CHAPTER VI

SOCIAL MORPHOLOGY: A CASE STUDY OF SAMPLE VILLAGES
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The village morphology includes ground plan, general built of settlements and social morphology. The ground plan denotes the layout including length and breadth of streets, the arrangement of house inside the compound of a household and the location of main cultural features as mosque, temple, fort, headman’s residence, walls, moats, market place, gardens etc. The built of the village comprises architectural style, general conditions of street, front of houses etc., and lastly its third component, social morphology includes functional and social spaces, which are socially and culturally controlled. In fact, morphological structure, street patterning and arrangement of dwelling and location of secular buildings etc. are all governed by socio-economic and cultural factors. The village community as an integrated living whole "consists of collection of units", arrange to form a social structure, i.e. a set of social relations.1

This study aims to investigate the existing morphological characteristics of rural settlements of the two selected villages of different ecological settings in the study area, and to examine the influence of physico-cultural and socio-economic factors, particularly caste and landownership, on the village morphology of the two selected villages in the study area.

1.0 SOCIO-SPATIAL STRUCTURE

The morphological structure of the sample villages in the study area is mainly determined by their socio-economic as well as physical attributes. Land ownership and caste system have played a crucial role in determining their spatial morphological structure. Field studies of the sample villages have shown that although Brahmins, occupy the highest rank in the social hierarchy, but do not hold the central or the best available sites of these villages, whereas people of the second and the third order of the social hierarchy, such as Kshatriya and Vaishayas, occupy the central or best available sites, and have the largest land holdings in these villages. The lowest strata of the rural society, namely, people belonging to the scheduled castes generally live in congested residences on the periphery of the villages, away from the higher caste dwellings. At times, caste based hamlets also emerge within the village territory, having caste names like Jatpur, Julehra, Singhaoli Ahir, Pathanpur etc. Such hamlets though physically isolated from each other by intervening fields, water bodies, grave land, streets etc., are functioning well-knit together as components of a single unit under the old Jajmani system. Thus, social space and functions are expressed through various morphological patterns, which can be studied on the basis of following models.

1.1 Religio-Ritual Model

The villages have various hierarchy and ranking of jatis still practicing age-old customs and maintaining religio-ritual distances in
behaviour. The Hindu social organization is based on the caste system. Caste is a very important feature in India’s life and culture. No other social institution has played such a vital role as that of caste in the development of village society (Fig.6.1A). The Indian society is split up into many self-contained divisions of castes in which each caste has its own way of life, with its distinct profession, ideology and behaviour. People of one caste and clan are closely knit together by common traditions and beliefs. They are found very close to each other and work in harmony. Different patterns of religio-ritual distances among various castes and jatis (sub-castes) have been found in the villages of different localities of the study area. The segregationist notions of castes such as purity, pollution, untouchability etc. maximizes social distances between the higher and lower castes. The stigma of pollution connotes a sense of ritual distance between different castes and determines the spatial arrangement of their respective dwellings in the villages. There exists a Brahmin-untouchable ritual continuum in which all other various castes occupy different niches; these placements, however, in middle rungs of ritually determined social scale, vary in different regional and local structural models.¹ Such caste segregation, being maximum during the early days of settlements, led to the establishment of caste based hamlets in the villages. In case of compact villages, the untouchables were confined to the periphery of the settlements.

HYPOTHETICAL SOCIO-SPATIAL STRUCTURE

A  1. COMPACT SITES  2. HEMLETED SITES

INDIAN VILLAGE-STRUCTURE

RELIGIO-RITUAL MODEL  SECULAR DOMINANCE MODEL
DISTANCE MAXIMIZATION BETWEEN  DISTANCE MINIMIZATION
U- AND HIGHER CASTES  U- AND HIGHER CASTES

R- RAJPUT  B- BRAHMIN  A- AHIR  K- KAYASTH
H- BHUMIHAR  M- KUMHAR  N- BARBAR  G- GONR  S- SERVICE
C- CASTES  U- UNTOUCHABLE- CHAMAR etc.

FIG. 6.1
in south, southeast and sometimes in the north to maintain the supposed purity of air and village environment. But, this model does not explain other patterns visible in many parts, hence a secular model was adopted.

