

Belgaum as an Urban Centre Under The Bombay Presidency



History

KEYWORDS :

C. M. Munnoli

Asst. Professor., Dept. of History, R.P.D College, Belgaum.

Introduction:

Urbanization is the most emerging branch of knowledge in historical studies. In the west, extensive works have been done in this field, but in India till independence, its importance was hardly recognized. Only for the administrative point of view, many studies on urban centers made by the Govt. of India, do not help us to understand the origin and growth of towns in its historical perspective, analyzing demographic, socio-economic and their role in growth of urbanization and its impact on society.

The Belgaum town played an important role in the history of ancient, medieval and modern Karnataka. Urbanization of Belgaum was started in the second century and only during the medieval times it was already a prosperous town but in the modern sance urbanization gained momentum under the Britishers. Belgaum is situated in the North-West of Karnataka surrounded by Maharashtra and Goa at the borders. Belgaum lies between 15°29 North latitude to 16°58 and 74°5 to 75°75 East longitude. Its temperature is generally 13°C to 35°C and it receives average 100 cms. Rainfall every year. The climate is pleasant and it is popularly known as 'Kashmir of Karnataka'. It is fifth largest city in Karnataka having two Universities, two Medical Colleges, four Dental Colleges, six Engineering Colleges and many other Colleges. Thus Belgaum is Educational, Economical, Cultural hub of Karnataka. In the year 2006 the Govt. of Karnataka declared as second capital of Karnataka. Belgaum, in fact is situated as a middle post in the Arabian Sea and plains of North Karnataka.

From second century B.C. it was already a town under the Satavahanas and served as an administrative, a market place under various ruling dynasties. Belgaum changed hands several times during the second half of the 18th century and early part of the 19th century under the Marathas and Muslims etc. till their final take-over by the British in 1818. In 1836, the new District of Belgaum was created by splitting Dharwad. Thus, Belgaum was a bone of contention between the various ruling dynasties of North as well as South. Bombay presidency was a former province of British India it begun in the 17th century as a trading post later grew to include much of western and central India as well as part of Pakistan and Arabian Peninsula. The presidency was divided into four commissioners and 28 districts. Belgaum which was under the Poona commissionerate developed as a great urban centre on account of direct British rule. The present research aimed to study how Belgaum developed as an urban center British presidency.

Factors of Urbanisation

Urbanisation has become a common feature of Indian society. Growth of Industries has contributed to the growth of cities. As a result of industrialisation people have started moving towards the industrial areas in search of employment. This has resulted in the growth of towns and cities. It denotes a diffusion of the influence of urban centres to a rural hinterland. Urbanisation can also be defined as a process of concentration of population in a particular territory. According to Mitchell 'urbanisation is a process of becoming urban, moving to cities, changing from agriculture to other pursuits common to cities'.

There are various causative factors for the growth of urban centres. For example; industrialization is a major cause of urbanization. It has expanded the employment opportunities. Rural

people have migrated to cities on account of better employment opportunities. Many social factors such as attraction of cities, better standard of living, better educational facilities, need for status also induce people to migrate to cities, employment opportunities, modernization, spread of education etc. In the case of Belgaum city the same factors are causative factors for the growth of city.

Establishment of Cantonment

Belgaum Salboursious Climate, Proximity to the coastal and strategic position near Goa commanded the Britishers as a suitable location for army training centre and cantonment. The establishment of military station at Belgaum in 1828 caused statutory agency to look civil affairs cantonment board was constituted; it is a class 1 cantonment in Karnataka. The total area is 1777 acres. The main cantonment and fort zone.

Troops

The troops station in Belgaum in 1882 artillery 162 men 110 horses. The seven companies of the British regiment of 770 men. Native infantry, 1475 rank and file. The station staff comprises the Brigadier General Commanding, Deputy Assistant General, the Deputy Assistant adjutant, General for Musketry, Cantonment Magistrate, Executive Engineer, Executive Commissariat, camp Chaplin, fort Chaplin, Roman Catholic Chaplin, Staff Surgeon, Barrack Master, almost all of these officers lived in the newly built cantonment.

Administrative Offices

Belgaum was included in the collectorate of dharma but a separate Belgaum collectorate was started in 1836 Ravanscroft the Asst. Collector took the charge Belgaum fixed as the headhunters of the District in 1838 with eight Taluqs.

Belgaum city Municipal Corporation was first committee to be constituted among the then Municipal Committee of Bombay Karnataka. As early as in 1851 covering population of 23 115 and having income of 35.460. Later it was up ass Bombay act 18 of 1925.

Post Office

The Belgaum post office was established in 1880 Superintendent of post was created with 27 sub offices and 12 villages. 1855 a Telegraph office was stated and connected Goa in 1857. Poona in 1856.

Population

Belgaum does not have appears to have been a large town. Under the Muslims 1350 to 1750 and Marathas 1750 to 1818 it had only sizable population. In 1820, the population was only 7,652, but it rised in 1881 to 31,631 and 1951 it was 1,17,872.

The Belgaum population for the first time noticed the heterogeneous population in 1881 the population was 31,672. Out of which 22,128 are Hindus, 7136 Muslims, 2453 Christians, 57 Parsis, and 91 Jews. The increase of population was due to the cantonment and establishment of various offices.

