.
There have been some jurisdictional changes since Delhi was constituted as a Union Territory. According to 1961 census, Delhi comprised of only one district and one tehsil. The Union Territory of Delhi was divided according to the areas governed by three local bodies (i) Delhi Municipal Corporation (DMC), (ii) Delhi Cantonment and (iii) New Delhi Municipal Committee (NDMC). The urban part of DMC was further divided into seven zones. (i) Shahadara, (ii) City Saradar Paharganj, (iii) Karol Bagh-Patel Nagar, (iv) Civil Lines-Subzi Mandi, (v) Transferred area, (vi) South Delhi, (vii) West Delhi. The rural component comprises of 300 villages of which 24 were deserted. During the decade 1961-71, the tehsil of Delhi was bifurcated into two—Delhi and Mehrauli tehsils. They in all had rural areas comprising 156 and 102 census villages respectively (1971). Besides, the urban area of Delhi comprised of components same as in 1961. However, during the decade 1961-71, the urban portion of DMC further enveloped another 40 villages on its periphery. This inturn resulted in the decline in the number of villages. In 1981, the Union Territory of Delhi included 27 census towns besides the three of 1971. There were a total of 131 villages. It is noteworthy at this junction that the Town Group (T.G.) concept of 1961 was replaced by standard urban area (S.U.A.) in 1971. It comprised of DMC, the Cantonment, NDMC, 67 villages of Delhi Tehsil and 82 villages of Mehrauli Tehsil. This change in concept lead to the formation of 27 new census towns in 1981. The number of such towns increased to 33 in 1991 due to the expansion of urban components.
3.3 A SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC ACCOUNT

As soon as the independent India was declared Republic in 1950, Delhi, the seat of imperial power transformed into a focal point of the political and economic activity for people. Delhi was administered directly by the Central Government when independence was achieved. The fast growing population and the large expansion in industry and commerce largely due to the influx of thousands of displaced persons from Pakistan, produced an insatiable demand for both residential and commercial accommodation. Consequently, the city experienced unprecedented expansion. Modern Delhi sprawled across all the earlier cities of Delhi that had grown up and decayed during the past centuries. The process since then has not slowed down and the city has spilled across the Yamuna and continues to expand towards the neighbouring states of Uttar Pradesh in the east and Haryana in the north, south and west.

a) Demographic Characteristics

In the pre-British period, Delhi was only a political and cultural centre. The population of Delhi at that time consisted of the countries, the nobles and the army of the king. When the King left Delhi for a longer stay elsewhere, all of them followed along with their families and servants. The merchants also had to follow them thus leaving behind no trade.

i) Population Growth:

As the British rule established in northern India, Delhi
became a thriving commercial centre. With the improvement in the unsettled conditions and introduction of better civic amenities, there began a stable growth in its population. When the city passed into the British hands in 1803, its population at that time was estimated at about 1,50,000 inhabitants (Bopegamage: 1957). During the next forty years, there was a very slow growth in its population. In 1847, the population of the city along with its suburbs was 1,60,279 persons showing an increase of about 6.5 per cent. In 1868, the population of Delhi stood at 1,54,417 persons registering a decrease of 3.7 per cent. This is perhaps accounted for by the fact that after the revolt of 1857, some of the people were expelled from the city and many were killed.

Between 1901 and 1961, the population of Delhi increased by 225793 persons showing continuous increase since the turn of the century. The decade ending 1911 indicated a decadal growth of 11.31 per cent, which was to some extent due to the presence of hundreds of persons who had come from the other provinces to make the preparations for the Imperial Durbar. Also, an epidemic of plague during this decade caused substantial number of deaths (Rao and Desai: 1965).