1.2 Secular Dominance Model

It is the territorial hold by the dominant family or kin group or the jati or the caste in the village through the control of the village land resources, which fulfills the most basic needs of the majority of the villagers by providing the source of food or livelihood, shelter or house site within the village, protection and security of a job, and a position or status in the village society and freedom of movement.1 The land-owning dominant caste group articulated the settling and socio-economic patterning of the village society. This dominant caste may be a Rajput, Brahmin, Jat, Gujar etc. varying spatially. The functional interdependence generates an atmosphere of co-operation in the countryside in which castes barrier tend to be disregarded in spite of the stigma of untouchablity attached to lower castes (Fig.6.1B). This brings down the distance between these two social groups, making rural settlements compact and unified. But, the village pattern of the past is much affected now and explanation of the additional expansions or relocation needs a separate model.

1.3 Economic Space Model

After Independence villages experienced change in the occupance

and expansion of various sites irrespective of the factors explained through the two models. The coming of separate tolas, purwas or pattis (hamlets) may best be explained by economic factors, hence, economic space model. In some cases it has been seen that Ahirs spread towards the jungle area to avail maximum benefit of stock raising and cultivation of their own field, Chamars came along the road to enjoy the free front of the road avoiding congestion of the main settlement and others are occupying temporary bases (pump-set locations). Road has attracted various caste people for economic gains. This roadside expansion is new phenomenon in rural countryside resulting from development of transportation means, hence, job opportunity.

The following two villages have been selected randomly to present the actual picture of various aspects of rural settlements and their social morphology. These are Medpur and Meghrajpur.

2.0 VILLAGE MEDPUR

The village lies in the Rajpur block of the Meerut district at 28°58' north latitude and 77°47' east longitude. It is situated about 13.5 km from the tehsil headquarters. The approach to the village is easy and convenient. While traveling on the Garh Road towards southeast, just after crossing the Kali Nadi (east) there fall a village named Gokulpur on the left side of the road then comes a big gate after the premises of the village then we will
take a turn towards this village and the metalled road through the gate goes right up to the village Medpur. On the way a village named Datauli also falls. In addition, the village is linked to surrounding villages by three other metalled roads. Like all villages of the study area, Medpur depends mainly on agriculture. According to 1991 census, the Medpur has a population of 2660 persons, out of which 1420 are males and 1240 are females.

**Historical Set-up**

According to the old people the village derives its name from a Gujar named Med who lived here about 250 years ago. A Rajput who came from Haryana drove him out. He married a girl of Buxor Gai village in the north east of Medpur. Later on he embraced Islam and changed his name to Hayat Khan but his first wife and sons remained as Hindus.

**Physical Set-up**

Village, unlike towns and cities, seldom experience any major changes in their aerial extent. The main reason for this slack physical expansion is the out migration resulting from saturation of the agricultural sector, absence of any other employment opportunities in villages, and increased literacy in rural areas.

Its flat level plain governs the spatial morphology of the village and the Kali Nadi (west) flows in the northwest of the village. This is a compact village having a roughly rectangular pattern.
Functionally the houses can be grouped into three types: ghar (residential quarters), gher (place used as cattle shed and for storing fodder etc.) and ghar-gher (used for all purposes). The ghers are mostly built in the outer margin of main inhabited site in the western part while the other parts are occupied by residential quarters. There are 15 shops, which cater the daily needs of the villagers. The villages have one government primary school and one Ambedkar primary school and a madarsa. It has a temple and two mosques located in the Hindu and Muslim localities respectively. There is one privately run dispensary.

There are about 357 occupied residential houses in the village. Out of the total houses, 85% are pucca, with flat roofs, while 5% are kaccha, made of mud walls and flat mud roofs. The rest of the houses i.e., 10% are of the mixed type. This does not mean that this proportion is true some 10 years back, actually the reconstruction of kaccha houses into pucca ones has gone on at a pace. This high percentage of pucca houses reflects the economic well being of the villages. On an average 6-7 persons are living in one house. Housing condition in the village is moderately good, although there is no set plan. Most of the houses have two kothas (medium size rooms) with a dalan (verandah), one kothari (small room) and angan (courtyard). Member of chief land owing castes of the village owns over half of the village. They mostly live in spacious pucca houses with big courtyards. People belonging to other communities like Chamar, Harijan and Dhimar,
Dhobi, Barhai etc., live in one or two room houses with out any provision for ventilation or sanitation. About 80% of the houses have a separate kitchen and they are using cooking gas as well. Most of the houses have a separate toilet because majority of the people in the village are upper caste Muslims and they observe purdah. There are about 220 private hand pumps while 14 belong to government.

