Chapter - IV

URBAN CENTRES

GENERAL

A city or town is defined variously from country to country, and sometimes the definition may be changed by the central authorities of a country. In Greenland, for example, a place with 300 or more inhabitants is called an "urban area", while in South Korea, an "urban area" must have at least 40,000 inhabitants. Or the example of the U.S.A., where the definition of urban centre was changed in 1950. This shows the difficulty of studying comparative urbanization not only at the international level but also at the national level. It calls for numerous adjustments to attain comparable picture(s) over a period of time.

In the case of India, the census definition of "town" remained more or less the same during the period 1901-51. It was only in 1961 that several modifications were introduced to make the definition more satisfactory.

\[ 31 \]
from the statistical point of view. Moreover, another complicating feature of the Indian census is the latitude given to Census Superintendents in regard to the classification of places which fall on the borderline of "rural" and "urban".

Besides the factor of arbitrament there have been difficulties inherent in the over all definitions provided from time to time. To quote from the general report of the 1901 Census of India, the term "town" was applicable to:

1. Every municipal area of whatever size;
2. All civil lines areas not included within the municipal limits;
3. Every other continuous collection of houses, permanently inhabited by not less than 5000 persons, which the Provincial Superintendent may decide to treat as a town for census purposes.

Thus the size of population was not the primary consideration for deciding whether a particular place was a "town". Not all the municipalities, civil lines areas and cantonments had had a population of over 5000 and yet these were classified as towns. At the same time all places with a population of 5,000 and over may not have been necessarily towns but could have been merely overgrown villages. However, the Census Superintendents had the discretion to treat them as towns. They also had the discretion to treat as a 'town'...

---

any place, irrespective of its administrative set up or population size, for some "special reasons".

The 1911 Census Commissioner referred in his report to the criticism of a distinguished German Statistician who thought that the adoption of a double criteria, i.e., the existence of a municipal government as well as a population of over 5,000 - introduced an element of uncertainty in the definition of "town". He pointed out that in framing the definition, the object in view, as far as possible, should be to treat as town only those places which are more or less of an urban character. It could be assumed that all places under municipal government possessed urban characteristics. However, the converse proposition may not always be true, for sometimes it may happen that places with a distinctly urban nature may not have been raised to the municipal rank. So a definition based on the administrative set up alone could result in the exclusion of several places with urban characteristics. At the same time, the adoption of a definition based on the "5,000 population test" would have resulted in the inclusion of overgrown villages in the list of towns. 10

In the 1921 Census, the Census Superintendents were asked to keep in mind the following facts in the exercise of their discretionary powers:

---

1/ the character of the population;
2/ the density of population; and
3/ the importance of a place as a centre of trade and its historic associations.

The definition of town remained as such in the 1931 and 1941 census operations. The definition adopted in the 1951 census was similar to that of the 1901 census, but was worded more cautiously and was as follows:

1/ Population should not be less than 5,000.
2/ Places with a population larger than 5,000 but not possessing definite urban character should not be treated as towns.
3/ Places with smaller population and having definite urban character should be treated as towns.

The definition of town adopted for the 1961 census was much more rigorous than the earlier ones. To qualify as an "urban area" a place was to be looked at from the following viewpoint:

1/ The should be either a Municipal Corporation or a Municipal Area or should be under a Town Committee or a Cantonment Board.
2/ The population density should not be less than 1000 per sq. mile.
3/ At least 75% of the total population must

---

be non-agricultural.

iv/ The place must possess a few pronounced urban characteristics and amenities.

For the 1971 census the definition of town remained the same as it was in 1961. However, the term "town group" was abandoned and, instead, the expression "Urban Agglomeration" was adopted. In 1961, the concept of "town group" was not uniformly applied in all the States of India and this created several methodological problems. Hence, in 1971 census attempt was made to adopt the concept of "urban agglomeration" uniformly in all the States. However, the 1971 census Commissioner did not reach the end of the journey. What is rural? What is urban? These are questions which were not fully resolved and in fact they still echo in the hall of international seminars and conferences and every new definition only adds to the confusion.

What is a town? Reduced to the simplest elements, the functions of towns have four main features. First, they provide trading facilities for the people; secondly, they have craftsmen; thirdly, they include in their population men and women providing professional services.

---

with various forms of social welfare; fourthly, they may have factory-based industries, though this is not essential.

