SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL SURVEY OF A TYPICAL PROVINCIAL CITY

By

DR. K. N. VENKATA RAYAPPA, M.A., Ph.D.

Mysore University

In 1300 A.D., a band of Morasu Vokkaligas left Morasunadu, a small territory near Kanjeevaram, and travelled towards Nandidoorg. A distinguished descendant of these travellers, namely Kempe Gowda the First, founded the City of Bangalore in 1537 A.D., and erected the historical mud fort therein. It was Kempe Gowda who built in the City the famous temples of Hanuman, Vinayaka, Veerabhadra and Gangadhareswara. His descendants further contributed a lot towards the glorification of Bangalore City, and the area of the city thus built by the Gowda Dynasty was about two square miles.

After the Gowda dynasty, Mysore Rajas and Maratha Chiefs did their best to expand the City. In 1790 the city was only 2,000 yards long by 750 yards broad, with irregular streets and congested houses. During the British period, Bangalore City grew breadthwise and lengthwise, with all the amenities for a decent living.

Bangalore City, which had 400 years ago an area of 100 Square yards, today occupies the area of 28 Square Miles bounded by the Indian Institute of Science, Munireddypalya and Doddajeevanahalli in the North, Chellaghatta, Kodihalli, Thippasandra and Bayappanahalli in the east, Turukarapalya, Mariyappanapalya, Goripalya and Madigarapalya in the west, and Yediyur, Bairasandra, Hadgodi, and Koramangala in the south.

Physical Features

The City is situated in the centre of a table land, at 12°37’ north latitude and at 77°35’ east longitude. Towards its north at about 25 miles distance is the line of Nandidoorg hills and towards its west at about 20 miles distance is the line of Sivaganga hills. It is also located in the centre of important towns, namely Anekal, Kankanahalli, Channapatna, Magadi, Tumkur, Nelamangala, Doddaballapur and Hosakote. Towards its north at a distance of 83 miles is Bellary; towards its north-west at a distance of 692 miles is the City of Bombay, and at a distance of 169 miles is Guntakal; towards its south at a distance of 30 miles is Kankanahalli and towards its east at a distance of 219 miles is the City of Madras. It is also within a short distance from almost all parts of Mysore State. Within the State, at a distance of 24 miles is Magadi, at a distance of 58 miles is Mandya,
at a distance of 37 miles is Tumkur, at a distance of 120 miles is Chitaldroog, at a distance of 40 miles is Kolar, at a distance of 170 miles is Shimoga, and at a distance of 36 miles is Bowringpet.

The elevation of the highest rising ground at Bangalore, one of the highest parts of Mysore tableland, is 3118 feet above the level of the sea. Parallel with the watershed, that forms the Cauvery River system in Mysore, is a broken chain of rocky hills, extending from the west of Nelamangala and Magadi Taluks. This rises occasionally into lofty mountain peaks towards the west of Bangalore.

The eastern, northern and western portions of the City are open fields and the land is fit for good cultivation. The low lying grounds are occupied by a series of tanks for cultivation, varying from small ponds to huge tanks. The upland tracts are very often bare and sometimes covered with green grass. Towards the south of the City the level of the land seems to be declined and it is also fit for cultivation.

Bangalore has salubrious climate. The mean temperature is 74.9 and the mean range is 15.6, but the extreme range marked in any one day varies from 18 in October and November to 30 and 32 in January and February, and the total range from year to year is from 17.4 to 19.5 and the mean temperature from year to year ranges from 73.7 to 74.9, the differences of which are not too much.

There are no extremes of rainfall. The maximum days of rainfall in a year varies from 43 days to 73 days, and the maximum of inches of annual rainfall varies from 32.66” to 73.14”. The average rainfall is 35.53” and the average rain-falling days are 51 in a year.

The earth is mostly “Kempu.” It is a red loam of great fertility and is found in every variety from dark red to deep chocolate. It overlies the granite in varying depths from a few inches to several feet depths. The chocolate and dark red soils are the results of the weathering down of the Gneissose rocks, which are commonly visible in most parts of the City. Granite rocks are withering down, resulting in red soil of much fertility, which is the finest soil for the best crops and gardens.

Nourished in such geographical environments, is the City of Bangalore, the soil around which is fit for any type of cultivation. Millets, Vegetables, Fruits and Flowers are abundantly grown, encouraging the easy settlements of populations. Horses, cows, buffalos, and bullocks are reared conveniently since green grass, ragi-straw and the husks of “Avare” are abundantly produced.