Brick paving of all the street and cemented open drains are other notable changes, which occurred during the sixties, but their maintenance and sanitation expose a very sorry state of affairs.

**Economic Set-up**

In the village of Medpur agriculture is still the mainstay of the village economy. The primary sector dominates the economic structure of the village. Cultivators (206) and agricultural laborers (254) constitute the primary sector. The cultivators are further subdivided into three categories, namely, landowners, land-owners-cum-tenants and tenants. The numbers of landowner-cultivators with large holdings and of pure tenants are quite negligible. On the other hand, there are landowners with small landholdings some of whom do not cultivate their land themselves.

Before 1947, the Muslim Rajputs were the large landowners; poor Muslim Rajputs and non-scheduled castes, landowners-cum-tenants and the scheduled castes were the agricultural labourers. The Rajput
landowners, except, for a very few of them being very status-conscious could not make any progress on the economic front and were compelled to sell their land.

The use of modern agricultural innovations in terms of power, fertilizers, improved seeds, mechanization, credit facilities, marketing, etc has helped to increase production considerably and has brought the total land of the village under plough and double cropping. Large-scale mechanization is not possible due to the small size of the landholdings.

The existence of secondary and tertiary workers does not mean that secondary and tertiary activities do exist in the village, except for a few shopkeepers. The recorded secondary and tertiary sector workers work in nearby urban centres like Delhi, Meerut city, Mawana town. The secondary and tertiary activities accounts for 25.8 per cent of the total workers, which represents a good combination of employment in different activities.

Social Morphology

The Muslim Rajputs are the dominating caste in the village. More than half of the population belongs to this community. They are occupying the best possible sites like whole of the western and central parts. In the north the three houses of Gararia are located near Rajputs Gher. There are two houses of Brahmins located near the temple in the northeast corner of the village. About eight houses of Baniyas surrounded the temple. The
houses of Scheduled castes Bhangi are found in the southeastern corner of the village built up area while Chamars are found in the southeastern parts adjacent to Bhangis. The backward Muslims are found in northeastern portion of the region near masjid, which caters their religious needs. All the above-discussed models are quite applicable in this village as the best sites are occupied by higher castes like Rajputs, Brahmins and Baniyas. The scheduled castes live in congested residences usually on the periphery of the villages, away from the higher caste dwellings. But the village scene is changing gradually. Community life is being replaced by individualism. The behavioral change in the nature of the society is due to the changing economic forces (Fig. 6.2).

Administrative Set-up

The local village government, known as Gram Panchayat, looks after the village administration. The Gram Panchayat consists of 15 elected members with one as the leader of the team, known as the Sarpanch. The sarpanch, being a mature person with administrative skills, could manage the village affairs quite smoothly. Dirty streets, abandoned street lights, distillation of illicit liquor, conflicting resources, disputes, infighting among the local members mark the order of the day, which indicates the inefficiency of the Gram Panchayat in safe guarding the public interest. This, of course, is a serious issue demanding immediate action. The present state government wants to give more judicial powers to the Gram
MEDPUR VILLAGE
SOCIAL MORPHOLOGICAL STRUCTURE

FIG. 6.2
Panchayat. The present system of structuring the Panchayat and their functioning should be thoroughly investigated. The Panchayats need to be constituted so that they can deliver the goods. Otherwise the judicial powers vested with them will be liable to misuse and can add further dangers to village life. If not all the members, at least the Sarpanch should be an educated and mature person.

**Infrastructural Set-up**

Since the village contributes the lion’s share in the state economy, the state government is taking a keen interest in upgrading rural areas, villages are being provided with the required infrastructure as and when funds are available. But the infrastructural facilities lack rationality in their distribution. In some cases, it is just a matter of chance that a particular facility is given to a village, in other case it is due to political pressure. Rural life has been improved, but the way in which the facilities are bound to be limited.