In the history of Delhi, the year 1911 is considered as a landmark as it witness the shifting of the capital from Calcutta to Delhi. The population began to grow significantly since then. During 1911-21 the decadal growth rate increased to 27.94 per cent. By 1921 the commercial and industrial conditions had improved and this attracted a steady stream of migrants into city. The decadal
growth rate during 1921-31 increased to 46.98 per cent. The census of 1931 showed an increase of over 30 per cent in the population of Delhi. The decade witnessed a slight movement of population towards Karol Bagh into the west and beyond Subzi Mandi in the north west. The village Shahadara located in the east across the river Yamuna grew up into a township of 8,000 persons. A vast majority of this population depended on the city for employment. The growth of population during the decade ending 1941, was recorded as 55.48 per cent. The partition of the Indian sub-continent in 1947 brought a huge influx of refugees into Delhi. This resulted in the highest decadal growth rate of 106.58 per cent, recorded till 1991. This movement overshadowed those immigrants who had come from individual provinces. The census of 1951 showed an increase of 90 per cent. The population further increased by 64.17 per cent during 1951-61. The following decade saw a decline in the decadal growth of population by nearly 10 per cent. The population of Delhi in 1961 and 1971 showed an absolute increase of 914540 and 1407086 persons. In terms of percentage, the population rose by 52.44 and 53 per cent, recording an average annual increase of more than 5.2 per cent. In 1981 Delhi had a total of 5,713,581 persons recording a decadal growth of 56.66 per cent during 1971-81 (Table 3.1). The population increased to 9370475 in 1991 of which 5120733 were men and 4249742 were women (Census of India: 1991). Delhi now ranks third as regards population after Calcutta and Bombay (Fig. 3.5).
Table 3.1

GROWTH OF POPULATION
1901-1991

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Decade</th>
<th>Growth Rate</th>
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<td>1901-1911</td>
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<td>1971-1981</td>
<td>+55.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981-1991</td>
<td>+64.01</td>
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Source-Census of India, Provisional
Population Totals, Delhi, 1991.
GROWTH OF POPULATION 1901-1991


Growth Rate 120 100 80 60 40 20

Fig. 3.5

--- Decadal growth rate
Uptil the year 1950, Delhi typically reflected the pattern of metropolitan growth in India. The rate of growth was slow up to 1931, then a watershed at 1941 and very fast growth in the last three decades for the urban areas was experienced by Delhi. The average increase for the rural areas for each of the fifty years was one per cent. From a little over two lakhs in 1901, urban Delhi grew slowly to about 4.5 lakhs in 1931, but took a sudden leap to about 7.0 lakhs in 1941, touching over 14 lakhs in 1951 the population doubled itself in ten years. It further increased by two-thirds to about 24 lakhs in 1961. The city has attracted more than 36 lakhs urban population in 1971. It increased to 6,220,406 in 1981. The corresponding figures stood at 8427083 in 1991, the rural share amounting to 943392 persons.

The pace of urbanization of Delhi has thus been remarkable. In its spectacular leap since 1941, Delhi has outpaced all other million plus cities in the country (Mitra: 1978; Bose: 1980). It had the highest percentage of urban population in 1951 and 1961, enabling the city, more appropriately to be termed as an essentially urban district. According to 1951 census, Delhi had two cities - Delhi and New Delhi; and three towns - Mehrauli, Narela and Najafgarh and also the cantonment. But in 1961, the criterion to declare a place as town got changed. Therefore, Delhi had three towns - the Delhi city, New Delhi and Cantonment in 1961. The Delhi Town Group of the urban tract of the Municipal Corporation, New Delhi and Delhi Cantonment was a class I town and it has been so since 1901. About 48 villages which were treated as such in 1951,
had since been urbanized and were treated as urbanized areas in 1961. These villages in all covered an area of 30,934 acres, 16,185 houses, 16,696 households and a population of 88,947 persons, 50,469 males and 38,478 females. In the subsequent censuses also, there had been villages treated as urban under the term Census Towns.

The rural population of Delhi in 1951 was spread in 304 villages, 206 of which had a population below 1,000 persons. According to 1961 census there were 276 inhabited and 24 deserted villages in Delhi. In 1971, there were 243 villages. The following census of 1981 recorded 214 villages (Table 3.2). The percentage share of rural population had declined during 1901-1981 (Fig. 3.6).

iii) Density of Population

Delhi is one among the cities with the highest density of population in the world. The density of population of Delhi Territory has been on the increase since 1911. The year 1931 experienced a high density due to the fact that the bulk of population was residing in cities. The main reason for the increase in 1951 was that nearly five lakhs displaced persons had migrated to Delhi during 1947-48. This increase was recorded despite the muslim emigration from Delhi during the same period. The density of population increase from 1,171 persons per sq. km in 1951 to as high as 1,791 persons per sq. km. in 1961 recording thereby an increase of nearly one and a half times during the decade 1951-61. In 1971, the density went as high as 2,738. This phenomenal increase
Table 3.2
GROWTH OF RURAL POPULATION

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<th>Year</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source—Census of India, Portrait of Population, Delhi, 1981.
PER CENT RURAL TO TOTAL POPULATION

Year

Rural Population

Fig.3.6
is due to the large immigration which was nearly nine lakhs in 1971 in addition to natural increase (Fig. 3.7).

