

**Minor research Project**  
**Generative and Parasitic Character of Small and Medium Size**  
**Towns of South Maharashtra**

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**Summary and the findings**

The study of small and medium towns, in the present era of urbanization and industrialization in the country has not received due attention from the academicians, as well as the government organizations. While large cities have been growing at a very high rate, the small and medium towns, on the contrary have exhibited slow growth, stagnation and even decline in the population as well as in the economic activities. The generative character of towns grows and exerts a favorable influence on economic development of the areas adjoining it, while the parasitic character on the other hand, either does not exerts any influence on the growth of town itself and on the economic development of the surrounding areas. These two classes of towns have different urban characteristics in respect of their location, occupational structure, demography and functional base.

The region under investigation forms the southern part of Maharashtra. It stretches from 15° 36' north to 18° 35' north latitudes and 73° 5' east to 75° 25' east longitudes. Administratively it covers 61 talukas of six districts namely, Kolhapur, Solapur, Sangali, Satara Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg of Maharashtra state. The study region covers an area of 55,047 sq. km. and supports a population of 16,484,361 persons (2011), of which 73.98 per cent (12,194,797 persons) is rural. The region covers 17.86 per cent of the total geographical area of the Maharashtra state and shares 17.01 per cent population of the state. The area comprises 7128 villages and 85 urban centers.

Out of 89 urban centers only six urban centers have population more than 1, 00,000 and remaining 83 urban centers are small and medium size towns. Out of the sixty one talukas 42 talukas possess urban settlements and remaining 18 talukas do not possess a single town. The spatial distribution of small and medium size towns is uneven in geographical space. The two districts of Konkan have 25 towns; ranging class orders from II to V have 8.64 % urban population of the study region. Kolhapur has 20 towns (out of which 18 towns are small and medium size towns), where 28.67 % urban population of the study region is found. Satara and

Solapur districts accounting 32.61 % and 13.29 % of the total urban population respectively. These two districts having 24 and 12 small and medium towns respectively.

Sangali district having 6.76 % of the total urban population of the region has 7 small and medium towns. The analysis of the percent share of small and medium size town population reveals that in the study area out of the total urban population only 45.06 per cent population is dominated by small and medium size town of which 33.74 per cent population is found in medium and only 11.96 per cent population located in small towns. The regional distribution indicates that two districts namely Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg where entire population falls in the category of small and medium towns.

The Rn value provides a measure of degree to which extends the observed distribution approaches or departs from random expectation. The Rn value ranges from 0.0 (random) to 2.149 (ideal or perfect uniform hexagonal pattern). The spatial pattern of distribution has been studied by dividing into five broad physiographic divisions. The five regions show contrast in geographical, social and economic conditions. The South Konkan region covers 26.35% area of study region having 28.23% of urban population (24 towns) randomly distributed in poorly developed areas.

The upland hilly region covers 15.90% of the total area and only 9.41 % of urban population has only 8 towns distributed in uniform manner. In this area nearly 82% land has rough topography, limited irrigated land and poor soil. The upper Krishna basin which is economically developed and prosperous part of the study region has 34 urban centers covering 18.65% of total area and 40.0% of urban population. In this region degree of randomness is 1.21. Dry Plateau region characterized by very low density of road network and adverse climatic conditions has only 7 towns uniformly distributed. In upper Bhima Basin market organizations, development of agriculture and better road network are the controlling factors in the location of urban centers which are distributed randomly. The entire study area has (85 urban centers) clustered grouping pattern.

The high level development is observed in Karvir taluka of Kolhapur, Miraj taluka of Sangali and North Solapur taluka of Solapur district. This highly developed region occupies only 5.00% talukas but it has a share of 52.60 % of urban population, where three high class order cities of study are found. Moderate level of development is observed in 33 talukas, where 44 small and medium size towns (71% small and medium towns) are found. Remaining 24

talukas of the region are very poorly developed, where only 16 small and medium size towns are found. In this group most of the talukas are from hilly area and dry plateau region.