Two primary schools, 14 government hand pumps, a pond in the north west of the built up area which is used for Pisciculture, street lights (though not all functioning) and about 15 shops fulfilling daily needs. In addition services of four medics are also available.

**3.0 VILLAGE MEGHRAJPUR**

The village lies in the Machra block of the Meerut district at 28° 54’ north latitude and 71°54’ east longitude. It is situated about 16 km from the
tehsil headquarters. A metalled road running between the town of Garhmukteshwar and the city of Meerut passes through the northern part of Meghrajpur and joins the village with the markets of Garhmukteshwar and Meerut, which are about 12 and 9 miles in the east and west respectively. Besides, there is a metalled road, which divides the village from north to south and connects Meghrajpur with Bhatipura village where markets are held on every Saturday.

The village also falls on the Garh Road after crossing the Chhoiya Nadi moving ahead towards the southeast. The village is linked to the surrounding villages named Mau Khas, Bhatipura Manakpur, Rachhoti by metalled roads and Nagla Mal by unmetalled road. Agriculture is the mainstay of the village.

**Historical Set-up**

The story, as told by the elderly in the village, is that about 600 years ago the two brothers named Megha Singh and Raj Singh came and settled here from Beri-Bhiwani, some place in Haryana. The village derives its name from these early settlers. They were Brahmins by caste. From the very beginning this village belonged to Brahmins but the landowners were the Baniyas popularly known as Patharwale. They lived in Meerut city and have landownership in other villages also. At some time they had a dispute with Brahmins and filed a court case, obviously the Patharwale won the
case. Due to their defeat Brahmins left the village and migrated to nearby villages - Bhatipura, Silarpur, Maukhas, Singhpur, Sikri, Hasanpur and Nagla Mal. It is also said that when Brahmins left this place they gave a curse that who will got the landownership will not bear a male child and this happened so, to some extent till the abolition of zamindari.

**Physical Set-up**

Meghrajpur is bounded by the villages of Bhatipurs in the north, Hasanpur in the east, Nagla Mal in south and Mau Khas in the west. Meghrajpur lies in a well-drained plain at the height of about 717 feet. The Chhoiya Nadi, a seasonal stream, flows through the southwest corner of the village. In the wet monsoon months this stream provides an outlet for draining the surplus water. In the years of excessive rainfall the Chhoiya Nadi overflows its bank and inundates the southwestern part of the village. This is a compact village having a roughly rectangular pattern. Functionally the houses can be grouped into three types: ghar, gher and ghar-gher. The ghers are mostly built in the outer margin of main inhabited site. In this village it is also true. There are two ghers in the village belonging to Brahmins and located in the northwestern part of the built-up area. The other parts are occupied by residential quarters. There are 15 shops, which sold everyday goods. Out of them two are well maintained similar to the shops of urban areas. There is one tea stall, a cycle repairing centre, a tempo stand and a Sugar cane processing unit locally called Kalesar plant.
is also located on the Garh Road. The village has one primary school and a
junior high school (under construction) where classes have been started for
two year. It also comprise of three temples and a mosque found in the
Hindu and Muslim localities respectively. There is one tailor shop and one
privately run dispensary.

The village consists of 255 occupied residential houses. Out of them
87 per cent are pucca with flat roofs. While 5% are Kaccha, made of mud
walls and flat mud roofs. The rest of the houses, i.e., 8 per cent are of
mixed types. There is one old deserted mound. Few years back all the
kaccha houses were replaced by pucca houses. The high percentage of
pucca houses has gone on at pace. The nature of pucca houses reflects the
economic well being of the villagers. The average persons per house are 6.

Lanes and byelanes intersect the village. Housing conditions in the villages
is relatively better, but does not have any set plan. Most of the houses have
two kothas (medium size rooms) with a dalan (verandah), one kothri (small
room) and angan (courtyard). About 50% of the houses have a separate
kitchen. All the roads are paved with bricks. There is a proper drainage
system, but in rainy season the drains over-flow leaving the condition
worsen. There are four masonry wells and water level is at 50 feet.