The rural density had been steadily increasing throughout the period except for the decade ending 1911, when it fell due to an epidemic of plague. The urban density rose till 1911 and showed marked decline in 1921, but recovered slightly during the inter-censal period 1911-21. The reason for this fluctuation is that after 1911 the city of New Delhi came into existence with a large area and sparse population. The same was true of the new Cantonment. The impact of the refugee migration during 1947-48 is evident from the urban density figure of 1951.

Out of a total number of about five lakhs refugees enumerated in Delhi in 1951, as many as 91 per cent were settled in the urban areas of Delhi. The decade 1951-61 witnessed a very small increase in the urban density. This was due to the fact that urban area increased from 199 sq.km. to 326 sq.km. It may be pointed out here that in 1961 the density of population of urban Delhi was about thirty times more than that of rural Delhi.

The city Sadar-Paharganj zone in 1961 had the highest density within the city and one of the highest among the cities of the world. Its density of 55,256 persons per sq.km. was close to double the density of the average of Calcutta Municipal area and more than six times the density of Greater Bombay. Similarly even the Karol Bagh - Patel Nagar zone with a density of 20805 persons per sq.km. is nearly two-thirds the average density of Calcutta Municipal
DENSITY OF POPULATION

Fig. 3.7

---

Population density
Corporation and more than double the density of Greater Bombay. Thus, it has been rightly claimed that these two Census zones can be counted in the foremost of the world's highest density areas.

In 1961 Delhi showed the symptoms of a "thinning of the core" as compared to 1951. This was because of the dispersal of refugees over the decade to the peripheral regions of the metropolis away from the old city counter pointed by the redensification of the areas, though at a slower pace. The fastest to grow during the intercensal period of 1951-61 was West Delhi followed by Shahadara and South Delhi. The rate of growth was more than five times for the west Delhi, more than thrice for Shahadara and more than double for South Delhi. The city Sadar-Paharganj Zone grew by a mere seven per cent. The only area which experienced decline in population size was Delhi Cantonment. The population density for the city as a whole recorded continuous increase from 6518 in 1951 to 7226 (1961) to 8173 (1971) to 9758 in 1981 (Table 3.3).

iv) Sex Ratio

As in other cities of India, population of Delhi is predominantly male, though the predominance is much less marked in comparison to Calcutta, Bombay or Kanpur. Delhi had a sex ratio of 862 females per 1000 males in 1901. The male population grew steadily lowering the sex ratio to 715 females per 1000 males in 1941. The continuous decline in sex ratio during 1911, 1921 and 1931 was accentuated by the transfer of the Capital in 1911, the accelerated establishment of offices in 1921, and the economic
Table 3.3
DENSITY OF POPULATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Persons per sq. km</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>6518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>7226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>8173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>9758</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census of India, Portrait of Population, Delhi, 1981.
depression in 1931 further lowered it. The post-partition migration improved the female ratio from 715 females for every 1000 males in 1941 to over 768 in 1951. In the next decade this ratio improved still further to 785 females to every 1000 males. This improvement in 1961 is ascribed to the multiplication of dwelling units and the rapid growth of housing (Bopegamage: 1956). In 1971 the sex ratio was 801 and it increased to 808 in 1981 and to 830 in 1991 (Fig. 3.8).

The proportion of females per 1000 males has always been higher in the rural areas than in urban. This is perhaps explained by the fact that a large number of men migrate to urban areas in search of employment, leaving their families back in the rural areas (Table 3.4).

v) Migration:

It is evident from the available sources that about 50,000 persons had emigrated to other provinces. In addition, after the participation of the country in 1947, over two lakh Muslims emigrated to Pakistan. The number of Muslims in Delhi in 1941 was 304971, while in 1951 they reduced to 99501.

