

Class 12 Geography Notes Chapter 10 Human Settlements

Rural-Urban Dichotomy (Difference)

The human settlements can be differentiated in terms of rural and urban, population size, nature of activities, structure, functions, etc. There is no uniformity in the differentiation of the settlements. But, the basic difference between towns and villages is that in towns the main occupation of the people is related to secondary and tertiary sectors, on the other side, in villages people are engaged in primary activities.

- **Sub-Urbanisation** It is a new trend of people moving away from congested urban areas to cleaner areas outside the city in search of better quality of life.
- **Census of India, 1991** It defines urban settlements as places which have municipal corporation, cantonment board, notified town area committee and have a population of 5000 persons and above and where 75% of male workers are engaged in non-agricultural activities and density of population is at least 400 persons per sq km.

Types and Patterns of Settlements

Settlements can be classified into compact and dispersed by their shape, pattern and types. The major types classified by shape are as follows:

- **Compact or Nucleated Settlements** In these settlements, large number of houses are built very close to each other and they develop along the river valleys and in fertile plains. There are close knit communities and people here share common occupations.
- **Dispersed Settlements** In these settlements, houses are spaced far apart and often interspersed with fields such as a place of worship, a market that binds the settlement together.

Rural Settlements

These settlements are closely and directly related to land. They are dominated by primary activities like agriculture, fishing, animal husbandry, etc. The factors affecting the location of settlements are as follows:

- **Water Supply** Rural settlements are located near water bodies such as rivers, lakes and springs as water is needed for irrigation, fishing, navigation and drinking.
- **Land** Fertile lands suitable for agriculture are places of human settlement like villages in rolling countryside in Europe avoiding swampy areas, low lying river valleys and coastal plains suited for wet rice cultivation in South-East Asia.
- **Upland** Dry points like uplands, terraces, leaves that are not prone to flooding are places of settlements. In tropical countries, people build their houses on stilts near marshy lands to protect themselves from flood, insects and animal pests.

- **Building Material** Settlements are made in those places where building materials are available like cave dwellings in China, mud bricks houses in African Savanna and igloos with ice blocks in polar regions.
- **Defence** Places that form good defensive site are developed as settlements like defensive hills, islands, etc. In India, forts were built on hills.
- **Planned Settlements** Planned settlements are constructed by government by providing shelter, water and other infrastructure on acquired lands, e.g. canal colonies in Indira Gandhi Canal Command Area in India.

Rural Settlement Patterns

This refers to the way the houses are sited in relation to each other. The surrounding topography terrain influence the shape.

They are classified as below:

1. On the basis of setting, the main types are plain and size of village, plain villages, plateau villages, coastal villages, forest villages, desert villages, etc.
2. On the basis of functions, there may be farming villages, fishermen villages, lumberjack villages, pastoral villages, etc.
3. On the basis of forms/shapes of the Settlement, the villages are developed in geometrical forms and shapes such as:

Linear Pattern The houses are located along the road, railway line, river, canal edge of a valley, along a levee.

Rectangular Pattern The settlements are located in plain areas or in wide inter montane valleys. The roads are rectangular and cut each other at right angles.

Circular Pattern The settlements develop around lakes, tanks and the central part remains open for keeping the animals to protect them from wild animals.

Star-like Pattern These settlements develop where several roads converge and the houses are built along the roads.

T-shaped, Y-shaped, Cross-shaped or Cruciform Settlements The T-shape settlements develop at tri-junctions, Y-shaped settlements emerge where two roads converge on the third and houses are built along these roads, cruciform settlements develop on the cross-roads and houses extend in all the four directions.

Double Village These settlements extend on both sides of a river where there is a bridge or a ferry.

Problems of Rural Settlements

- Rural settlements in developing countries are large in number and have poor infrastructure. There is inadequate supply of water in these settlements.
- Water borne diseases like cholera, jaundice, etc are a common problem. There is lack of irrigation facilities, problem of drought and flood in rural settlements. Inadequate sanitation facility, toilet and garbage disposal facilities cause health related problems.

- Proper housing and separate shed for animals are not there. Rural settlements mostly lack metalled roads and modern communication network. Health centres and educational institutions are less in number.

Urban Settlements

There had been a rapid growth of urban settlements around the world. The first city to reach a population of one million was London in AD 1810. At present 48% of the world population live in cities.