**Population**

The population of the City increased from decade to decade, and in 1881 it had a population of 1,55,857 and increased to 7,78,977 in the year 1951. The variation of the population from 1881 to 1891
is + 15.7; from 1891 to 1901 is −11.8; from 1901 to 1911 is + 19.1; from 1911 to 1921 is + 25.3; from 1921 to 1931 is + 29.0; from 1931 to 1941 is + 32.4, and from 1941 to 1951 is + 92.3. The growth of population had a set-back between 1891 and 1901 on account of plague which had swept away much of the population. After 1911, the population began to increase leaping from strength to strength and throbbing with vitality.

Such a steady increase of population is partly due to the fact of immigration. The rapid growth of industries and trade attracted many persons to settle in the City. Government service, domestic service, general labour, factory labour, cart driving, bricklaying, masonry and money-lending attracted many outsiders who added to the existing population. Hence, out of the total population, nearly two-thirds of the population is immigrant population, and roughly for every five persons there are three immigrants.

**Industries and Commerce**

As a result of the growth of industries and commerce, Bangalore has drawn a stream of immigrant labour from the neighbouring districts and added to the housing problem. Bangalore is on the progressive march, towards high industrialization, owing to its various factories, heavy trade in cotton, woollen and silk goods. On this account, the immigrant labour is already at a very high mark. The villagers on the neighbouring districts have been attracted by the City, since they can earn in the City more, compared with their incomes in the villages. The textile and woollen Mills, Aircraft and Telephone Industries are responsible for the mass immigration of labour from several places, especially from Madras State.

**Housing Problem**

The flow of immigrant labour is mostly of those who cannot afford to have houses of their own. Mills and factories that employ labourers provide nothing in the way of houses. The labourers have to look for securing houses on their own initiation. As a result of all these factors, innumerable huts have sprung up on vacant lands, affecting the health of the surrounding areas. Some labourers have to depend upon the landlords who provide them with tenements. Here also, there is the difficulty of rents which are far in excess of the labourers’ capacity to pay.

Apart from these factors, Bangalore is fast heading for Educational facilities. This has resulted in attracting a great number of student population from all over the State. The hostels, both private and government cannot provide accommodation for all. So some students have to look for rooms and some others for houses where two or three unite together and run messes, an arrangement which has
proved to be more economical. Hence students add to the demands on housing accommodation.

It is a known fact that Bangalore is the centre of administration since a very long time, as a result of which a large number of government officers have settled in the City and exert a great amount of pressure on the problem of housing. Moreover, the salubrious climate of Bangalore draws visitors and settlers who have no houses of their own, and to provide them with housing accommodation adds an additional problem to the existing housing difficulties.

Apart from the above, the lack of proper planning in the old city area has led to haphazard development and construction of ill-ventilated dingy dwellings. There are 3,497 houses per square mile, and 37,109 persons dwell per square mile in this area. The overcrowding percentage is 61.8. Water, drainage and lighting facilities, which are inadequate, have created their own effects. Such a state of affairs deprives the individual of physical and moral welfare.

Housing difficulties had been felt since 1892, and even before. To relieve the congestion and to provide the people with livable houses, various extensions were formed. In 1892, Chamarajapet extension and Seshadripuram extension were formed with 1,600 building sites. Basavanagudi extension was formed in 1898 with 1,862 building sites. During the same year, Malleswaram extension was formed with 620 building sites. In 1908, with 150 building sites, Sankarapurm extension was formed. Gavipuram and Srirampuram extensions were formed in 1915 and 1916 respectively with 500 building sites. In the year 1918 Visveswarapurm extension was formed with 467 building sites.

Since the year 1892, till 1921, the attempts made to solve the housing problem were greatly successful. 1,654 acres of land were acquired and 5,199 building sites were formed, and all of them are properly used for building purposes. Hence the problem was greatly solved and houses were easily found for tenement purposes. This state of affairs continued as late as the year 1940.