The emigrants from Delhi in the year 1961 account for 181279 persons, of whom 72091 were males and 109188 were females. The percentage of female emigrants (62.2) was much larger than that of male (39.8). This phenomenon can be attributed to the marriage migration. The three adjacent states of Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Rajasthan account for 76.2 per cent of the total
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>862</td>
<td>916</td>
<td>817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>793</td>
<td>869</td>
<td>740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>733</td>
<td>845</td>
<td>672</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>722</td>
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<td>670</td>
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<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>715</td>
<td>846</td>
<td>677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>768</td>
<td>837</td>
<td>675</td>
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<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>785</td>
<td>847</td>
<td>777</td>
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<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>801</td>
<td>825</td>
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<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>808</td>
<td>820</td>
<td>808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>830</td>
<td>821</td>
<td>830</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census of India, Provisional Population Totals, Delhi, 1991.
Fig. 3.8

SEX RATIO
Females per 1000 males

Year

Total  Rural  Urban
emigrants. Punjab's share was largest (38.3 per cent) followed by Uttar Pradesh (32.0 per cent), while Rajasthan funnelled about 5.9 per cent of the total emigrants. It may be added that female emigrants constituted two-third and male one-third of the total emigrants.

As regards immigration, a majority of the people enumerated in the population of Delhi in 1961 were born outside the territorial limits of Delhi. Only 43.6 per cent of the population enumerated in 1961, were born within the limits of Delhi and remaining 56.4 per cent were migrants to Delhi. About 36.6 per cent of them were migrant from other parts of India while 19.5 per cent of them were born in foreign countries. More than four-fifths of the immigrants have come from within the northern zone of the country in which Delhi is centrally located. The catchment for Delhi is shared principally by the three neighbouring states of Haryana, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh.

The number of non-Indian nationals in Delhi almost doubled itself during the inter-censal period of 1951-61. It rose from 2902 in 1951 to 4616 in 1961. Nepalese constituted the largest single block of non-Indian nationals both in 1951 and 1961, though their percentage to total non-Indian nationals in Delhi decreased from 42.3 in 1951 to 36.2 in 1961. It is noteworthy that during the decade 1951-61, the percentage of Pakistanis, Americans, Russians and Chinese increased and that of the British, Nepalese and Malayans decreased (Census of India: 1961; 1971).

The partition of the country in 1947 witnessed a gigantic
and unprecedented mass migration. The outflow of Hindus from Pakistan progressively swelled through 1946 to assume the proportion of a tide in the middle of 1947. Delhi reeled under the avalanche of refugees who were given shelter in three main campus - Kingsway, Tibbia College area in Karol Bagh and at Shahdara. The Kingsway camp was the largest with about three lakh inmates. The maximum number of displaced persons arrived during August-October 1947. Thereafter, migration of the refugees to Delhi continued on a progressively shrinking scale. Some of the subsequent migrants initially settled in the neighbouring states of Uttar Pradesh and Punjab. They later came to Delhi in search of a better employment or more secure resettlement. This type of subsequent emigration was only a sequence in the process of redistribution of the refugee. In 1951, the number of displaced persons enumerated in Delhi was 495,391. District Lahore in the then West Pakistan contributed the highest percentage (17.0) of total displaced persons in Delhi in 1951. The other major contributors included districts of Rawalpindi (8.0), Multan (7.7), Shahpur (5.6), Gujranwala (5.4), Lyallpur (5.1), Sealkot (3.9) and Peshawar (3.6) (Chopra: 1976).

b) Social Characteristics:

i) Language

There were mainly three languages spoken in the first quarter of the present century. The town people used urdu; the villagers Hindi, while the recruits from the north spoke Punjabi. The census of 1921, 1931, 1941, 1951, and 1961 all confirm the fact
that these three languages have continued to be the major languages spoken as mother tongue by over 90 per cent of the population.