There are twenty towns, whose zone of influence shows remarkable negative change. They can be called stagnant towns. There are twelve towns in the study region who indicate static position of their city regions, where the deflection in the zone of influence is comparatively less, On the other hand there are only nine towns in the study region who indicate higher change in their city region; they include Sagole, Pachagani, Chiplun, Kankawali, Vadgoan, Jaisigpur, Urun Islampur and Vita. These towns are generative towns of the study region. The present analysis will certainly help in finding out the growth and non-growth character of small and medium size towns of south Maharashtra.

The study generative and parasitic character of small and medium size towns reveals that, nearly 42.10 % towns are parasitic in nature whose population and functional growth is retarded. All the towns of Sindhudurg district, except Kankawali indicate stagnant nature of growth in respect of population as well as all the functions. Kankawali (gain status as a new town in 1981 declassified in 1991 and again classified as a new town in 2001) and Kudal (classified as a new town in 1991) show high growth in respect of population and various functions in last few decades. Both of these towns have very high potentials of growth in the near future.

Most of the towns of Solapur and Ratnagiri districts also indicate very slow growth and have parasitic nature. These small and medium size towns having parasitic nature can become generative, if they are well connected with surrounding area and their dormant potentials are activated.

Slow generative towns of the study region can also grow at a faster rate, if their economic potentials are properly handled. Regarding all nine generative towns of the region, one may say that these towns have better prospect of development in the near future.

## **SUGGESTIONS**

- 1) As the large urban centers of study region will continue to grow, efforts should be made to develop counter magnets to slow down their growth.
- 2) Small towns and big villages should be identified in least urbanized talukas of the study region and developed to give a boost to urbanization. To develop rural areas, it is essential to create more small towns on a rural urban continuum. This would remove existing gap between large cities and small and medium towns.
- 3) Thirteen towns of study region, namely Kurduwadi, Mangalvede, Karad, Pandharpur, Mahabalshwar, Mhaswad, Panchgani, Phaltan, Gadhinglaj, Kurundwad, Murgud,

Vadgaon, and Tasgaon, are slow generative small and medium towns of the study region can be strengthened by providing economic support, physical infrastructure and economic base. The best way to strengthen the economic base of these towns is by developing agro-based industries.

- 4) There are sixteen small and medium towns show retarded growth, since last 40 years. They have indicated only a normal growth in respect of population and selected functions. Out of these sixteen towns, three towns each, Dudhani, Akkalkot, Maindargi from Solapur district, Dapoli camp, Khed, Rajapur from Ratnagiri district, Malwan, Sawantwadi and Vengurla from Sindhudurg district, Malkapur, Gandhinagar, and Panhala from Kolhapur district and two towns each, Rahimatpur, Wai from Satara district and Ashta, Madhavnagar from Sangli district are included. Most of these towns are dominated by agricultural activity and they can be called as urban villages. Small scale industry, transport and infrastructures and economic support from government will be helpful to their retarded growth.
- 5) Nine towns of the study region are generative towns. They are Karmala, Sangole, Chiplun, Ratnagiri, Kankavali, Jaysingpur, Kagal, Urunislampur and Vita. Most of these towns indicate high growth rate in respect of their population size and their functional importance. These towns have industrial and market potential. They also have better linkage with other urban centers of the study region. Due to all of these factors, they have high growth rate. Some of generative towns are important trade and market centers of the study area. Their linkage with surrounding area is rapidly increasing with their functional and population growth. They also exert their influence on the surrounding rural area, even though it is important to have balanced growth in these towns.
- 6) The main problem of small towns is that, their size is so small therefore they fail to operate as economically viable and strong diffusing centers. And secondly their number is also so small that they often fail to cater to the needs of surroundings. Small and medium towns of study region can play an important role in the diffusion of development and for this strengthening the existing centers by providing economic support, improving transportation linkage and market and trade is the best policy.

#### 14 Contribution to the society

Generative towns of the study region have industrial and market potential and some of generative towns are important trade and market centers of the study area, even though it is important to have balanced growth in these towns. Some of small and medium town show

retarded growth since last few years. Most of these towns are dominated by agricultural activity and they can be called as urban villages. Small scale industry, transport and infrastructures and economic support from government will be helpful to their retarded growth. Small towns are so small in size and also in number. Therefore government and planning authority should concentrate on these small and medium towns for better and urban growth and urbanization.