After 1940, the conditions of housing in Bangalore City became worse. For all increased population, there were only a limited number of houses. Hence, housing problem grew more acute than ever. To solve this problem, Jayanagar Extension, Rajaji Nagar Extension, Vyalikaval Extension, Wilson Garden Extension, Kumara Park Extension, Sunkenahalli Extension and Jayamahal Extensions are formed after 1945, acquiring 3,876 acres of land. When all these extensions are built, there will come into existence 11,131 buildings, accommodating nearly 15,000 families, and it is a hope that congestion will be relieved.
Educational Facilities

Any study on Social Ecology includes the study of educational amenities. Bangalore City has 489 Primary Schools in which there are 56,435 students. The ratio of girls to boys in these institutions is about 1:2.50. There are 79 Middle Schools in which there are 22,816 students. The ratio of boys to girls in these institutions is 2:1. There are 41 High Schools in which there are 19,155 students. The ratio of boys to girls in these Institutions is about 1.2:1. Roughly speaking, there is one Middle School for every six Primary Schools; for every two Middle Schools, there is one High School, and for every twelve Primary Schools, there is one High School. Out of 28 Colleges in Mysore State, 14 are located in Bangalore City alone, and almost all the Technical colleges are situated in this City, with the exception of one at Mysore and another at Davangere. The City is the centre of college students and the home of technical studies. There are 9,658 students studying in various colleges of the University, out of whom 2,911 students are studying in technical colleges. Hostel facilities are provided for the students of higher educational institutions.

Recreational Amenities

The increased facilities for transport, the mechanisation of industrial and commercial life and the development of mass production are the main factors which have created a large number of people who seek leisure time activities in the City of Bangalore. The recreational amenities available in Bangalore may be studied under two divisions, namely (1) indoor recreation and (2) outdoor recreation.

(1) Under indoor recreation, drama, cinemas, dance halls, gymnasium and swimming pools are important. Prior to the dramas, there were ‘Bylata’s,’ where the story is generally selected from Mahabharatha or Ramayana. The actors, with the help of their colourful dresses, entertain the people of the suburbs and slums of various parts of the city in small stages constructed in an hour or two.

Drama succeeded the ‘Bylata’s’, and the first theatre built for this purpose is situated in Kempe Gowda Road which is converted into a cinema house. Drama has made an improvement on ‘Bylata’s’ through the use of better dress and better musical instruments. Doddanna Hall and the entertainment hall in Kempe Gowda Road are noted for the activities of the dramas.

More than any other form of recreation, the moving picture reflects the interests of the community in the city. With themes designed to present a universal appeal, with amusement offered entailing a minimum of effort on the part of the spectator, the cinema has attained an unprecedented popularity in the realm of recreation.
The monotony and drabness are forgotten for the time being, in viewing the romantic, mysterious, adventurous or comical figures. In it, the individual finds an escape from the worries and anxieties. It provides a sedative for nerves. To meet the needs of the pleasure-seeking people, there are 30 picture houses throughout the city, out of which eight are located in Kempe Gowda Road area, two are in Narasimharaja Road area, three are in Jayachamarajendra Road area, at the rate of one in Chamarajapet area, Akkipet area, Chickpet area, Yesavanthapur area and City Market area. The remaining eight are located in Cantonment area.

Picture houses are kept in good condition. The buildings are designed with the drive way entrance, off the side street, so as not to interrupt the traffic on the main street. They have small car parks and bicycle stands. The entrances to the different priced seats are kept separate, so as not to overcrowd the main foyer.

The cinema is a socialising factor for the transmission and dissemination of culture. Screen idols become models for imitative audiences. Those who attend generally imitate the cinema stars in their dress, their mannerisms and their songs. It is through the pictures that the latest fashions and the fads of the day are made public to the masses. To a great extent, the imitation can be discovered at the Maharani’s College. College girls and boys take a delight in imitating the picture dolls.

Once a week, at the Bowring Institute, European dance entertains the people. Occasionally a dance performance takes place at the Puttanna Chetty Town Hall.

In addition to the above, swimming ponds, circus, various arts exhibitions, cattle shows, wrestling matches and various clubs and associations serve the leisure time needs of the citizens.

(2) Under outdoor recreation, various play grounds, parks and gardens are important. Matches conducted in football, basketball, volleyball, cricket and hockey entertain a lot of people and are largely attended also.

Parks and gardens play a dominant role in offering recreation to the people, out of which the Cubbon Park and the Lal Bagh are important. The Cubbon Park, with its beautiful trees and flower plants, has an area of more than a hundred acres. In the evenings, these parks are full of relaxing people. Young as well as old people go to this park for the fresh air. Pensioners, after parking their cars in some corners, take a walk and sit for rest till it is late in the evening. It is a pleasure to see the newly married couples walking lovingly in the evenings in these parks.

As Bangalore became an industrial as well as an educational centre to meet the needs of the shifting population, hotels and restaurants came into existence. Most of the hotels are located adjacent to the
City’s central commercial area, which includes the City Market, Chickpet, Balepet and Commercial Street. They are also situated at the areas of City passenger terminals, namely City Railway Station, Majestic, Mavalli Circle and Kalasipalyam Bus Stand.