But no two towns are identical and the known individuality of each has led the various writers to attempt what is called "functional classification." It was remarked by Dickinson with reference to the urban centres of Western Europe and North America that "A town is a compact settlement engaged primarily in non-agricultural occupations." But this is hardly true of the "village cities" of Hungary or of South Italy or of Spain, where many farmers live in cities and go to labour in their fields situated in villages which may be several miles away. It is of the essence of a town's life that it meets the needs of its countryside. In this, the gently flowing life of the small marked town differs little from one country to other. A city is a king among towns, enjoying leadership over its neighbours. One of the problems of an urban geographer is to determine how the four elements of a city or town are arranged in relation to each other and to the streets and places. A city according to Census of India, is a town with population 10 million or above. In general, a city must have a full-fledged self-government performing various services to the city such as education, health, recreation and various specialized functions.

**Distribution of Towns:**

According to the 1961 Census, there were 145 towns in
Rajasthan, out of which 73 (i.e., 48.66%) were located in Eastern Rajasthan, i.e., the area under study. In the 1971 Census the number of towns in the State had increased to 157, the share of Eastern Rajasthan increasing to 80.

As stated earlier, Eastern Rajasthan constitutes 40% of the total area of the State of Rajasthan but enjoys comparatively better physical, economic and cultural conditions, which in fact accounts for a larger number of towns as compared to those in Western Rajasthan.

Taking the districts of Eastern Rajasthan as units, we find that Jaipur, Bharatpur and Ajmer have 11, 9 and 8 towns respectively, whereas Dungarpur and Banswara have only 2 towns each. The rest of the districts lie between the two extremes.

In the following pages we shall make some observations on the nature of some of the towns under study.

To begin with, Man - town in Sawai Madhopur district which has been given the status of an independent town by census authorities, is actually a part of Sawai Madhopur town. In fact, this town consists of three parts: namely, Madhopur, Alampur and Bajaraj. Madhopur lies at a distance of about 10 km. from the railway station.

---

In between Madhopur and Bajaria is Alampur which has a rather rural appearance. Adjacent to the Railway station is Bajaria. It includes the railway colony, government offices, residences of government employees, and Chak Chainpura, the Cement Factory area and residential quarters of the Cement Factory workers. It is this part which has been named Man-town by the 1971 Census. It is most likely that in future Man-town and Sawai-Madhopur may develop as twin towns with Alampur serving as the link.

Another observation concerns the town of Deoli. This town is located at the junction of the boundaries of the three districts, Tonk, Ajmer and Bhilwara. The settlement is actually located in Tonk district, but a part of Bus Station and the octroi post is situated within the district of Bhilwara. Furthermore, the barracks of the Central Reserve Police and the Cantonment area lie in Ajmer district. Thus it is a town straggling over the boundaries of three districts. Hence it is likely that district boundaries may have to be adjusted to facilitate the administration of the town.

Another town which deserves mention here is Bhawani Mandi in the Jhalawar district. It lies on the border of Rajasthan and beyond, with the result that the boundary line between Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh passes through the middle of railway platform of Bhawani Mandi.
Railway station. It was observed that axis of expansion of the town was intruding into Madhya Pradesh.

Yet another observation is the phenomenon of "town-capture". As for example, near Jaipur we have Amber and Sanganer, both of which are at present separate towns according to the official records, each having an independent status. However, the expansion of the urban area of Jaipur city has reached these towns and it seems only a matter of time that they would be included within the Jaipur city. Similar is the case of Ajmer and Pushkar. Likewise, Jhalar and Jhalrapatan, which are 10 Km apart, are likely to develop as twin towns or even as a single town. Another case in point is Bijaynagar, a town in Ajmer district and situated on the northern bank of river Khari. On the southern bank of the river there is a settlement called Gulabpura, and it is only 2 Km away from Bijaynagar. Before independence, Gulabpura was a part of the erstwhile Mewar State, whereas Bijaynagar was in the British province of Ajmer. Now that there is no such political differentiation and the only barrier is that which is formed by the river, it is likely that Bijaynagar would capture Gulabpura.

Lastly, we find that from the viewpoint of communication and service there are in some cases extra-regional orientation. As for example Dholpur and Bajakhera are more oriented towards Agra (in U.P.) than towards
Bharatpur (in Rajasthan). Similarly, Nimbehera and Partapgarh are oriented towards Mandsaur and Neemuch which are towns of Madhya Pradesh than to the neighbouring towns in Rajasthan. Again, Banswara appears to be obviously oriented to Gujarat.

The point we would finally like to make is that in some places district boundaries or even State boundaries, may have to be adjusted so that the inhabitants are not put to unnecessary administrative inconveniences.