Improvement in Communication

With creation of district large number of communication were improved. Captain Clumins mentioned five important roads in

1825 connecting two to Poona one to Dharwad one to Vengurla and other one to Goa. In 1818 Belgaum to Satara highway was opened. In 1867 not only old roads were improved but new roads also constructed. Pune - Belgaum Railways line was started six bridges were constructed at the cost of 11 lakhs the Kudachi bridge to the river Krishna and Ghataprabha . Still they are in use. 1883 to connect Goa, Vasco line between constructed

Belgaum as a Trade Centre

The Western Ghat at the length of Western Ghat of Belgaum made the places in the District as a terminal point for the movement of goods taken from the hinterland and of Deccan to the parts of coast of Goa Vengurla, Redi, Malavan etc, in 1886 Municipal market and about 52 shops were built 250 families, Narvekar, Marathis, Gujaratis, Marvadis, Parsis and Musalmans carrying the trade 20,000 per year almost all are Independent. The imports consist of Timber from Karawar, Iron glass main articles of European goods like from Bombay. Metal Vassals from Poona, Coconuts from Goa and Karavar. Exports consist of Grain, Rice, Wheat, Milk, Cloths and Saris to Konkan. Bed Sheets, Ornamental chairs etc.

Industries

With the Cotton Trade flourish in Belgaum in 1850 the saw gins were at the greatest height Mr. Chaplin calculated that saw gins at working in Belgaum could produce 1,200,000 pounds of raw cotton in year. The Gokak mill on the model of Manchester was started in 1887 for converting cotton to into yarns. An oil mill and ice factory was in 1911. The Macche factory also started.

1920 hosiery industry was started at Shahapur. The needs of military station created an opportunity for Sweater, Banyans, Socks, Muflovers later this industry became second in India next to Ludhian in Punjab. Indian Aluminum factory was started in 1938.

Laxmanrao Kirloskar started bicycle shop at Belgaum and later shifted to production of Engineering Goods became a great Industrialist in five states, power generation was started in 1887 at Gokak mill is earliest in India .

Migration

Belgaum town is next to Bangalore in terms of migrated population. The Bhandekar and Narvekar families of 250 in Belgaum came from Goa to escape from of religious conversion from the fanatic Portuguese. They are traders and they speak Konkani and Marathi.

Kalavant they came from Uttar Pradesh around 1825. Naidus came from Andhra Pradesh, Kayastaprabhus came to Belgaum during the time of Shivaji Kunabis around 3000 came from the Maratha speaking area of Deccan. Bhangis 109 they came to Belgaum in 1840 from Miraj they appears to have come from upper India neighborhood of Delhi. Gavalis around 200 families came from Rajasthan and north India they are two types Raja put Gavali and Maratha Gavali. The traders like Gujarat Vanis came Gujarat from and Maravari Vanis Maravar in Rajasthan.

The Marathas numbered 1,11,00 found in the districts are migrated all are the district of Satara, Deccan, Nasik and Kolaba Muslims they are 7.23 population are came to Belgaum under Aurangzeb and Hyder Ali, Tippu Sultan among the Christians Roman Catholics came from Goa and Protestant are from Madras ,

Impact of Urban Centre

It was under British that the unification of Belgaum town was achieved. All the three principalities of Miraj , Sangli and Jamakhandi came under their control.

The urbanization of Belgaum is legacy of British rule. With the establishment of cantonment a systematic town planning was developed in Belgaum. Later colony like Tilakwadi was built on the European model. The Bungalows, Social Clubs, Garden, Churches were established in Belgaum. A walk into the cantonment camp area gives a feeling of colonial towns like London, Bombay, Madras etc.,

The first modern Public library in Karnataka was started at Belgaum in 1848 by J D. Inveralty and it is functioning even today.

Bharat Scout and Guides movement was started in Belgaum in the year 1918 by Miller. Infarct it was first movement in Bombay Presidency.

With support from British Christian missionaries came to Belgaum and started many English medium schools like Beynon Smith High School in 1824, St. Pauls in 1856 and St. Josephs convent HS.

The first exclusive school for the schools for the girls was opened in 1856 at Maruti Galli. It was started by Mrs. Staon Carr an European Lady. The London Mission Girls High School was started in 1875. As a result of English education and economic development heterogeneous castes like Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Jains, Parsis, Sindhis Belgaum developed into cosmopolitan city.

Because of urban centre almost all leaders of freedom movement visited Belgaum like Swamy Vivekanand, A.O.Hume, Surendranath Banerjee, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Balgangadhar Tilak, Subhashchandra Bose , Dr B.R Ambedkar . Annie Besant, Ali Brothers etc., They could easily communicate to the people of Belgaum in various languages like Kannada, Hindi, Marathi, English, Konkani etc., Later in 1924 Belgaum was chosen as venue for Indian National Congress. The only session where Mahatma Gandhi was chosen as the President of Congress. After this Belgaum became a door to the freedom movement in Karnataka. It is also place from where the unification movement of Karnataka started.

Thus it was under the Britishers, under Bombay Presidency that Belgaum developed as an Urban centre in north Karnataka.

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