Except a few hotels, the remaining are not conducive to the health of the people. The food served is below the general requirements of health. Plates are not properly washed. ‘Hospitality and service factors’ are foreign in these hotels. The buildings are ill-ventilated. As regards the lodging rooms, the condition is still worse. There are more beds than the required number in the rooms. The beds are dirty and the same beds are served for a number of people, for years together without being washed. Bugs are commonly found in the beds.

Health Services

The City is known as a hospital centre for Mysore State, where specialised medical help is available for the public. Out of the four Sanatoriums in the State, two are located in this City alone. The only Mental Hospital in Mysore State is situated in Bangalore City. Ophthalmic Treatment has found its specialisation; and specialised treatment of lepers is found here for the entire State.

The percentage of the population treated yearly in Victoria Hospital is about 14.50; Vani Vilas Hospital 7.22; Bowring Civil Hospital 6.75; Minto Ophthalmic Hospital 6.59; Lady Curzon Hospital 6.15; Leper Asylum 0.07, and Mental Hospital 0.19.

A study of the distribution of the hospitals in the City shows that more hospitals are found around the Fort area. Next in order is the area around Russell Market where the Bowring Hospital is located. The private dispensaries are located within easy reach of the citizens. Mental Hospital and Sanatoriums are situated outside the City limits.

Attempts are made to control the diseases through programmes of prevention by eliminating the sources of diseases with the help of maternity and child welfare work, medical inspection of students, control of epidemics by performing inoculations, preventing the sale of adulterated food stuffs, issuing licenses for the establishment of coffee houses, milkbars, sweetmeat halls, sale of fish, mutton and beef and many more eatables. There are regulations for the maintenance of dogs and cattle. There is a mobile dispensary to aid the poor and the needy. 3,200 dust bins are kept at different places to throw the waste-papers, street sweepings and ash which will be removed easily. There are 1,800 scavengers to keep the City clean. There is underground drainage system carrying waste and refuse from the houses. Burial grounds are maintained to dispose of the dead.
Transport Facilities

Since Bangalore is an industrial city, its transport facilities are interesting for a student of Sociology. There are two types of transport facilities, internal and external. Internal traffic includes various types, such as cars, bicycles, City Bus Service, jatkas, victorias, autorickshaws and bullock-carts. External traffic includes the railways, the private buses, the Mysore Government Transport buses and the air-ways.

In the year 1950, there were in the City 819 victorias and jatkas; 759 double bullock-carts; 1,738 single bullock-carts and 8,900 bicycles. As regards external traffic, there were 162 Government buses in 1948, which were covering 12,700 miles a day. In addition to these, there were 149 private buses that used to start and arrive at Bangalore City.

There is a steady increase in the number of transport vehicles in the City. For the year 1949 to 1950, the increase per cent of the victorias and jatkas is — 10; double bullock-carts — 9; single bullock-carts — 7 and bicycles — 14. On account of these transport facilities, Bangalore has drawn visitors as well as settlers.

Ecological Structure

At first glance, the City of Bangalore impresses the visitors as an area of confusion and chaos. Things seem misplaced. Huge buildings tower over dilapidated hovels. Beggars at nights find their living places on high priced land. Impoverished families often live within hailing distance of the aristocrats. Immobile people live alongside the highly mobile. Everywhere a perplexing babble of strange tongues is noticed. Things appear in a state of flux.

But, for a student of Social Ecology, this confusion is more apparent than real. A study of the above factors will help him to divide the City on the ‘activity pattern’ into seven ecological zones, namely (1) The Business zone, (2) The Factory zone, (3) The Agriculture zone, (4) The Culture zone, (5) The Middle-class zone, (6) The Pensioner zone, and (7) The Military zone.

The business zone has two areas, scattered in the City, where commercial activity is predominant. Both buyers and sellers meet in this zone and carry on their business activities. This zone is the magnet to which the merchants are attracted. Communications and transport system tend to converge in it. The remaining parts of the City depend upon this zone for the supply of its necessities by way of finished products. In this zone lie the warehouses, and the establishment of big merchants who import and store things and products brought from far off. Cloth, machinery, toilet articles, hardware stores, small workshops of domestic utility are found in this
zone. The businessman with Telephone, the Telegraph and the Postal system at his disposal directs and plans his business service. It is the commercial activities that tend to make this business zone a centre of dominance.