Economic Set-up

Agriculture is the main occupation in this village. The primary sector
accounts 97 cultivators and 205 agricultural labourers. Before the abolition
of zamindari the Vaish family popularly called Patherwale were the landlords but after the abolition of zamindari in 1953 the whole scenario was changed. The zamindars were compelled to sell their lands and their land share reduced considerably. The other rural richs are the Brahmins, belong to a single clan spread over ten house in the village where they posses half of the cultivated land. The Patharwale have 16 Bigha land and rest of the land belong to Chamars, which is the largest community in this village. They have got the land under Ambedkar Scheme. A small portion of the land belongs to other communities. Except for a few shopkeepers and schoolteachers, the recorded secondary and tertiary sector workers work in nearby urban centres that account 50.49 percent of the total workers.

**Social Morphology**

The Jatavs are the single largest community consisting about 35 percent of the total population of the village. They have occupying almost the whole of the eastern part of the built-up areas. There are six households of Balmikis also living with the Jatavs. Brahmins, occupying the central position of the village, have their own separate temple for their religious activities. There are six houses of Jats located in the northern part of the village. Muslim backwards are scattered around the mosque lies in the northwestern part of the village. The Muslim backwards are comprises of Lohar, Barhai, Darzi, Teli, Dhune, Dhobi. The Brahmins occupy the highest rank in the social hierarchy. The have hold the best available site and
largest land holdings of the village. The schedule castes have occupied the peripheral position on the eastern part of the village. After Independence it is seen that the stigma of caste influence has lost its importance over economic gains and it become the potent one (Fig. 6.3).

Administrative Set-up

The Gram Panchayat, consists of 11 elected members, looks after the village administration. The village Pradhan, a lady belongs to Jatav community, is running the village administration very smoothly with the help of her male supporters. In Meerut district, out of a total number of 704 Gram Pradhans, 33 per cent are women.

Under new Panchayati Raj acts. Many new scheme of development has been introduced in the village to alleviate poverty, selection of beneficiaries, imposition and enhancement of taxes etc. The most important programme given to the Gram Panchayat is resource planning. The Gram Panchayat prepares an inventory of human, physical and other available resources for the development of village. Some agitating problems of villagers are garbage disposal, adequate toilets, unemployment, law and order, electricity fluctuation, etc. All the inadequacies adversely affect the living and functions of the farmers in the village.

Infrastructural Set-up

The village has a mosque, three temples, one primary school and one junior high school. There is only one private dispensary run by a quack.
People usually go to Bhatipura Primary Health Centre, Machra and Meerut for medical treatment. There is only one primary school building in which 250 children are enrolled. Two female teachers and three male teachers serve the purpose very well. Although the building of junior high school is under construction, where the classes have been started since last year. The students are 30 in number.

For further studies at high school, graduate and postgraduate level they go to Mau Khas, Machra and Meerut College respectively. There are five well maintained shop which sell every day goods, one tailor shop, one tea stall at the Garh Road, a Kalesar plant situated on the right side of the Meerut - Garh road, one cycle repairing shop and a tempo stand on the road. The villagers go to nearby villages for shopping since, weekly market is not held in the village. Weekly market is held at Bhatipura, Maukhas, Hasanpura, Hasanpur, Rachhoti, and animal hat is held at Medpur, Shahjahanpur, Mundali. There exist two ponds one in northern part and other in the southwestern corner of the village.

The foregoing analysis of the socio-spatial morphological structure of the two selected villages of the study area, i.e., Medpur and Meghrajpur shows the existence of the habitations of most of the people belonging to services castes near to those of the higher castes, thus forming a closely knit social structure. This is due to the economic dependency of the former on the latter groups of castes under the Jajmani system. The analysis of the
spatial patterning of different castes reveals that segregation is closely associated with the caste of the inhabitants, resulting in the formation of distinct settlement units. Thus the pattern of the religio-ritual-cum-functional interactions is the factor that is responsible for spatial distribution of different castes, which is exhibited, in the socio-spatial organization of the sample villages.
6.1 Medpur: A General view

6.2 Medpur: A temple

6.3 Medpur: A scheduled caste Habitation
6.4 Meghrajpur: A General view.

6.5 Meghrajpur: An old mound
6.6 Meghrajpur: A Mosque

6.7 Meghrajpur: A primary School.