Separate data for individual mother-tongues, Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu and Pahari for the year 1951 are not available. The data for these languages were grouped together in order to iron out bias of the informants due to the then prevailing language controversies. The non-local language continued to increase its importance with the growth of importance of Delhi as the capital of India. In 1921 only one more language, English claimed a proportion of 0.1 per cent speaker. The proportion of such languages increased from 3.0 in 1931 to 6.0 in 1941 and to 8.0 in 1951. Almost all such languages except Bengali and English, improved their share in 1951. Thus, it is indicated that linguistic heterogeneity has been on the increase in Delhi. The linguistic composition of Delhi reflects its intensely northern character. In 1951, 94.4 per cent of Delhi population declared its mother tongue to be Hindi, Urdu or Punjabi. In 1961 the corresponding percentage of this linguistic group rose still further to 95.1 and increased the share of Hindi and Punjabi to over 89 per cent (Mitra: 1963, Bopegamage: 1957). Delhi may be termed, despite the representation of many other languages, a bilingual rather than a multilingual city (Chopra: 1976). In 1951 only 98,000 persons spoke languages other than Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu. This figure rose to 1,32,000 in 1961. This increase indicates a linguistic decline during 1951-61 (Census of India: 1961).

It is not evident from the available records whether the figures reflect the reverse migration after completion of tenure of
work, or whether the children of those migrants have returned Hindi as their mother tongue because they were learning it. The decline could be attributed to both the factors at work. The declines have occurred to Malayalam by more than 3.0 per cent from 9800 in 1951 to 9500 in 1961. Marathi declined by more than 82 per cent from 20,000 in 1951 to 7600 in 1960. Gujarati declined by more than 53 per cent from 14,000 in 1951 to 5200 in 1961 (Census of India: 1961; Mitra: 1963). This linguistic decline is contrary to the volume of migration from those states during the decade 1951-61, if it is assumed that the majority of these migrants would claim the language of those states as their mother-tongue. Bengali and Tamil appeared to be two most intractable mother-tongues. The absolute number as well as the percentage increase in both reflected almost exactly the number same as having immigrated during this period from these states. Kannada speakers grew to 2000 in 1961 from a mere 85 to 1951. However, the migrants from Karnataka grew from 500 to 46,000 during this period. Sindhi speakers almost doubled during the decade. The number of Kashmiri speakers grew from 410 in 1951 to 3040, in 1961. Only the English speaking population remained almost constant.

In rural areas, 99.8 per cent of the people spoke either Hindi or Punjabi or Urdu and in the urban areas 94.5 per cent persons spoke one of those three languages. Hindi has been used as mother tongue predominantly both in rural and urban areas. Hindi speaking people in rural Delhi is much higher than in urban Delhi. Punjabi and Urdu speaking people rank second and third in
respectively in urban Delhi. But in the rural areas of the territory, Urdu is next to Hindi followed by Punjabi.

Those who returned Hindi as their mother-tongue declared English, Urdu and Punjabi as three main subsidiary languages. Persons with Punjabi as their mother tongue, returned Hindi, English and Arabic as three main subsidiary languages while those whose mother tongue was Urdu, returned English, Hindi an Arabic as subsidiary language. It may be pointed out here that there is a close approximation between the total population of Muslims and those who returned Urdu as their mother-tongue. On the other hand, the total population of the Sikhs in 1961 was 203916 while those who declared Punjabi as their mother-tongue were 316672. This leads to the assumption that all Sikhs returned Punjabi as their mother tongue. Other than Sikhs there were 112756 persons amongst other religion who declared Punjabi as their mother-tongue.

ii) Religion

The three principal communities have been the Hindu, Sikh and Muslim. The Jains, Christians and Buddhists have constituted small majority. The city has recorded some Zoroastrians and a few Jews too. The Hindus constitute numerically the largest religious community in Delhi. The second place is claimed by Muslims and third by Christians. The Hindus showed a continuously decreasing trend during the two decades between 1921 and 1941, while the Muslims registered increase throughout the period. During the decades, 1921-61 the proportion of Muslims and Christians have
decreased, while those of other major religion, have increased. As regards rural-urban composition, the Hindus are in majority both in rural and urban areas. There are more Muslims settled in rural Delhi than the Sikhs; next in number being the Christians followed by the Jains and Buddhists.

There were more than 72 per cent Hindus in 1961. The proportion of Muslims reduced to 18 per cent who were well above 40 per cent till 1951. The following census year recorded further increase (82.34 per cent) in Hindus and decrease (8.18 per cent) in the Muslims (Table 3.5). The year 1981 presented almost a similar picture. Christians, Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists remained other religious communities in order of their numerical strength (Census of India: 1961, 1971; Chopra: 1976).