Out of the two areas of business zone, one area comprises the sub-areas, namely Aralepet, akkipet Manavarthapet, Halasurpet, Dodpet, Chickpet, Huriyupet, Ballapurpet, Cubbonpet and Upparpet. The other area comprises the sub-areas, namely Tasker Town, Blacpally, General Bazaar and Russell Market.

The second zone is the Factory Zone which gives an embodiment of the activities of the people connected with the factories and slums. Labourers and the poor are the inhabitants of this zone. Huts and houses with precarious conditions are the special features of this zone. It has seven areas in the City. The first area comprises Koracharpallya; the second area comprises the Binny Mills and Brick and Tile Works near it; the third area comprises the Minerva Mills, and the Tile Works; the fourth area includes in it the Labour Colony, Maharaja Mills and Brick Kilns; the fifth area comprises the Government Porcelain Factory, Lac Factory and Industrial and Testing Laboratory; the sixth area includes in it the Government Soap Factory, and the seventh area includes the Tobacco Factory and workmen’s quarters.

The Agriculture Zone reflects the activities of the people who are engaged in tilling the soil, gardening, cow feeding and poultry-keeping. They grow vegetables and supply to the market. This zone has four areas, which lie on the four extreme bounds of the City. The first area lies on the eastern borders of the City and comprises Dumlur, Dukhanalli, Appareddypallya, J o g p a l y a, Halasur, Kallenalli, Murphy Town, Dodkunte, Jivanalli, Kadarampallya and Binnamangala. The second area lies on the northern borders of the City and comprises Byadaralli, Pottery Town, Munimarappanapallya, Munireddypallya, Guttalli and Venkataringapuram. The third area lies towards the western borders of the City and comprises Gavipur Guttalli, Madigarapallya, Goripallya, Kempapura-Agrahara, Hosagrahara, Basavanpally, Hanumanthapura, Ramachandrapura, Siddaramannadinne and Mariyappanapallya. The fourth area lies on the southern borders of the City and comprises Kanakanpallya, Siddapur, Akkithimmanalli, Puduparcheri, Nilsandra, Sonnenalli, Vannarpet and Ukkadapallya.

The Culture Zone is the embodiment of the activities of the people connected with educational, social service and cultivation of the mind in general. It typifies those activities of the community which are designed to develop the mentality of the people and turn them into good citizens. This zone has five areas. The first area comprises the National High School, Indian Institute of Culture and Gokhale Institute of public affairs; the second area comprises the
Lal Bagh and Victory Hall; The third area comprises Asaktha Poshaka Sabha and Arya Samaj; the fourth area includes in it the Central College, the Intermediate College, the Maharani’s College, the Mount Carmel College for Women, the Engineering College and School, Technological Institute, Y.M.C.A., Century Club, Public Library, Museum, Cubbon Park and Government Offices; the fifth area includes in it St. Joseph’s College, Bishop Cotton School for Girls and Good Shepherd Convent.

The Middle Class Zone is so called on the basis of social grouping only, which is characterised by a certain set of feelings, certain unity of occupations and certain economic standards. The inhabitants of this zone feel it very difficult to adjust and to maintain a standard of living. They wish to be known as self-made men, capable, independent and self-reliant. Intelligent forethought and sober ambition are their guides of action. This zone has four areas. The First area comprises Visweswarapuram, Upparalli, Chickmavalli, Dodmavalli, Kalasipalya, Kumbaragundi, the Fort and Chamrajpet. The Second area includes in it Gandhi Nagar; the Third area includes in it Upparalli, Dobspet, Benson Town and St. John Hill; while the Fourth area comprises Maciver Town.

The Pensioner Zone gives the embodiment of the activities of the pensioners who are dominant in this zone. The retired officers reside in this zone. Peaceful, quiet and calm activities are the special characteristics of this zone. It has four areas. The first area comprises Narasimharaja Colony, Basavangudi and Sankarapuram. The second area includes in it Seshadripuram and Malleswaram; the third area comprises Cleveland Town, Frazer Town, Richards Town Cooke Town and Cox Town, while the fourth area includes in it Langford Town, Richmond Town and Austin Town.

The last zone is characterised as the Military Zone, which gives an embodiment of the activities of the soldiers. Disciplinary activities are the dominant characteristics of this zone. Soldiers and Military officers are the inhabitants of this zone. It has the only area which includes in it Baird Barracks, Harris Barracks, Pekin Barracks, Royal Artillery Practice Ground and Landing Ground.

The above division of the City into Seven Ecological Zones, on the basis of ‘activity pattern’ will introduce the organic order into the seeming confusion of Bangalore City.