

URBAN SETTLEMENT

The concept of the Urban System **was introduced by** Brian J.L. Berry (1964) in his noteworthy work “Cities as systems within systems of cities”. The urban hierarchy concept considers that the urban places vary in population sizes and economic functions. The analysis of urban hierarchy mainly relates to the ranked order of cities based on different criteria, such as population size, economic power, retail sales, and the number of industrial workers. The rapid urban growth is a recent phenomenon. Until recent times, few settlements reached the population size of more than a few thousand inhabitants. The first urban settlement to reach a population of one million was the city of London by around. A.D. 1810. By 1982 approximately 175 cities in the world had crossed the one million population mark. Presently 48 per cent of the world’s population lives in urban settlements compared to only 3 per cent in the year 1800.

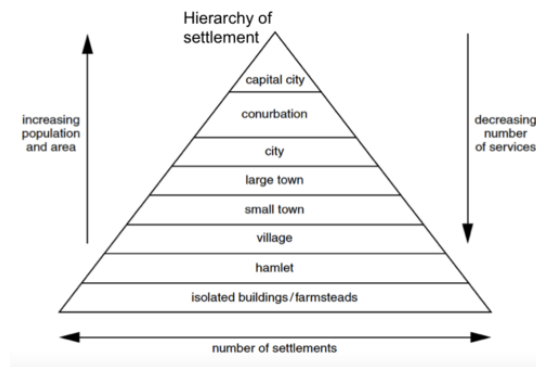


Figure:-Hierarchy of settlement

Types of Urban Settlements

Depending on the size and the services available and functions rendered, urban centres are designated as town, city, million city, conurbation, and megalopolis. On the basis of functions, cities can be grouped as administrative, industrial, transportation, commercial, mining, cantonment, educational, religious, tourist, etc.

Town

The concept of ‘town’ can best be understood with reference to ‘village’. The population size is not the only criterion. Functional contrasts between towns and villages may not always be clear cut, but specific functions such as, manufacturing, retail and wholesale trade, and professional services exist in towns.

City

A city may be regarded as a leading town, which has outstripped its local or regional rivals. In the words of Lewis Mumford, “the city is in fact the physical form of the highest and most complex type of associative life”. Cities are much larger than towns and have a greater number of economic functions. They tend to have transport terminals, major financial institutions and regional administrative offices. When the population crosses the one million mark it is designated as a million city.

Conurbation

The term conurbation was coined by Patrick Geddes in 1915 and applied to a large area of urban development that resulted from the merging of originally separate towns or cities. Greater London, Manchester, Chicago and Tokyo are examples.

Megalopolis

This Greek word meaning “great city”, was popularised by Jean Gottman (1957) and signifies ‘super-metropolitan’ region extending, as union of conurbations. The urban landscape stretching from Boston in the north to south of Washington in U.S.A. is the best known example of a megalopolis.

Million City

The number of million cities in the world has been increasing as never before. London reached the million mark in 1800, followed by Paris in 1850, New York in 1860, and by 1950 there were around 80 such cities. The rate of increase in the number of million cities has been three-fold in every three decades – around 160 in 1975 to around 438 in 2005.

Distribution of Mega Cities

A mega city or megalopolis is a general term for cities together with their suburbs with a population of more than 10 million people. New York was the first to attain the status of a mega city by 1950 with a total population of about 12.5 million. The number of mega cities is now 25. The number of mega cities has increased in the developing countries during the last 50 years vis-à-vis the developed countries.

Classification based on Population Size

According to population size, census of India classifies urban centres into six classes. Class wise urban settlements and their population are given below:-

Table1 Classification of urban settlement

Class	Population
Class I	1,00,000 and above
Class II	50,000 – 99,999
Class III	20,000 – 49,999
Class IV -	10,000 – 19,999
Class V -	5,000 – 9,999
Class VI -	less than 5,000

Hence a general classification is given by Lewis Mumford herewith,

- (i) Eopolis:** A small town of village origin based on agriculture, mining and fishing.
- (ii) Polis:** Market town with wholesale grain market.
- (iii) Metropolis:** It is a large city with 10 lakhs of population.
- (iv) Megapolis:** When main cities and metropolis coalesce to form a giant urban centre.
- (v) Tyranopolis:** In this country wide urbanization predominated the scene. Here the display and expense become the measurement of culture.
- (vi) Nekropolis:** It is known as ghost city or dead city. This stage comes due to war, famine, diseases, decay of culture.