From an urban agglomeration that Delhi might have been as a Mughal city in late 17th century, it declined in population as well as political strength. The advent of British and the early decades of this century saw a slow growth which got accelerated in the post independence decade (Bopegamage: 1957; Chandra: 1969; Gupta: 1987).

The 1941-1951 decade experienced of complex demographic changes. In the first half of this decade Delhi served as a military supply base for the allied nations and received significant immigration. The war caused slight decline in natural increase. The years following partition saw further decline due to its disruptive effect on family life. It was the partition which resulted in influx of refugees and other migrants that caused the
Table 3.5

RELIGIOUS COMPOSITION OF POPULATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hinduism</td>
<td>54.86</td>
<td>52.28</td>
<td>52.90</td>
<td>54.62</td>
<td>51.14</td>
<td>72.70</td>
<td>82.39</td>
<td>82.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islam</td>
<td>42.41</td>
<td>47.88</td>
<td>46.83</td>
<td>41.36</td>
<td>43.71</td>
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<td>8.20</td>
</tr>
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<td>Sikhism</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.83</td>
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<td>1.29</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>6.62</td>
<td>6.57</td>
<td>6.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jainism</td>
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<td>1.50</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>1.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source- Census of India, Final Population Totals, Delhi, 1981.
growth of Delhi U.A. by 7.5 per cent per annum during 1941-1951. The influx of migrants remained at about 5.00 per cent during 1951-1961, declined to 4.5 per cent during 1961-1971 and continued to remain at that level during 1971-1981 (Census of India: 1981).

3.4 CONCLUSION

A brief sketch of the socio-historic profile of Delhi acquaints us with its evolution from a little known settlement of ancient period to the metropolis of today. The present Delhi sprawls over an area which encompasses the seven sites where the previous cities designated as Delhi were located.

The historic evidences support that Delhi remained a little more than a hinterland of the Hindu rulers of the Mauryan and the succeeding dynasties. It gained prominence only after the 'Tomaras' a Rajput clan, made it a seat of their administration around the mid-twelfth century B.C. Since then it continued to grow as a nodal city through the reigns of the Chauhans, and the advent of the Muslim rulers - from the Slave dynasty to the Mughals. The subsequent British rule not only strengthened the position of Delhi as an important city but also reaffirmed its status as the country's capital. It emerged as a strong administrative unit. It was constituted as a territory by the British for the first time in 1803 and divided into districts in 1819. Around 1850s it consisted of 160 villages with an area of approximately 500 square kms.

As the city evolved through the reigns of different rulers, its structure also underwent a change. The pre-British
Delhi confined itself to the limits of the Fort. The main activities centred around trade and commerce. However, the advent of British rule led to the establishment of Delhi as an imperial capital. This change left its impression on demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the people. The city registered around 1.5 lakhs of people in 1803 when it passed into the hands of British after the defeat of Marathas. It grew continuously recording a slight decline dating 1911 due to the plague epidemic. The urban population grew faster than the rural. The population density also increased over the years. As regards the sex ratio, the declining trend was visible for both rural and urban areas up to 1951. The ratio improved from 1961 onwards.

The people of Delhi mainly spoke Hindi, Urdu and Punjabi. More than 90 per cent of the population spoke these languages. There were three main religions, viz. Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism. It is notable that most of the Hindus spoke Hindi, Muslim spoke Urdu and Sikhs spoke Punjabi. Independence of India from the British rule is marked by the partition of the country and the consequent influx of the population. The passing years transformed the city centre of the Mughal Delhi into the old city. The British planners designed another city on the south of Mughal Delhi and named it New Delhi, which, after independence was divided into several zones for administrative purpose. As of today, the city has been divided into three civic divisions of Delhi Municipal Corporation (DMC), New Delhi Municipal Committee (NDMC) and the Cantonment which comprise of census charges. These charges are
further divided into enumeration blocks which are the smallest units of division.

Thus, it is evident that Delhi evolved from an unknown settlement into a seat of rulers who consolidated the territory to enhance it into a city of national importance not only by its politico-administrative characteristics but also in terms of demographic and economic traits.