Classification of Urban Settlements

Common basis of classification are:

- **Population Size** It refers to the lower limit of the population for a settlement to be designated as urban. It is not universal and varies from country to country. In Columbia, a settlement having population of 1500 is termed as urban, in Argentina and Portugal it is 2000, 2500 in USA and Thailand, 5000 in India, 30,000 in Japan, 250 in Denmark, Sweden and Finland, 300 in Iceland, and 1000 in Canada and Venezuela.
- **Occupational Structure** In some countries, the major economic activities alongwith population size designate a settlement as urban. In Italy, settlement called as urban if more than 50% of its economically productive population is engaged in non-agricultural pursuits. India has set its criterion at 75%.
- **Administration** Administration set up also designates a settlement as urban in some countries. In India, if an area has a municipality, notified area council, then it is considered urban.
- **Location** Location of urban centres is examined with reference to their function, e.g. strategic towns offering natural defence, mining towns, industrial towns, tourist centres, places with historical relics and other places that can provide proper living conditions have the potential to develop into urban centres.

Functions of Urban Centres

On the basis of the functions, the urban settlements are classified into the following:

- **Administrative towns** National capitals having administrative offices like New Delhi, Canberra, London, Beijing, etc are called administrative towns. Provincial (sub-national) towns can also have administrative functions, e.g. Victoria (British Columbia), Albany (New York), etc.
- **Trading and Commercial Towns** Agricultural market towns like Winnipeg, banking and financial centres like Frankfurt, large inland centres like Manchester, transport nodes like Lahore, Baghdad, Agra are important trading centres.
- **Cultural Towns** Pilgrimage places like Jerusalem, Varanasi, Jagannath Puri, etc are considered cultural towns. Other centres like health and recreation (Miami), industrial (Pittsburgh and Jamshedpur), mining, quarrying (Dhanbad) and transport (Singapore and Mughal Sarai) are also urban settlements.

Classification of Towns on the basis of Forms

Urban settlements can be linear, square, star or crescent shaped. Cities in developed countries are planned while in developing countries have evolved historically with irregular shapes. Chandigarh and Canberra are planned cities while smaller town in India have evolved historically from walled cities to large urban sprawls.

- **Addis Ababa** Established in 1878, it is capital of Ethiopia and is located in hill valley topography. It is a large nodal centre, has large markets and government headquarters. The city has witnessed rapid growth and expansion in all directions.
- **Canberra** Established in 1912, it is the capital of Australia. It is a garden city with wide open spaces, parks and gardens. Initially, it was built to accommodate 25,000 people but now it has expanded to accommodate many satellite towns.

Types of Urban Settlements Problems of Urban Settlements

Depending upon the size and services available, urban centres are classified further as follows:

- **Towns** These can be well understood with reference to 'village'. Specific functions such as manufacturing, retail and wholesale trade, and professional services exist in towns.
- **City** They are larger than towns, have greater number of economic functions, tend to have transport terminals, major financial institution and administrative offices. In the words of Lewis Mumford, "The city is in fact the physical form of the highest and most complex type of associative life".
- **Conurbation** The term conurbation was coined by Patrick Geddes in 1915. This is applied to a large area of urban development that resulted from the merging of originally separate towns or cities like Greater London and Tokyo.
- **Megalopolis** Popularised by Jean Gottman (1957), this signifies super metropolitan region extending as union of conurbations, e.g. urban landscape stretching from Boston to Washington.
- **Million City** It refers to a city whose population reaches more than one million, e.g. London reached million mark in 1800 followed by Paris in 1850 and by 1950 there were around 80 such cities.
- **Distribution of Mega Cities** The number of mega cities or megalopolis has been rising rapidly. The number of mega cities is 25 currently. At present, the number of million cities in Europe is 58, 206 in Asia, 79 in North and Central America, 43 in South America, 46 in Africa and 6 in Australia. They are also inadequate in infrastructure such as electricity sewage, disposal, health and education facilities.

Problems Of Urban Settlements

In developing countries, urban settlements suffer from unsustainable concentration of population, congested housing, lack of drinking water, poor infrastructure, no proper sewage disposal, health and education facilities, vertical expansion and growth of slums. Most of the cities in developing countries suffer from such unplanned growth. They are:

- **Economic Problems** The decreasing employment opportunities in rural areas push the unskilled and semi-skilled labour force to migrate to urban areas which is already saturated. ‘
- **Socio-Cultural Problems** Cities in developing countries suffer from several social ills. Lack of financial resources fail to create adequate social infrastructure. Lack of employment and education tends to aggravate the crime rates. Male selective migration to the urban areas disorts the sex ratio in these cities.
- **Environmental Problems** Urban settlements in developing countries suffer from improper sewage system, massive use of fuel that causes air pollution, lack of clean drinking water, dumping of untreated wastes and huge concrete structures that aggravate the environmental problems.

Healthy City

The World Health Organisation suggests that a healthy city should have clean and safe environment, meet the basic needs of all his inhabitants, involve the community in local government and provide easily accessible health service.

Urban Strategy

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) outlines the urban strategy that aims to increase shelter for urban poor, provision of basic services like primary healthcare, drinking water, education, sanitation, government facilities, upgrading energy use, alternative transport system and reducing air pollution.